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Front cover: The Presiding Officer, Rt Hon Tricia Marwick MSP, with (left to right) Christina McKelvie MSP, Mary Fee MSP, and Mary Scanlon MSP, present a certificate to Midshipman Raj Patel of the US Naval Academy Pipes and Drums ahead of the New York Tartan Day Parade
Introduction
This is the report of the Scottish Parliament delegation to Scotland Week 2015. The delegation comprised:

- Rt Hon Tricia Marwick MSP, Presiding Officer
- Mary Scanlon MSP
- Christina McKelvie MSP
- Mary Fee MSP

The focus of the programme was engagements and discussions with a focus on core parliamentary activities such as discussions relating to policy issues under active consideration by Scottish Parliament committees.

Since 1998, Tartan Day has been recognised by the U.S. House of Representatives as an official celebration of the contribution of American-Scots to US culture and life. Over the past 10 years Scotland-focused activity around Tartan Day has grown into a week-long programme to promote Scotland in North America and is now called Scotland Week.

Scotland Week 2015 was a week-long programme of events in America, aiming to promote all things Scottish. Fifty million people across the world claim Scottish heritage, the majority being in America and Canada.

The Scottish Parliament’s budget for Scotland Week has been capped at £30,000 since 2009. The cost of this visit was £24,061 which covered the cost of travel, accommodation and expenses for the four MSPs and two accompanying staff.

The delegation wishes to thank each and every person who facilitated their respective meetings and engagements in New York and Chicago, and for the time and information which they so willingly shared. Members were met with warmth, friendship and enthusiasm across all of the programme’s activities, and the contribution of each person involved led directly to the visit’s success and outcomes.

Purpose
The purpose of the visit was to:

- participate in a series of policy discussions with policymakers in both New York and Chicago focussed on areas of:
  - educational attainment
  - mental health
  - freight transport
  - active travel
  - broadband connectivity and infrastructure
  - global engagement and connecting Scotland
  (these being matters of core interest to particular Members and the work of their respective parliamentary committees);

- support and promote, through our participation, activities which could bring wider economic benefit and added value to Scotland; and
- enhance our institutional and international reputation through involvement in Scotland Week activities.

The outcomes from the discussions held across the breadth of the programme will help in broadening the understanding of Members on specific policy initiatives and approaches in New York, Chicago and the wider US. These discussions also provided a direct opportunity to discuss policy initiatives and approaches in Scotland, to share examples and information, and assist in developing thinking in how to tackle particular issues within each policy area.

The International Strategy identifies activities and countries which the Scottish Parliament considers are strategically important. The Strategy states that the US remains a partner:

‘from which we can learn and offer support. Scotland has very strong links with North America in terms of business, tourism and culture’.

It goes on to state that the Scottish Parliament will:

‘build on existing links to strengthen and find further opportunities to cooperate with the parliaments and people of North America through, for example, the annual Scotland Week activity in the USA and Canada through our representation at this event’.

Programme

The visit was focused on New York and, for the first time, Chicago. Details of the programme are outlined in the Annex to this report.

The programme was a mixture of events involving all Members (such as the meeting with UN Women) and solo engagements on matters directly relevant to each particular Member and the work of their respective committees.

The remainder of the report outlines the background to, and discussion points from, the various engagements and meetings, including those prepared by Members.

Thursday 9 April 2015

Shortly after arrival in New York the delegation met with Danny Lopez, HM Consul-General New York and Director General Trade & Investment USA, and Matthew Windrum, Vice-Consul and Head of Political Affairs.

Both officials gave a broad overview of political and other events both in the US and in New York. There was a discussion on the wider programme and the individuals and organisations with whom the delegation would meet.
Friday 10 April 2015

Mary Scanlon MSP had a meeting to discuss mental health policy issues with Ann Marie T. Sullivan MD, Commissioner of the New York State Office of Mental Health. In particular, the discussion focused on mental health policies, the provision of public services; strategies to tackle etc.

‘Research in recent years has developed a significant evidence base in terms of understanding mental health. In New York, there is now much greater emphasis and priority given to mental health in terms of children from three months onwards and for adult mental health.

