

JUSTICE 1 COMMITTEE AND JUSTICE 2 COMMITTEE (JOINT MEETING)

Tuesday 8 May 2001
(Morning)

Session 1

£5.00

© Parliamentary copyright. Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body 2001.

Applications for reproduction should be made in writing to the Copyright Unit,
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 The
Stationery Office Ltd.

Her Majesty's Stationery Office is independent of and separate from the company now
trading as The Stationery Office Ltd, which is responsible for printing and publishing
Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body publications.

CONTENTS

Tuesday 8 May 2001

Col.

| | |
|-------------------------------------|----|
| BUDGET PROCESS 2002-03 | 17 |
|-------------------------------------|----|

JUSTICE 1 COMMITTEE

14th Meeting 2001, Session 1

CONVENER

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

DEPUTY CONVENER

*Gordon Jackson (Glasgow Govan) (Lab)

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

*Phil Gallie (South of Scotland) (Con)

*Maureen Macmillan (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)

*Paul Martin (Glasgow Springburn) (Lab)

*Michael Matheson (Central Scotland) (SNP)

*Nora Radcliffe (Gordon) (LD)

*attended

JUSTICE 2 COMMITTEE

10th Meeting 2001, Session 1

CONVENER

*Pauline McNeill (Glasgow Kelvin) (Lab)

DEPUTY CONVENER

*Mrs Lyndsay McIntosh (Central Scotland) (Con)

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

*Scott Barrie (Dunfermline West) (Lab)

*Christine Grahame (South of Scotland) (SNP)

Ms Margo MacDonald (Lothians) (SNP)

*Mrs Mary Mulligan (Linlithgow) (Lab)

Tavish Scott (Shetland) (LD)

*attended

THE FOLLOWING ALSO ATTENDED:

Mike Watson (Glasgow Cathcart) (Lab)

WITNESSES

Dr Alastair Brown (Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service)

John Dawson (Prison Officers Association Scotland)

Andy Gilchrist (Fire Brigades Union)

David McKenna (Victim Support Scotland)

Elizabeth May (Victim Support Scotland)

Andrew Normand (Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service)

Roddy Robertson (Fire Brigades Union)

Sandy Rosie (Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service)

John Service (Procurators Fiscal Society)

Richard Stott (Procurators Fiscal Society)

CLERK TO THE COMMITTEE

Lynn Tullis

SENIOR ASSISTANT CLERK

Alison Taylor

ASSISTANT CLERK

Jenny Goldsmith

LOCATION

Committee Room 1

CLERK TO THE COMMITTEE

Gillian Baxendine

SENIOR ASSISTANT CLERK

Claire Menzies

ASSISTANT CLERK

Fiona Groves

ACTING ASSISTANT CLERK

Graeme Elliott

Scottish Parliament

Justice 1 Committee and Justice 2 Committee (Joint Meeting)

Tuesday 8 May 2001

(Morning)

[THE CONVENER *opened the meeting at 11:16*]

The Convener (Alasdair Morgan): I formally open this joint meeting of the Justice 1 Committee and the Justice 2 Committee. We have received apologies from Margo MacDonald and Tavish Scott.

Budget Process 2002-03

The Convener: We have a tight timetable today, as we have a fair number of witnesses and we must be finished by 1 o'clock. I hope that committee members will keep their questions focused and that, likewise, witnesses will keep their answers focused.

Our first witnesses are from the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service. We have with us Andrew Normand, Crown Agent; Sandy Rosie, director of resources; and Dr Alastair Brown from the policy group. Do you wish to make a few remarks before we begin questions?

Andrew Normand (Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service): I have some brief opening comments. This is the second year in which we have appeared before a committee in the early stages of the budget process, but the context this year is slightly different. For one thing, our appearance here follows our appearance on 24 April before the Justice 2 Committee. At that committee's request, we sought to assist it with information about the structure and organisation of the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service. The Justice 2 Committee has just settled—and announced—a remit for a wide-ranging inquiry into the COPFS, to investigate the sufficiency of the resources that are available to the COPFS to enable it to meet its stated aim of thorough, critical and accurate investigation, preparation and presentation of cases, while having sensitivity to the needs of victims and witnesses.

A further difference from last year is that we have been provided with a note of four specific questions to be addressed at this meeting. We have assumed in our preparation that this joint meeting of the Justice 1 Committee and the Justice 2 Committee will wish us to focus on those particular questions and to leave the wider issues

for the Justice 2 Committee inquiry, with which we look forward to co-operating in due course.

I remind members that, in my evidence to last year's budget process meeting, I explained that, beyond 2000-01, the forecasts in our strategic plan for 2000-03, which was circulated to committee members, were likely to require an increase in our funding. I also explained that follow-through on then current or proposed initiatives was also likely to require additional funding. When the Lord Advocate appeared before the Justice and Home Affairs Committee on 27 September last year, he reported an increase in funding for the department that would allow us to make real progress in relation to our key priorities—including plans for improved information technology that were supported by the committee in its budget process report, and plans for improved services to victims, witnesses and next of kin. That is reflected in the section that deals with the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service in the Scottish Executive's expenditure report, "The Scottish Budget".

We are happy to deal now with the questions raised in the note that we received from the clerk. We are in the committee's hands.

The Convener: We will pick up on those questions during general questioning from the committee. We can come back to any that we miss. Phil Gallie would like to begin.

Phil Gallie (South of Scotland) (Con): Oh—my questions were not on that list from the clerk and I was hoping to come in towards the end. However, I will go first.

I understand that a staff audit has recently been carried out at the COPFS. The results of that audit have not been made public, but the information that I have suggests that there is great concern about stress and the pressures on staff. There is a feeling that, because of funding problems, the provision of service is inadequate. Is that feeling justified, and are those issues addressed in the current budget?

Andrew Normand: We discussed that issue a couple of weeks ago with the Justice 2 Committee. Members expressed concerns about the level of morale disclosed by the staff survey carried out last summer. As I said to the committee, the COPFS senior management took those findings very seriously and produced an action plan. That action plan has, I understand, been circulated to members of the Justice 2 Committee and perhaps also to members of the Justice 1 Committee, together with the findings of the staff survey.

I told the Justice 2 Committee on 24 April that we are reviewing the action plan to check that action has been taken on the commitments that we made in the aftermath of the publication of the

summary of the survey. The Lord Advocate also mentioned that when he appeared, last September. The funding that is being provided for the service should, in my view, be sufficient to enable us to address the concerns that arose in the survey. We are, of course, taking other action. This is not just a matter of resources: there are also other aspects of the operation and management systems that require to be addressed.

Phil Gallie: I have a question on the way that the budget has been presented. We have estimates of the costs of the Lockerbie trial up to the current financial year. In the COPFS budget, has provision been made for the costs of the trial, the appeal and so on in the following years? Are those costs included?

Andrew Normand: I will ask Sandy Rosie to answer that.

Sandy Rosie (Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service): Funding for the Lockerbie trial has been, and will continue to be, over and above the department's normal provision. At the moment, we expect something of the order of £1.5 million in the financial year that has just started. Agreement on the amount will be the subject of further discussions, but it will come to us in the form of a supplementary estimate in the middle of this year, over and above our existing provision.

Phil Gallie: How about the year 2002-03?

Sandy Rosie: We have no detailed estimates for years after the current financial year.

Christine Grahame (South of Scotland) (SNP): I want to ask a supplementary question relating to Phil Gallie's point. I do not want to step into the territory of the Justice 2 Committee inquiry, but Mr Normand kindly provided us with figures to show the high turnover among staff who have been in the fiscal service for between six months and one year. Is the budget going to provide the fiscal service with enough funding to pay for a higher level of procurator fiscal, rather than having to have juniors come into the service? Will you be able to retain and pay staff at that higher level? Will you be able to increase the number of procurators fiscal—within the budget that you have got—to meet demand, given that that must deal with the stress that they feel?

Andrew Normand: I am not sure that the figures that we provided in relation to staffing levels and staff turnover justify Christine Grahame's conclusion that there is a substantial loss or wastage rate in the service. Sandy Rosie can give members more detail on that point. Over the past few years, we have seen something in the order of eight to 10 members of the legal staff leave us for reasons other than retirement. That is against a total legal staff of well in excess of 300.

The budget will be adequate to enable us to pay staff. We are at present conducting an engagement exercise for new deutes fiscal. We have attracted substantial interest from recently qualified, and some not so recently qualified, solicitors in Scotland. We hope that we will be able to take on a number of new deutes fiscal as a result of that recruitment exercise.

Christine Grahame: Will Mr Normand give a broad idea of the number of additional procurator fiscal posts that there will be?

Sandy Rosie: At the end of the current exercise we will add in the order of 20 posts.

Christine Grahame: Is that a total of 20 fiscal posts for Scotland?

Sandy Rosie: Yes, 20 posts across the service.

Christine Grahame: Is Mr Rosie satisfied that that will fill what appear to the public to be staffing difficulties in the service? Is he content with the budget that the Executive has provided for that or would he have wanted more?

Sandy Rosie: One could always argue for more funds and resources.

Christine Grahame: If Mr Rosie had done so, how many procurators fiscal would he have aimed for?

Sandy Rosie: The amount of increased money and staff is adequate to meet our current circumstances, which constantly change. We are talking about a base-line level that was set in the summer of last year. Life has moved on since that time, as has our understanding of the staff survey information. In addition, there have been a number of other policy developments. In our discussions with the Executive, we keep the base-line level constantly under review. That is the background against which we are content with the number of additional posts. At the moment, that level will deal with our immediate circumstances.

