Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010: statement for 2020/21

**Scottish Law Commission Return for Financial Year 2020/21**

Under the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010 the Commission, along with other public bodies in Scotland, has a duty to publish annual public statements relating to our expenditure in the following areas:

* Public relations
* Overseas travel
* Hospitality and entertainment
* External consultancy

There are further duties to publish certain information relating to the purchasing of goods, the remuneration of employees and the steps we have taken to improve efficiency, effectiveness and economy in our performance as well as the promotion of sustainable growth.

Our statement covering the financial year 2020-21 (1/4/2020–31/3/2021) is set out below:

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| **Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010** |
| Scottish Law Commission Expenditure for Financial Year 2020/21 |
| **Activity** | **Spend 2020/21** |
| Public Relations | Nil |
| Overseas Travel | Nil |
| Hospitality and Entertainment | Nil |
| External Consultancy | Nil |
| Payments with a value in excess of £25,000 | Nil |
| Remunerations received in excess of £150,000 | Nil |

**Promotion of sustainable growth through the exercise of our functions**

The Scottish Law Commission has a statutory function: to recommend to Ministers ways of simplifying, updating and improving the law of Scotland.  Most of our work is carried out in accordance with our Programme of Law Reform.  The Programme is prepared following extensive consultation, including discussions with Government.  The Programme is submitted to Scottish Ministers for approval, and is laid before the Scottish Parliament. The Commission also from time to time receives references from Ministers to carry out law reform projects.  In exercising these functions the Commission seeks to contribute to the promotion of sustainable growth as follows -

* The Commission's business planning takes account of the Scottish Government's purpose: namely to focus on creating a more successful country, with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish through increased well-being and sustainable and inclusive economic growth.
	+ The law reform projects that the Commission undertakes are designed to contribute to the Scottish Government's National Outcomes, by recommending reforms that will help to provide an improved and modernised legal framework within which these National Outcomes can be pursued.  The Commission's current law reform projects contribute to National Outcomes: on Fair Work and Business, the Economy, and Communities.
* Recent and current law reform projects have the following general purposes:

Defamation law: modernisation of outdated rules, for the digital age and for the development of a digital economy;

Aspects of the law of prescription: making Scotland a fairer place in which to work and invest;

Review of contract law, of the law on termination of commercial leases, and of the law on moveable transactions (security over corporeal and incorporeal moveable property; assignation of incorporeal moveable property): making Scotland a more attractive place to contract and to do business;

**Improving efficiency, effectiveness and economy in our performance**

In the course of this financial year, we have continued to review the operating costs of the Commission in order to improve efficiency and effectiveness, and make economies where possible.  Steps taken for this purpose include the following –

* A continuing agreement with the Scottish Government Legal Directorate on the provision of a shared library service to the Commission by the Scottish Legal Information Centre;
* Travel costs continue to be reduced by undertaking meetings by video and telephone conference where possible instead of travel; the conference phone facility allows for multi-party conferencing; costs are also reduced by combining Commission business with other commitments, when possible; such as trips undertaken for academic purposes;
* Office costs: continued review of files, and destruction as appropriate: saving storage space; office cleaning costs reviewed and reduced; continued reduction in spend on postage and stationery, due to online publication only; recycling of stationery;
* Operating costs: continued participation in Scottish Government collaborative procurement agreements, for operating costs; resulting in some savings;
* On staff training, continued reliance for compulsory professional development and for general staff development on free sources of training, for example seminars organised by the Scottish Government and the Government Legal Service for Scotland.