The insurance backed system raises questions regarding care when a patient has visited the doctor several times with the same condition. This alerts the GP to take the next step which is to include psychiatric support for the patient or child at the earliest stage. This has helped to prevent mild and moderate mental health issues becoming severe and chronic. Considerable work has also been done on ensuring good mental health and wellbeing for older people and patients with chronic conditions as well as addictions. It has been proven that looking after a patient’s mental health allows them to address addictions and to cope much better with long term conditions. (80% of high cost patients have anxiety/depression) In order words mental health is the key to good physical health and a constant focus on mental health is found to be an excellent coping mechanism.

Only 30% of children referred to mental health services are medicated. The services provide support and understanding for the child and also for the whole family. Referral to specialist mental health for children is done within two weeks. There is no doubt that the high cost of medical care is driving earlier diagnosis and treatment for mental health patients.

There is a national programme in place named Ages and Stages which can detect autism by the age of two and address issues such as childhood poverty and services again focus on supporting the whole family. The understanding of addressing mental health in childhood is well documented and understood and a preventative strategy to reduce problems in later life.

In adult mental health services, the Commissioner and her staff are now looking at full integration of services between general practitioners and psychiatric and psychological support.

I was very interested in the mandatory annual screening tool which consists of nine simple questions looking at mood, appetite, sleeping patterns etc. which is used in the Obama care model and also for other more expensive insurance backed health care. This has identified and increased demand for mental health services and currently the Commissioner and her staff are addressing workforce issues in order to cope with the level of identified need.’
Christina McKelvie MSP had a meeting with Ms Mireia Rozas-Simon, Deputy Head of the Delegation, Delegation of Catalonia in the United States. This tied in with the European and External Relations Committee’s ‘Connecting Scotland’ inquiry.

Of particular interest was the theme of ‘How other organisations connect internationally’, for example, how the Delegation’s office engages in international activities; how such activities are mapped and provide opportunities for learning and exchange; the office’s presence in New York and abroad; international cooperation between it and other agencies; joint research projects.

‘Mireia introduced me to her team and explained that all things Catalonia go through her office. They have responsibility for all trade, cultural, educational and inward investment interests. They also arrange and negotiate inward and outward visits to and from the US and Catalonia.

Mireia briefed me on the recent visit of members of the Catalonian government which visited the US recently to discuss all of the links above and explain a bit about the diplomatic campaign for Catalonia to be an independent state.

The main key topics at present are research and innovation and encouraging inward investment to Catalonia. Catalonia has a memorandum of understanding with the US and this is the basis on which trade and other negotiations take place.

A very interesting visit indeed which gave me a clear insight into how small nations and regions can work with large countries like the US.’

Mary Fee MSP undertook a visit to the East Side Access project which was organised by the Metropolitan Transportation Authority. This is one of the largest transportation infrastructure projects currently underway in the United States and encompasses work in multiple locations in Manhattan, Queens and the Bronx and includes more than 11 miles of tunnelling.

Mrs Fee’s visit was led by Dr Michael Horodniceanu, President of the MTA Capital Construction and involved a tour of the underground project and discussions around the need for the railway, how the project managers had liaised with local communities and business on impact mitigation, cost considerations and monitoring, waste disposal, transport integration and other matters.

‘Currently a number of large scale infrastructure projects are under development in Scotland including the new Forth Crossing, Borders railway and Dundee Waterfront. The visit to East Side gave me the opportunity to discuss how funding packages are put together and discuss how partner organisations can work together to develop projects. Minimising disruption and maintaining good community links is always a crucial part of a major development and the discussions I had with the project managers at East Side Access gave me a valuable insight in how they achieve this. The discussions I had while visiting the project will be useful when we further scrutinise large scale Infrastructure projects at Committee.’
Christina McKelvie MSP had a meeting with Nicolas Polet, Deputy General Representative of the Government of Flanders to the United States (again, tied in with the European and External Relations Committee’s ‘Connecting Scotland’ inquiry). The discussion centred around ‘How other organisations connect internationally’, for example, how the Delegation’s office engages in international activities; how such activities are mapped and provide opportunities for learning and exchange; the office’s presence in New York and abroad; international cooperation between it and other agencies; joint research projects.

