

# **SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE**

Wednesday 5 September 2001  
(*Morning*)

Session 1

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### **SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE** **22<sup>nd</sup> Meeting 2001, Session 1**

#### **CONVENER**

\*Johann Lamont (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab)

#### **DEPUTY CONVENER**

\*Ms Sandra White (Glasgow) (SNP)

#### **COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

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

\*Robert Brown (Glasgow) (LD)

\*Cathie Craigie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (Lab)

\*Mrs Lyndsay McIntosh (Central Scotland) (Con)

\*Karen Whitefield (Airdrie and Shotts) (Lab)

\*attended

#### **CLERK TO THE COMMITTEE**

Lee Bridges

#### **SENIOR ASSISTANT CLERK**

Mary Dinsdale

#### **LOCATION**

The Hub



## Scottish Parliament

### Social Justice Committee

*Wednesday 5 September 2001*

*(Morning)*

[THE CONVENER *opened the meeting at 10:00*]

**The Convener (Johann Lamont):** I welcome members to the first meeting of the Social Justice Committee of the new term. I hope that everybody had a productive and hard-working recess.

There have been some changes to our committee since we met last. Bill Aitken has resigned from the committee and I record the committee's thanks to him for all the work that he did. We all miss him. I am also aware that Sandra White and Brian Adam will be leaving us. We will be able to say what we like once you have gone, but we want to record our thanks to you for your contribution to the committee. There is a special bond between those of us who went through the Housing (Scotland) Bill. Regardless of our differing opinions, the experience of going through the process was interesting. I wish you well on your new committees.

I welcome our new member Lyndsay McIntosh, who replaces Bill Aitken from the Conservative party. I hope that you will enjoy your time with us. As you missed the Housing (Scotland) Bill, we will have to find something else over which we can bond. I am sure that we will find something soon.

Members should note that we have booked the room until 1 o'clock only. I hope that the meeting will be finished long before then, but the latest we can finish is at 12.30. Members are reminded that there is a buffet lunch with parliamentarians from the Saxon State Parliament to follow. We welcome our guests from that delegation. We hope that they have a productive and interesting time visiting Parliament.

There are no apologies.

### Interests

**The Convener:** I ask Lyndsay McIntosh to declare any interests.

**Mrs Lyndsay McIntosh (Central Scotland) (Con):** I have no interests to declare apart from a continuing, but non-pecuniary interest in the affairs of the District Courts Association.

### Items in Private

**The Convener:** We must now agree whether to take items 4 and 5 in private.

**Ms Sandra White (Glasgow) (SNP):** I do not understand why we should take the items in private, as they were dealt with in a public meeting. I read the notes, which give an honest appraisal of what happened at the meeting.

**The Convener:** Which meeting was that?

**Ms White:** It was the fifth meeting—the one in Dundee.

**The Convener:** The point is not whether the meeting was in public, although as far as I am aware it was a meeting between committee members and members of the Communities Against Poverty Network. Items 4 and 5 concern reports that we are compiling and it is the practice that such reports should be considered in private. They will be made open to public scrutiny thereafter. Members will note from the agenda that we will deal with the committee's work plan in public, but because items 4 and 5 are reports, I ask the agreement of the committee to take them in private.

**Robert Brown (Glasgow) (LD):** Is it the practice of all committees to take that approach? I see reasons for and against the approach, but I wonder whether we are taking the same approach as everyone else.

**The Convener:** My understanding is that when a draft report is being discussed, the practice is for committees to take that approach because the draft is open to change before it enters the public domain. There are lots of opportunities to scrutinise such reports later; they do not remain private. The discussion on whether to take such items in private is on-going. People are aware of the issues.

I ask the committee to take a view on whether or not to take the items in private. Is there an objection to taking items 4 and 5 in private?

**Ms White:** I object.

**The Convener:** Do you want both items to be taken in public?

**Ms White:** Yes.

**The Convener:** The proposal is, that items 4 and 5 be taken in public. Are we agreed?

**Members:** No.

**The Convener:** There will be a division.

**FOR**

Adam, Brian (North-East Scotland) (SNP)  
White, Ms Sandra (Glasgow) (SNP)

**AGAINST**

Brown, Robert (Glasgow) (LD)  
 Craigie, Cathie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (Lab)  
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab)  
 McIntosh, Mrs Lyndsay (Central Scotland) (Con)  
 Whitefield, Karen (Airdrie and Shotts) (Lab)

**The Convener:** The result of the division is: For 2, Against 5, Abstentions 0.

*Proposal disagreed to.*

**Ms White:** I would like to record my thanks to the committee. Will I do that now or at the end of the meeting? Brian Adam and I will not be at the next meeting.

**The Convener:** I presume that you want to do it in public and that you want to do it before we fall out. It may be as well to take the opportunity to do it now, if you wish.

**Ms White:** I am thankful that there will not be a division on whether I record my thanks in public or in private.

**Brian Adam (North-East Scotland) (SNP):** That would be a public hanging.

**Ms White:** I am sure that Brian Adam will have something to say and that it will be much the same as what I have to say.

I have enjoyed the time—albeit short—that I have spent on the committee. We have done a lot of hard work. We have not always seen eye to eye, but in some cases we have come to good agreements and conclusions. The committee's work has been important and its inquiry into the voluntary sector will be important.

Unlike some of the Scotland football team, we are getting a free transfer. I wish them well tonight and I hope that they win.

I thank the committee clerks and all the committee members for the help that they have given us.

**Brian Adam:** I have enjoyed the time that I have served on the Social Justice Committee. It has been extremely interesting, exciting and a lot of hard work—particularly the Housing (Scotland) Bill. I record my thanks to the staff who made it possible for us to lodge all our amendments to the bill.

I also record my appreciation for the generally good-natured way in which we have been able to conduct ourselves on issues on which we have political differences.

I wish the committee well for the future.

**The Convener:** We have now been joined by the delegation from the Saxon State Parliament. I welcome them again to the Scottish Parliament. I hope that they find their visit useful and productive. I also hope that there will be a

constructive dialogue between us at some point on a range of issues of mutual interest.

10:07

*Meeting continued in public until 10:17 and in private thereafter until 10:50.*

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