Christine Grahame: However, given that your circumstances have changed, what is your current position? Mr Rosie mentioned 20 posts, but he also said that things have moved on. What figure has he moved on to?

Sandy Rosie: The Lord Advocate has already explained that, as a result of the spending review, our staffing should increase by 30 posts over this year and next year. As far as we are concerned, the extra 20 posts are not the end of the process.

Christine Grahame: Based on what the Lord Advocate said, you will remain understaffed.

Sandy Rosie: We do not see it as a matter of our being understaffed, but of continuing to strengthen the service against changing circumstances.

Christine Grahame: Thank you.

Andrew Normand: We are strengthening other staff resources, including by the appointment of more precognition officers. I reported that at the Justice 2 Committee meeting on 24 April. That will help us to deal with the increasing number of serious criminal cases which, for us, are the main challenge and the main area of pressure.

Pauline McNeill (Glasgow Kelvin) (Lab): I am interested in the idea of better liaison between the procurator fiscal service and the police service. Information from my local area will—of course—be anecdotal, but there is a perception there that the liaison between the fiscal service and the police service is not as good as it used to be, because the fiscal service is under-resourced. In answer to Christine Grahame's question, Mr Rosie said that the 20 extra posts would suffice. Does Mr Rosie think that liaison—joint working—between the fiscal service and the police service can be strengthened?

Andrew Normand: I am not sure that I accept the proposition that Pauline McNeill is putting to me. I am aware of fairly substantial liaison between fiscals and the police at all levels. At my level, I meet at least twice a year with office bearers of the Association of Chief Police Officers in Scotland. Those meetings are at chief constable level. Regional procurators fiscal also meet chief constables and deputy and assistant chief constables.

11.30

So far as I am aware, although I would have to check the details, the system of liaison meetings between senior fiscals in Glasgow and divisional police commanders and their senior officers in various divisions in Glasgow continues. The level of liaison is adequate, although issues require to be addressed from time to time. That is done on an ad-hoc basis with the creation of special liaison committees. One has recently looked at police reports and another was set up to look at the enforcement of the criminal law in relation to racist offences and the like.

Pauline McNeill: Is there a written or unwritten policy of having a nominated fiscal for liaison with the police service?

Dr Alastair Brown (Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service): Ultimately, it is for the fiscal who is in charge of the office to make arrangements for liaison with the local police force. When we talk to fiscals around the country about policy issues, their staff occasionally say, "The fiscal is not here today because he is seeing the divisional commander" or, "He is seeing the police." When I have been temporarily in charge of officers I have regularly seen divisional

commanders.

In relation to particular cases, there has always been an arrangement whereby reporting officers could be in touch with the fiscal who was dealing with the case, either at the initiative of the police or the fiscal, as required.

Pauline McNeill: I want to press Mr Brown on the phrase that he used, which was "could be in touch". If we believe in a joined-up justice system, we must ensure that all the justice agencies communicate easily with one another. I am looking for a stronger statement than "could be in touch"—I deliberately used the word "nominated"—but Mr Brown is not going as far as to say that. Does he think that we should be moving towards that sort of liaison?

Dr Alastair Brown: I apologise if I misled Pauline McNeill by using the expression "could be in touch". Communication takes place in many ways. There will be frequent meetings between one service and the other, or there will be telephone calls or correspondence.

Rather than having a particular fiscal nominated as the person who is always the channel for the police, what usually happens is that the person who is dealing with a particular issue will be the one who communicates with the police. I understand that, in certain police forces, and Strathclyde police is one, there are rules about who is entitled to communicate directly with fiscals. I think that there is a certain rank threshold for that. I wonder whether that may be the issue that led to the perception that Pauline McNeill mentioned.

The Convener: We are beginning to wander a bit away from the budget. Perhaps we could return to that line of questioning.

Pauline McNeill: I have one more question. In the section of the budget document entitled "What we will do with the money", a priority is to

"recruit additional legal staff to assist in dealing with increased, serious and complex crime."

What kind of legal staff do you intend to recruit to deal with serious and complex crime?

Andrew Normand: That is more a question of generally increasing our numbers and strengthening our legal staff resources. I doubt whether a pool of practitioners exists into which we could tap to obtain people who are specialists in such matters. That is another reason why we are looking to appoint precognition officers—paralegal staff who assist in preparing serious cases.

Mrs Lyndsay McIntosh (Central Scotland) (Con): How many staff, and of what level, might there be in the victim liaison office? Is that number

contained in the figures that you gave in answer to questions from Ms Grahame and Ms McNeill?

Andrew Normand: I cannot give that information at this stage. A project is under way to finalise the specification for that new service. The staff of the new service will be additional. They are not covered by the figures that I gave. We have a couple of staff in Aberdeen, and two are about to start in Hamilton, where the second pilot is about to commence. We will keep both committees posted with information about that project's development.

Mrs McIntosh: At what level might those staff be, and from where do you hope to recruit?

Andrew Normand: Sandy Rosie could give you information on the level. We intend to recruit from within and outwith the organisation. My understanding is that in Hamilton, the newly-appointed victim liaison officer came from outwith the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service, but her assistant came from the service. In Aberdeen, both staff came from outside the service.

Christine Grahame: Victim support must impact on the work of the service in keeping victims, witnesses and others informed. I understand that funding of £1.58 million was for victim support. Does that money go direct to Victim Support Scotland? Is funding allocated to the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service for that purpose, or is it part of your general budget?

Andrew Normand: That money is part of the Crown Office budget. It will be allocated within the departmental budget planning arrangements to that division of the department, which will be responsible for improving our service for victims, witnesses and next of kin.

Christine Grahame: Do you have a figure for that?

Sandy Rosie: We have allowed £500,000 in the current year to establish the scheme. We expect that next year, to cover all Scotland, we will require at least £1.5 million. We must be guided for the years ahead by the lessons that are learned through the pilots.

Christine Grahame: It is helpful to know that there are separate funding sources. Do Victim Support Scotland, the police service and the Crown Office have separate funding?

Andrew Normand: I would like to be clear about what is meant by victim support. Victim Support Scotland has separate funding through the Scottish Executive, as have the police. The Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service has separate funding, part of which is to be devoted to creating the new victim liaison service in our organisation.

Christine Grahame: In discussions with the Executive, how did you reach the figures of £500,000 this year and £1.5 million in the following year?

Sandy Rosie: A feasibility study was conducted into possible ways of establishing the service. That gave an idea of costs and suggested that the full service would require between £1.5 million and £2 million. Working back from that and considering a plan for a year leading up to that in which two pilots would be established—in Aberdeen and Hamilton—we made an in-house estimate. We established a project manager post from our budget. That person produced more detailed estimates, which guided us for the budget.

Christine Grahame: Is your £500,000 part of the £1.58 million overall budget for victim support?

Sandy Rosie: No.

Christine Grahame: I just want to understand all the figures.

How will you evaluate and audit the service when it becomes national in 2002?

Andrew Normand: An exercise is under way for formal, independent evaluation of the victim liaison office pilots. External consultants are conducting that and are involved in work in Aberdeen, where the project has been running for some months. The Hamilton pilot is about to start. We are working with the central research unit at the justice department to determine arrangements for evaluating that pilot. That evaluation will include the views of victims who are offered services, which we consider an important part of evaluation.

As Sandy Rosie said, the planning process for the new national service will be informed by the pilots. That process will include the consideration and development of performance indicators and service standards for the new victim liaison office service. Implementation of our new IT office system should facilitate monitoring the performance and measuring the success of the victim liaison office. We will report on performance in our annual departmental report.

As part of the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service, the victim liaison service will be subject to review by the quality and practice review unit, about which there was some discussion at the Justice 2 Committee's meeting on 24 April.

The Convener: How much will the IT system that you mentioned cost? Where are the costs hidden in the budget figures?

Sandy Rosie: The overall cost is £5.5 million of investment.

The Convener: Over what period?

Sandy Rosie: Principally over two years. We are in the middle stage. Last year, we designed and commenced the procurement of the IT infrastructure—communication systems, personal computers and other items. We are well through that stage, and the acquisitions will be put in place this summer to support the service. In parallel, we developed new business software to facilitate increased electronic handling of cases, as opposed to the paper handling that has been used until now. The bulk of the expenditure will be finished by the end of this calendar year. We will have spent the bulk of that money during the past year and this year.

The Convener: Under which headings does that money fall? I presume that capital spending does not cover it all.

Sandy Rosie: The money is a mixture of capital and recurring spending, because the equipment is being leased, for instance.

The Convener: Have the other costs been allocated among the other headings? We have figures for prosecutions, death investigations and victim services, for example. I wonder where the £5.5 million is.

Sandy Rosie: The money is contained mainly under the headings for prosecutions and death investigations.

The Convener: Is a contractor developing the software?

Sandy Rosie: Yes. We are employing a contractor for most of the software development, working in conjunction with our in-house IT unit.

The Convener: Is the system on schedule?

Sandy Rosie: Yes. It is on schedule to be implemented later this year.

Maureen Macmillan (Highlands and Islands) (Lab): Do you have plans to use information and communications technology for other matters? I ask that because I know that a pilot study of videolinking is being conducted, which would be of great interest to courts in remote areas.

