



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Official Report

STANDARDS, PROCEDURES AND PUBLIC APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE

Thursday 9 May 2013

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STANDARDS, PROCEDURES AND PUBLIC APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE
7th Meeting 2013, Session 4

CONVENER

*Dave Thompson (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP)

DEPUTY CONVENER

*Helen Eadie (Cowdenbeath) (Lab)

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

John Lamont (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)

*Richard Lyle (Central Scotland) (SNP)

*Margaret McCulloch (Central Scotland) (Lab)

*Fiona McLeod (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP)

*attended

THE FOLLOWING ALSO PARTICIPATED:

George Adam (Paisley) (SNP) (Committee Substitute)

Clare Adamson (Central Scotland) (SNP)

CLERK TO THE COMMITTEE

Gillian Baxendine

Alison Walker

LOCATION

Committee Room 6

Scottish Parliament

Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee

Thursday 9 May 2013

[The Convener opened the meeting at 09:30]

Decision on Taking Business in Private

The Convener (Dave Thompson): Good morning, colleagues. Welcome to the seventh meeting in 2013 of the Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee. We have apologies from John Lamont.

I want to say a few words about Brian Adam, a fellow committee member, who died recently. I attended his funeral in Aberdeen last Friday. Brian was a great friend and colleague. I ask for a short silence in memory of Brian.

Thank you.

I ask everyone to ensure that they have their BlackBerrys and mobiles switched off. I managed to remember to switch mine off before today's meeting; I normally make that request and then remember that I have to switch off my own one, too.

Item 1 is to decide whether to take in private item 6, which is the committee's consideration of its work programme. Do we agree to take item 6 in private?

Members indicated agreement.

Cross-party Groups

09:32

The Convener: Item 2 is on cross-party groups. I welcome Clare Adamson MSP, from whom we will take evidence. Thank you for your application for a cross-party group on accident prevention and safety awareness. Members have a paper on the subject. Do any members have questions for Clare on her cross-party group application?

Richard Lyle (Central Scotland) (SNP): Good morning, Clare. Your application is excellent. No doubt that is because it follows Margaret McCulloch's template. Why do you see a need for the group?

Clare Adamson (Central Scotland) (SNP): Scotland has particular problems relating to accident prevention and safety awareness. Notably, we had eight deaths on our hills last year, which was one of the worst seasons that we have had. Our death rate from fire is particularly high, too.

In 2011, *The Scotsman* published an article titled "Poor in Scotland twice as likely to die in accidents as middle classes". The issue is one of social justice: people from socially deprived areas are being killed more frequently through accidental injury than people from other areas are. It is not an issue that we fully understand.

Stakeholders are carrying out excellent work. I recently attended the Scottish Youth Theatre, which has a promotion with Network Rail in areas where it is electrifying lines. Young Scot and the Scottish Youth Theatre are working with primary and early secondary school children to teach them about safety awareness. They are teaching the children about better awareness and empathy for people involved in an accident, such as train drivers, and they are tackling the children's decision-making processes. Those skills are transferable across all areas of safety in young people's lives. Safety awareness is an important message, which we could do a lot more to promote.

Richard Lyle: You have listed a number of groups and organisations that the group could draw on. How many organisations on average would you intend to have at a meeting?

Clare Adamson: We would intend to invite as many stakeholders as possible, depending on our capacity. When I was a councillor, I was on the Scottish Accident Prevention Council. I was nominated to be on it by my council and I was chair of its home safety committee. There was a great interest in its meetings. Up until now, there has not been a cross-party group on the issue in

the Scottish Parliament and many stakeholders have indicated that they would be interested in coming along to such a group. The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents has volunteered to provide the secretariat for the proposed group. It is involved in a similar cross-party group at Westminster, which it has found to be a very successful group.

Helen Eadie (Cowdenbeath) (Lab): I applaud the work that you are doing, because accident prevention and safety awareness are an important aspect of our involvement and engagement with our constituents and with people throughout Scotland. You are right to highlight all the cases that you have highlighted. In my constituency, Shell has a policy that everybody who goes down stairs must hold on to handrails. That is a very sensible policy, which has rippled out to other people in the community.

I was impressed by the suggested membership list for the proposed group. I take it that it is a list of potential members to whom you are writing but who have not yet accepted.

