



## Local Government and Regeneration Committee Newsletter

No 2 (2015)

9 July 2015

This newsletter provides information on our work as the Local Government and Regeneration Committee. It is also available on our [Committee's website](#). If you have any questions, or wish to speak to someone about our work, please contact the clerking team. Contact details are provided at the end of this newsletter.

### Committee Membership

<a href="#">Kevin Stewart MSP</a>	<i>Convener</i>
<a href="#">John Wilson MSP</a>	<i>Deputy Convener</i>
<a href="#">Clare Adamson MSP</a>	<i>Member</i>
<a href="#">Cameron Buchanan MSP</a>	<i>Member</i>
<a href="#">Willie Coffey MSP</a>	<i>Member</i>
<a href="#">Cara Hilton MSP</a>	<i>Member</i>
<a href="#">Alex Rowley MSP</a>	<i>Member</i>



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## Committee's 2015 work programme

We've published a revised [work programme \(176KB pdf\)](#) for the period September 2015 to March 2016. Please note that this programme may be liable to amendment at short notice. Please contact the clerking team if you have any questions about the work programme.

## Completed Committee business

We published our annual report in June. The report summarises the outcomes achieved by our Committee during the Parliamentary year 11 May 2014 to 10 May 2015.

Read the report here: [4th Report, 2015 \(Session 4\): Annual Report 2014-2015 \(1.76MB pdf\)](#)

## Current Committee business

### Fixed-odds Betting Terminals

At our meeting on [24 June 2015](#), we agreed to hold an [inquiry](#) to consider the level of control of Fixed Odds Betting Terminals ("FOBTs"), also known as touch screen roulette machines, as proposed in [the Scotland Bill 2015](#).

Currently betting, gaming and lotteries are all matters reserved to Westminster. However, clause 45 of the Scotland Bill proposes devolving legislative competence in relation to gaming machines authorised by a betting premises licence where the maximum charge for a single play is more than £10.



The Gambling Act 2005 would be amended so the Scottish Ministers would be able to vary the number of machines allowed on betting premises. The power will only apply to applications for new premises.

We [launched a call for evidence on Wednesday 8 July](#) (214KB pdf). Organisations and individuals are invited to submit written evidence to us setting out their views on the proposed new power set out in Clause 45 of the Scotland Bill. Views are also invited on the Scottish Government's alternative clause as set out in pages 18 and 57 of [its response to the Interim Report from the Devolution \(Further Powers\) Committee on the Smith Commission and the UK Government's Proposals](#).

### Footway Parking and Double Parking (Scotland) Bill

This [Bill](#) is a Members Bill' and was introduced in the Parliament, by Sandra White MSP, on 21 May 2015 ("the Member in Charge"). The Parliament designated us as the lead committee for Stage 1 consideration of the Bill.

We will consider our approach to our scrutiny of this Bill in early September 2015. Following this we will decide what evidence we wish to take on the Bill. Further



information on this work will be circulated via our [email distribution list](#) and [Twitter](#) feed in due course.

## **Mainstreamed budget scrutiny**

As part of our mainstreamed scrutiny of the [Scottish Government's 2016-17 Draft Budget](#), we are currently examining the ability of Scottish Local Government Pension Funds to support the delivery of local capital infrastructure through their investment policies.

We will undertake oral evidence sessions with stakeholders and Scottish Ministers in October. We will also undertake fact-finding visits to Manchester (Sept 2015) and Inverclyde (Oct 2015). Further information on this work will be published in due course.

## **European issues**

### *EU Priorities*

In mid-September we will consider our approach to European issues for the period up until March 2016.

Deputy Convener, John Wilson MSP is our European Reporter. European Reporters are an integral part of the Scottish Parliament's EU Strategy. Our Reporter is required to manage our EU engagement and to take the lead on scrutiny of EU proposals.

## **Petitions**

[Petition PE1534](#) was referred to us by the Public Petitions Committee on 27 January 2015. This petition was lodged on 3 September 2014 by Clare Symonds on behalf of Planning Democracy. The petition calls on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to review the current rights of appeal within planning and other consenting processes which give deemed planning consent, considering the benefits of widening the scope of appeal, and providing an equal right of appeal.

We [wrote](#) to the Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Communities and Pensioners' Rights seeking the views of the Scottish Government on the current rights of appeal within planning and other consenting processes and to ask if the Government has any plans to review those processes. The Cabinet Secretary [responded](#) to us on 14 May.

As part of this work the, we will undertake a one-off oral evidence session in late 2015 on various planning issues, such as local development plans and strategic development plans.

## **Completed Committee business**

### **Air Weapons and Licensing (Scotland) Bill**

The Parliament [passed](#) the Air Weapons and Licensing (Scotland) Bill following its Stage 3 consideration on Thursday 25 June 2015. The Bill will shortly receive Royal Assent and become an Act.

