

McKie grilling out of order

THE justice 1 committee of the Scottish Parliament is holding an inquiry into the running of the Scottish Criminal Record Office (SCRO) in the light of the Shirley McKie scandal. Ms McKie lost her job as a Strathclyde police officer after being falsely accused of perjury, resulting from a misidentification of her prints at a murder scene. Earlier this year, she was awarded £750,000 in an out-of-court settlement with the Executive after she sued for compensation.

However, yesterday's justice 1 proceedings took a highly questionable direction when Des McNulty, MSP, who is not formally a member of the committee, used the occasion to cross-examine Ms McKie on the veracity of her trial statements. Quite rightly, Ms McKie threatened to withdraw from the session.

Mr McNulty's line of questioning is not what the justice 1 committee investigation is about. Rather, justice 1 is concerned with restoring confidence in the SCRO by exposing the truth after that agency has caused a serious miscarriage of justice. It is not Mr McNulty's place to put Ms McKie on trial again when she has been found innocent in court. Instead, MSPs should be fixing what is wrong inside the SCRO.

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