



The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

## **Local Government and Regeneration Committee**

**Kevin Stewart MSP**  
**Convener**

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Dear Ms Proctor

### **Local Government and Regeneration Committee meeting 18 November 2015**

I refer to the invitation issued to you to provide evidence to the Local Government and Regeneration Committee at our meeting today in relation to the Committee's inquiry into Arms-Length External Organisations ("ALEOs").

In response to the invitation Angela Scott, Chief Executive wrote on 11 November to me indicating the Council would not be attending. The Clerk to the Committee thereafter made contact with officials to discuss but ultimately Aberdeen City Council did not attend the Committee meeting.

The background to the invitation, including detail of the letter sent to the Convener, were considered by the Committee today. The Committee did not find the action taken by the Council to be reasonable and have determined they wish to hear in person from the Council Leader, the Chief Executive and Judith Proctor in relation both to the original inquiry and the failure of Aberdeen City Council to attend as requested. This further meeting has been fixed for 2 December. The public record of today's meeting will be available on Monday 23 November, for information I attach a copy of the Committee's agreed approach to witness selection which was first stated on 10 December 2014 and can be viewed [here](#).

I would also remind you that Committees of the Scottish Parliament have powers to compel attendance under the Scotland Act 1998. While this power is rarely mentioned in invitations to attend, as Committees prefer to rely upon witnesses respecting the democratic process, in this instance the power will, if required, be invoked to secure attendance.

The Committee meeting on 2 December is scheduled to commence at 10am and the continued item for which your attendance is required is anticipated to commence at 11:30. It would be helpful if you could report to the Scottish Parliament no later than 11:15.

I would be grateful if you would confirm receipt of this letter and your attendance in respect of the invitation direct to the Clerk of the Committee who will be happy to provide any further information you might require in relation to the Committee's ALEO inquiry.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Kern', with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Convener  
Local Government and Regeneration Committee

Extract from Official Report  
Local Government and Regeneration Committee  
*Wednesday 10 December 2014*

## The Convener

Before I introduce the witnesses, I would like to clarify the committee's approach to who we ask to appear before us and the general criteria that we adopt. This is directed towards those from the public sector, including local authorities in particular, although for others our approach is similar.

When deciding who to invite, we look to achieve a balance from across the country that covers both rural and urban. We also have in mind coverage from affluent and less affluent areas. We aim to spread the coverage across the whole country, although we recognise that those in the larger urban areas might have more experience and knowledge of particular issues to share with us. We also recognise that staff in the larger urban areas can be more specialised and potentially handle a wider variety of issues, but we are always looking to the impacts on smaller areas, too.

We consider written submissions and other pertinent information before we select witnesses, and we are always interested to hear from those who provide an opinion that may differ from the status quo. If we receive submissions that provide similar opinions, we will try to avoid duplication on our panels, and we will strive to have contrary views available to test what we are told.

When we issue an invitation, we expect witnesses to attend. We will cancel an invitation only in exceptional circumstances. These invitations are not like invites to attend Government or other working groups, and we do not consider acceptance to be discretionary. We have powers to compel, but we do not want to use them, as we appreciate that it is far better all round that people attend willingly.

If witnesses feel that they are not the appropriate person to attend, they should contact the clerk immediately. That will allow an opportunity to discuss whether there might be a better alternative. If witnesses leave it to the last minute to contact the clerks, they will not be allowed to withdraw, and we will expect them to attend.