‘Nicolas explained that they are the diplomatic delegation with all arms (trade, education and culture) brought together. They have four staff in his section and 15 in total. They are linked to the Consulate General of Belgium. Nicolas explained that his office has six focussed elements linked to geography for example the office in New York, another in California, one focussed on the energy industry in Texas, and another office in Massachusetts.

They arrange many cultural events, most recently cultural exhibitions and conferences with a focus on artists such as Rueben's, Van Eyck. They promote their food, beer and theatre experiences jointly with any events they have.

Economic work with Flanders investment trade and investment gives them four offices in New York City, Los Angeles, Atlanta and Chicago.

Trade shows are one of their focussed priorities and they also have a technology attaché supporting biotech business development working closely with the academic sector. They also promote and educate in minority languages, art and history. Most recently they commemorated 100 years since the outbreak of World War I.

They use corporate, academic, business and Individual connections to build their international reputation and fund Research chairs at different Universities’.

The Presiding Officer undertook a speaking engagement at the New York University Wagner Graduate School of Public Service. The theme of the talk was Democratic engagement in the 21st Century: Scotland’s Constitutional Journey. The engagement was facilitated through the University of Edinburgh with Professor Charlie Jeffery from the University joining the Presiding Officer, following her talk, in a Q&A session alongside Michael Laver, Dean for Social Sciences at NYU's Faculty of Arts and Science. The session was moderated by NYU Wagner Vice Dean, Tony Bertelli.

This was an open event attended by students, faculty staff and members of the public. The Presiding Officer’s speech can be accessed via this link: www.scottish.parliament.uk/abouttheparliament/41197.aspx

Mary Fee MSP attended a meeting with Hayes Lord, NYC Department of Transportation to discuss the city’s ‘Bicycle program’. The Scottish Parliament delegation to New York in 2010 held a meeting with Mr Lord to discuss the central objectives of the programme (to implement and maintain New York's on and off-
street bicycle network; improve cycling safety; and improve bicycle access on bridges and mass transit).

‘As a member of the Infrastructure and Capital Investment Committee, I was interested to hear how the programme was developing. Active travel is a matter under regular consideration by the Committee so the meeting was of particular relevance.

Achieving the modal shift to active travel is a challenge but is something the Infrastructure and Capital Investment Committee is committed to doing. The Cycle Network is developing at different rates across Scotland, and the Committee acknowledges that more work needs done to increase the availability of safe Cycle routes.

Hayes Lord discussed in detail how the Bicycle Programme was developed and rolled out, how the areas it moved into were selected and what work was done with local communities and schools.

The Bicycle Programme worked in partnership with transport providers to ensure routes were safe, minimising accident risks for all types of transport users. The Programme is a long term strategy and has commitment from all levels of government to maintain and fund it (the funding was 80% federal and 20% city). Climate change was a key concern to people moving across to using bicycles with an increase in the number of young people using bikes.

There was discussion around some of the measures taken to encourage more people to use their bikes such as the city’s education programmes on safe and responsible cycling, the production of cycle maps and giving people a free bell for their bike. In addition, the provision of bike racks at subway stations made it easier for people to travel by bike and subway rather than only by car. As a result, there was now a more positive attitude towards cycling and of cars sharing the roads with bikes.

The model used to develop the programme will be very useful as we continue our scrutiny in Committee.’

The delegation met with key representatives of UN Women at its HQ to discuss its work and gain an understanding of how the organisation operates within the broad framework of the United Nations.

With operations stretching across 96 countries worldwide, they learnt how programmes run by UN Women are addressing key areas of global concern within the UN.

Of particular interest were projects to help end violence against women and girls and how political transformation could take place in countries with a poor record of gender equality. Female MSPs currently account for 35% of our total MSPs (compared to an average worldwide rate for female politicians of 22%) and the
delegation was able to share their past and present experiences of gender equality issues.

