

Your Ref: CSD/017/2011/AMcP

To: Social Development Committee

From: Barbara McConaghie

Date: 2 December 2013

INQUIRY INTO ALLEGATIONS, ARISING FROM A BBC NI SPOTLIGHT PROGRAMME AIRED ON 3 JULY 2013, OF IMPROPRIETY OR IRREGULARITY RELATING TO NIHE MANAGED CONTRACTS AND CONSIDERATION OF ANY RESULTING ACTIONS

I refer to your letter of 21 November 2013 which was passed to me on 29 November 2013 for a reply.

Please see my response below to each of the queries raised in your letter.

1a What Ms McConaghie understood to the reason for her attending the meeting and whether she was requested to take notes at the meeting.

As Private Secretary to Minister McCausland it was part of my role to normally attend internal and external meetings involving the Minister. As with all meetings I attended I would take a manuscript note of the discussions and replace this with an electronic Private Office internal memoir.

1b Whether Ms McConaghie took notes at the meeting. If so the Committee would like to know whether the notes were forwarded to anyone and if so to whom; and the Committee would also like to receive a copy of these notes.

I took notes at the meeting and these were typed up as an internal document (as described above) and would have been forwarded to the lead official in attendance (in this case Michael Sands) for his consideration/amendments/follow-up action as required. Copy attached at Annex 1.

1c Whether Ms McConaghie was requested to draft minutes of the meeting. If so the Committee would like to know who the minutes were sent to and would also like to receive a copy of the first draft. The Committee would also like to know whether Ms McConaghie was asked to amend the draft minutes, by whom and the nature of the amendment. The Committee would also like to know whether Ms McConaghie had sight of the final version of her minutes.

I was not requested to draft minutes of any meetings but to note the discussion as part of my normal duties. A first draft of the internal memoir was not circulated by me to anyone other than the lead official in attendance, Michael Sands. Responsibility for contents of the draft is passed to the lead official and I am not normally required to make any amendments. I cannot recall who requested subsequent amendments. I confirm that I had sight of the final document based on the copy of the version provided to me by the Departmental Assembly Liaison Officer, and as recorded on the Department's electronic records management system.

1d Whether Ms McConaghie had knowledge of the minutes of the meeting of 16 April 2012 that were provided to the Committee in your letter of 29 October 2013. It would be helpful if Ms McConaghie could be sent a copy of the minutes that were provided to the Committee in order that she may correctly address this last point.

As Private Secretary in both DCAL and DSD during the period June 2009 to January 2013 I would have been responsible for the initial record of many hundreds of meetings held with the Minister. Having read the copy provided I can recall the memoir, however, I have no access to any Ministerial correspondence since I left the post of Private Secretary.



Barbara McConaghie