

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Tuesday 18 November 2003
(*Morning*)

Session 2

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STANDARDS COMMITTEE

9th Meeting 2003, Session 2

CONVENER

*Brian Adam (Aberdeen North) (SNP)

DEPUTY CONVENER

*Mr Kenneth Macintosh (Eastwood) (Lab)

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

*Bill Butler (Glasgow Anniesland) (Lab)

*Alex Fergusson (Galloway and Upper Nithsdale) (Con)

*Donald Gorrie (Central Scotland) (LD)

*Alex Neil (Central Scotland) (SNP)

*Karen Whitefield (Airdrie and Shotts) (Lab)

COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTES

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton (Lothians) (Con)

Marilyn Livingstone (Kirkcaldy) (Lab)

Alasdair Morgan (South of Scotland) (SNP)

*attended

CLERK TO THE COMMITTEE

Sam Jones

SENIOR ASSISTANT CLERK

Sarah Robertson

LOCATION

Committee Room 4

Scottish Parliament

Standards Committee

Tuesday 18 November 2003

(Morning)

[THE DEPUTY CONVENER *opened the meeting at 10:30*]

Interests

The Deputy Convener (Mr Kenneth Macintosh): Good morning, and welcome to this meeting of the Standards Committee. I ask members to check that their mobile phones and pagers are switched off.

We have a short agenda today. First, I welcome Brian Adam as a new member of the committee and ask whether he has any interests to declare.

Brian Adam (Aberdeen North) (SNP): The only thing that I would like to declare is that I am currently a director of the Scottish Parliament and Business Exchange, although I intend to resign as a director because the public perception might be that there is a conflict of interest.

The Deputy Convener: Fine. The committee notes your remarks.

Convener

10:31

The Deputy Convener: We have to choose a convener. Are there any nominations for the post of convener?

Alex Neil (Central Scotland) (SNP): I nominate Brian Adam.

Brian Adam was chosen as convener.

The Deputy Convener: I congratulate Brian Adam and ask him to take over as convener of the committee. [Applause.]

The Convener (Brian Adam): I note the air of expectation.

Future Meetings

10:31

The Convener: The next item on the agenda is future meetings. Rather than meet on 2 December, when I have a significant family commitment, I would prefer to meet next Tuesday or on Tuesday 9 December, if that is not inconvenient for members. Do members have a preference?

Donald Gorrie (Central Scotland) (LD): I cannot be here on the morning of Tuesday 9 December, but I am less important than you are.

The Convener: In that case, why do we not meet next Tuesday? I understand that most of the relevant material is available for next week, although I am quite happy to be told otherwise. I would hate to become the convener and then not turn up for the next meeting. As I said, I have a long-standing family commitment on 2 December.

Donald Gorrie: I have a question on the timing of meetings. I know from other committees in the past that committees that meet on Tuesday morning sometimes find problems with people who come from afar. In order to ensure a good attendance, in spite of late trains and so on, 11 o'clock might be more sensible than 10.30, when we might be twiddling our thumbs waiting for people. It does not affect me, because I am probably as near as anyone can be, but it does affect other members.

Alex Neil: I support that suggestion. It would be helpful if the meeting were at 11 o'clock.

The Convener: Is it agreeable that we meet at 11 o'clock, unless there is a heavy agenda, which we will know in advance and in which case we will leave it to the deputy convener and me to make the appropriate adjustment?

Karen Whitefield (Airdrie and Shotts) (Lab): I have quite a busy diary on Tuesdays. I have a meeting at 12.30 and I have the Justice 2 Committee at 2 o'clock. On the days when we have a busy agenda, I will not get a break at all. Other members might have committees in the afternoon.

The Convener: I am in the same situation.

Karen Whitefield: That should be a consideration. I would rather be here in the morning than not have a break all day, because that makes it difficult to do my job by late afternoon, especially when I should be concentrating on amendments at stage 2.

The Convener: We will deal with that as sympathetically as possible. If we have an

indication that the meeting is likely to be long, we will make arrangements and I will get up early and get here for 10 o'clock, if I have to.

It is agreed that the next meeting will be on Tuesday at 11 o'clock, and that the meeting after that will be on 16 December at 11 o'clock.

Meeting closed at 10:35.

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