The delegation was also very keen to do their part, at political and parliamentary levels, to raise further awareness in Scotland of the excellent work UN Women is doing.

The issue of ending violence against women and young girls has recently been considered by the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) at the British Islands and Mediterranean Region (BIMR) Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) conference on the Role of Parliamentarians in Ending Violence against Women and Girls and by the CPA Scotland Branch (Ending Violence Against) at its Commonwealth Day event. In addition, the Scotland Branch will be holding a seminar in October 2015 on how social media is being used as a weapon of abuse against individuals.

Rt Hon Tricia Marwick MSP, Mary Fee MSP, Christina McKelvie MSP and Mary Scanlon MSP with staff from UN Women

The delegation attended a Scottish Government hosted ‘Scottish University Alumni’ reception at Glasgow Caledonian University Campus.

This was an opportunity to meet with a variety of individuals and organisations, including alumni groups who have firsthand experience of living and working in Scotland and who are now based in New York and the US and who are well placed to promote Scotland as a place to visit and study.

The reception also featured a talk by artist Gerald Burns who spoke about his exhibition ‘A Brush with Inspiration’ featuring 16 prominent Scots.
SATURDAY 11 APRIL 2015
The delegation attended the St Andrew's Society of the State of New York Kirkin’ of the Tartan service at the Brick Presbyterian Church. The service (non-denominational) was conducted by Society member, the Reverend George William Rutler. The service is a traditional prelude to the Tartan Day Parade.

The Presiding Officer served at Honorary Grand Marshall of the Tartan Day Parade. The Parade is seen as the high point of Scotland Week and this year it was thought to be the biggest yet. The Presiding Officer led the Parade up Sixth Avenue and the Members carried the Scottish Parliament banner.

Following the Parade the delegation attended receptions by the America Scottish Foundation and the New York City Tartan Day Committee. The Presiding Officer, on behalf of the Scottish Parliament, thanked everyone involved with the organisation of the Parade and for involving the delegation in the day’s events.

SUNDAY 12 APRIL 2015
The delegation transferred from New York to Chicago.

MONDAY 13 APRIL 2015
The Presiding Officer met with Stephen Bridges, the British Consul General in Chicago, who gave an overview of political and other events both in the US and in Chicago. There was a discussion on the wider programme and the individuals and organisations with whom the delegation would meet.

Mary Scanlon MSP met with Alderman Latasha Thomas, Chair of the Committee on Education and Child Development at Chicago Council, to discuss issues around educational attainment in Chicago and policy approaches, the provision of public services, the opportunities for children in deprived communities, and the contacts with hard to reach children and parents. The educational attainment gap is an issue under consideration by the Education and Culture Committee.

‘A federal programme named ‘Early Head Start’ has been rolled out to all school districts, focussing on educating parents and identifying if there have been ‘school benefits’ by the age of eight. Any development issues identified at this age is seen as a prediction of issues later in life. Key features of the programme included smaller classroom sizes and providing a meal in school.

They are trying hard to bring families into the classroom. This has been found to break down barriers, particularly when the parent has not had a good school experience.
Work is being done to get children out of gang environments, provide job placements, counselling and mentoring. Serving a meal at school which children can enjoy with their parents was proving helpful in breaking down these barriers. I also had a briefing on the Becoming A Man initiative which ‘is a dropout and violence prevention program for at-risk male students in grades 7-12 and offers in-school programming, in some cases complemented by after-school sports, to develop social-cognitive skills strongly correlated with reductions in violent and anti-social behaviour’.

Testing is done every year to identify children falling behind. In addition, steps were taken to identify pupils in their 5th and 6th years who may be about to drop out of school.

Community colleges’ curriculum is paired with industry, particularly the automotive industry to help with employment opportunities. Pupils can start placements and work experience at 14 years of age.

Funding systems for nursery education require monitoring of the child's development. This helps to pick up an issues requiring additional support.’

