

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Tuesday 28 March 2006

Session 2

£5.00

© Parliamentary copyright. Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body 2006.

Applications for reproduction should be made in writing to the Licensing Division,
Her Majesty's Stationery Office, St Clements House, 2-16 Colegate, Norwich NR3 1BQ
Fax 01603 723000, which is administering the copyright on behalf of the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate
Body.

Produced and published in Scotland on behalf of the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body by Astron.

CONTENTS

Tuesday 28 March 2006

Col.

SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE POLICY AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT REVIEWS	3509
TOURIST BOARDS (SCOTLAND) BILL: FINANCIAL MEMORANDUM	3510

FINANCE COMMITTEE

10th Meeting 2006, Session 2

CONVENER

*Des McNulty (Clydebank and Milngavie) (Lab)

DEPUTY CONVENER

*Mr John Swinney (North Tayside) (SNP)

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Ms Wendy Alexander (Paisley North) (Lab)

Mr Andrew Arbuckle (Mid Scotland and Fife) (LD)

*Mark Ballard (Lothians) (Green)

*Derek Brownlee (South of Scotland) (Con)

*Jim Mather (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)

*Mr Frank McAveety (Glasgow Shettleston) (Lab)

*Dr Elaine Murray (Dumfries) (Lab)

COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTES

Robin Harper (Lothians) (Green)

Janis Hughes (Glasgow Rutherglen) (Lab)

Alex Neil (Central Scotland) (SNP)

John Scott (Ayr) (Con)

Iain Smith (North East Fife) (LD)

*attended

THE FOLLOWING ALSO ATTENDED :

Professor Arthur Midwinter (Adviser)

CLERK TO THE COMMITTEE

Susan Duffy

SENIOR ASSISTANT CLERK

Rosalind Wheeler

ASSISTANT CLERK

Kristin Mitchell

LOCATION

Committee Room 5

Scottish Parliament

Finance Committee

Tuesday 28 March 2006

[THE CONVENER *opened the meeting at 10:02*]

Scottish Executive Policy and Financial Management Reviews

The Convener (Des McNulty): It is past 10 o'clock, so I open the 10th meeting in 2006 of the Finance Committee. I welcome the press and remind everyone present to turn off their pagers and mobile phones. We have received apologies from Wendy Alexander and Andrew Arbuckle.

The first item on today's agenda is consideration of a paper on the policy and financial management reviews by the Scottish Executive. We have launched the committee's wide-ranging accountability and governance inquiry and, as the paper suggests, we could do some work on non-departmental public bodies. The inquiry that we have initiated will require a lot of time and work. We also have various legislation to consider, and after the summer recess we will begin stage 2 of the budget process. For that reason, it is suggested that we examine NDPBs in a time-efficient manner, so it struck me that examining them through the PFM reviews might be a sensible way of piggybacking on work that is already being done. That would also allow for a process of financial scrutiny. If members agree to that course of action, we can write to the Scottish Executive, as set out in the paper, and consider the best way forward once we have received its reply. Are members content to proceed as the paper suggests?

Members indicated agreement.

The Convener: To some extent, we are dependent on the Executive's programme for reviews, but if we can agree with the Executive to proceed by that route, we may be able to offer input in respect of its timetable.

Mr John Swinney (North Tayside) (SNP): How we proceed will to a large extent depend on what information is available for our scrutiny through the policy and financial management reviews. Many of the issues about which members are concerned in relation to the performance of NDPBs may not be covered by that information. Subject to the caveat that we get access to appropriate information, the approach that is suggested could be quite useful.

The Convener: One advantage of the proposal is that it may allow us to offer input not only on the timing of reviews but on their format. We may be

able to suggest a consistency of purpose if we find some inconsistencies of approach, which might improve the quinquennial scrutiny process generally. We will write to the Executive as suggested.

Tourist Boards (Scotland) Bill: Financial Memorandum

10:05

The Convener: The second item on the agenda is to decide what level of scrutiny should be applied to the Tourist Boards (Scotland) Bill. As members will see from the clerks' paper, although the amount of money that will relate to the specific provisions of the bill is minimal, it is suggested that because of the transitional costs of merging the area tourist boards with VisitScotland, we should adopt level 2 scrutiny, take written evidence from VisitScotland and the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, and take oral evidence from the Executive. Do members agree to that approach?

Members indicated agreement.

The Convener: The third item on the agenda is consideration of a draft report on our inquiry into deprivation. We have already agreed that it and the fourth item, on the review of the Executive's management of public finances, will be taken in private.

10:06

Meeting continued in private until 11:53.

Members who would like a printed copy of the *Official Report* to be forwarded to them should give notice at the Document Supply Centre.

No proofs of the *Official Report* can be supplied. Members who want to suggest corrections for the archive edition should mark them clearly in the daily edition, and send it to the Official Report, Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh EH99 1SP. Suggested corrections in any other form cannot be accepted.

The deadline for corrections to this edition is:

Tuesday 4 April 2006

PRICES AND SUBSCRIPTION RATES

OFFICIAL REPORT daily editions

Single copies: £5.00

Meetings of the Parliament annual subscriptions: £350.00

The archive edition of the *Official Report* of meetings of the Parliament, written answers and public meetings of committees will be published on CD-ROM.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO PARLIAMENTARY QUESTIONS weekly compilation

Single copies: £3.75

Annual subscriptions: £150.00

Standing orders will be accepted at Document Supply.

Published in Edinburgh by Astron and available from:

Blackwell's Bookshop
53 South Bridge
Edinburgh EH1 1YS
0131 622 8222

Blackwell's Bookshops:
243-244 High Holborn
London WC1 7DZ
Tel 020 7831 9501

All trade orders for Scottish Parliament documents should be placed through Blackwell's Edinburgh

Blackwell's Scottish Parliament Documentation
Helpline may be able to assist with additional information on publications of or about the Scottish Parliament, their availability and cost:

Telephone orders and inquiries
0131 622 8283 or
0131 622 8258

Fax orders
0131 557 8149

E-mail orders
business.edinburgh@blackwell.co.uk

Subscriptions & Standing Orders
business.edinburgh@blackwell.co.uk

RNID Typetalk calls welcome on
18001 0131 348 5412
Textphone 0845 270 0152

sp.info@scottish.parliament.uk

All documents are available on the Scottish Parliament website at:

www.scottish.parliament.uk

Accredited Agents
(see Yellow Pages)

and through good booksellers

Printed in Scotland by Astron