Our [Stage 1 Report \(1331KB pdf\)](#) on the Bill debated by Parliament on Thursday 23 April 2015. Over three days (13, 20 & 27 May) we debated and amended the Bill at Stage 2.

## *Background*

The [Air Weapons and Licensing \(Scotland\) Bill](#) was introduced into the Parliament on 14 May 2014 by the Cabinet Secretary for Justice. We were designated as the lead committee for the Stage 1 scrutiny of the Bill. The Bill creates a new licencing regime for owning and using an air weapon in Scotland as well as creating a new separate licensing regime for the operation of sexual entertainment venues in Scotland. The Bill also amends the current licencing regime on the sale of alcohol to make it an offence to supply alcohol to people under 18 for consumption in a public place, as well as amending existing civil licencing regime in relation to the licensing of taxis and private car hires; scrap metal dealerships and public entertainment venues. [More information on the Bill](#) can be found on our website.

## **Community Empowerment (Scotland) Bill**

The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Bill was [passed](#) by the Parliament on 17 June 2015, following Stage 3 proceedings. The Bill will shortly receive Royal Assent and become an Act.

Our [Stage 1 Report on the Bill \(3.04MB pdf\)](#) on the Bill was published earlier in January. The Scottish Government published its [response to our report \(650KB pdf\)](#) in February 2015. Stage 2 proceedings were completed on the Bill in March.

We also produced a number of short web videos about our work on the Bill—

- [You spoke, we listened, we acted](#) (April 2015)
- [Community Empowerment Bill completing first stage of law-making process](#) (January 2015)
- [MSPs seek your help to shape new law on empowering communities](#) (November 2014)
- [MSPs seek your help on community empowerment law](#) (October 2014)

## *Background*

The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Bill was introduced into the Parliament on 11 June 2014 by the Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Employment and Sustainable Growth. The Bill will empower local communities across Scotland in various ways. Included in the Bill are provisions about national outcomes; conferring functions on certain persons in relation to services provided by, and assets of, local authorities and other public bodies; amendments to the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003; enabling certain bodies to buy abandoned or neglected land; provision for registers of common good property; reforms to the law on allotments and powers to allow local authorities to reduce non-domestic rates.

## **Other Committee business**

### **Local Government Benchmarking**

We continue to undertake our annual review of the progress of the COSLA/SOLACE/IS local government [Benchmarking Framework](#). We will undertake an oral evidence session in early 2016 to continue its ongoing review of this project.



As part of this work, we will issue a public call for views/questions on the Benchmarking Framework in October 2015.

### **Integrated health and social care complaints procedures**

Following the recent integration of health and social care services in Scotland on 1 April 2015, we have decided to keep a watching brief on the implications of this reform on public complaints procedure. This issue was also raised as part of our engagement with the SPSO. On 4 March 2015, we [agreed our approach to our examination](#) of this issue.

### **Commissioner for Ethical Standards in Public Life in Scotland**

We will consider the annual report of the Commissioner for Ethical Standards in Public Life in Scotland, as well as examining some of the interaction between codes of practise for councillors under the jurisdiction of the Commissioner, and codes of practise under the jurisdiction of the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) for councillors who sit on ALEOs which have charitable status.

### **Committee meetings 2015/2016**

We normally meet each Wednesday morning, starting at 10am, when the Parliament is sitting. The [agenda and papers](#) for our meetings are usually published on our website on the Friday of the preceding week. You may attend a meeting by booking tickets, free of charge, from the Parliament's [Visitor Services](#) team (Tel 0131 348 5200). Our meetings are also [broadcast live](#) on the Parliament's website.

[Recess dates](#) for the Parliament are available online.

### **Committee staff**

The current members of the Committee clerking team are:

- David Cullum, Clerk to the Committee;
- Claire Menzies Smith, Senior Assistant Clerk;
- Seán Wixted, Assistant Clerk;
- Ross Fairbairn, Committee Assistant.

Contact details for the clerking team are provided at the foot of this newsletter.

## Useful links



Information on the Scottish Parliament is available on the Parliament's [website](#) and [Twitter](#) feed, as well as on its [Facebook](#) page and on the dedicated Scottish Parliament [YouTube](#) channel. You may also access video recordings of our Committee meetings on the YouTube channel. [Transcripts of all of our meetings](#) are published by the Official Report.

Information on our scrutiny and inquiry work as a parliamentary committee is available on our [webpages](#) as well as on our [Twitter](#) feed and on our [Instagram](#) site.

## Contacts

### Contact the Committee

*Telephone:* (0131) 348 5223 or (0131) 348 6040

*Textphone:* (0131) 348 5415 (RNID Typetalk calls welcome)

*Email:* [lgr.committee@scottish.parliament.uk](mailto:lgr.committee@scottish.parliament.uk)

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