Christina McKelvie MSP and Mary Fee MSP were due to meet with State Senator Pamela Althoff. Unfortunately the Senator was unable to attend at the last minute therefore meeting went ahead with staff from the Senator’s office: Joseph P McKeown III, Account Manager, Office of Regional Economic Development; Esther Joy King, Deputy Director, Office of Entrepreneurship Innovation & Technology; and Tim Bryers, Communication and Public Affairs, Illinois Senate Republican Staff.

‘The Senator is a member of a number of State Senate committees e.g. transportation, labour and commerce and her aides outlined the work under consideration by the State Senate, its committees and the Senator herself. They also gave an overview of how the Senate works which gave an opportunity to reflect on parallels with the operation of the Scottish Parliament’.

The Presiding Officer met with Allan Garraway and Gus Noble, Chicago Scots board members, to discuss the work of Chicago Scots.

Established in 1845, it is ‘the oldest charity in Illinois’ and ‘one of the world’s largest Scottish cultural organizations’ Its mission is ‘to nourish Scottish identity through service, fellowship and celebration of Scottish culture’ and offers scholarships and organises events and initiatives ‘to educate, entertain and promote both traditional and contemporary Scottish culture’. It also offers a range of elderly care services at its Scottish Home.

Chicago Scots had been particularly helpful in providing contacts and making introductions with regards the Presiding Officer’s engagements with the Chicago Tribune and the University of Chicago. The meeting provided an opportunity for the Presiding Officer to discuss the politics Scotland has passed through and the challenges that now presents to the parliament and the country. Given the worldwide
interest in the referendum which was regarded as a positive example of democratic participation it was a useful opportunity to discuss further with interested parties. It also provided an opportunity for the Presiding Officer to thank Chicago Scots for its assistance in facilitating contacts and meetings with key individuals in Chicago.

Mary Scanlon MSP had further discussions on the issue of educational attainment. Mrs Scanlon met with Melina Wright of the Illinois State Board of Education. The emphasis of the discussion was on the No Child Left Behind Initiative.

‘This is a federal law which requires states to evaluate the performance of every school every year. Under NCLB, the State (Illinois) sets targets and determines whether schools are making ‘Adequate Yearly Progress’ (AYP) towards meeting those targets. Students at schools missing AYP for two or more years may have the opportunity to transfer or receive tutoring. It is the latest revision of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act 1965 and is regarded as the most significant federal education policy initiative in a generation.

There was discussion around some of the particular aims of the initiative such as all pupils attaining a minimum proficiency or better in English, reading and mathematics; that students are taught in an appropriate and safe environment and that all students graduate from high school.

To meet these aims, the law provides certain requirements, incentives and resources including annual testing of all students against state standards in reading and mathematics in grades 3-8 and in science at three times in a student’s school career (including once in high school); verification of each state’s assessment system; and a timetable for determining whether a school, district and the state are making AYP toward the goal of 100% of students meeting state standards’.

Christina McKelvie MSP had a meeting on the European and External Relations Committee’s ‘Connecting Scotland’ inquiry with Ms Niamh King, Vice President of Programs at the Chicago Council on Global Affairs, and Thomas W. Bartkoski, Director of International Business Development at World Business Chicago (WBC). Again the discussion centred around ‘How other organisations connect internationally’, for example, how the Mayor’s office engages in international activities; how such activities are mapped and provide opportunities for learning and exchange; international co-operation; and joint research projects.

There was an overview and discussion around the role of World Business Chicago. It is chaired by the Mayor and seeks to drive regional economic growth, collaborate to create jobs, cultivate talent, and ‘put Chicago at the forefront of the global economy’. It acts as a ‘liaison between the public and private sectors’ and works with the Mayor’s office, the city’s Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection, the state of Illinois’ Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, and other partners throughout the city and state. It has a role similar to Scottish Enterprise and Highlands and Islands Enterprise in that it seeks to encourage new business start ups, grow talent and grow and expand existing businesses.
It works with the business community and is responsible for implementing the city’s Plan for Economic Growth and Jobs which sets out the approach to foster regional growth.