Sandy Rosie: I am unfamiliar with the pilot that you mention. It is not being conducted primarily by our department. The exercise that we are undertaking is a massive change in our procedures. That is the current focus of our attention. Members may also be aware that we are a key player in the integration of Scottish criminal justice information systems project, known as ISCJIS, which is designed to assist the flow of case data around the justice system. That is also due for completion later this year. The two projects will be a major step forward in the way in which we handle cases.

Gordon Jackson (Glasgow Govan) (Lab): The

capital spending is £600,000 in 2000-01 and £1 million in 2001-02. I assumed that that was spending on IT, but now I realise that a lot of it is for leases. What is the capital spend? What do you spend the money on?

Sandy Rosie: It is mostly IT spending. Before the future office project came along, we had a line of spend on equipment and the development of IT systems. Other capital spend is mainly on accommodation and vehicles. That is about it.

11:45

Gordon Jackson: I have one other question, to satisfy my idle curiosity. Spending is divided up under headings such as prosecution, deaths investigation and police complaints. In the real world, those are not watertight compartments; often the same people work in all three areas. Is the distinction arbitrary? How are the calculations made, bearing in mind that it is not necessarily different people in each area?

Sandy Rosie: That is correct. We have to make pro rata calculations of some of the common costs such as those for staff, but we do have a casework basis for a lot of the calculations, in terms of weighted unit statistics of our case load. We have some specialist units, such as the High Court unit and the Crown Office. The exercise to produce the figures is done by statisticians and finance people.

Gordon Jackson: Am I right in saying that the information is not obtained from staff filling in time sheets, but from statistical calculations on the basis of the amount of work done in each department?

Sandy Rosie: Yes, we do not base the calculations on detailed time recording.

The Convener: One of the questions that you were given notice of was on your performance targets. Will the extra expenditure be targeted evenly at all the performance targets, or do you view some of the targets as more important than others? When do you expect to meet the targets?

Andrew Normand: I see them all as important. Provisional figures suggest that compared with 1999-2000, performance against targets improved in 2000-01. The figures will be published in our annual report later in the summer, but provisional results suggest that five out of the seven key targets were met. Of the two that we failed to meet, one was a new target for internal processing stages, which we came reasonably close to meeting. That target is important for the management of work, but it does not materially affect performance with regard to the impact of our service on the public or our contribution to the efficiency of the justice system as a whole.

The other target that we missed quite badly is on

the handling of death cases. That was due in part to external factors, including delays in the provision of essential information, such as reports, to fiscals. To address that, we recently included new provisions in contracts with service providers to secure the timeliness of the submission of reports. We have seen some improvement as a result of that.

Our objective is to meet all targets in 2001-02. We will continue to monitor and improve over the expenditure period. Steady growth in staff numbers, and the growing experience of staff, should help us to achieve the targets.

The Convener: There is a substantial increase in expenditure on prosecutions. Should we expect to see an increased proportion of cases coming to court as a result?

Andrew Normand: We had some discussion at the meeting with the Justice 2 Committee about the work load of the department and the profile of that work. The picture in recent years is of a relatively flat line for the total number of new reports coming into the Procurator Fiscal Service from the police and various other reporting agencies. The area of increase in our work is serious criminal cases, including drugs cases. It is not possible at this stage to forecast a significant increase in the number of cases going to court. The aim is to ensure that we deal properly and timeously with the most serious cases, which is the area of particular pressure, while maintaining performance in relation to other cases at the summary level, or using alternatives to prosecution, such as fiscal fines.

The Convener: I call Christine Creech.

Christine Grahame: Creech? That is a blast from the past.

The Convener: My apologies, Christine. Old habits die hard.

Christine Grahame: I am thinking my way through the figures for the total budget. Let us take 2000-01. Table 0.1 in the annual expenditure report, on the total managed expenditure by portfolio, says that the expenditure for the Crown Office was £51 million. Table 0.2, on the total budget by portfolio in real terms, says that the total budget for the Crown Office was £50 million. The departmental expenditure limit in table 0.4 is £49.8 million for the Crown Office. I am just a punter. Which figure should I be looking at? Which figure is the money that you have?

Andrew Normand: I will call on the expertise of our director of resources to answer that question.

Sandy Rosie: The easiest way for me to answer is to ask you to look at the table that I have just circulated, which is consistent with the Scottish budget publication. You should see the same

figures.

Christine Grahame: I see the figure of £49.8 million.

Sandy Rosie: The point of this document—and this relates also to the question on end-year flexibility that you gave us notice of—is that it shows that our money changes from the original planning figure through to what is called the revised provision. That pretty much happens every year, and the reason is the supplementaries line, where we take in additional resources, which can be resources that are carried forward from the previous year or transfers in from other departments. In this case, the line includes the additional money for Lockerbie, which I mentioned earlier. In that way, we gather extra resources over and above the original provision and end up with the revised provision line.

Christine Grahame: The supplementaries for 2000-01 amount to £8 million. How much of that is due to Lockerbie?

Sandy Rosie: About £2.5 million.

Christine Grahame: So in 1999-2000 and 2000-01 you have depended on those additions and end-year flexibility. For the projected figures, do you add £5 million to £8 million in any event?

Sandy Rosie: Yes. It depends on the circumstances—for example, Lockerbie, which we have touched on. In the comprehensive spending review the Treasury set a flat baseline for the past three years. That created circumstances in which we had to plan and use end-year flexibility to see us through the three-year period. Since the 2000 spending review we have been in a slightly better position, because we have a rising baseline. It may not be quite the same degree of additionality that you have described. In general terms, we will still need end-year flexibility.

Christine Grahame: So the departmental expenditure limit will be more than £53.6 million in 2001-02.

Gordon Jackson: I have one final question about staff. Take any year's budget—it does not matter for my purposes—for example, 2001-02. The budget is £55 million. How much of that is staff costs? What percentage of the Crown Office budget goes on wages?

Sandy Rosie: In the present year, it is £32.5 million, which is just under 60 per cent.

Gordon Jackson: Is that normal? Is 60 per cent the year-in-year-out figure for the proportion of Crown Office money that goes on wages?

Sandy Rosie: Yes.

The Convener: I have one final question. It has been pointed out to me that Q<R means

Queen's and Lord Treasurer's Remembrancer, who I seem to recall in the days when there were student grants used to be on the student grant cheque. Why is it necessary to have a line in the budget with zeros against it?

Andrew Normand: I am the Queen's and Lord Treasurer's Remembrancer, and I no longer write cheques for students. We gather estates for the Crown at no overall cost to the taxpayer. Sandy Rosie can explain the technicalities of it.

Sandy Rosie: The money that is involved is completely separate from our departmental funding. We act in a collection capacity and we do not benefit from it; we simply handle it as a post office, and the money is returned to the Exchequer.

The Convener: I presume that you get paid for that.

Sandy Rosie: Yes, the costs that we incur are netted off from the proceeds and accounted for separately.

The Convener: Due to our timetable, we must move on. Thank you for your evidence. We may write to you with any questions that we have not asked.

The next witnesses are from Victim Support Scotland. We welcome David McKenna and Elizabeth May. Do you want to make a statement to the committee before taking questions?

David McKenna (Victim Support Scotland): Yes, please.

The Convener: Please keep it brief, as time is limited.

David McKenna: We welcome the fact that the justice committees are taking time, during a busy budget review, to listen to the views of Victim Support Scotland. Although Government funding of Victim Support represents less than 0.5 per cent of the entire justice budget, Victim Support provides an important—some would say essential—service in our communities.

There are several key issues that may interest the committee. The first relates to the level of referrals that we receive and the access to our services that victims of crime enjoy. Historically, around 90 per cent of all victims who are referred to Victim Support come via police referral. In recent years, we have experienced difficulties in establishing proper procedures under the Data Protection Act 1984. Over the past 24 months, we have had to live with the introduction of the new measures in the Data Protection Act 1998, which have impacted on the number of victims who get access to our services.

It is a testament to the work of the police service in Scotland, the Association of Chief Police

Officers in Scotland and Victim Support that, despite the challenges, around 40,000 victims of crime have been able to access our service year on year. The past four years have been challenging, and in the year 2000-01 we will probably report that our number of referrals has dropped for the first time in 15 years. We expect that figure to drop from about 40,000 to about 34,000. Further, we expect the impending full implementation of the Data Protection Act 1998 in October to have a knock-on effect in the current financial year.

The good news is that, following extensive action by the Scottish Executive and the UK Government, we expect to receive guidance on data protection shortly from the UK Information Commissioner. That will allow us to make progress and put police referrals back on an even keel, as they were in the 1990s.

We welcomed the Government's victim strategy, the action plan that was published by the justice department and the establishment in the justice department of a special victims unit, which will take responsibility for day-to-day victims' issues. Our working relationship with that unit is extremely good and we look forward to working closely with it in the years ahead.

I came into post as chief officer of Victim Support only in January this year. Victim Support is undergoing a full review of its organisation, structure and services, with a view to making a number of important announcements in September this year.

We have no immediate complaints about overall funding, but we could always do with more. We have two or three key issues. It would be helpful to have a budgeting process that did not provide just annuality of funding, so that we do not know until January what we will get at the beginning of April. It would be better to have our funding agreed, at least in principle, for a period extending to two, three or four years, to provide for jointly agreed objectives for developing our service.

