

# **STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

Wednesday 22 May 2002  
(*Morning*)

Session 1

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# CONTENTS

Wednesday 22 May 2002

	Col.
INTERESTS .....	1039
ITEM IN PRIVATE.....	1039
MEMBERS' INTERESTS ORDER.....	1040

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## STANDARDS COMMITTEE

### 9<sup>th</sup> Meeting 2002, Session 1

#### CONVENER

\*Mr Mike Rumbles (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine) (LD)

#### DEPUTY CONVENER

\*Tricia Marwick (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)

#### COMMITTEE MEMBERS

\*Susan Deacon (Edinburgh East and Musselburgh) (Lab)

\*Lord James Douglas-Hamilton (Lothians) (Con)

\*Mr Kenneth Macintosh (Eastwood) (Lab)

\*Paul Martin (Glasgow Springburn) (Lab)

\*Kay Ullrich (West of Scotland) (SNP)

#### COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTES

Alex Johnstone (North-East Scotland) (Con)

Michael Russell (South of Scotland) (SNP)

\*attended

#### CLERK TO THE COMMITTEE

Sam Jones

#### SENIOR ASSISTANT CLERK

Sarah Robertson

#### LOCATION

Committee Room 3



## Scottish Parliament

### Standards Committee

*Wednesday 22 May 2002*

*(Morning)*

[THE CONVENER *opened the meeting at 10:32*]

**The Convener (Mr Mike Rumbles):** Good morning. Welcome to the ninth meeting this year of the Standards Committee. I extend a particularly warm welcome to Paul Martin, who replaces Frank McAveety on the committee. I also wish to place on the record the committee's thanks to Frank McAveety for his contribution to our work over the past 18 months.

### Interests

**The Convener:** I invite Paul Martin to declare any relevant interests.

**Paul Martin (Glasgow Springburn) (Lab):** I have no interests to declare.

### Item in Private

**The Convener:** Agenda item 2 is to consider whether to take item 4 in private. Given that item 4 relates to consideration of legal advice, I propose that we take the item in private. Are we agreed?

**Members** *indicated agreement.*

## Members' Interests Order

**The Convener:** Item 3 concerns our work on replacing the Scotland Act 1998 (Transitory and Transitional Provisions) (Members' Interests) Order 1999. The clerks are finalising our proposal for a committee bill on the subject—a draft will be available in June. Members will have received a copy of a short paper from the clerks on the subject of heritable property. The paper draws members' attention to concerns that the requirement to disclose the location of such property may impact on the privacy of individual tenants in small, rural communities.

Heritable property is the final issue that we need to address in relation to the order. We briefly touched on the issue of property at a previous meeting, but we need to decide at today's meeting whether our recommendations on the registration of heritable property should remain as we decided or whether there is a need to adjust them. Do members have comments on the paper?

**Mr Kenneth Macintosh (Eastwood) (Lab):** I was concerned to read about the case that is described in the paper. When we discussed property previously, we agreed that we wanted to avoid such a situation. I suggest that the order be reframed in such a way that the location is not stated. That would prevent such situations from arising in future. We need to strike a balance between the requirements that are placed on members and the privacy of individuals who have nothing to disclose to the Parliament.

**The Convener:** I remind members that we decided that, for reasons of privacy, it was not necessary to identify the individual tenant. However, we considered that it was important to note the income involved and the location of the property. We need to decide today whether we remove the requirement to state the location.

**Tricia Marwick (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP):** I am conscious that we need to protect the privacy of individuals who are not members of the Parliament. Only members' interests need to be declared. However, I am not entirely convinced that we need to remove the need for the location to be registered. Perhaps stating the wider location—the county, city or town—would be sufficient. It may not be appropriate to give the precise location of a property if it is in a small village, but giving the county would cover that issue.

**The Convener:** Are you suggesting that the 32 council areas would be the best measure to use?

**Tricia Marwick:** That would probably strike the right balance.

**Kay Ullrich (West of Scotland) (SNP):** That is more or less what I was going to suggest. It would be best for the location to be based on the council areas. There is no need to identify property by street, house number or name. It is the members' interests that we need to register.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton (Lothians) (Con):** I have an interest to declare. I rent out a house in London, which I own jointly with my wife.

I believe that giving a wider location would meet tenants' objections.

**The Convener:** Are members content that we adjust the members' interests order recommendations to reflect the discussion that we have had today?

**Members** *indicated agreement.*

**The Convener:** Thank you. As agreed, we move into private session to consider item 4.

10:36

*Meeting continued in private until 12:05.*

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