

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Wednesday 26 June 2002
(Morning)

Session 1

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FINANCE COMMITTEE

14th Meeting 2002, Session 1

CONVENER

*Des McNulty (Clydebank and Milngavie) (Lab)

DEPUTY CONVENER

*Elaine Thomson (Aberdeen North) (Lab)

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

*Brian Adam (North-East Scotland) (SNP)

*Mr David Davidson (North-East Scotland) (Con)

*Mr Tom McCabe (Hamilton South) (Lab)

*Alasdair Morgan (Galloway and Upper Nithsdale) (SNP)

*Mr Jamie Stone (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD)

COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTES

Mr Keith Harding (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)

Mr Keith Raffan (Mid Scotland and Fife) (LD)

Andrew Wilson (Central Scotland) (SNP)

*attended

ACTING CLERK TO THE COMMITTEE

David McGill

SENIOR ASSISTANT CLERK

Terry Shevlin

ASSISTANT CLERK

Gerald McNally

LOCATION

Committee Room 3

Scottish Parliament

Finance Committee

Wednesday 26 June 2002

(Morning)

[THE CONVENER opened the meeting at 10:04]

Item in Private

The Convener (Des McNulty): I formally open the 14th meeting of the Finance Committee in 2002. I make the usual announcement that mobile phones and pagers should be switched off. All the committee's members are present and Murray McVicar is in attendance.

Agenda item 1 is to ask whether members agree to discuss in private item 2, which is consideration of a paper on potential advisers on financial memoranda. Is that agreed?

Alasdair Morgan (Galloway and Upper Nithsdale) (SNP): I want to raise a general point—excuse me for my lack of breath, but I had to run over here—about matters that are discussed in private. What is the status of discussions that take place in private? I ask because I notice that Mr Davidson suggested in last week's debate on public-private partnerships that, during the Finance Committee's inquiry into such issues, the SNP was threatening to release a minority report. When Brian Adam asked him what evidence he had for making such a claim, Mr Davidson said:

"I was at the Finance Committee meeting last week."

There is nothing on the record to indicate that Mr Adam said anything of that nature and I cannot remember his saying any such thing. Clearly, the only discussion of our inquiry took place in private. My question is: Even if Brian Adam had said something like that in private, would it be in order to use such discussions in a public debate?

The Convener: I will allow David Davidson to respond to the specific issue before I say something about the general point.

Mr David Davidson (North-East Scotland) (Con): I recall replying to Mr Adam's intervention, but I did not say, "at the Finance Committee meeting".

Alasdair Morgan: Yes you did.

Mr Davidson: I said, "at the meeting". I deliberately did not say anything else. To be honest, I have not seen the *Official Report*, so I do not know how it was reported.

Brian Adam (North-East Scotland) (SNP): What Mr Davidson said was:

"I was at the Finance Committee meeting last week." — [Official Report, 20 June 2002; c 12909.]

Mr Davidson: That might be how it was reported, but that is not exactly what I said.

The Convener: The status of what is said in private is that it should be private. Our discussions in private are to organise the work of the committee. When we have private sessions, confidentiality should be respected.

Mr Davidson: I totally agree with you.

The Convener: Do members agree that agenda item 2 should be discussed in private?

Members indicated agreement.

10:06

Meeting continued in private until 12:58.

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