23 August 2019

Margaret Mitchell MSP
Convener
Justice Committee
Clerks Room T2.80
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

Dear Convener,

I refer to your invitation of 25 June to give evidence to the Committee in relation to the proposal for a judicial register of interests. This is a matter that has been the subject of parliamentary consideration for number of years, with the petition being lodged in 2012. Since then there have been a number of exchanges between the Petitions Committee and both my predecessor, Lord Gill, and myself. Both Lord Gill and I have given oral evidence to the Petitions Committee on this matter. For your convenience, I attach copies of the letters that Lord Gill and I have sent to the Petitions Committee, and also the transcripts of our oral evidence.

I appreciate that your Committee is constituted differently from the Petitions Committee, and that the topic may therefore be comparatively new to its members. There would, however, appear to be little that could be said in any further session that does not simply go over ground that has already been covered extensively. It would not, I suggest, be the most fruitful use of the Committee’s valuable time.

If, however, after consideration of everything that has gone before, it emerges that there are new substantive issues, I would be happy to address them. I would be grateful if you could write to me setting out any new issues that have been identified. We will then be well placed to determine how best to progress this matter which, unfortunately, has been aired at a time when I am attempting to encourage our most senior lawyers to apply for office of judge of the Court of Session and High Court.

Yours sincerely,

[Signature]

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