

Further Comment from Roger Mullin on the case of Coatbridge College

Providing evidence

I have made clear all along my desire to help the committee and willingness to provide evidence either in writing or in oral session. The clerk to the committee will be able to confirm this as she did in an email to me on 14 October.

This opening comment is provided as Dr Richard Simpson MSP made a public statement following last week's committee session calling on me to give evidence before the committee, as if I had not already offered to do so.

Mr Doyle's oral evidence

Mr Doyle in his appearance last week before the committee had a very idiosyncratic understanding of the truth. He accused me in effect of forcing him out. There is not a scintilla of truth in such an accusation. Having talked with the clerk, I understand the committee has a copy of the email I sent to Mr Doyle and copied to others on 18 August, prior to a meeting of 20 August 2013. As the committee can see, regarding point 4 on the subject of Transitional Leadership, my email states:

"On 18 July you asked myself and Linda McTavish to advise you on when you might depart. We avoided answering, as we didn't have a clear view and didn't know what the wider merger considerations would be...."

I also have a copy of Mr Doyle's email to me dated 19 August at which he did not dispute the above

In other words, it was John Doyle himself who first raised the issue of his departure at the meeting of 18 July. Indeed both myself and Mrs McTavish were surprised and hence we could provide no advice on a departure date.

Seeking posts elsewhere

It may also be instructive to note that Mr Doyle on or around January of 2013 had unsuccessfully applied for the post of Principal of Ayrshire College. As the committee is also aware he did not apply for the post of Principal of New College Lanarkshire, which was publicly advertised, and whose closing date for applications was 17 May. This seems to suggest that for some time Mr Doyle had been seeking to leave, although it was only at the meeting of 18 July that he said so.

Mr Doyle's briefings to others

I became aware around September/October 2013 that Mr Doyle was implicating myself and Dr John Kemp of the Scottish Funding Council in his terms of departure. Such was my concern about what Mr

Doyle was saying to others I took preliminary legal advice about how I could seek a remedy. I did not pursue legal action but can provide the committee with evidence in the form of a message I sent on 13 October to a senior civil servant seeking comment on the best course of action. The central untruth of Mr Doyle's briefing (to trade union representatives amongst others at the time), was that along with Dr Kemp of the Scottish Funding Council I had approved a 21 month package back in February 2013. A claim that is completely untrue.

Summary

My impression is that Mr Doyle has sought to confuse the issues surrounding his departure. So far as I am concerned however, the choice to leave was entirely his, and the detailed arrangements of a severance package were never at any time discussed with me.