12:00

We are conscious of the fact that, despite the important and valuable work that we do—involving some 1,200 people in Scotland in a voluntary capacity day in, day out helping victims of crime and witnesses—the service that we are able to provide is extremely limited. We are certainly not a full-time service in Scotland; we are very much a part-time service.

This year, we received a 3 per cent increase in our core grant, which increased our funding to £1,584,000. That is an increase of around £46,000, which does not go far across 32 victim support services in Scotland. However, we very

much welcomed an additional one-off grant for project funding of some £264,000, which will allow us to address some public awareness issues and improve access to our services. We are currently discussing with the Scottish Executive the basis on which we are going to roll out those projects.

I have given you an overview of our situation, and I welcome any questions.

Michael Matheson (Central Scotland) (SNP): You referred to the possibility of having a budget that was set over a two, three or four-year period. I take it that, nationally and locally, you have to spend a considerable amount of time looking at resource matters. A common story that I hear from voluntary organisations is that, having just dealt with one budget process, they have to start working on the next year's budget. Can you elaborate on the extent of the work that you find yourself involved in, at national and local level, on budgeting and bringing in additional resources?

David McKenna: There is no doubt that working on a budget basis of one financial year, with very limited information throughout that period about what is coming in the next financial year, makes it difficult to plan. It makes it difficult to use resources effectively, because we do not know whether we will have those resources in six or nine months. It certainly makes it difficult to develop the service, and you must remember that our service is still developing. There is not a national framework of well-established victim support services throughout Scotland. Our service is developing and growing. Having no insight into our future funding arrangements makes it difficult to use resources most effectively and to plan for the future.

At local victim support service level, we are going through a process of awarding people £500 running costs every 12 months for their local service's part-time paid co-ordinator. That process has to be repeated every year. It is hard to make a clear judgment, but I suspect that we are spending about 5 or 6 per cent of our resources each year simply going through that financial planning process. I have no doubt that that figure could be reduced by half, which would effectively be a 3 per cent increase in the use of resources for victim support services rather than for planning.

Elizabeth May (Victim Support Scotland): We submit applications to the Scottish Executive on a three-year basis. We carry out that work annually and, as David McKenna says, it would be absolutely wonderful if we had budget information on a three-year basis. We do that work to supply that information to the Executive.

Michael Matheson: Is that information needed at national and local levels because there are different funding sources at each level? Do you

need a three or four-year budget set by the Executive at national level, and the same sort of process at local government level?

David McKenna: Yes.

Michael Matheson: You said that, for the first time in 15 years, you expect your referral rates to decrease. I recall the Data Protection Act 1998 being flagged up as a potential problem about two years ago. Do you expect that to affect the funding of some of your local victim support groups, whose budgets are often linked to referral levels?

David McKenna: Without the data protection referral issue being resolved, our local victim support services need to secure more resources to deliver the kind of minimum standard of service that we think victims are entitled to. However, there is no doubt that if the headline number of victims referred to our service increases substantially—our projection is that, with data protection effects, there will be about 48,000 to 50,000 referrals in 2002-03—that would have substantial resource implications for local victim support services, more so than for the national organisation.

The Convener: What reaction have you had from the Executive when you have discussed the possibility of getting a three-year plan?

David McKenna: The issue has been around for five or six years, with the odd discussion in between tea breaks with the Scottish Executive, but it has never really been followed through by Victim Support Scotland as materially as it ought to have been. We have begun to talk to the new victims unit about our future vision of what we want to happen for victims of crime in Scotland. Our funding arrangements are right at the top of the list of discussions that we hope to have with the victims unit throughout the summer.

The Convener: Has the Executive said why it is possible for it to budget three years ahead but not possible to tell you what your percentage of that budget is going to be?

David McKenna: That was the previous position. I hope that, with the greater emphasis that is being placed on victims by the Executive, by the Parliament and by the justice committees, the Government will look favourably on ensuring more effective funding arrangements over a period of more than one year.

The Convener: Are there any areas of the country that are relatively underprovided with your service?

David McKenna: All communities, whether rural, island or urban, have resource issues. The primary concern among local victim support services at the moment is their inability to secure accommodation in local communities from which

to provide a service. In the past, they have been up church steeples and down back lanes. One of our victim support services actually operates at the back of an old pigsty, with an outside toilet and no disabled access. I cannot find it, so I do not know how difficult it must be for victims. Across Scotland, we are trying to ensure that we are able to provide a basic standard of premises for victims and for staff and volunteers.

Christine Grahame: This may be a daft question, but what percentage of victims does your predicted figure of 48,000 to 50,000 referrals represent?

David McKenna: Statisticians love that question. The kind of baseline figure that we can use is that around 900,000 crimes are committed in Scotland every year, of which about 50 per cent, or 450,000, are reported to the police. That means that 50,000 victims represent about 10 per cent of all victims of reported crime, or 5 per cent of all victims of crime in Scotland. You can therefore see that there is a huge area of need between 5 per cent and the total victim need.

Christine Grahame: My second question concerns the £260,000 that is specifically for raising the profile of VSS and highlighting the ability to self-refer, which we were told about at the previous meeting. Is that money enough? Out of the 39,000 victims who contacted you last year, there were only 4,000 self-referrals.

David McKenna: As a voluntary organisation, if we put three adverts on Scottish Television each night for three weeks, we would burn up £300,000. It is not so much a question of the level of resources as of how we use them. We want to talk to the Executive about future years. That sum was one-off money for this financial year. We certainly need to build on that work. We applied for funding for that project to improve local victim support services' ability to generate public awareness in their own communities, to advertise the availability of their services and to skill up staff so that they have the kinds of skills that are useful for generating public awareness.

We also have a small amount of money that can be used to place small adverts in local newspapers. In September, we will announce the publication of 1 million leaflets that will be available across Scotland in, for example, libraries, general practice surgeries, hospitals, social work units and police stations. We want to set out a platform that can help local victim support services continue to make use of the investment.

Christine Grahame: How much did you apply for?

Elizabeth May: We applied for £385,000 and were granted £264,000.

Michael Matheson: Is accommodation funded from the centre or by local government?

David McKenna: The Government provides about 20 per cent of the total cost at local service level, excluding staff costs. Local victim support services have to raise anywhere between 50 and 80 per cent of their running costs to pay for heating, lighting, stamps, travel costs, volunteers' expenses and so on as well as accommodation costs. In the early days, local victim support services set themselves up wherever they could find space, which is why the accommodation was often poorly accessible and out of the way, although local authorities provided premises in some areas.

We have realised that if we want to provide access to our services, we cannot hide down lanes and around the back of buildings. Our premises must be easy to find. Also, while we have always appreciated the accommodation that local authorities have given us, it has not always been well placed for ready access. Furthermore, local authorities are increasingly applying higher charges to voluntary sector organisations—they are more likely to charge a commercial rent than a peppercorn rent of £50 a year. Across the board, costs are rising.

Michael Matheson: Would you like the Executive to provide more money or would you like the problem to be addressed through the local authorities?

David McKenna: We need to have a broad funding base that allows the Government and local government to contribute, as well as the private sector and people in our community who want to give us their time, money and resources.

A key issue for us is which elements of our service should have guaranteed funding and which should be paid for by constant fundraising. It is important to remember that people who volunteer for the organisation so that they may help victims of crime get fed up if they spend all their time fundraising.

We are undergoing a major review of how we are structured, who does what and what services we provide for victims of crime. We are consulting victims and other victim organisations. When I took up my post in 1985, there were two other victim organisations. There are now 22, which shows that there has been a huge growth in understanding of the needs of victims in our local communities. We want to consult other people in an attempt to work out how to spend funds—should it all go on premises? Should part of it go on advertising materials? Our advertising budget last year was £8,000, which does not go very far. There are questions of priorities and questions of planning. For example, we would spend a one-off

sum of £200,000 differently to the way we would spend £1 million over three years.

The Convener: I thank the witnesses from Victim Support Scotland for their attendance.

Our next witnesses are from the Procurators Fiscal Society. Richard Stott is the president of the Procurators Fiscal Society and John Service is its secretary.

Richard Stott (Procurators Fiscal Society): I am the president of the Procurators Fiscal Society, which is the trade union that represents legal staff of all grades in the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service. We have a membership of approximately 85 per cent of those who work in the legal grades.

My real job, if you like, is procurator fiscal at Dunfermline. John Service, who is the secretary of the Procurators Fiscal Society, is a principal depute in Glasgow; he is responsible for the deaths unit there.

We are delighted to be asked to appear before the committee, but we have been given fairly short notice so we have had little time to do any real preparation. We are more than happy to answer any questions that members have.

12:15

The Lord Advocate accepted last year that there has been historical underfunding in the service; that was also accepted by the Crown Office. Our members feel that the budget that has been allocated to the service is probably insufficient to deal with historical difficulties and get funding back up to a level that would make our members of staff feel that they are adequately rewarded and resourced to provide the necessary service to the public.

The Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service has traditionally absorbed additional responsibilities without, in our view, adequately bidding for or receiving the necessary resources to cover them. Human rights is one major issue that caused difficulty with resources. It is clear from the staff survey that was carried out and from the views that our members have expressed at various meetings that the legal staff in the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service feel undervalued for several reasons, including pressure of work; lack of resources; in some cases unfair criticism from the media; and poor pay in comparison with other Government lawyers, considering the responsibility and the work load.