Clare Adamson: I have spoken to the individual members listed as non-MSP members of the group and they have all indicated a definite interest. ROSPA suggested that, given its experience in the Westminster cross-party group, it would suggest people who are members of ROSPA who could be involved. They would obviously be invited, along with other stakeholders, as there are many others, such as the new Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, Police Scotland and the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities. I think that all those organisations would also be interested.

Helen Eadie: I have another question. I believe that I am right in saying that health and safety at work is a reserved matter for Westminster. Nevertheless, I notice that the Scottish Trades Union Congress is on the list of suggested members. Do you also have it in mind to include some trade unions? I know that many of them have full-time officials for health and safety and I feel that they could play an important part in educating people on a lot of the issues.

Clare Adamson: We have tried to make the group as open as possible to all areas of safety. Although health and safety at work is a reserved matter, there are a lot of safety messages in that area that are equally important in the Scottish context. We have not excluded anyone at this point.

It is a huge area and we are taking baby steps now, but there is the possibility of a sub-group or another interest group looking at specific areas of work interest. However, for now, although our

intention is to include work, we also want to look at leisure and home safety and other issues.

Helen Eadie: I am glad to hear that. I wish you well in your work and I hope that we approve the group this morning.

The Convener: The proposed cross-party group's remit is a wide-ranging one, as it is

"To promote all aspects of safety through safety awareness and accident prevention."

Your exchange with Helen Eadie touched on the fact that that covers a wide range of issues. I applaud you on taking the group forward, as I have had experience of such issues. As a trading standards officer, I was involved in home safety and consumer safety. I also led the campaign on the open level crossings in the north. We are now getting barriers, which is great.

The group will cover a huge range of issues. I am conscious that it might impinge on some other cross-party groups when it looks at various issues. Is it your intention, if the group considers an issue that impinges on the work of another cross-party group, to have joint meetings with such groups or to link with them when you consider such issues?

Clare Adamson: Absolutely. The group covers a huge area. The cross-party group on sport is one that it would be crucial to work with, because so many aspects of leisure relate to sport. There is also a cross-party group on recreational boating and marine tourism—I believe that Stuart McMillan is the convener of that group. All those areas impinge on safety.

The group aims to raise awareness of safety in all aspects of life and awareness of everything that we are doing in Scotland to improve people's safety. That is the focus and the group aims to bring all the aspects together. There are certainly plenty of cross-party groups in which stakeholders would be interested, and I hope to work with my colleagues in those areas.

The Convener: As there are no further questions, I thank Clare Adamson for attending. We will make our decision later in the meeting.

Clare Adamson: Thank you very much, convener.

The Convener: Item 3 is for the committee to consider a change of purpose for the cross-party group on drug and alcohol misuse. The change is fairly simple; it is to include the word "alcohol" in the purpose of the group. Members will see from their papers that Kezia Dugdale has said that the word was missed out because of an administrative error when the group was being set up and it has always been part of the group's purpose to deal with both drug and alcohol misuse. I suppose that it could be argued that alcohol is a drug and drug

abuse would include alcohol abuse. Are members quite happy with the change?

Members *indicated agreement.*

The Convener: Item 4 is for the committee to discuss the evidence that we have heard from Clare Adamson on the proposed cross-party group on accident prevention and safety awareness. Do members have any comments?

Richard Lyle: It was an excellent presentation. Clare Adamson spoke to the purpose. Having known her for years, I know about her commitment to accident prevention, and she is quite right. She was appointed as North Lanarkshire Council's representative on the Scottish Accident Prevention Council, which was quite unusual, but it was because of her involvement in the issue. I certainly agree with her and request that the committee supports the proposal.

The Convener: Are members happy with that?

Members *indicated agreement.*

Annual Report

09:42

The Convener: Item 5 is the committee's annual report. As members know, the committee is required to produce a report each year under rule 12.9 of standing orders. Members have the report in front of them. Do members have any comments, changes or additions to make, or are we happy with the report?

Members *indicated agreement.*

The Convener: The report shows the range of things that the committee has been involved with over the past year and there is a lot. I think that when we are doing it week to week, we do not realise how much ground we are covering. The clerks have made a very good report and it is now approved.

09:42

Meeting continued in private until 10:06.

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