There was also discussion around the Chicago Sister Cities International which develops, manages and co-ordinates programmes with ‘Chicago’s 28 sister cities in the areas of economic development, tourism, immigration, education, and cultural enrichment, expanding Chicago’s global reach for the benefit of the Chicago, its residents and businesses’. It works with ‘City departments and affiliate agencies, international municipal and federal governments, for- and not-for-profit organizations, diplomatic agencies and the Chicago Consular Corps to achieve its goals’.

Mary Fee MSP held discussions with senior officials to discuss digital infrastructure and broadband. She met with Danielle DuMerer, Director of Planning, Policy and Management at the City of Chicago’s Department of Innovation and Technology; Demond Drummer, Managing Director of Smart Chicago Collaborative; and Sonja Marziano, Project Co-ordinator at Smart Chicago Collaborative.

The Department of Innovation and Technology seeks to enhance delivery of City services through easy, reliable, cost-effective and secure access to information and to promote Chicago’s advancement through technology. Smart Chicago is a civic organization devoted to improving lives in Chicago through technology. It works towards increasing access to, and improving skills for using, the internet, and developing meaningful products from data that measurably contribute to the quality of life of residents in the Chicago region and beyond.

‘Increasing access to superfast broadband is a key priority for the Scottish Government and the Infrastructure and Capital Investment Committee is regularly updated on progress to achieving this. Reducing digital exclusion is also a key challenge and much work has been done to alleviate this. The discussions with Danielle on the work that is currently being done in different communities across Chicago will help the Committee as we further scrutinise this area (digital participation and mobile phone infrastructure is a potential Committee inquiry topic in 2015).’

TUESDAY 14 APRIL 2015

Mary Scanlon MSP met with Alderman George Cardenas, Chair of the Committee on Health and Environmental Protection, Chicago Council.

‘Mental health is a priority issue for the City administration given the high incidence in the city and the additional level of demand that has been identified from the Obama care reforms. Work is being undertaken in the County Jail with mental health services and support, both prior to release and continuing in the community and with the whole family. A partnership has been developed between the justice system and mental health staff to stop the gang violence and to reduce the repetition of violence and homicide within families.'
Like New York, priority is given to identify issues in children given the conclusive evidence that problems not addressed in childhood will manifest themselves in other ways in adulthood.

All staff at the City Hall have to fill in a mental health questionnaire online once a year. This addresses lifestyle and mental health and is overseen by the insurance company which insists on staff taking ownership of their lifestyle at the point where it will potentially impact on their overall health. Some staff have been advised to take more exercise and to lose weight. This questionnaire is provided by the City as an incentive for staff to look after themselves. The emphasis is on prevention and healthy lifestyle and has been successful in reducing sickness absence. This is a programme based on the need to make greater efforts to support staff. 'Healthy Chicago' has won several awards in the United States for its focus on wellness.

I was delighted to witness the Aldermen questioning the Health Commissioner prior to the confirmation of her appointment. Issues, such as mental health stigma, low flu vaccination uptake, HIV, causes of autism and workforce planning to ensure that all the issues identified in the new Obamacare system that were being identified, had adequate staff to support and treat patients.

I found many similarities to the topical health issues in Scotland and found the role of the insurance companies very interesting in terms of demanding better services and more rapid referrals to specialists. They are very influential in addressing personal lifestyle issues. The link between good mental and physical health appears to be much better understood and the partnership working between both disciplines was commendable and holistic yielding more benefits to patients.’

Christina McKelvie MSP met with David Anderson, Senior Vice President at Scottish Development International, in relation to her Committee’s ‘Connecting Scotland’ inquiry. Of interest was to learn more about how key organisations connect internationally and how SDI engages in international activities; how such activities are mapped and provide opportunities for learning and exchange; international co-operation between SDI and other agencies; and joint research projects.

‘We discussed ways in which the Chicago office works across SDI’s other office to have a strategic approach but to also react to local events and interests. Mr Anderson outlined the work of SDI in Chicago in relation to bodies such as UK Trade & Investment and the GlobalScot and the assistance which SDI can offer businesses around key investment opportunities in Scotland, partnering and collaboration opportunities, government, industry and academic contacts, visits to, and setting up business in Scotland.

