

Work Programme

Introduction

The Committee agreed its work programme to the end of June 2010 at its meeting on 9 December 2009 and added some further items after discussion at its meeting on 17 March 2010.

Legislation

Control of Dogs (Scotland) Bill

The Committee has completed its Stage 1 consideration of the Bill and Stage 2 of the Bill will take place on 24 March 2010.

Housing (Scotland) Bill

The Committee issued a call for written evidence and will take oral evidence on the Bill at Stage 1 in March and April. Parliament has agreed that Stage 1 should be completed by 25 June 2010.

Budget Scrutiny

Budget Strategy Phase

The Budget Strategy Phase (which is the replacement for Stage 1 of the Budget Process) will take place in the period April-June 2010 and the Finance Committee has issued guidance to subject committees on their potential involvement in the process. As the Committee has already examined many of the key questions being asked by the Finance Committee in the context of its inquiry into Local Government Finance, the Committee will submit a report to the Finance Committee which will be based on its inquiry report and response from the Scottish Government.

Other issues

Support for the voluntary sector

The Committee took evidence on 10 February on the suspension of, and reducing levels of, grants being made available to the voluntary sector by charitable foundations as a result of the current economic situation, and the impact this is having on the sector. It intends to hold a further evidence session in May 2010.

Local Government Overview Report

The Committee intends to take evidence from the Accounts Commission, following the publication of its annual overview of local government in Scotland. This is likely to take place in May.

Scottish Public Services Ombudsman Annual Report

As it has done in previous years, the Committee intends to take evidence from the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman on his annual report.

Energy Assistance Package

The Committee will take evidence from the Minister for Housing and Communities on the operation of the Energy Assistance Package which came into operation on 1 April 2009.

Voting seminar

The Committee has agreed to hold a half-day seminar in June, jointly with the Scottish Government, to examine ways in which voter turnout can be increased.

Previous inquiries (follow-up)

National Planning Framework 2

The Committee agreed to monitor progress being made by the Scottish Government in implementing NPF2, and will seek to consider the Action Plan once it has been reviewed by the Scottish Government in June 2010.

Child Poverty

The Committee agreed to monitor progress being made by the Scottish Government on the commitments it made in response to the Committee's report on child poverty, and its progress towards meeting child poverty targets. The Committee agreed to take evidence from the Scottish Government May 2010.

Home Care Services for the Elderly

The Committee considered draft guidance on social care procurement published by the Scottish Government. It noted that many of the recommendations the Committee had previously made were taken onboard in this draft guidance. The Committee agreed to write to the Accounts Commission and to the Social Work Inspection Agency regarding proposals made by Community Care Providers Scotland for an independent assessment of previous procurement exercises.

Equal Pay in local government

The Committee took further evidence from COSLA at its meeting on 17 March 2010 on progress being made in relation to settling local government equal pay claims. This follows on from the Committee's inquiry which was completed in June 2009. The Committee will continue to monitor the situation with regard to equal pay.