

STANDARDS, PROCEDURES AND PUBLIC APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE

INQUIRY INTO LOBBYING

SUBMISSION RECEIVED FROM BRIAN BALMAIN

In response to the call to evidence for your inquiry into lobbying, I wish to make the general points:

Active and informed participation is an essential aspect of democracy – citizens and civil society must have access to the information they need to make judgements about their lives, their government and their democracy. Without accurate information, citizens will be unable to play their role in a functioning healthy democracy, with the deterioration of the democracy as a consequence.

The current levels of distrust and dissatisfaction with politics and politicians are inherently linked to levels of secrecy and behind the scenes lobbying activity, whether this is actual or perceived is irrelevant. A mandatory lobbying register which effectively ensures citizens can see who is lobbying whom should be seen as a required part of a functioning democracy.

I would urge you to swiftly act to demonstrate that the Scottish Parliament continues to abide by and wishes to develop its founding principles of transparency and accessibility.

(although this is primarily a standardised wording, it covers what I would wish to convey as my opinions and suggestions)

**BRIAN BALMAIN
7 JANUARY 2014**