We welcome the initiatives that the Crown Agent talked about this morning, such as the victim liaison office, the introduction of drug courts and the new case processing management systems that are coming into the service, but we are

concerned that we will not be adequately resourced or trained to deal with those matters, considering the way in which the funding of the department has been dealt with historically.

We are aware that there has been an increase in serious crime and drugs cases. Those cause particular burdens on our resources. We welcome initiatives to target drug dealers, especially the Strathclyde police initiative, but it must be appreciated that when others spend money solving crime, the problem ends up in the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service as it must deal with the prosecution of those who are reported.

Pauline McNeill: Both the Justice 1 Committee and the Justice 2 Committee have discussed the feeling that there is perhaps a need to get a bit more experience into the service. Do you share that view? How could we address experience in prosecution? As you mentioned it, could you expand on what kind of resources are needed to improve salary levels in the service?

Richard Stott: The problem is not solvable overnight. We welcome the 30 new legal staff that the Lord Advocate has given an undertaking to bring into the service by 2002, but that will not solve the problem. The solution must be long term. There is a difficulty with the level of experience of members of staff who are dealing with the most serious cases. A feeling is that there is a shortage of experienced staff to deal with those cases. Bringing in new members of staff will not solve the problem overnight, but it is the first step on the way to solving that problem.

As the Crown Agent said in his presentation, there is not a pool of staff who are able to hit the ground running in the Procurator Fiscal Service. It is a fairly specialised form of the law that requires appropriate training. We are aware that bringing in 30 new members of staff will initially create additional burdens for existing staff as it will be necessary to train them up to an appropriate level so that they can be used. It is obvious that we need to have them in at the beginning so that we can train them, but I do not see that as a short-term solution; I see it as part of a long-term solution that is necessary to ensure that in future years we have a Procurator Fiscal Service with enough adequately trained staff to deal with the level of crime.

Pauline McNeill: Can you be more specific about the resources that are needed either to attract the experience that is required in the Procurator Fiscal Service or to retain staff once they have been trained? What salary levels are needed?

Richard Stott: We are gathering evidence on that. We have been in discussion with the

management side. The intention is to run a comparability study with other Government lawyers to see whether our service is undervalued. We believe that it will be shown to be undervalued. The study will indicate the salary levels that ought to be appropriate. Until the exercise has been carried out, we have no hard-and-fast evidence to indicate what the levels should be. The study will produce the evidence in due course and we will be more than happy to respond once we have it in our possession.

Gordon Jackson: I was going to ask you the same question. I will press you on it a little. There is some urgency because we are being confronted with stories in the newspapers of unprecedented strike meetings in the Procurators Fiscal Society and some of us have been told that privately because, for historical reasons, we know people who work in the service. I am concerned, as are other committee members.

You are talking about the need to pay better wages and employ more people—a combination of things that cost money. We heard from the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service this morning that about £32 million, or 60 per cent of the budget, goes on staff costs. Do you have any guidance at all on the level of resource that might be needed—is it 10 per cent or 20 per cent of that amount—to enable the Procurators Fiscal Society to say, “We are getting a fair crack”?

Richard Stott: Those are areas that we are looking into at present in conjunction with management. I can do nothing other than give you a gut feeling at present, because we do not have evidence. We reckon that the figure would be around 25 per cent. When mentioning staff costs, it must be borne in mind that the staff costs that you are talking about include all the members of the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service, not just the legal members. We represent only the legal members.

The Convener: I call Scott Barrie.

Scott Barrie (Dunfermline West) (Lab): All my questions have been answered.

Michael Matheson: Richard Stott mentioned the availability of training resources for staff. In answer to Pauline McNeill, you said that although you welcome the additional 30 staff, that resource will not address the problem in the short term, because the issue is long term. It has been suggested that many of the staff who are recruited into the service have limited legal experience. Is much provision made to provide those staff with adequate training before they take on cases, or is there adequate training to help them to develop their experience?

Richard Stott: That is one of the areas in which we feel that we are heavily under-resourced. The

Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service provides some good training—for example, its training on the European convention on human rights was praised by many sources. However, that training bore heavily on resources and courts had to be cancelled in order for it to be held.

You cannot train a depute overnight. You cannot give them a book and say, “Here’s a book. Go away and read it.” Only by working closely with colleagues over a period of time do deposes build up experience in taking the type of decisions that they need to be able to take. Training can be targeted at specific areas, but getting somebody up to speed is a burden on resources until such time as they can be useful. We do not see a short-term solution. There is not a pool of procurators fiscal to be employed. There may be a pool of lawyers, but once they come into the service, they still require to be trained adequately to be procurators fiscal.

Michael Matheson: Would it be fair to say that some procurators fiscal are dealing with cases for which they are inadequately trained, purely because of lack of resources?

Richard Stott: There are certainly cases that we would like to be dealt with by more experienced members of staff than at present, or by junior members of staff with greater supervision from their senior colleagues.

Michael Matheson: Are you aware of any additional resources that have been provided for training as a result of the recent initiatives on the establishment of the victim liaison office and the publication of the report on drugs courts?

Richard Stott: I am not aware of any training as far as the drugs courts are concerned, but it will be some time until the drugs courts come into operation. We work with the drug testing and treatment orders that go through separate court procedures, but the Procurator Fiscal Service has little input to those hearings other than a depute’s attendance in court to assist the sheriff, should that be required.

The major training issue is the IT project that Sandy Rosie and the Crown Agent spoke about. There will be considerable change in the working practices of deposes, from working on paper to working online. That is one of the intentions of the new IT project.

The training programme is being put in place, but I understand that it is an internal training programme and will be borne within the resources of the department—the department will train itself to deal with the system. The effect will be that, if somebody is working on the training, they will not be available to do the front-line work.

Michael Matheson: To what extent is the

Procurator Fiscals Society engaged with the Crown Office in discussing areas that should be targeted to assist the staff that you represent?

Richard Stott: Historically, we have had difficulties, but we think that we have taken a step forward. Meetings have taken place between full-time officials of the First Division Association—to which we are affiliated—the Lord Advocate and the Crown Agent in an endeavour to address such issues.

We have certain undertakings concerning, for example, the comparability study that will consider such issues as wages and training in connection with the issues we have discussed and, in particular, stress within the department. As a result of negotiations between the trade union side and management, we have an undertaking from the Crown Agent and the Lord Advocate that a full stress survey will be conducted on all members of the department. We think that we are improving but, historically, things have not been good. We are waiting for the results of those discussions, which could be very promising.

Michael Matheson: You said that things had not been good historically. Will you expand on that?

John Service (Procurators Fiscal Society): Historical underfunding is the crucial point. The committee has heard a bit about the progress that has been made with the recruitment of additional legal staff, but, as the Lord Advocate has said, procurators fiscal do not grow on trees. Procurators fiscal have a very specialised area of work and it takes time for somebody to build up experience and expertise in that area before they can perform the full range of duties.

Increased resources have been brought into play, but we are still running fast to try to catch up with what Richard Stott referred to as an increase in work load. That increase may not be evident in the overall figures, but is reflected in the figures for serious crime and the additional responsibilities and duties that the European convention on human rights has introduced, for example. Additional work will also be engendered by the victim liaison office.

We accept those challenges, but we are trying to catch up with historical underfunding, which makes things difficult. There is still room to go, but that is where we are just now.

Phil Gallie: What you said about training suggested that even a fairly substantial increase in your budget would not really help the current situation. Have you any ideas about what could help? A Government report on the recycling of criminals was published recently. Would a change in sentencing policy ease your budget problems in relation to the number of procurators who are

ready to work in the field?

The Convener: We are getting beyond the subject of the budget.

Phil Gallie: My question had budget implications.

The Convener: Your question included the word “budget”, but it was not particularly relevant.

Christine Grahame: I hope that my question is relevant. Before the staffing figures that led to the budget total were arrived at, how much discussion took place between your organisation—which, as I understand it, represents 85 per cent of prosecutors—and the Crown Office? What kind of discussion took place about staffing levels?

12:30

Richard Stott: Very little discussion about staffing levels took place between our society and the Crown Office. We expressed the general view that we are under-resourced and understaffed, but we were not asked to have specific input to the preparation of the bid for the budget.

Christine Grahame: Was there no specific discussion between the two groups on staffing levels?

Richard Stott: The Crown Office management side was well aware of our views on under-resourcing. We know not what account was taken of those views.

Christine Grahame: Only £500,000 has been allocated from the Crown Office budget for the victim support office for 2001-02, but that office is sure to impact on the work load of the procurators fiscal. Should not that have led to an increase in the required number of procurators fiscal? The introduction of the victim support office will mean that time will be taken away from prosecuting cases and used for inputting data.

Richard Stott: The victim support office is separate from the Procurator Fiscal Service. At present, the time of only one legal member of staff—the principal depute, who is running the pilot project—is taken up by it. We hope that the report that will be produced by the pilot project will explore the additional responsibilities that arise and enable us to approach the management team to ensure that we are adequately resourced to deal with those responsibilities. That is one of the reasons for running the pilot project.

Christine Grahame: We are told that there will be an increase in the number of precognition takers. How will that impact on the procurators fiscal and their duties? Will the required number of staff reduce or increase?

