



SCOTTISH PARLIAMENTARY STANDARDS COMMISSIONER

Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh. EH99 1SP
Tel 07909 872726 Fax 0131 348 6834 Email
standards.commissioner@scottish.parliament.uk
Website www.spsc.co.uk

From the Commissioner, Dr J A T Dyer OBE

PRESS NOTICE

COMPLAINT AGAINST WENDY ALEXANDER MSP BY ANDREW HARLICK

DECISION BY STANDARDS, PROCEDURES AND PUBLIC APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE ON 23 SEPTEMBER 2008

Following the decision of the Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee on this complaint, announced earlier today, my report of my investigation, with my conclusions, will be published in full as an annex to the Committee's report. I have no comment to add to what is said in my report, which will shortly be available for anyone to read.

The system set up by Parliament for complaints about MSP conduct contains two separate components. The Standards Commissioner's role is to carry out an independent and impartial investigation of the facts and then to report to the Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee on what occurred and whether in his judgment a breach of the Code of Conduct took place. The MSPs on the Standards Committee then make their own definitive decision as to whether a breach was committed by the Member complained against, as Parliament is self-regulating in conduct matters (barring criminal offences).

It is unusual, but, as explained above, possible, for the Commissioner and the Committee to reach different conclusions as to whether a breach occurred. That happened in this case.

Note

1. The role of the Scottish Parliamentary Standards Commissioner, currently Dr Jim Dyer, is laid out in the Scottish Parliamentary Standards Commissioner

Act 2002. Further guidance is available on the Commissioner's website at www.spssc.co.uk

2. The rule in question, in Sections 9.1.2 and 9.1.4 of the Code of Conduct for Members (Volume 2), broadly prohibits a Member from publicising a complaint which is under investigation by the Commissioner, except where there has been previous publicity about the complaint without the involvement of the Member complained about, in which case the Member may issue a brief statement, avoiding as far as possible discussing details of the complaint. The Code of Conduct is available to view as a link on my website and on the Scottish Parliament website (MSP pages).

23 September 2008