

Rice to chair new Scottish Fiscal Commission



The Scottish Government has approved the Finance Committee's recommendations to appoint Managing Director of Lloyds Banking Group, Lady Susan Rice, as Chair of the Scottish Fiscal Commission. Professor Andrew Hughes Hallett and Professor Campbell Leith were also appointed as members of the committee.

These three experts will review what the Scottish Government thinks it will ingather as tax revenue and they will begin work this summer to review how much Scotland might expect in Land and Buildings Transaction Tax and Scottish Landfill Tax. These two taxes are devolved to the Scottish Government under powers in the Scotland Act 2012 and payments begin in April 2015.

They will work in an office space provided by Glasgow University which is hoped will endorse independence of the government.

Finance Secretary John Swinney welcomed the appointments: "I am delighted that these three strong candidates have been appointed to the Scottish Fiscal Commission and will provide impartial and expert public scrutiny of the Scottish Government's tax forecasts.

"As managing director of Lloyds Banking Group and the first woman to head a UK clearing bank Lady Susan Rice has a wealth of experience to bring to her new role as Chair of the Commission. She will lead the very credible team of experts which includes Professor Andrew Hughes Hallett and Professor

Campbell Leith who will both bring significant technical expertise and renowned reputations to the task.

“Going forward their work will be crucial as these tax receipts will fund a proportion of public spending in Scotland from 2015-16. We need to make sure that these forecasts are as robust as possible and the work of the Commission will help ensure this happens.

“As I outlined to Parliament we have put in place important safeguards to ensure the Commission is fully independent of the Scottish Government. These include accepting an invitation from the University of Glasgow to host the Commission, and inviting the Scottish Parliament to consider and approve appointments.

“We also plan to introduce a code of conduct for Commission members which will ensure that robust procedures are in place to deal with any conflicts of interest which may arise in future.”

To ensure independence from the Scottish Government, the Commission will not draw on Scottish Government officials for analysis and other inputs. In practice, expert resources to undertake this work are likely to come from the academic community.

Lady Susan Rice said:- “I’m delighted to be joined by two notable economists as we set about to create Scotland’s first ever Fiscal Commission.

“This is an important undertaking and one that needs to be handled with transparency, independence from the political process, and sound judgement. To be asked to serve the public good in this way is a great privilege.”

Lady Susan Rice is a very notable appointment to this job. She is chair of the Edinburgh International Book Festival and a non-executive director on many and diverse boards. She joined

the First Minister's Council of Economic Advisers in 2011 and among many other appointments she is President of the Scottish Council for Development and Industry.