

MEETING OF THE COMMISSION

Thursday 28 June 2007

Session 3

£5.00

© Parliamentary copyright. Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body 2007.

Applications for reproduction should be made in writing to the Licensing Division,
Her Majesty's Stationery Office, St Clements House, 2-16 Colegate, Norwich NR3 1BQ
Fax 01603 723000, which is administering the copyright on behalf of the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate
Body.

Produced and published in Scotland on behalf of the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body by RR
Donnelley.

CONTENTS

Thursday 28 June 2007

	Col.
CONVENER	1
WORK PROGRAMME	2

SCOTTISH COMMISSION FOR PUBLIC AUDIT **1st Meeting 2007, Session 3**

COMMISSION MEMBERS

- *Robert Brown (Glasgow) (LD)
- *Derek Brownlee (South of Scotland) (Con)
- *Angela Constance (Livingston) (SNP)
- *George Foulkes (Lothians) (Lab)
- *Charlie Gordon (Glasgow Cathcart) (Lab)

*attended

SECRETARY TO THE COMMISSION

Mark Brough

LOCATION

Committee Room 5

Scottish Parliament

Scottish Commission for Public Audit

Thursday 28 June 2007

[THE SECRETARY *opened the meeting at 12:45*]

Convener

Mark Brough (Secretary): I welcome members to the first meeting of the Scottish Commission for Public Audit in the third session of the Parliament. Before we start, I will introduce myself and the other officials. My name is Mark Brough, and I am the secretary to the commission and a member of the Finance Committee clerking team. Beside me is Rebecca Lamb, who is the assistant secretary and a member of the Audit Committee clerking team. Further to my left is Andy Munro, who is the Parliament's internal audit adviser. Part of Andy's role is to provide services to the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body. It is also his role to advise the commission on audit matters. I hope that over the coming years we will work successfully with members, and I look forward to that.

Item 1 on the agenda is the choice of a convener. The commission is a public body established under section 12 of the Public Finance and Accountability (Scotland) Act 2000. Schedule 3 to the act states that the commission may

"appoint one of its members to preside at its meetings."

The appointment of a convener is entirely a matter for the commission, but established practice is that the *ex officio* member—the convener of the Audit Committee—is not chosen as convener of the commission, because of the relationship that he has with the Auditor General for Scotland through the Audit Committee. With that in mind, I ask for nominations for the post of convener.

George Foulkes (Lothians) (Lab): I understand that there have been discussions through the usual channels. I suggest that Angela Constance be appointed as convener.

Mark Brough: Angela Constance has been nominated. Do members agree to her appointment?

Angela Constance was chosen as convener.

Mark Brough: I ask Angela Constance to take the chair.

Work Programme

12:46

The Convener (Angela Constance): I thank Mark Brough and my colleagues. As the only Scottish National Party member of the commission, I am relieved that there was no embarrassing silence when members were asked to nominate a convener. I am sure that we will all get on swimmingly.

As it is lunch time, I am sure that we will want to trot through the business that is ahead of us.

Charlie Gordon (Glasgow Cathcart) (Lab): Hear, hear.

The Convener: There are some matters on which we must focus our minds, principally an away day and our initial work programme. I will begin by addressing some practicalities. I understand from an earlier discussion that I had with Mark Brough that previously the commission met in the evenings. However, the previous commission's legacy paper suggests that we get a slot in the timetable. I also understand that most members have commitments on Tuesday and that Charlie Gordon has a commitment on alternate Wednesday mornings to the Audit Committee. We still have to decide how often we will meet, but would Wednesday mornings that do not clash with meetings of the Audit Committee be acceptable to members as a time for meetings?

Members indicated agreement.

The Convener: That is grand. What are members' views on the principle of our having an away day? I am sure that all members have had a chance to glance at the legacy paper, which raises a number of procedural issues that we may wish to consider at an away day, such as establishing a relationship with Audit Scotland and the auditors, Haines Watts, especially in relation to any potential future effectiveness, efficiency and economy review.

George Foulkes: Do we need to take a whole day? Might a half day not too far away be enough?

The Convener: The nods from members suggest that they agree that a half day would more than suffice. I am not entirely sure where would be near for most members. I seek members' guidance on whether a central belt or Edinburgh location would be preferable.