John Service: Obviously, we do not speak on behalf of the precognition officers. Generally

speaking, our members would encourage any increase in the number of precognition officers, because we work together as part of a team. Our members supervise precognition officers, who play a crucial role in investigating the most serious crimes. Although in many ways an increase in their numbers would increase the work load of our staff in managing that work, that increase is essential because of the increase in work relating to serious crime. Over the past few years, we have seen substantial increases in the number of cases that end up in the High Court and in the number of cases in the sheriff and jury courts.

Nora Radcliffe (Gordon) (LD): I seek your views on the budgetary implications of training. Do newly recruited procurators fiscal learn on the job, as it were? Would it be cost-effective if some sort of specialist training course were devised for apprentice procurators fiscal, so that they could learn more quickly off the job, which would make them more useful when they started on the job?

Richard Stott: There is induction training and, in certain areas, a limited amount of off-the-job training can be provided. However, certain things come only with experience. New staff can gain experience of the discretionary decisions that procurators fiscal are required to make in fairly serious cases only by seeing how the job is done by others and by working alongside others and taking their advice.

Some colleagues have talked about starting up a prosecution/judicial college, which happens in other jurisdictions. I have no idea where that idea is going—I think that people are just talking about it. However, the idea has an element of attraction when one considers the number of lawyers that would be involved if the college dealt with both the judiciary and the prosecution. Perhaps others will consider the idea further.

Gordon Jackson: I am trying to get my mind round the ramifications of what you have said. You used the language of industrial relations, such as “trade union side” and “management”. In the normal world, that immediately gives an impression of junior people and senior people. However, the reality is different, because there are only two handfuls of people in the Procurator Fiscal Service who are more senior than your members. Who, precisely, do you mean when you talk about “management”? On the other side of the coin, how far up does that sense of underfunding go? Up to what level in the Procurator Fiscal Service do you have members that share your views?

Richard Stott: The specific issues relate to those who are of principal depute grade and below. They rejected the most recent pay offer, which led to some of the press items that were referred to. The trade union side is discussing

those issues with the senior management team, which represents the Crown Office. So far, discussions have taken place between full-time officials of the civil servants’ First Division Association, myself, other representatives of the council of the Procurator Fiscal Service, the Lord Advocate, the Crown Agent, Sandy Rosie and members of Sandy Rosie’s department.

Pauline McNeill: My question concerns how we can achieve more joined-up justice. What resources would be required if the policy was that a nominated officer from the Procurator Fiscal Service dealt directly with reporting police officers?

Richard Stott: I listened with interest when you asked the same question of the Crown Agent. I speak with experience of the Dunfermline procurator fiscal’s office and I have also spoken to colleagues about this. The people who must be available to answer inquiries—the duty deputies, if I may put it that way—are coming under more and more pressure. On occasions, the duty depute is simply not in the office because of other commitments in court.

There needs to be more liaison with the police. Some such liaison takes place, but the question whether there is enough ought to be examined. A depute should be available to deal with such issues. At the moment, sometimes there is a depute available, but sometimes there is not.

The Convener: Thank you both for attending and for giving evidence. That has been helpful.

The next and penultimate set of witnesses is from the Fire Brigades Union. I welcome Roddy Robertson and Andy Gilchrist. When we were considering the budget, both committees were conscious that, although the fire service was an important part of the justice department’s budget, neither committee had talked to representatives of the service. We thought that today would be a useful chance to do that.

Will Andy Gilchrist say a few words to start the ball rolling?

Andy Gilchrist (Fire Brigades Union): Thank you for giving us the opportunity to make a shortish contribution.

First, I will put our contribution in some sort of context. From either a UK or a Scottish perspective, the fire service is an extremely high-performing service, despite some of the historical funding problems that had an effect across the UK. By any non-politically defined definition, the fire service in Scotland and in the UK would meet the requirements of best value.

I want to touch on a couple of things that were mentioned in the committee’s correspondence. I ask the committee to bear in mind the fact that we have hands-on experience of the fire service. It

would have been helpful if we had had more detail of the specific aims that the committee wanted to be set out in the budget. Local fire brigades also have a great deal of input once the budget is set.

There appears at least to be a discrepancy in the overall spending figures between the summary document that was sent to us, which includes a figure of £702.3 million, and chapter 1 of the Executive's budget document.

Roddy Robertson (Fire Brigades Union): The first figure appeared in the summary document of the annual budget report that was sent to us.

Andy Gilchrist: There appears to be a discrepancy; it might be a simple mistake or we may need clarification. On page 14, the Executive figure is £727 million, as opposed to £702 million. Members have the Fire Brigades Union's support for the £727 million figure.

The Scottish Fire Service Training School provides important training. The budget document shows that the Executive plans to provide 3,800 student training weeks at the school. It also gives the current figure as 3,580 weeks. Those figures do not match with our understanding of the numbers. Up to April 2001, the school provided some 3,900 student training weeks. For the year ahead, it estimates—and is planning on—a figure of some 4,300 student training weeks. In that context, the budget figures show a cut in the provision of student training weeks, but we are prepared to accept that there may be a misunderstanding on our part.

The facilities at Gullane need to be upgraded. Courses for firefighters and whole-time retained firefighters are already being cancelled because of pressure on what is effectively too low a capacity at the school. The position of the Fire Service College, south of the border in Gloucestershire, is one for further debate and thought, as the Home Office would say. I am glad that members acknowledge that there are unresolved questions around training provision, now and in the future.

On the overall funding situation, we welcome what we call modest increases. We call them modest not because we want to be predictably over-critical, but because the fire service went through 18 years under a Conservative Government and at least two years in which the Labour Government adopted the Conservatives' spending plans. The fire service right across the country—including in Scotland—suffered and now finds itself a long way from full recovery to its position 20 or so years ago. That affects many nuts-and-bolts issues inside the service, including replacement of vehicles and maintenance of stations and buildings. Perhaps more important, the maintenance of establishment levels—the number of firefighters provided to serve the

community—is affected.

I will not go on at length at this point, but I believe that the committee should, in its future and final deliberations, consider the issues that will affect the fire service across the UK. Those issues will certainly need to be confronted in Scotland, even if the committee decides to sidestep them.

The first issue, which is part of the radical change in emphasis in the fire service, is community fire safety. There is broad, in-principle support across the service for community fire safety. We welcome the commitment to publicity campaigns in communities across Scotland. The theory that community fire safety will reduce fire deaths and fire injuries is sound. People might expect to see financial savings as a result, but such savings would be in the medium to longer term—such a radical change in the UK or Scottish fire service is likely to cost more in the short term. As a former operational firefighter, I stress that, although community fire safety stands up in theory, it has not yet been proven in practice to have the results that people suggest.

Another important question, in Scotland in particular, is rural firefighters, who operate in the smaller towns and villages. They are the part-time and volunteer firefighters—the part-time firefighters are commonly called retained firefighters. There is a broad consensus that retained firefighters, and therefore volunteer firefighters, are entitled under the new European Part-time Workers (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2000 to membership of the firemen's—if members will excuse my terminology—pension scheme. If a significant number were to take up that legal right, that would have a significant impact on funding in Scotland. The legal process is well under way on that issue.

A further issue is equipment and protective clothing for retained and volunteer firefighters. Perhaps the most crucial factor is training, which for firefighters is a matter of life and death. In Scotland, the rural firefighter, whether retained or volunteer, in many instances is the fire service. They are expected to carry out the full duties and operational commitments of whole-time firefighters on the basis of two hours training a week. Historically, that has been unacceptable to the Fire Brigades Union. Provisions allow for that training to be increased to three hours but, even though that would go only a minuscule way to addressing the situation, those provisions have not been properly implemented in Scotland.

Retained and volunteer firefighters now have entitlements for holiday pay. In 2001, that is not exactly a position that we should boast about. However, if people are able to take paid holidays, that will have an establishment impact.

If I may briefly go through a couple of other important issues for us—

The Convener: Well, briefly—

12:45

Andy Gilchrist: I will certainly be brief. A general issue is safety. Some 27 firefighters from the UK fire service have been killed on duty in the past 11 years. I am minded of one death in Tayside. We hope that there will be a fundamental increase in the profile, commitment and funding of health and safety initiatives in Scotland.

I will conclude on the equality issue, which is now high on the agenda. That issue will not, and should not, go away. It leads to the need for the provision of facilities for women firefighters in stations across the service. We are disappointed to hear that the Executive is not prepared to consider ring-fencing resources or making special funding provision to address what is an unacceptable situation.

Phil Gallie: During the 18 years of the Conservative Government, there was not quite the number of retirements that we now face. As was stated, that was partly due to the bulge in recruitment that resulted from the 1974 reduction in working-week times. It appears that, in the not-too-distant future, we will face a fairly high level of retirement in Scotland. As you said, that will have revenue effects for pension entitlements. It also has an impact on training, given the further recruitment that is needed. Do you feel that the budget covers those issues?

Andy Gilchrist: The increased recruitment between 1974 and 1978 reflected the modernisation of the service at that time and led to the situation in which full-time firefighters work some 42 hours a week. As a result of that recruitment, the massive spectre arises of firefighters who will reach their 30-year-service status between 2004 and 2008. For everyone I can find who is fearful of that spectre, there are people who say that the fears are not grounded because those firefighters have for other reasons left the service.

