The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Information Management and Governance
Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

foi.officer@parliament.scot

23 January 2023

Dear Requester,

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION: 2022-683093

We acknowledge your request for the following information:

> *Public Audit Committee of Scottish Parliament hold a number of agenda items in private*
> *To ask how many meetings were held by the public audit committee*
> *In 2018*
> *In 2019*
> *In 2020*
> *In 2021*
> *In 2022*
> *To ask how many of the meetings in each of the years above had agenda items in private*
> *To ask for copies of papers where most agenda items were in private*

Your request was received on 28 December 2022 and has been handled in accordance with the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 (FOI(S)A).

Your request asks for information that spans sessions 5 and 6 of the Scottish Parliament. We therefore provide further information about the respective public audit committees in place during these two sessions of Parliament and the associated remit for each committee.

The Public Audit Committee was established for session five and first met on 16 June 2016. On 29 September 2016, the Committee changed its name to the Public Audit and Post-Legislative Scrutiny (PAPLS) Committee. The remit of the PAPLS Committee was to consider and report on the following (and any additional matter added under Standing Order Rule 6.1.5A):

- any accounts laid before the Parliament;
- any report laid before or made to the Parliament by the Auditor General for Scotland;
- any other document laid before the Parliament, or referred to it by the Parliamentary Bureau or by the Auditor General for Scotland, concerning financial control, accounting and auditing in relation to public expenditure; and
- post-legislative scrutiny.

The Public Audit Committee established for session six has met since June 2021. The remit of the Public Audit Committee is to consider and report on the following (and any additional matter added under Standing Order Rule 6.1.5A):

- any accounts laid before the Parliament;
- any report laid before or made to the Parliament by the Auditor General for Scotland; and
- any other document laid before the Parliament, or referred to it by the Parliamentary Bureau or by the Auditor General for Scotland, concerning financial control, accounting and auditing in relation to public expenditure.

Information regarding the total number of meetings held and the proportion of these meetings held in private is summarised in each committee's annual report. Links to these reports are provided below:

- Public Audit Committee (from June 2021 to date of request)
  - [Annual Report 2021-22](#) – (paragraph 19) – (paragraph 19)
- Public Audit and Post Legislative Scrutiny Committee (January 2018 – March 2021)
  - [Annual Report 2020-21](#) – (paragraph 29)
  - [Annual Report 2019-20](#) – (paragraph 40)
  - [Annual Report 2018-19](#) – (paragraph 25)
  - [Annual Report 2017-18](#) – (paragraph 28)

In common with other Parliamentary committees, the Public Audit Committee meets in private for a range of reasons. For example, when considering draft committee reports, it meets in private to facilitate the achievement of consensus and prevent media focus on preliminary conclusions which may not feature in the final report. Meeting in private also enables the Committee to consider its work programme and confidential or sensitive material (for example, evidence from vulnerable or intimidated people), which would not be appropriate to discuss during a public meeting. The decision to meet in private must be agreed by the Committee.

Committee meeting papers for business taken in private for each parliamentary year are publicly available. Links to this information are provided below:

- Public Audit Committee (from June 2021 to date of request)
  - [Committee meeting papers 2021 and 2022](#) (Click on "+" symbol next to relevant year)
- Public Audit and Post Legislative Scrutiny Committee (January 2018 – March 2021)
  - [Committee meeting papers 2021](#)
  - [Committee meeting papers 2020](#)
  - [Committee meeting papers 2019](#)
  - [Committee meeting papers 2018](#)

As the information you have requested is publicly available on the Scottish Parliament's website, we have attached a notice advising of this. This is provided in line with the technical requirements of FOI(S)A.

In keeping with our FOI procedures, this information may also be posted on the Parliament's disclosure log (usually within 24 hours). For further details on the Parliament's Disclosure Log and the information released under FOI, visit: [FOI Request Disclosure Log | Scottish Parliament Website](#)

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https://www.parliament.scot/about/copyright

We would welcome feedback or comment on how we handled your request. Please feel free to contact the Head of Information Governance at foi.officer@parliament.scot. Please find below Annex B, which explains how we handle FOI requests and reviews.

We are currently working remotely and so would ask you to contact us by email at foi.officer@parliament.scot

Yours sincerely

Linda Forrest
Information Compliance Officer

REQUESTS MADE UNDER
THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION (SCOTLAND) ACT 2002

How we handle FOI requests

Information on how we handle FOI requests is available on the Parliament's website at:
[Privacy notice: Information rights: Freedom of Information request handling | Scottish Parliament Website](#)

Alternatively, please contact the Public Information & Resources Team to request a copy.
https://www.parliament.scot/contact-us

Review

If you are dissatisfied with the way in which we have dealt with your request for information, you can ask us to review our decision and actions. You must do this in writing (or other permanent form) within 40 working days of the date of this letter, stating the reasons for your dissatisfaction, and we will respond within 20 working days of receipt. A request for a review should be made to the Head of Information Governance:

Post: Head of Information Governance
           The Scottish Parliament
           Edinburgh
           EH99 1SP
Telephone: 0131 348 5281

We welcome calls using the Text Relay service or in British Sign Language through contactSCOTLAND-BSL.

E-mail: foi.officer@parliament.scot

Application to the Scottish Information Commissioner

If, on the outcome of any review, you are still dissatisfied, or if we are unable to resolve any other complaint, then you can contact the Scottish Information Commissioner:

Post: The Office of the Scottish Information Commissioner
           Kinburn Castle
           Doubledykes Road
           St Andrews
           Fife
           KY16 9DS

Email: www.itspublicknowledge.info/Appeal

Telephone: 01334 464610

Fax: 01334 464611
Website: www.itspublicknowledge.info
A decision by the Scottish Information Commissioner may be appealed on a point of law to the Court of Session.

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Feedback or comment

We would welcome feedback or comment on how we handled your request. Please contact the Head of Information Governance.

Data Protection

If you wish to find out more about how we use your personal data then you can access our Privacy Notice at the following link:
Privacy notice: Information rights: Freedom of Information request handling | Scottish Parliament Website

Complaints

If you are dissatisfied with the way in which we dealt with your enquiry, then you may wish to raise the matter with Public Information and Resources.
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How to contact us

Post: The Scottish Parliament
            Edinburgh
            EH99 1SP

Telephone: 0131 348 5000
            0800 092 7500 (Public Enquiries)
            0131 348 5395 (Gàidhlig)

We also welcome calls using the Text Relay service or in British Sign Language through contactSCOTLAND-BSL.

E-mail: info@parliament.scot