



## FALKLAND ISLANDS GOVERNMENT

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### PRESS RELEASE

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*15 March 2010*

#### **Members of Legislative Assembly on Overseas Visits** **Public Accounts Committee Familiarisation Trip**

Public Accounts Committee members Mr Stuart Wallace (chair), the Hon Sharon Halford MLA and Mr Mike Forrest are visiting the UK from 16<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> March on a 5-day trip funded by the Foreign & Commonwealth Office through the Overseas Territories Fund. The purpose of the trip is to learn how Public Accounts Committees operate in small jurisdictions and local authorities within the British Isles.

The visit starts with a meeting at the Audit Commission Head Office in London, covering the principles behind public audit and the operation of public accounts committees. The Falkland Islands representatives then have a packed schedule, as they spend a full day at each of Guernsey, Tameside Borough Council in Manchester, and the Isle of Man. In each location the visitors will meet with elected representatives, officials and public accounts committee members. They will share their experiences of good governance in public office, and learn how other jurisdictions handle public audit and scrutiny.

The Hon Sharon Halford MLA was due to spend today, 15<sup>th</sup> March, working at the Falkland House, the Falkland Islands Government Office in Westminster, London. Mrs Halford was also to attend a meeting at the Foreign & Commonwealth Office.

Today the Hon Jan Cheek MLA returned to the Falkland Islands after a 10 day privately-funded trip to the UK, primarily on business for the South Georgia Heritage Trust. During her trip she spent a morning at the Falkland House, meeting with Falklands Representative Sukey Cameron and finalising an article for the Guardian newspaper ('Argentina's claim to the Falklands is neither logical nor valid' published 10 March).

The Hon Jan Cheek reports that, "I took the opportunity while I was in the UK to visit the Foreign & Commonwealth Office, where I met with Andrew Allan and Victor Clark,

who together staff the FCO's Falklands desk. It is usual practice for newly-elected MLAs to meet the people at the FCO responsible for Falkland Islands matters, and it was a very useful and productive meeting. By coincidence, Mr Clark is due to visit the islands in the near future."

The Hon Dick Sawle is currently in London, attending the Westminster Seminar on Parliamentary Practices and Procedures, which runs from 7<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> March. The Seminar is organised by the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association for newly-elected politicians. Mr Sawle is due to return to the Falkland Islands on 29<sup>th</sup> March after a short private holiday.

Office of the Legislative Assembly  
Gilbert House  
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For more information please contact Alison Inglis, Media Liaison Office, Falkland Islands Government at tel. +500 27451 or [Media2@sec.gov.fk](mailto:Media2@sec.gov.fk). Photography and Interviews are available on request.

#### **Notes for Editors**

- The current Falkland Islands Constitution, which came into force on 1 January 2009, makes provision for the first time for the appointment of an independent Public Accounts Committee. The Committee comprises three independent members and two elected Members of Legislative Assembly (neither of whom may act as chair of the Government's Standing Finance Committee). The principal role of the Committee is to examine and report to Legislative Assembly and keep the Governor informed on all public accounts and audit reports. The subsidiary objects of the Committee include advising the Governor on arrangements, priorities and effectiveness of audit; and reporting to Legislative Assembly on the effectiveness of regulation where public services are contracted out to private bodies. The Public Accounts Committee Ordinance came into force on 1 February 2010.
- The Overseas Territories Fund is available to the Governor acting in his discretion to spend as he thinks fit; it is usually spent on good governance projects.
- More Falkland Islands information is available at [www.falklands.gov.fk](http://www.falklands.gov.fk).