



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

JUSTICE COMMITTEE

MINUTES

6th Meeting, 2014 (Session 4)

Tuesday 18 February 2014

Present:

Christian Allard

John Finnie

Alison McInnes

Elaine Murray (Deputy Convener)

Sandra White

Roderick Campbell

Christine Grahame (Convener)

Margaret Mitchell

John Pentland

The meeting opened at 10.45 am.

1. **Decision on taking business in private:** The Committee agreed to take item 5 in private.
2. **Subordinate legislation:** The Committee considered the following negative instruments—

Discontinuance of Aberdeen and Peterhead Prisons (Scotland) Order 2014 (SSI 2014/13);

Act of Sederunt (Fees of Solicitors in the Sheriff Court) (Amendment) 2014 (SSI 2014/14).

The Committee agreed to make no recommendations in relation to the instruments.

3. **Scottish Human Rights Commission:** The Committee took evidence on Scotland's National Action Plan for Human Rights from—

Professor Alan Miller, Chair, and Shelagh McCall, Commissioner, Scottish Human Rights Commission.

4. **Petitions:** The Committee considered the following petitions and agreed in relation to—

PE1280 by Dr Kenneth Faulds and Julie Love on fatal accident inquiries: to keep the petition open and to write to the Scottish Government seeking an update on the timescale for introduction of legislation on fatal accident inquiries;

PE1370 by Dr Jim Swire, Professor Robert Black QC, Robert Forrester, Father Patrick Keegans and Iain McKie on Justice for Megrahi: to keep the petition open and to write to the Chief Constable seeking clarification regarding the handling of the petitioners' concerns by Police Scotland; and the Scottish Criminal Cases Review Commission to ascertain whether an application to review the conviction of Mr Al-Megrahi has been made recently;

PE1403 by Peter Morris on support and assistance to victims of crime: to close the petition on the basis that the Committee considered the issues raised as part of its consideration of the Victims and Witnesses (Scotland) Bill, which was enacted earlier this year;

PE1427 by Robert Kirkwood on behalf of Leith Links Residents' Association on multi-party actions: to keep the petition open and to write to the Scottish Government seeking an update on the timescale for its response to the Taylor Review of Expenses and Funding of Civil Litigation in Scotland;

PE1436 by Colette Barrie on retrospective abolition of the requirement for corroboration: to close the petition on the basis that, after considering the petition alongside its Stage 1 consideration of the Criminal Justice (Scotland) Bill, the Committee concluded in its Stage 1 report that if corroboration was to be abolished, it should not apply retrospectively;

PE1449 by Dr John Wallace Hinton on behalf of Accountability Scotland on the Scottish Committee of the Administrative Justice and Tribunals Council: to keep the petition open and to keep matters under review;

PE1479 by Andrew Muir on complaints about solicitors: to keep the petition open and to review the position again once the Scottish Legal Complaints Commission has concluded its consultation on all of its rules, including the time bar.

In relation to PE1370, Sandra White indicated that she was a member of the Public Petitions Committee when the petition was first lodged.

5. **Courts Reform (Scotland) Bill:** The Committee considered its approach to the scrutiny of the Bill at Stage 1 and agreed: (a) the proposed timetable for its scrutiny of the Bill; (b) to issue a call for written evidence; (c) proposed witnesses for its meeting on 18 March; and (d) to consider proposed witnesses for its meetings on 25 March, 1 and 22 April at a later date.

Roderick Campbell indicated that he is a member of the Faculty of Advocates.

The meeting closed at 12.41 pm.

J/S4/14/6/M

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