



## FALKLAND ISLANDS GOVERNMENT

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### PRESS RELEASE

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*24 March 2010*

#### **Successful Overseas Visit for Public Accounts Committee**

The Hon Sharon Halford MLA reports on her recent 5-day trip to the UK with fellow Public Accounts Committee members Mr Stuart Wallace (chair) and Mr Mike Forrest. The purpose of the trip, which was funded by the Foreign & Commonwealth Office through the Overseas Territories Fund, was to find out more about how Public Accounts Committees promote good governance and careful financial management.

“My week started off in FIGO on Monday, when I had an individual chat with all the staff and updated them on current events back in the Falkland Islands,” said Mrs Halford, who is the deputy portfolio holder for the Falkland Islands Government’s Office in Westminster, London.

“I also had a visit to the Foreign & Commonwealth Office, and had a chat there with Andrew Allen, who is head of the Southern Oceans Team, and one of those who deals with Falklands issues. It was a good discussion and exchange of views, and I came away content.”

“On Tuesday Stuart, Mike and I had meetings with representatives of the National Audit Office, the National Audit Commission and the National School of Government, before we headed off to Guernsey by plane.”

“Wednesday we were very busy as the Guernsey Public Accounts Committee had laid on a very full day for us, taking us through various aspects of what they do and how it all works for them. We ended our session there sitting in on one of their meetings.”

“Socially the Guernsey PAC had arranged for us to have lunch with members of their Island’s Executive, some of whom I had met previously when at Commonwealth Parliamentary Association conferences, and to have dinner with the chair of PAC and

his wife plus former Stanley residents Robert and Lesley Titterington who now work for the Guernsey Island Government.”

“Thursday was perhaps our toughest day, as we started before 5am, in order to catch our flight to Manchester, where we spent the day in meetings with members of Tameside Borough Council, finishing up watching their PAC in session. The day ended with an evening meal at our hotel with Richard Kemp, a Liverpool Councillor. Overall it was a very interesting and informative day.”

“Friday also started around 5am, in order to catch our flight to the Isle of Man. Again, I met several people who I have met previously at CPA events, including some people who had been to the Falkland Islands, both on CPA business and privately.”

“Interestingly, in both Guernsey and Tameside, the PAC does not always meet in public, and when they do it is mainly when they are taking evidence. The Isle of Man PAC only meets in private.”

Mrs Halford concluded by saying that, “All in all I think the visit was very useful and informative, and what it has shown is that if you are going to have a PAC then it does need to be funded. The PACs we visited seem to have wider terms of reference than the Falkland Islands PAC, but generally are not allowed to question council policy. It was suggested to me by one PAC member I met that they believe that in order to be effective they need to show a 10 to 1 saving in what money they have been allocated. Once we are up and running we will be able to question how money has been spent in all areas, assess whether what has been done has achieved best value for money, or identify whether things could have been done differently and more efficiently.”

Mr Stuart Wallace, as chair of the Falkland Islands Public Accounts Committee, will be preparing a formal report on the trip. The Committee is due to have its first meeting in April.

Office of the Legislative Assembly  
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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.
- The Falkland Islands Government maintains an office in Westminster, London headed by Government Representative Ms Sukey Cameron.
- The Falkland Islands Government is a member of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. In 2004 the Falkland Islands hosted the CPA's Annual Regional Conference.
- Robert Titterington was Principal Crown Counsel to the Falkland Islands Government from 1988 to 2000 and Acting Attorney General in 2007; Lesley Titterington was formerly the Courts Administrator in Stanley.
- More Falkland Islands information is available at [www.falklands.gov.fk](http://www.falklands.gov.fk).