



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Official Report

HEALTH AND SPORT COMMITTEE

Tuesday 7 February 2012

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HEALTH AND SPORT COMMITTEE

6th Meeting 2012, Session 4

CONVENER

*Duncan McNeil (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab)

DEPUTY CONVENER

*Bob Doris (Glasgow) (SNP)

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Jackson Carlaw (West Scotland) (Con)

*Jim Eadie (Edinburgh Southern) (SNP)

*Richard Lyle (Central Scotland) (SNP)

Fiona McLeod (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP)

*Gil Paterson (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP)

Dr Richard Simpson (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)

*Drew Smith (Glasgow) (Lab)

*attended

THE FOLLOWING ALSO PARTICIPATED:

Nanette Milne (North East Scotland) (Con) (Committee Substitute)

Dennis Robertson (Aberdeenshire West) (SNP) (Committee Substitute)

CLERK TO THE COMMITTEE

Douglas Wands

LOCATION

Committee Room 6

Scottish Parliament

Health and Sport Committee

Tuesday 7 February 2012

[The Convener *opened the meeting at 10:00*]

Decision on Taking Business in Private

The Convener (Duncan McNeil): Good morning and welcome to the sixth meeting in 2012 of the Health and Sport Committee. I remind everyone to turn off their mobile phones and BlackBerrys, which can interfere with the sound system. We have received apologies from Fiona McLeod and Jackson Carlaw. Dennis Robertson and Nanette Milne are attending as committee substitutes—I welcome you both. We also have a late apology from Richard Simpson.

Item 1 is a decision on whether to take in private items 3 and 4, on the committee's work programme. Does the committee agree to take the items in private?

Members *indicated agreement.*

European Commission Work Programme

10:01

The Convener: Item 2 is consideration of the European Commission work programme for 2012. There are five proposals from the Commission on health, details of which are set out in the paper from the clerks and the Scottish Parliament information centre. I ask Richard Lyle, who is our European Union reporter, to begin the discussion on the paper.

Richard Lyle (Central Scotland) (SNP): An important issue that will come up is the revision of the directive on the manufacture, presentation and sale of tobacco products. I have brought with me an example of the proposed new cigarette packaging.

I confess that I am a smoker, as you know. However, I support the proposals. Tobacco manufacturers have long recognised the power of branding. Branding is particularly important in a product such as cigarettes, because consumers typically struggle to identify differences between brands in blind tests. An Imperial Tobacco employee said:

"So the discrimination in product terms, pure blind product terms, without any packaging or name around it is very limited. You can tell if it's very mild or very strong, and you might get some case characteristics that are different. But it's very difficult for people to discriminate, blind tested. Put it in a package and put a name on it, and then it has a lot of product characteristics."

I think that making tobacco products less appealing is an aim of everyone. Plain packaging is perceived less favourably by adult smokers and young people. A recent study, which piloted plain packets with young adult smokers in Glasgow—I am sure that Bob Doris will appreciate this—found that the use of plain packets was associated with increased negative perceptions and feelings about smoking.

Members can see from the example packet that I have brought along that the message is:

"Protect children: don't make them breathe your smoke."

On the side of the packet there is a health warning, which says:

"Warning: the toxic chemicals in tobacco smoke damage your blood vessels"

and goes on to emphasise other problems that smoking causes. The brand name will be much, much smaller and will appear only on certain parts of the packaging.

The proposal is going through the EU and I suggest to the committee that we should support it.

The Convener: Thank you. I understand that there will be a debate on EU priorities in February or March. We do not need to make a decision other than to monitor the situation. We could write to the Scottish Government to ask for an update on how it is engaging in the programme. Do members agree to do that?

Members *indicated agreement.*

The Convener: Do members have comments on the rest of the paper? We have talked about the revision of the tobacco products directive. There are also proposals on the promotion of innovation in medical devices, as part of the package of innovation in health. I do not know whether “medical devices” covers the implants and replacements issue.

Douglas Wands (Clerk): Convener, we can ask for information about the detail of the proposal from our colleagues in SPICe and through the European and External Relations Committee, if the committee would like further information.

The Convener: Is that okay with the committee?

Members *indicated agreement.*

The Convener: Thank you. Do members have comments on the proposed communication on the European innovation partnership on active and healthy ageing?

Nanette Milne (North East Scotland) (Con): Given the problems of an ageing population that we all anticipate, it would be good to hear more about the issue.

Richard Lyle: I can certainly bring something back, convener.

The Convener: Thank you. If there are no more comments on the work programme, I thank Richard Lyle. We move into private for item 3, as agreed.

10:07

Meeting continued in private until 12:25.

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