



## **Local Government and Regeneration Committee**

### **Inquiry into the Flexibility and Autonomy of Local Government**

The Scottish Parliament's Local Government and Regeneration Committee has today, Thursday 6 February 2014, launched a call for written evidence as part of its inquiry into the Inquiry into the flexibility and autonomy of local government in Scotland

Organisations and individuals are invited to submit written evidence to the Committee setting out their views.

#### **Committee's Call for evidence**

The Committee invites all interested parties to submit written evidence on the inquiry. It would be helpful if written submissions could address the following questions:

1. Does any action require to be taken to improve the level of public engagement and interaction with local government, if so please suggest what action might be beneficial?
2. Views on the current legal and funding positions of local government.
3. Views on the way that remote, peripheral and island communities are accommodated within the local government structure.
4. Views on the level of legal flexibility and autonomy from central government that local government enjoys.

#### **Remit of the inquiry**

The remit of the inquiry is to examine the levels of flexibility and autonomy available to local government in Scotland. The aim of the inquiry is to learn lessons, and inform the ongoing debate on whether there is a need to strengthen and enhance local democratic structures in Scotland. The inquiry will—

- Contrast the position of local government with the constitutional and legal framework in neighbouring EU jurisdictions;
- Examine the level of public engagement and interaction with local government, including turnout at local elections;

- Consider the legal and constitutional funding mechanisms available to local government;
- Consider how remote, peripheral or island communities are accommodated within the local government structures, and
- Consider the level of legal flexibility, and autonomy from central government, which local government enjoys.

### **How to submit your evidence**

The closing date for receipt of submissions is **6pm on Friday 28 March 2014**.

Submissions should be limited to no more than eight pages of A4. Responses should be sent, **wherever possible, electronically** and in MS Word format to the following email address: [lgr.committee@scottish.parliament.uk](mailto:lgr.committee@scottish.parliament.uk)

Before submitting your evidence please read the Parliament's policy on treatment of written evidence by subject and mandatory committees (see below).

Responses can also be sent by post to:

Clerk to the Local Government and Regeneration Committee  
Committee Office  
Room T3.40  
Scottish Parliament  
Edinburgh  
EH99 1SP

### **For Committee information, contact:**

David Cullum: 0131 348 5217  
[david.cullum@scottish.parliament.uk](mailto:david.cullum@scottish.parliament.uk)

Seán Wixted: 0131 348 5223  
[sean.wixted@scottish.parliament.uk](mailto:sean.wixted@scottish.parliament.uk)

Ben Morton: 0131 348 6040  
[ben.morton@scottish.parliament.uk](mailto:ben.morton@scottish.parliament.uk)

### **For media information, contact:**

Linda Peters: 0131 348 6269  
[linda.peters@scottish.parliament.uk](mailto:linda.peters@scottish.parliament.uk)

## **Policy on treatment of written evidence by subject and mandatory committees**

This information lets you know how committees of the Scottish Parliament will deal with any information sent in response to calls for evidence and any subsequent correspondence.

Most people who submit evidence want it to be put in the public domain. In addition, the committees of the Scottish Parliament are committed to being open in their dealings in accordance with the Scottish Parliament's founding principles.

Our normal practice is to publish relevant evidence that is sent to us on our website and we may also include it in the hard copy of any committee report. **Therefore, if you wish your evidence to be treated as confidential, or for your evidence to be published anonymously, please contact the Clerk to the Committee before you submit your evidence.**

You should be aware that it is for the relevant Committee to decide whether the evidence can be accepted on the basis that it will be seen in full by the Committee but will not be published, or will be published in edited form or anonymously. See section on "Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002" below.

There are a few situations where we do not publish all the evidence sent to us. This may be for practical reasons or for legal reasons. Examples of practical reasons are where the number of submissions we received does not make this possible or where we receive a large number of submissions in very similar terms. In that case, we would normally publish only a list of the names of people who have submitted evidence.

In addition, there may be a few situations where we may not choose to publish your evidence or have to edit it before publication for legal reasons.

### *Data Protection Act 1998*

The Parliament must comply with the Data Protection Act 1998. This affects what information about living people we can make public.

When we publish your evidence, we will not publish your signature or your personal contact information (like your home telephone number or your home address).

We may also have to edit information which can identify another living person who has not specifically given their consent to have their information about them made public.

In these situations, committee members will have access to the full text of your evidence, even though it has not been published in full.

**If you consider that evidence you plan to submit may raise issues concerning the Data Protection Act, please contact the Clerk to the Committee before you submit your evidence.**

### *Potentially defamatory material*

Typically, the Parliament will not publish defamatory statements or material. If we think your submission contains potentially defamatory material, typically we will return it to you

with an invitation to substantiate the comments or remove them. In these circumstances, if the evidence is returned to us and it still contains material which we consider may be defamatory, it may not be considered by the Committee and it may have to be destroyed.

### *Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002*

The Parliament is covered by the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002. This also affects the way that we deal with your evidence.

As stated above, if you wish your evidence to be treated as confidential, or for your evidence to be published anonymously, please contact the Clerk to the Committee, before you submit your evidence.

In particular, you should be aware that if we receive a request for information under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002, we may be legally required to release the information to the person who has made the request – even where the Committee has agreed to treat all or part of the information in confidence

So, in the circumstances outlined above, while we can assure you that your document/name will not be circulated to the general public in the context of the Committee's current work, we are unable to give you a guarantee that the document will never be released.