



Briefing Paper for **S34(1)** - Crown Office **S34(1)**

S34(1)

FOR INFORMATION AND DIRECTION			
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Date Created	9 th June 2021	Telephone	S30(c)
S30(b)(i)&(ii), S34(1)			

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Media

There has been significant media reporting in respect of the SNP fundraising for another Independence Referendum since the fundraising efforts were announced in 2017. However, the first that the police were contacted by the media in respect of this was on 7 April 2021.

Police Scotland provided the following press statement at that time:

"The complaint is still being assessed to determine if an investigation is required."

This media statement was shared with COPFS and also the SNP for their awareness. This media line was maintained throughout most of the police activity as we moved through the Scottish Parliamentary Elections period.

The media have continued to show significant interest in this story and this has been exacerbated recently through high profile resignations from the SNP such as S38(1)(b) sighting 'a lack of transparency' within the Party.

On 1 June 2021, Police Scotland were again contacted by a number of media outlets looking for updates on this story. In particular The Herald highlighted that they were aware of specifics in regards to police activity in that they knew the name of the officer making enquiries, DI S38(1)(b), that police had contacted the SNP's Auditors – Johnson Carmichael and that we were noting statements from three people who recently left the SNP's Audit Committee – S38(1)(b) and S38(1)(b)

In response to this media enquiry further discussion took place and the 'if asked' media line was amended to:

"We continue to assess a complaint of alleged financial irregularity. During this initial work further information has been received which also requires to be assessed to determine if an investigation is required."

Again, this amended line was shared with COPFS and the SNP.

As we finalise our initial assessments a wider Comms Strategy will require to be finalised. We continue to ensure that we share any proposed media statements with COPFS.

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