

# **EDUCATION, CULTURE AND SPORT COMMITTEE**

Wednesday 15 November 2000  
(*Morning*)

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## EDUCATION, CULTURE AND SPORT COMMITTEE

### 36<sup>th</sup> Meeting 2000, Session 1

#### CONVENER

\*Mrs Mary Mulligan (Linlithgow) (Lab)

#### DEPUTY CONVENER

\*Cathy Peattie (Falkirk East) (Lab)

#### COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Cathy Jamieson (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (Lab)

\*Ian Jenkins (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale) (LD)

Johann Lamont (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab)

Irene McGugan (North-East Scotland) (SNP)

\*Mr Kenneth Macintosh (Eastwood) (Lab)

\*Mr Brian Monteith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)

\*Michael Russell (South of Scotland) (SNP)

Mr Jamie Stone (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD)

\*Nicola Sturgeon (Glasgow) (SNP)

\*attended

#### CLERK TO THE COMMITTEE

Martin Verity

#### SENIOR ASSISTANT CLERK

David McLaren

#### ASSISTANT CLERK

Ian Cowan

#### LOCATION

The Hub



## Scottish Parliament

### Education, Culture and Sport Committee

*Wednesday 15 November 2000*

*(Morning)*

[THE CONVENER *opened the meeting at 10:05*]

**The Convener (Mrs Mary Mulligan):** Good morning, everybody. Let us make a start. A number of apologies have been received from committee members.

### Items in Private

**The Convener:** Can we agree to take items 3 and 4 on the agenda in private?

**Members** *indicated agreement.*

### Committee Business

**The Convener:** Item 2 is an update on committee business. Next week we will consider the first draft of the school exams inquiry report. Can we agree to do that in private?

**Members** *indicated agreement.*

**The Convener:** Do members have any questions on that first draft report, or does anyone want to say anything about it?

**Members** *indicated disagreement.*

**The Convener:** Perhaps I should have asked this before, but will that include an executive summary?

**Martin Verity (Clerk):** Yes. We can provide a summary.

**The Convener:** I ask because I was at a school this week, at which the students were showing an interest in the contents of the report. It might be difficult to allow everybody to see the full report, so it would be useful to have a précis, which the students could see.

**Ian Jenkins (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale) (LD):** Without going into detail, I thought that there should be a foreword or preamble to the report—written by you, convener—as well as an executive summary.

**The Convener:** Yes. That is fine.

I assume that the report will be published on the web. Is that correct?

**Martin Verity:** Yes, it will.

**The Convener:** Therefore, it will be available in all partner libraries.

**Martin Verity:** Yes.

**Michael Russell (South of Scotland) (SNP):** When we published our national companies report, we held a press conference that involved the four political parties. The four parties signed up to the press release and the contents of the report in that way. That was a successful thing to do, as it showed the unanimity of the committee and involved the four parties in promoting the report. We should therefore hold a press conference for the release of the report, at which the four parties would be represented. Any preamble should also be signed by representatives of all the political parties.

**The Convener:** Yes. I agree. Yesterday I met Alex Neil, the convener of the Enterprise and Lifelong Learning Committee, who told me that that is how that committee proposes to launch its report. It would be most appropriate for us to follow the procedure that we used in the past, for the launch of the national companies report. All members of the committee would be able to attend the launch if they so wished.

Let us move on to the next item of committee business. Julie Allan has confirmed that she is available to discuss the special educational needs report on 13 December. Can we agree to hold our first discussions on the draft SEN report on 13 December and that that item should be taken in private?

**Members** *indicated agreement.*

**The Convener:** If there are any problems with the school exams report, consideration of the SEN report might have to be postponed, but it is useful to have that date in our diaries.

**Michael Russell:** I am also hoping to produce my report on the Scottish film industry on 13 December, and I shall let the clerks have a copy of it a few days beforehand.

**The Convener:** Thank you.

**Mr Kenneth Macintosh (Eastwood) (Lab):** If we discuss the SEN report on 13 December, when will it be published?

**The Convener:** That would depend on how successful that discussion was.

**Mr Macintosh:** I am slightly concerned that the report would get lost before Christmas.

**The Convener:** We would not want to publish it in the week before Christmas. We could leave its publication until the new year.

**Mr Macintosh:** That is my view. If we did not meet until 13 December, there would be no chance of publishing it earlier.

**Cathy Peattie (Falkirk East) (Lab):** No, there would be no chance of that.

**The Convener:** Can we decide now to hold publication of the report over until the new year?

**Members** *indicated agreement.*

**The Convener:** Finally, members have received an e-mail about today's business and the problems that we had getting witnesses for today.

**Mr Macintosh:** I have not seen that e-mail, but Martin Verity mentioned it to me.

**Cathy Peattie:** It seems remarkable that, in a country of Scotland's size, we cannot get half a dozen or fewer young people to come to the committee to share their experiences of leaving school, waiting for exam results, putting a curriculum vitae together and applying for jobs. We might be criticised for that.

**The Convener:** I am sure that the clerks have made every effort and have approached everybody they could to try to provide witnesses. Looking on the positive side, it may be that those who experienced difficulties have had those difficulties sorted out and therefore feel less inclined to put themselves through the ordeal of coming to the committee to discuss what they regard as a solved situation. On the other hand, I would like to say publicly that, should anybody still be experiencing difficulties, we would be prepared to hear from them right up to the line.

As members have no other points to raise on updated committee business, we move to item 3, which we will consider in private.

10:11

*Meeting continued in private until 12:10.*

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