The truth of the matter is that, in respect of the firemen's pension scheme, the local authority fire brigades find themselves in a situation of their own making. The scheme is not fully funded. Throughout their 30 years' service, firefighters pay 11 per cent of their gross earnings into the scheme. It is then for the employer to make provision to pay out that pension. That has not been the case and we are not blind to the problem. Now that our local authority employers find themselves with this problem some 30 years down the line, it is somewhat saucy of them to suggest that firefighters who paid their money into

the scheme every week or every month—depending on their method of payment—should in some way bail out the local authority fire brigades by taking a reduced pension. We do not accept that situation.

I return to the point that I made earlier. There has not yet been a test case to determine whether local authorities will face that problem. It seems that, for every person that you find facing one way on the issue, you will find another person facing in the other direction.

Phil Gallie: I was not so much setting out the local authority situation as looking at central Government funding for training. Given last week's acknowledgement by individuals from the Scottish Executive that there was likely to be a bulge in retirements, do you feel that sufficient training provision is being made?

Andy Gilchrist: The first part of the answer to that is fairly easy: throughout the UK—and certainly in Scotland—there is not enough funding for training, although there may not be a point at which the need for training will ever be satisfied. Retained firefighters, especially in Scotland, are trained for two hours a week—when they can make it—but are expected to perform in exactly the same way as a man or woman who is doing 42 hours a week. Training is a massive part of the work routine of an operational firefighter in bigger towns and cities.

The background to that is something of a tragedy—there has been, in the 1990s in particular, an increase throughout the UK in the number of firefighters who have been killed and a considerable increase in the number of injuries that have been sustained. There is a link between lack of attention to health and safety issues and underfunding of training. If that underfunding was addressed, not only would we deal with—dare I say it—the injury and death side of the service, but we might address some of the retirement issues that you mentioned.

There has been the opportunity for fire services throughout the country to put in place occupational health schemes. One of the benefits of such schemes is to return people to work or to the system in some other way. For funding reasons, the schemes were put into practice in a piecemeal fashion.

Phil Gallie: To enable firemen to continue to use their skills and knowledge beyond the age of 55, might the Fire Brigades Union undergo a change in attitude towards the idea of people being allowed to work past that age if they choose to and if they can demonstrate their ability and fitness to do so?

Andy Gilchrist: This will be not so much a political answer as one based on my having

worked for the service for about 18 years. I do not know how familiar you are with the entry requirements and the on-going fitness regime in the service, but I can assure you that, at 40, I am not remotely fit enough to be an operational firefighter. The standards are incredibly high. Individuals—men or women—would have to be fairly exceptional to meet those standards at 55 or older. There has not yet been an individual who could do that. Given that firefighters' retirement tends not to be as long as that for many other workers, we ought to consider increasing it, not reducing it.

Pauline McNeill: You talked about fitness, which, from what I know of the fire service, must be crucial. The training programme seems to be about new trainees more than about on-going training. Is enough built into the budget to cover the need for on-going training and fitness for firefighters?

Andy Gilchrist: The simple answer is no. Training takes up a massive amount of the work day or night of an operational firefighter. At two hours a week at best, that is not the case for a retained firefighter. Even in a full-time fire station, health and fitness training means multigyms and education on diet, for example. That has a funding implication—not enough has been done on that. There are issues about training to do the job, which is now increasingly complex and extremely technical—we live in a more complex society and people expect more from their public services. That issue is not being addressed. We believe that there is a link between that and the level of injury and, unfortunately, the occasional unnecessary death of a firefighter on duty.

Pauline McNeill: You said that there had been 27 deaths in the UK and that there were too few health and safety initiatives. What initiatives are required, in addition to what you have talked about?

Andy Gilchrist: At the Local Government Association conference, we put out not so much a challenge as a clear offer. We said that there were two ways of progressing health and safety in the fire service. One is in a confrontational manner—as a trade union, we feel that we are fairly able there—and the other is to agree on some joint aims on health and safety and welfare for firefighters and to work together on them. We have put down an offer for a national revitalising health and safety conference, to which I extend an invitation to Scotland. We have had a positive response, which we welcome, from the Chief and Assistant Chief Fire Officers Association. We have not yet heard from our colleagues—if I can call them that—in the Local Government Association.

Pauline McNeill: What would you say at that conference about the measures that should be

taken to reduce the number of deaths on duty?

Andy Gilchrist: I do not want to pre-empt that, because it is right that the people who are invited have the opportunity to influence any decisions. We have documents describing what we believe should be done on health and safety. We would like to sit down with chief officers and fire masters, as we have done on community fire safety, and set up a joint protocol on aims to achieve over a specific time scale. We will not deal with the problems in health and safety and training in the fire service this year, but we could agree to attempt to deal with them over four to seven years. That would be acceptable.

Pauline McNeill: Is there a need to modernise the fire vehicles? If so, what needs to be done?

Roddy Robertson: HM fire service inspectorate keeps an eye on replacement programmes within brigades. The normal replacement programme for a front-line appliance is seven years. At the last count, Lothian and Borders had a 10-year replacement programme. The inspectorate expressed concern about that in its report. The specialist vehicles with turntable ladders and hydraulic platforms are on a 16-year replacement programme. That programme has also fallen behind. One brigade attempted to put a ladder on to a new chassis—it was running about with a 25-year-old ladder on a brand-new chassis. There are real problems in Scotland with appliance replacement programmes.

Nora Radcliffe: I have a query about the possible correlation between the increase in the number of injuries and the requirement for more training. Retained and volunteer firefighters seem to be the poor relations as far as training is concerned. Is it demonstrable that, for retained and volunteer firefighters, the levels of injury and death are higher than for full-time firemen—or firefighters, to be politically correct?

Andy Gilchrist: I am never very good at this, but I will do my best. The number of fires that retained and volunteer firefighters attend is lower but, in the samples at a national level, the percentages for injuries and death are marginally higher.

Nora Radcliffe: Is there an imperative to reallocate resources to give those firefighters a fairer crack of the whip?

Andy Gilchrist: I never like the reallocation of resources.

Nora Radcliffe: Nobody does, unless they are at the thin end.

Andy Gilchrist: The point that I am making is that there is a fire service issue called training. You are right to identify the issue inside that, which is that, because of the massive reliance on

retained and volunteer firefighters, especially in Scotland—at present at least—training is imperative. Those firefighters are expected to do exactly the same job as their full-time counterparts. When they turn up in remote rural areas and small towns, they are the fire service.

Nora Radcliffe: Do you have the Scottish figures for the percentage of the fire service that is retained?

Michael Matheson: The figures are in the report.

Christine Grahame: I have a question about table 1.6 and the funding of training of part-time retained and volunteer firemen in rural areas. Am I correct that that money comes out of the Scottish fire service training budget and is not in any way funded by grant-aided expenditure to local authorities? That is a straightforward, financial question.

Roddy Robertson: That is our understanding, yes.

Christine Grahame: Therefore, that money does not come out of local authority funding.

The Convener: I thank the witnesses from the Fire Brigades Union for attending.

Our final witnesses are from the Prison Officers Association Scotland. I ask John Dawson to introduce his two colleagues and to say a few words.

13:00

John Dawson (Prison Officers Association Scotland): I have with me Mr David Melrose, who is the chairman of the Prison Officers Association Scotland, and Mr John Speed, who is one of our national executive committee members.

The Convener: Do you wish to say a few words to the committee?

John Dawson: If I may—I will be brief.

We have viewed the figures from the summary paper that was circulated and we welcome the increases that are noted in that paper. However, we do not know the costs of some issues and therefore we cannot take them into account. The estates review is a key issue that is in the hands of the Minister for Justice. Other issues include the Lockerbie trial, which is continuing. A further issue that is of particular relevance to prison officers is our great disappointment that, at present, 25 per cent of prisoners remain in accommodation where they must slop out. We also face questions about low pay, recruitment and retention, and we have been trying to encourage our employer to consider occupational health as opposed to basic fitness testing. All those issues have budget implications,

but we have no specific figures on them.

I do not want to make a big spiel. I am happy to take questions.

Phil Gallie: You mentioned slopping out. I presume that that will be covered by the capital budget. I note that there has been a reduction of £1 million in capital allocation between last year and this year, although the figure rises marginally for next year and thereafter. That means that, over a four-year period, there is a net increase of £4 million. At the same time, £13 million was taken out of the budget two years ago. Do you think that the £4 million increase that has been allowed for the capital allocation will adequately deal with the situation at Barlinnie?

John Dawson: No, certainly not. Some of the figures, such as the figure on slopping out, have been manipulated, on the basis that HMP Kilmarnock, which is a private prison, has been included in that key performance indicator target, but has not been included in the budget figures. That is slightly naughty.

If you were to take Kilmarnock out, you would see that about 71 per cent of Scottish Prison Service accommodation has slopping out and the remaining 29 per cent does not. That is a truer figure, and £4 million will not address that in the least, particularly at Barlinnie, which is a Victorian establishment with walls that are 3ft thick. It will take a massive injection of money to bring that prison up to standard.

Phil Gallie: Are you aware of any cash that the SPS might have in hand, given the fact that it had £13 million in hand two years ago? Have other savings been made that would allow additional capital spending on top of what is in the budget figures?

John Dawson: At present, we are just over 100 members of staff short while we await the outcome of the estates review and the continuing negotiations on attendance patterns. We have no figures on those matters and we await next month's annual report with great interest. However, although we do not know what will happen eventually, we are aware that money is slopping around the system—[*Laughter.*] That was a poor choice of words, convener.

