



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

WELFARE REFORM COMMITTEE

MINUTES

19th Meeting, 2014 (Session 4)

Tuesday 2 December 2014

Present:

Clare Adamson (Deputy Convener)	Ken Macintosh
Joan McAlpine	Christina McKelvie
Michael McMahon (Convener)	Kevin Stewart

The meeting opened at 10.00 am.

1. **Declaration of interests:** Clare Adamson, Joan McAlpine and Christina McKelvie were invited to declare any relevant interests. Ms Adamson and Ms McKelvie indicated that they had no interests to declare. Ms McAlpine declared an interest as a columnist for the Daily Record which has campaigned previously on welfare reform.
2. **Choice of Deputy Convener:** The Committee chose Clare Adamson as its new Deputy Convener.
3. **Decision on taking business in private:** The Committee agreed to take item 7 in private.
4. **Subordinate legislation:** The Committee considered the following negative instrument

Discretionary Housing Payments (Limit on Total Expenditure) Revocation (Scotland) Order 2014 (SSI 2014/298)

The Committee agreed to make no recommendations in relation to the instrument.

5. **Welfare Funds (Scotland) Bill (in private):** The Committee agreed a draft Stage 1 report. One change was agreed by division.

In relation to the following section of the stage 1 report Kevin Stewart proposed that option 1 (paras 9-11) be accepted. The proposal was agreed to by division. For 5 (Christina McKelvie, Joan McAlpine, Kevin Stewart, Alex Johnstone and Clare Adamson), Against 2 (Ken Mackintosh and Michael McMahon).

Outsourcing the operation of the fund

09. The Committee acknowledges the benefits that may be drawn from local authorities working jointly to administer the fund. It also takes some comfort from the view of the Minister that the Scottish Government does not envisage the fund being outsourced to a private company.

10. However, in light of the evidence received the Committee recommends that the Scottish Government consider the issue of outsourcing in light of EU procurement laws and thresholds to ensure that private companies are not allowed to undertake the work.

11. The Committee would also suggest that the Scottish Government issue guidance to help steer local authorities through the outsourcing process and to provide consistency in approach.

12. Or

13. The Committee acknowledges the benefits that may be drawn from local authorities working jointly to administer the fund. It also takes some comfort from the view of the Minister that the Scottish Government does not envisage the fund being outsourced to a private company.

14. However, the Committee recommends that the Scottish Government removes the opportunity for local authorities to outsource to a third party and restrict the provision in the Bill to solely joint working with other local authorities.

15. The Committee would also suggest that the Scottish Government issue guidance to help steer local authorities through the joint working process and to provide consistency in approach.

6. **Draft Budget Scrutiny 2015-16 (in private):** The Committee agreed a draft report to the Finance Committee on the Scottish Government's Draft Budget 2015-16.
7. **Work programme (in private):** The Committee considered its work programme.

The meeting closed at 10.43 am.

WR/S4/14/19/M

Simon Watkins
Clerk to the Welfare Reform Committee
Room T1.01
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
Tel: 0131 348 5228
Email: simon.watkins@scottish.parliament.uk