



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES COMMITTEE

MINUTES

3rd Meeting, 2011 (Session 4)

Tuesday 13 September 2011

Present:

Clare Adamson	Claudia Beamish (Convener)
John Finnie	Stuart McMillan (Deputy Convener)
Anne McTaggart (Committee Substitute)	Margaret Mitchell
Dennis Robertson	

Apologies were received from Siobhan McMahon.

The meeting opened at 2.02 pm.

1. **Decision on taking business in private:** The Committee agreed to take items 4 and 5 in private.
2. **Scottish Government priorities:** The Committee took evidence from—

Nicola Sturgeon MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Health, Wellbeing and Cities Strategy, and Yvonne Strachan, Head of Equality and Communities Division, Scottish Government.
3. **Petition PE1073:** The Committee considered a petition by Tom Minogue calling for the Scottish Parliament to investigate and establish the reasons for the apparently disproportionate number of Catholics in Scottish prisons. The Committee noted the findings of recent research showing that more than one faith group was affected in this way and drawing a link to deprivation. The Committee agreed to close the petition and to write to the Scottish Government inviting it to conduct further research on the link between deprivation and regional imbalances in the prison population.
4. **Work programme:** The Committee considered its work programme and agreed to hold a series of one-off evidence sessions on homelessness and young people; Gypsies/Travellers issues; women and employment, and access to transport, with a view to setting remits for inquiries. The Committee also agreed

to invite Dame Elish Angiolini to give oral evidence following the publication of the report of the Commission on Women Offenders. The Committee further agreed to hold an informal meeting with stakeholders on Tuesday 27 September and to host a performance by a group of 14- to 15-year-olds on their response to increasingly sexualised culture around them on Tuesday 4 October.

5. **Draft Budget Scrutiny 2012-13:** The Committee considered candidates for the post of adviser and agreed an order of preference for appointment. The Committee also agreed to take an initial briefing from the adviser in private at a future meeting. The Committee further agreed to take evidence from a range of groups on the draft Budget in a round-table discussion on Tuesday 4 October and, in relation to any expenses claimed by witnesses giving evidence on the draft Budget, to delegate to the Convener authority to approve.

The meeting closed at 4.11 pm.

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