

JUSTICE 1 COMMITTEE

Wednesday 3 September 2003
(*Morning*)

Session 2

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JUSTICE 1 COMMITTEE

† 4th Meeting 2003, Session 2

CONVENER

*Pauline McNeill (Glasgow Kelvin) (Lab)

DEPUTY CONVENER

*Mr Stewart Maxwell (West of Scotland) (SNP)

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

*Bill Butler (Glasgow Anniesland) (Lab)

*Marlyn Glen (North East Scotland) (Lab)

*Michael Matheson (Central Scotland) (SNP)

*Margaret Mitchell (Central Scotland) (Con)

*Mrs Margaret Smith (Edinburgh West) (LD)

*attended

CLERK TO THE COMMITTEE

Alison Taylor

SENIOR ASSISTANT CLERK

Claire Menzies Smith

ASSISTANT CLERK

Douglas Thornton

LOCATION

Committee Room 3

† 3rd Meeting 2003, Session 2—joint meeting with Justice 2 Committee.

Scottish Parliament

Justice 1 Committee

Wednesday 3 September 2003

(Morning)

[THE CONVENER opened the meeting at 10:01]

Item in Private

The Convener (Pauline McNeill): Good morning everyone and welcome to the fourth meeting this session of the Justice 1 Committee. I have received no apologies and ask everyone to do the usual and switch off mobile phones and the various other gadgets that might interrupt the meeting.

Item 1 is to consider whether to deal with item 3 in private. Item 3 relates to candidates for the post of adviser to the committee on the reform of the High Court of Justiciary. A lot of personal information about the candidates is contained in the document that we have for item 3 and it would therefore be appropriate to discuss it in private. Is that agreed?

Members indicated agreement.

Subordinate Legislation

10:02

The Convener: Item 2 is consideration of two instruments subject to negative procedure.

Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act 2003 (Saving and Transitional Provisions) Order 2003 (SSI 2003/287)

The Convener: I refer members to a note from the clerk on the order; they will notice that there is not a similar note from the Executive. I invite comments from members on the order. It is reasonably straightforward and tidies up and makes saving provisions for the changeover period in relation to long-term sentences and the powers of the Parole Board for Scotland. If there are no comments, we will simply note the order.

Drugs Courts (Scotland) Order 2003 (SSI 2003/290)

The Convener: I invite comments from members on the order. I have no specific comments to make, although the information that we have received is useful for those who are interested in the drugs courts pilots. The committee might want to request information when it becomes available, so that we can consider the research. My comment does not relate directly to the instrument but if members want to see the results of the pilots, that would be an appropriate time for us to request the information.

Mrs Margaret Smith (Edinburgh West) (LD): I do not have anything in particular to say about the order, but the information that we have received is helpful. There are issues about female offenders and treatment for offenders with mental health difficulties. There is also the question whether the establishment of drugs courts will be resourced properly. We could perhaps pick up on that during our consideration of the budget process.

Page 9 of the working group's report states:

"there was not a **current** infrastructure of treatment programmes for younger offenders, though these are being established."

It would be useful for us to have a watching brief to ensure that the treatment programmes come to fruition. That seems to be the nub of whether the drugs courts will be successful. Given what we have read in the report, it seems crucial that offenders begin treatment programmes quickly as part of a fast-track approach. It would be unfortunate if such programmes were not established in the way that they should be. The report also flags up the fact that treatment programmes for young people with drugs

problems are just not there. Perhaps some of the people who end up in treatment programmes would not have offended in the first place if wider treatment programmes had been available. We should keep an eye on the provision of treatment programmes.

The Convener: Is there consensus that we should get that information?

Members *indicated agreement.*

The Convener: If there are no other comments, we shall simply note the instrument.

We agreed a few minutes ago that we would take item 3 in private. The meeting has been short, but I am sure that our meetings will get longer as the weeks go on.

10:05

Meeting continued in private until 10:35

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