Michael Matheson: I will pick up on two areas: the retention of prison officers and training. I suspect that those areas are linked to a degree.

In general, is training for prison officers adequate? I was interested to read that a target of 85 per cent of prisoners being drug free while in prison has been set. Given the fact that 70 to 80 per cent of prisoners have a drug habit when they arrive in prison, that is an ambitious target. Are you able to expand on whether there are any

problems in relation to training for prison officers in that field?

John Dawson: There is adequate training up to a point. We quote the figures that we would like to achieve, but the reality is that we submit only 10 per cent of the prison population to mandatory drug testing at any given time. Our aspirations do not match what we are doing. If you are talking about the aspirational figures, the answer to your question would be, "No, we do not put enough money into funding training".

Recruitment and retention of staff is a separate issue. In 1995, the starting pay for prison officers was reduced to £12,500, and it has stayed static for the past six years. We now face a major recruitment and retention problem.

Michael Matheson: I understand that, historically, the service did not have a large turnover of staff, but that has changed in recent years. To what extent is the turnover changing? Is it deteriorating further? Are newly trained officers simply leaving the service? Are people with long experience leaving the service? Is the main reason for people leaving down to wages alone?

John Dawson: Historically, public service was seen as a career for life, but that ethos has changed in the past 24 months. The change has been greater since our present chief executive arrived, as he does not think that prison staff and their salary and conditions should be compared with the police or with other social sector staff who work in the criminal justice system. His comparators are call centre workers and their salaries and conditions. As long as we continue that approach, given the stress that comes with being a prison officer, recruitment and retention will always be a major problem, as will a salary that has been at a standstill for six years.

Michael Matheson: So the primary reason for the number of staff who are leaving the service is financial.

John Dawson: Yes, but there is also a secondary reason. We upped quite considerably the educational entrance requirements for prison officers in 1995. Now we have a far higher number of educated people, if you like, who joined the service on the back of a glossy promotion brochure. However, two to two and a half years into the job, they found that promotion does not exist in the SPS. Those people are now leaving. The SPS is the major recruitment resource for all police authorities in Scotland.

Christine Grahame: Although the Justice 1 Committee and the Justice 2 Committee were not properly convened as a joint committee last week, I asked a question about the cost per prisoner place that was given to us in a table and in a note that indicated that that cost was £32,600. I am

going to have to put to you evidence that was not given to us on the record, which is that revenue savings of £12.5 million will be directed into capital investment for 2001-02. I then asked how much of that money would come from salaries. It was explained that the new staff attendance scheme could generate savings of £5 million to £10 million—that is an enormous range—per annum, once all surplus staff had left through natural wastage. You have just told us that you are 100 members of staff short. I would be interested to hear your comments about how those savings will be made.

I was also told that slopping out had staff resource implications and that once that function was eliminated, shift patterns could be revised to achieve savings. We are being told about savings of £5 million or £10 million—perhaps you have a better figure—that are to come through salary or staffing cuts.

John Dawson: I do not have better figures. One source of figures is salary cuts. The eradication of slopping out will free up staff. Where slopping out is eradicated, we will not need as many staff as are needed at present. As a trade union, we both acknowledge and fully welcome that.

You asked about staff savings and staff shortages. At present, we are just over 100 staff short. I am sure that members of the committee are aware that we had an unfortunate day of action last Monday. If management get the new attendance patterns that they desire, that will save them 250 jobs and they will have 150 surplus staff at that point.

Christine Grahame: What is your position on whether those savings are appropriate? As I recall, the budget document describes the aim of the SPS as follows:

"To keep in custody those offenders committed by the courts, maintain good order in each prison, care for prisoners with humanity, and provide prisoners with a range of opportunities to exercise personal responsibility and prepare for release."

With those cuts coming, can that aim be achieved?

John Dawson: The figure that you were given is not a true figure; it is a paper exercise. I have investigated this matter myself. We have firm evidence that the figure that has been given to public sources is based on the number of prisoners that a prison can hold without overcrowding rather than on the number of prisoners that a prison actually has.

The figure that I have for Barlinnie, which was supplied by the Scottish Prison Service, is more than £25,000. The figure I have on its actual occupancy figures, which can be proved, is £21,000 per prisoner place. The same

manipulation occurs at every overcrowded establishment, which takes in Inverness, Aberdeen, Perth and Edinburgh prisons.

Christine Grahame: That is a different answer. That is an answer about the cost per prisoner.

John Dawson: The figure that you have is an overall figure that takes in everything. I cannot give you the answer at the moment.

Christine Grahame: If the chief executive's attendance plans are implemented, and you have 250 fewer prison officers—because you are 100 officers short and another 150 may go—can good order be maintained in prisons?

John Dawson: No, it cannot. You should bear in mind that this issue is a double-edged sword: while we are seeking savings, we are also increasing performance with regard to the performance indicators that Scottish ministers set down.

Pauline McNeill: I want to ask about the target of drug-free prisons, which is a big task.

John Dawson: It seems a strange question when the only drug-free prison that we had—HMP Dungavel—we closed.

Pauline McNeill: What initiatives have to be funded to achieve drug-free prisons?

John Dawson: All initiatives surrounding drugs—mandatory drugs testing, the use of passive sniffer dogs, enhanced regimes and better living areas—have to be resourced if we are to have drug-free areas, and not just have them but maintain them. It is a difficult question, and I have no figures for the cost.

Pauline McNeill: But you support a wide range of initiatives in making prisons drug free.

John Dawson: Traditionally, we have supported any initiative to tackle the drugs problem, which is our major problem across the service.

Pauline McNeill: Have you had any discussions with management on the initiatives that you would be involved in?

John Dawson: We already have initiatives in place: we have sniffer dogs; high-tech drug detection equipment is being evaluated at Barlinnie; and drug-free areas have been set aside in some of our prisons, for example, in Glenochil prison, which is a long-term prison and probably has the worst drug problem in the service. Those initiatives have not been in use long enough for us to evaluate them. We have to let them run their course, re-evaluate them in one year's time and see what the cost implications are if we are to improve or expand them.

Pauline McNeill: According to the annual

expenditure report, the numbers of assaults against prison staff and prisoners are down. Would you care to comment on that? Is there a correlation, given that both figures are down?

John Dawson: We would expect them to be down because prisoner numbers have dropped. They are now on their way back up and we may see a different trend next year, but when prisoner numbers drop, we expect to see a pro rata drop in the number of assaults.

Scottish ministers set targets for assaults that we would rather not have, because what assault is acceptable? If you set a performance indicator, that sends out a signal that we accept that number of assaults. It is our view that the indicator should be reconsidered.

Pauline McNeill: And not have a target at all?

John Dawson: Yes, we should not have a target.

Pauline McNeill: But you agree that the numbers of assaults are down for both staff and prisoners?

John Dawson: Yes. They are down slightly, which is related to the drop in prisoner numbers over the past year.

The Convener: If there are no other questions, I thank the witnesses from the Prison Officers Association Scotland. I am sorry that we kept you waiting.

That concludes the meeting. The next joint meeting is on Wednesday 16 May. We have a marathon session again, with the Glasgow Bar Association, the Law Society of Scotland, the District Courts Association, the Minister for Justice and the Lord Advocate.

Meeting closed at 13:13.

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, 375 High Street, Edinburgh EH99 1SP. Suggested corrections in any other form cannot be accepted.

The deadline for corrections to this edition is:

Tuesday 22 May 2001

Members who want reprints of their speeches (within one month of the date of publication) may obtain request forms and further details from the Central Distribution Office, the Document Supply Centre or the Official Report.

PRICES AND SUBSCRIPTION RATES

DAILY EDITIONS

Single copies: £5

Meetings of the Parliament annual subscriptions: £500

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.

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT, compiled by the Scottish Parliament Information Centre, contains details of past and forthcoming business and of the work of committees and gives general information on legislation and other parliamentary activity.

Single copies: £3.75

Special issue price: £5

Annual subscriptions: £150.00

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO PARLIAMENTARY QUESTIONS weekly compilation

Single copies: £3.75

Annual subscriptions: £150.00

Standing orders will be accepted at the Document Supply Centre.

Published in Edinburgh by The Stationery Office Limited and available from:

The Stationery Office Bookshop
71 Lothian Road
Edinburgh EH3 9AZ
0131 228 4181 Fax 0131 622 7017

The Stationery Office Bookshops at:
123 Kingsway, London WC2B 6PQ
Tel 020 7242 6393 Fax 020 7242 6394
68-69 Bull Street, Birmingham B4 6AD
Tel 0121 236 9696 Fax 0121 236 9699
33 Wine Street, Bristol BS1 2BQ
Tel 01179 264306 Fax 01179 294515
9-21 Princess Street, Manchester M60 8AS
Tel 0161 834 7201 Fax 0161 833 0634
16 Arthur Street, Belfast BT1 4GD
Tel 028 9023 8451 Fax 028 9023 5401
The Stationery Office Oriel Bookshop,
18-19 High Street, Cardiff CF1 2BZ
Tel 029 2039 5548 Fax 029 2038 4347

The Stationery Office 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
0870 606 5566

Fax orders
0870 606 5588

The Scottish Parliament Shop
George IV Bridge
EH99 1SP
Telephone orders 0131 348 5412

sp.info@scottish.parliament.uk

www.scottish.parliament.uk

Accredited Agents
(see Yellow Pages)

and through good booksellers