George Foulkes: I am totally biased—I prefer an Edinburgh location, but perhaps one away from the Parliament.

Charlie Gordon: I go along with that.

Derek Brownlee (South of Scotland) (Con): I, too, am perfectly happy with that.

The Convener: I am in the heart of Scotland, so anywhere along the central belt corridor is fine for me. The consensus appears to be that we should meet in the Edinburgh area, but not necessarily in the Parliament.

Robert Brown (Glasgow) (LD): I would be quite happy with Glasgow.

The Convener: Derek, where are you based?

Derek Brownlee: Edinburgh or Glasgow is fine for me, so the central belt is perfectly okay.

The Convener: I am fine with that, too.

George Foulkes: Glasgow is equally okay with me, if that is more convenient for members and there is a suitable location.

The Convener: We will leave it to Mark Brough to liaise individually with members after the meeting. Will a date in August be okay, or will members have to consult their diaries? George, do you have a preference?

George Foulkes: I would prefer not to hold the away day in August because that is about the only month that I will have free this year.

Robert Brown: It depends on what the date clashes with, but I think that it should be just before we start back.

George Foulkes: Do you mean right at the very end of August?

Robert Brown: Yes. I do not know what else is on then, but I suspect that we will find—

George Foulkes: That is the very last week of the recess.

Robert Brown: Yes. I do not know whether that would clash with anything else.

The Convener: Again, I ask Mark Brough to liaise with individual members later on that.

On the initial workload and outstanding issues, my understanding is that Audit Scotland has responded to the report of the previous Scottish Commission for Public Audit, so we must consider that. We must also consider any revisions that are required to the current year's budget and Audit Scotland's provisional expenditure estimates for the 2008-09 financial year. We will wish to consider taking evidence from Haines Watts, as I understand that we now have the annual accounts from Audit Scotland and that they have been published on the Parliament's website. Does that appear to members to be a reasonable programme for the agenda of our next meeting?

Members *indicated agreement.*

The Convener: We can consult members on a meeting date in early September. We should all be back from holiday then, bright eyed and bushy tailed. The advice that we were given is that we should schedule another meeting in early or mid-November to consider budgetary requirements.

We have no other items to consider, so I wish you all happy holidays.

Meeting closed at 12:52.

Members who would like a printed copy of the *Official Report* to be forwarded to them should give notice at the Document Supply Centre.

No proofs of the *Official Report* can be supplied. Members who want to suggest corrections for the archive edition should mark them clearly in the daily edition, and send it to the Official Report, Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh EH99 1SP. Suggested corrections in any other form cannot be accepted.

The deadline for corrections to this edition is:

Tuesday 10 July 2007

PRICES AND SUBSCRIPTION RATES

OFFICIAL REPORT daily editions

Single copies: £5.00

Meetings of the Parliament annual subscriptions: £350.00

The archive edition of the *Official Report* of meetings of the Parliament, written answers and public meetings of committees will be published on CD-ROM.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO PARLIAMENTARY QUESTIONS weekly compilation

Single copies: £3.75

Annual subscriptions: £150.00

Standing orders will be accepted at Document Supply.

Published in Edinburgh by RR Donnelley and available from:

Blackwell's Bookshop

**53 South Bridge
Edinburgh EH1 1YS
0131 622 8222**

Blackwell's Bookshops:
243-244 High Holborn
London WC1 7DZ
Tel 020 7831 9501

All trade orders for Scottish Parliament documents should be placed through Blackwell's Edinburgh.

Blackwell's Scottish Parliament Documentation
Helpline may be able to assist with additional information on publications of or about the Scottish Parliament, their availability and cost:

Telephone orders and inquiries
0131 622 8283 or
0131 622 8258

Fax orders
0131 557 8149

E-mail orders
business.edinburgh@blackwell.co.uk

Subscriptions & Standing Orders
business.edinburgh@blackwell.co.uk

Scottish Parliament

RNID Typetalk calls welcome on
18001 0131 348 5000
Textphone 0845 270 0152

sp.info@scottish.parliament.uk

All documents are available on the Scottish Parliament website at:

www.scottish.parliament.uk

Accredited Agents
(see Yellow Pages)

and through good booksellers