



The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

## Official Report

### **PUBLIC AUDIT COMMITTEE**

Wednesday 15 June 2011

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**CONTENTS**

	<b>Col.</b>
<b>INTERESTS</b> .....	1
<b>CONVENER</b> .....	3
<b>DEPUTY CONVENER</b> .....	4
<b>WORK PROGRAMME</b> .....	5

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**PUBLIC AUDIT COMMITTEE**

**1<sup>st</sup> Meeting 2011, Session 4**

**CONVENER**

\*Hugh Henry (Renfrewshire South) (Lab)

**DEPUTY CONVENER**

\*Murdo Fraser (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

\*George Adam (Paisley) (SNP)

\*Colin Beattie (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP)

\*Willie Coffey (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)

\*Mark McDonald (North East Scotland) (SNP)

\*Tavish Scott (Shetland Islands) (LD)

\*Drew Smith (Glasgow) (Lab)

\*Humza Yousaf (Glasgow) (SNP)

\*attended

**CLERK TO THE COMMITTEE**

Jane Williams

**LOCATION**

Committee Room 4



# Scottish Parliament

## Public Audit Committee

*Wednesday 15 June 2011*

[Colin Beattie *opened the meeting at 10:30*]

### Interests

**Colin Beattie (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP):** Good morning, everybody, and welcome to the first meeting of the Public Audit Committee in the fourth session of Parliament.

I remind everyone present, including members, that mobile phones and BlackBerrys should be turned off completely, as they interfere with the sound system, even when they are switched to silent.

The first item on the agenda is the declaration of interests. In accordance with section 3 of the code of conduct, I invite members to declare any interests that are relevant to the committee's remit. I remind members that any declaration should be brief but sufficiently detailed to make clear to any listener the nature of the interest.

I will start with my declaration, then we will move round the table to my right. I am a local authority councillor for Midlothian Council, for which I receive between £15,000 and £20,000 per year, but I have arranged to waive my salary from the date of my election to the Parliament. I own a 50 per cent share in a commercial property in Angus and a 50 per cent share in a commercial property in Fife. I also own two flats in Edinburgh, which I let out, and I am a director of the Scottish Mining Museum.

**Murdo Fraser (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con):** I have no relevant interests to declare.

**Hugh Henry (Renfrewshire South) (Lab):** I have no relevant interests to declare, either.

**Willie Coffey (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP):** I declare that I am a serving local authority councillor on East Ayrshire Council. I have a small number of shares in Kilmarnock Football Club and I am a former employee of Learning and Teaching Scotland.

**Tavish Scott (Shetland Islands) (LD):** I have no interests to declare that are relevant to the committee.

**George Adam (Paisley) (SNP):** I am a local authority councillor on Renfrewshire Council and I am involved in various voluntary activities, which will be put on the Parliament's website.

**Drew Smith (Glasgow) (Lab):** I do not have any relevant interests to declare.

**Humza Yousaf (Glasgow) (SNP):** I have no interests pertinent to the committee to declare.

**Mark McDonald (North East Scotland) (SNP):** I am a local authority councillor on Aberdeen City Council.

## Convener

10:33

**Colin Beattie:** We move to the more exciting item 2 on the agenda, which is our choosing of a convener. The Parliament has agreed that only members of the Scottish Labour Party are eligible for nomination as convener of the committee. That being the case, I seek nominations for the post.

**Murdo Fraser:** I nominate Hugh Henry.

**Colin Beattie:** Mr Henry, are you happy to accept that nomination?

**Hugh Henry:** I am.

**Colin Beattie:** One nomination has been received, so I ask the committee to agree that Hugh Henry be chosen as convener of the committee.

*Hugh Henry was chosen as convener.*

**Colin Beattie:** I congratulate Hugh Henry on his appointment and hand over the chair to him for the remainder of the proceedings.

**The Convener (Hugh Henry):** I thank members for selecting me as convener. I am delighted to have back with me Murdo Fraser and Willie Coffey, who were on the Public Audit Committee in session 3. I hope that the new members will enjoy their work on the committee, which a number of people, both within and outwith the Parliament, have noticed has proven to be an entertaining, interesting and somewhat direct committee. It is certainly a committee to the work of which members of all parties have made a significant contribution, and I look forward to that continuing.

## Deputy Convener

10:34

**The Convener:** We move on to the choosing of a deputy convener. Under the Parliament's procedures, it has been agreed that only a member of the Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party is eligible to be chosen as deputy convener of the committee. I invite nominations for the position.

**Drew Smith:** I nominate Murdo Fraser.

**The Convener:** Murdo, are you content to accept that nomination?

**Murdo Fraser:** I am very pleased to do so; I suspect that this is one of the easier elections that I have contested.

*Murdo Fraser was chosen as deputy convener.*

## Work Programme

10:35

**The Convener:** Item 4 on our agenda is our approach to developing a work programme. A note from the clerk to the committee has been circulated to members. It has been normal practice to hold a business planning meeting at the start of a session and to receive some background briefing on public audit issues. I invite members to comment on how they want to proceed.

**Murdo Fraser:** The clerk's proposal to have a business planning day makes a lot of sense, although I do not think that we would need a whole day to look at the forward work programme—we could probably get away with having a half-day session towards the end of the recess. As returning members will know, the committee's work is very much guided by Audit Scotland's work schedule. By then, we will have a clear idea of where Audit Scotland is likely to be going in the coming year and will be able to base our work on that.

**Willie Coffey:** I record my thanks to the members of all parties who served on the Public Audit Committee in the previous session, who, as I am sure that the convener will agree, made a fine contribution.

I agree with Murdo Fraser that we should have a business planning meeting to look at the future work programme. We should also look at the legacy paper that the session 3 Public Audit Committee produced, because it contains a number of outstanding issues that members might wish to pursue. I look forward to that.

**The Convener:** Do members agree to hold a business planning meeting, and to hold informal business planning sessions when required?

**Members** *indicated agreement.*

**The Convener:** That concludes our formal business.

*Meeting closed at 10:37.*





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