



The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

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## **Finance and Constitution Committee Comataidh Ionmhais is Bun-reachd**

# **Scottish Fiscal Commission – Chair Reappointment**



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(b) any report made by a committee setting out proposals concerning public revenue or expenditure;

(c) Budget Bills; and

(d) any other matter relating to or affecting the revenue or expenditure of the Scottish Administration or other monies payable into or expenditure payable out of the Scottish Consolidated Fund.

(e) constitutional matters falling within the responsibility of the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and the Constitution



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# Committee Membership



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Scottish National Party



**Deputy Convener**  
**Adam Tomkins**  
Scottish Conservative  
and Unionist Party



**Alexander Burnett**  
Scottish Conservative  
and Unionist Party



**Ash Denham**  
Scottish National Party



**Emma Harper**  
Scottish National Party



**Ivan McKee**  
Scottish National Party



**James Kelly**  
Scottish Labour



**Murdo Fraser**  
Scottish Conservative  
and Unionist Party



**Neil Bibby**  
Scottish Labour



**Patrick Harvie**  
Scottish Green Party



**Willie Coffey**  
Scottish National Party

# Introduction

1. On 14 November 2017, the [Cabinet Secretary for Finance and the Constitution wrote to the Committee](#) asking it to agree to the reappointment of Lady Susan Rice as Chair of the Scottish Fiscal Commission (SFC) until 30 June 2022.

# Background

2. The SFC was established by Scottish Ministers in June 2014 as an independent non-statutory commission to scrutinise and report publicly on fiscal forecasts prepared by the Scottish Government.
3. The [SFC Act 2016](#)<sup>i</sup> then placed the SFC on a statutory footing and constituted it as a Non-Ministerial Department within the Scottish Administration on 1 April 2017, with primary accountability to the Scottish Parliament.
4. There are currently three Commissioners: Lady Susan Rice CBE (Chair), Professor Alasdair Smith and David Wilson. Lady Rice was appointed Chair in 2014 on a four year term which is due to end in June 2018.

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<sup>i</sup> <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2016/17/contents> [Accessed Nov 2017]

# Membership, appointments and reappointments

5. The SFC Act provides that there should be between three and five members of the SFC, one of whom should serve as Chair. To ensure that the Commission is appropriately resourced to discharge its expanded remit as the financial provisions of the Scotland Act 2016 are enacted, Ministers determined that the statutory Commission should have four members, including the Chair.
6. Section 15(3) of the SFC Act states that "Scottish Ministers may appoint a person as a member only if the Scottish Parliament has approved the appointment." In addition, appointments to the SFC are public appointments and therefore subject to the [Public Appointments and Public Bodies etc \(Scotland\) Act 2003](#)<sup>ii</sup> which means that appointments and reappointments to the SFC are regulated by the Commissioner for Ethical Standards in Public Life in Scotland.
7. Section 17 of the SFC Act provides for the period of appointments to the SFC. The period of appointment is set at the outset and may be any period chosen by Ministers, not exceeding five years. Members can be reappointed on one occasion and so may serve a total of two consecutive terms, subject to subject parliamentary approval.

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ii <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2003/4/contents> [Accessed Nov 2017]



## Process to reappoint

8. This is the first Chair reappointment request which has been subject to the parliamentary approval process. In his letter, the Cabinet Secretary stated—
  - ” In my view, Lady Rice has effectively led the establishment of the Commission ensuring good governance and key production of material as required to support Scotland's growing fiscal responsibility.
9. The Cabinet Secretary also explained that reappointing Lady Rice will provide the required stability for the Board given that the SFC is still in its first year of operation as a statutory body.
10. The Cabinet Secretary also wrote to the Commissioner for Ethical Standards in Public Life in Scotland setting out the approach that the Scottish Ministers propose in seeking the Scottish Parliament's approval for the reappointment of Lady Susan Rice to the SFC. The Commissioner responded to the effect that he was content with the Scottish Ministers' proposed course of action.
11. On 6 December 2017, the Committee considered the proposal to reappoint Lady Susan Rice as Chair of the Scottish Fiscal Commission.

## Conclusion

The Committee recommends that the Scottish Parliament approves the reappointment of Lady Susan Rice as Chair of the Scottish Fiscal Commission.

