



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

JUSTICE COMMITTEE

MINUTES

37th Meeting, 2017 (Session 5)

Tuesday 19 December 2017

Present:

George Adam	Maurice Corry
Mary Fee	John Finnie
Mairi Gougeon	Liam Kerr
Fulton MacGregor	Rona Mackay (Deputy Convener)
Ben Macpherson	Liam McArthur
Margaret Mitchell (Convener)	

The meeting opened at 10.00 am.

1. **Decisions on taking business in private:** The Committee agreed to take item 5 in private. The Committee also agreed that consideration of a draft Stage 1 report on the Offensive Behaviour at Football and Threatening Communications (Repeal) (Scotland) Bill and a draft report on the Scottish Government's Draft Budget 2018-19 should be taken in private at future meetings.

2. **Draft Budget Scrutiny 2018-19:** The Committee took evidence on the Scottish Government's Draft Budget 2018-19 from—

Rt Hon James Wolffe QC, Lord Advocate, and David Harvie, Crown Agent and Chief Executive, Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service.

3. **Public petitions:** The Committee considered the following petitions, and agreed in relation to—

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 pending the completion of Police Scotland's Operation Sandwood;

PE1510 by Jody Curtis on the closure of police, fire and non-emergency service centres north of Dundee: to close the petition on the basis that the

Committee has considered the matters raised by the petition, and no further submissions have been received from the petitioner since January 2017;

PE1511 by Laura Ross on the decision made by the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service to close Inverness control room: to ask the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service whether it has any further comments on the petition, and to keep the petition open pending a response;

PE1633 by Bill Alexander on private criminal prosecution in Scotland: to write to the Faculty of Advocates, the Law Society of Scotland and the Scottish Trades Union Congress seeking their comments on the petition, and to keep the petition open.

In relation to petition PE1633, Rona Mackay declared an interest as the petitioner is a constituent.

4. **Civil Litigation (Expenses and Group Proceedings) (Scotland) Bill (in private):** The Committee continued consideration of a draft Stage 1 report. Various changes were agreed to and the Committee agreed its report to the Parliament.
5. **Work programme (in private):** The Committee considered its work programme and agreed (a) to take evidence on 16 January 2018 from Police Scotland and the Scottish Police Authority on policing in Scotland; (b) to ask the Scottish Law Commission to provide a briefing on its work on defamation; (c) to hold round-table evidence sessions in the new year on (i) remand; and (ii) issues relating to Brexit; (d) to invite written evidence on civil prosecutions for rape to inform possible future work on this topic; and (e) to ask SPICe to provide a briefing on wildlife crime to inform possible future work on this topic.

The meeting closed at 12.42 pm.

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