

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Tuesday 28 October 2008

Session 3

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FINANCE COMMITTEE

24th Meeting 2008, Session 3

CONVENER

*Andrew Welsh (Angus) (SNP)

DEPUTY CONVENER

*Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Lab)

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

*Derek Brownlee (South of Scotland) (Con)

*Joe FitzPatrick (Dundee West) (SNP)

*James Kelly (Glasgow Rutherglen) (Lab)

*Alex Neil (Central Scotland) (SNP)

*Jeremy Purvis (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale) (LD)

*David Whitton (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (Lab)

COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTES

Roseanna Cunningham (Perth) (SNP)

Murdo Fraser (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)

Lewis Macdonald (Aberdeen Central) (Lab)

Liam McArthur (Orkney) (LD)

*attended

CLERK TO THE COMMITTEE

Susan Duffy

SENIOR ASSISTANT CLERK

Mark Brough

ASSISTANT CLERK

Allan Campbell

LOCATION

Committee Room 2

Scottish Parliament

Finance Committee

Tuesday 28 October 2008

[THE CONVENER *opened the meeting at 14:04*]

Health Boards (Membership and Elections) (Scotland) Bill: Financial Memorandum

The Convener (Andrew Welsh): Good afternoon, and welcome to the 24th meeting of the Finance Committee in 2008 in the third session of the Scottish Parliament. I ask members to turn off any mobile phones or pagers.

Agenda item 1 was to have been oral evidence on the financial memorandum to the Health Boards (Membership and Elections) (Scotland) Bill, but we were informed half an hour ago that, due to staff illness, the bill team will not be able to appear today. There is time in our work programme to schedule an evidence session for next week's meeting, so I propose that we do that. Are members agreed?

Members indicated agreement.

Alex Neil (Central Scotland) (SNP): Given the written evidence that we have received from the health boards, could we invite some of them to come and justify their figures? There is certainly quite a discrepancy between what they are saying and what the Government is saying.

The Convener: Do you have any health boards in mind? What criteria should we use?

Alex Neil: NHS Ayrshire and Arran is saying very different things from what the others are saying. If we are examining the issue objectively, we need to consider both sides of the argument.

The Convener: Do members have any other comments?

Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Lab): I suggest that if we take oral evidence of that nature, we do not confine it to health boards. There was a very persuasive and intelligent submission from the electoral returning officers—or whatever their technical title is.

The Convener: The electoral registration committee of the Scottish Assessors Association.

Jackie Baillie: That is exactly what I would have said, convener—thank you. It might be useful to invite them too.

The Convener: Are members agreed?

Members indicated agreement.

The Convener: Did we suggest health boards?

Alex Neil: Yes.

Joe FitzPatrick (Dundee West) (SNP): If those suggested witnesses are not available, will the clerks see what they can do? It is obviously very short notice.

The Convener: The clerks will take that in hand.

Decisions on Taking Business in Private

14:06

The Convener: Item 2 is to agree whether to take a draft report on the financial memorandum to the Health Boards (Membership and Elections) (Scotland) Bill in private at a future meeting. Are members agreed?

Members indicated agreement.

The Convener: I also propose that we consider our work programme in private at next week's meeting. Are members agreed?

Members indicated agreement.

Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Bill: Financial Memorandum

14:06

The Convener: Item 3 is to consider our approach to the financial memorandum to the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Bill. The paper suggests that we adopt level 1 scrutiny, which would involve seeking written evidence from the Additional Support Needs Tribunals for Scotland, the Scottish Court Service, the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities and local authorities—either those that are identified in the financial memorandum or all local authorities—and then forwarding that evidence to the lead committee. Do members agree to adopt level 1 scrutiny?

Members indicated agreement.

The Convener: Do members have a view on whether we should write to all the local authorities or only the six that are specified in the financial memorandum?

Alex Neil: I think that we should write to them all, because there is wide variation. The thing that predicates and has driven the need for the bill is the inspector's report about the variation in practice among local authorities. It would therefore be sensible for us to invite all the local authorities to respond.

The Convener: The suggestion is that we write to all local authorities. Is that agreed?

Members indicated agreement.

The Convener: As previously agreed, we move into private session to consider our report on the financial memorandum to the Scottish Parliamentary Pensions Bill, and our report on capital investment.

14:08

Meeting continued in private until 15:16.

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