

# **STANDARDS, PROCEDURES AND PUBLIC APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE**

Tuesday 17 November 2009

Session 3

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## STANDARDS, PROCEDURES AND PUBLIC APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE 13<sup>th</sup> Meeting 2009, Session 3

### CONVENER

\*Gil Paterson (West of Scotland) (SNP)

### DEPUTY CONVENER

\*Marilyn Livingstone (Kirkcaldy) (Lab)

### COMMITTEE MEMBERS

\*Robert Brown (Glasgow) (LD)

\*Aileen Campbell (South of Scotland) (SNP)

Nanette Milne (North East Scotland) (Con)

\*Peter Peacock (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)

\*Dave Thompson (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)

### COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTES

Alasdair Morgan (South of Scotland) (SNP)

Mary Mulligan (Linlithgow) (Lab)

Mike Rumbles (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine) (LD)

Elizabeth Smith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)

\*attended

### CLERKS TO THE COMMITTEE

Gillian Baxendine

Alison Walker

### SENIOR ASSISTANT CLERKS

Mary Dinsdale

Jane Williams

### ASSISTANT CLERK

Catherine Fergusson

### LOCATION

Committee Room 6



## Scottish Parliament

### Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee

*Tuesday 17 November 2009*

[THE CONVENER *opened the meeting at 14:15*]

### Decision on Taking Business in Private

**The Convener (Gil Paterson):** I welcome members to the 13<sup>th</sup> meeting in 2009 of the Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee. I have received apologies from Nanette Milne, who cannot make it today.

The first item on the agenda is to decide whether to take items 3 and 4 in private. The committee previously agreed to consider in private the paper on the Interpretation and Legislative Reform (Scotland) Bill, which is item 5. Item 3 concerns the review of section 2 of the code of conduct and is a briefing on issues that the committee has not previously considered. Item 4 is the committee's first stab at consideration of our approach to our financial resolutions and financial memoranda inquiry. Do members agree to take items 3 and 4 in private?

**Members indicated agreement.**

**The Convener:** Thank you.

## Cross-party Group

14:16

**The Convener:** The next item is consideration of an application for a cross-party group on the Caribbean. We do not have anyone with us to speak to the application, but are there any questions about the proposed group?

**Peter Peacock (Highlands and Islands) (Lab):** I suppose that I should declare an interest, because I am one of the listed MSPs who intend to join the group.

**The Convener:** I did not realise that. Good. I thought that George Foulkes was going to be here and I was going to ask him a question—

**Peter Peacock:** But you are going to ask me instead.

**The Convener:** Yes. The committee really wants to know whether, if we agree to the establishment of the group, it will invite us all to visit the Caribbean free of charge.

**Peter Peacock:** I am sure that it would be a splendid idea to send a reconnaissance party in advance.

**The Convener:** It is a kind offer, but I was merely being flippant. I would really like to be able to exert that pressure on you, but I cannot, unfortunately.

**Robert Brown (Glasgow) (LD):** I have a question about the purposes of the group. I am conscious that there are a lot of cross-party groups on various things, and now we seem to be matching all the health and disease groups with ones for different areas of the globe. The groups of which I have been a member have had an emphasis on legislation or administrative actions in which the Government gets involved. Do we know what parliamentary influence a cross-party group on the Caribbean would have? I struggle to think of any relevant legislation that might arise, and to be frank I struggle to think of anything administrative that would be all that relevant. I can see the purpose of getting together to discuss matters of common interest, but it is the parliamentary bit that bothers me. Is there any elaboration of what the group might do or what sort of things it might discuss that would have a parliamentary aspect as opposed to being matters of common interest?

**The Convener:** Looking at the application, I see the list of non-MSP individuals who are involved. The make-up of the proposed group might in itself answer your question, because it is a laudable group of people. I think that the Parliament would benefit from an interconnection with the people

who are involved. Peter Peacock might want to comment.

**Peter Peacock:** I am not authorised to speak on behalf of the proposed group, so I will be careful what I say, but my understanding is that the initiative follows a collective request by the high commissioners of the Caribbean for a body of the type that they have at Westminster, to help to connect the Scottish Parliament with all the Caribbean islands. As you say, convener, they are people of significant standing in their own communities and Governments. I suppose, in a sense, that that partly answers Robert Brown's question.

**The Convener:** The question that you asked is a legitimate one, Robert.

With that said, is the committee minded to approve the establishment of the group?

**Members** *indicated agreement.*

14:19

*Meeting continued in private until 15:04.*

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