There was also some discussion on the impact of the US-EU Transatlantic Trade & Investment Partnership (TTIP) which was an issue which had recently been considered by the EER Committee.’

Mary Fee MSP met with Michael Connelly, Vice President of the Planning Department and Maria-Teresa Román, Liaison, Government and Community
Relations at the Chicago Transit Authority. The discussion was again relating to matters within the remit of the Infrastructure and Capital Investment Committee, for example, active travel, public transport passenger issues, and smart and integrated transport.

The Authority operates the second largest public transportation system in the US and covers the City of Chicago and 35 surrounding suburbs. On an average weekday, approximately 1.7 million rides are taken on the CTA.

‘Whilst the scale of transport authorities in the US is difficult to compare on a like for like basis the key challenges are never the less comparable. Around 35 million trips are made each year in the Chicago to St Louis corridor on only one set of rail tracks, future visions for the corridor will be to build a second track. The funding models available can cause uncertainty as the tiers of government can prove difficult to manage. Discussions focussed on connectivity, through ticketing, speed of travel, safety issues and funding. I was interested to hear how the Transit Authority operates and manages its Customer Service Department which receives very high volumes of and has a very high customer satisfaction rating. A key area for the Infrastructure and Capital Investment Committee is transport so the visit was of particular relevance.’

The Presiding Officer met with the Chicago Tribune Editorial Board, who had invited her to informally and impartially discuss a range of issues, to help inform their own knowledge of current parliamentary and political issues in Scotland and the UK.

Mary Fee MSP met with Doug Whitley, Executive Director of the Supply Chain Innovation Network of Chicago (SINC) at World Business Chicago which seeks to improve the efficient movement of goods to stimulate regional economic and business growth through improving infrastructure, developing people, advancing technology, and attracting capital.
The Infrastructure and Capital Investment Committee has just completed an inquiry into freight transport so the meeting allowed me to pass on information I received during that inquiry to help in our deliberations. We discussed the economic importance of freight, modes of transport, multi modal transport, transport hubs, innovation and technology and how to encourage and incentivise business to relocate.

Chicago has a long term plan for economic growth and a jobs strategy and utilises this to stimulate growth both locally and regionally to encourage investment and grow the area. Of particular interest was the off peak delivery coordination for shipping goods during periods of less congestion which is an area the Committee has recently taken evidence on as part of our freight inquiry.’

The Presiding Officer and Christina McKelvie MSP visited the University of Chicago for a series of engagements. They first of all met with the University’s Provost, Eric D. Isaacs, and Ian H. Solomon, Vice President for Global Engagement. The Provost was interested in the purpose of the visit to Chicago and the meetings held. He formally welcomed the Presiding Officer and Ms McKelvie to the University and gave an overview of the University’s history, its academic work and its place and role in the local community.

Following a tour of the University campus arranged by the Provost, the Presiding Officer met with Derek R B Douglas, Vice President for Civic Engagement, University of Chicago. A former Special Assistant to President Obama on urban and metropolitan policy issues, since joining the University in 2011 he has been talking forward its civic engagement policies.

As a very prestigious national institution, embedded in a socially challenged south side Chicago neighbourhood, he shared the achievements they had made through partnering with the local community in a number of key ways.

The Presiding Officer discussed her own recent initiatives to bring parliament days to more urban areas in Scotland and the Inspiring Young Women conference, held in Parliament just a few weeks before.

Despite the differences of locality, on engagement they felt there were clear areas of commonality. Through developing programmes which locate you physically into harder to reach communities and through the use of relevant role models for young adults, your engagement could make positive and necessary strides.

Following a tour of the University campus arranged by the Provost, Christina McKelvie MSP met with Ian Solomon, Vice President for Global Engagement at the University of Chicago who supports a number of international programs and partnerships, overseas centres and campuses, research collaborations, and global education opportunities.

Mr Solomon spoke about the work of the University and how it engages internationally, for example through its centres in Paris, Beijing and Delhi and through alumni who provide useful connections across the globe. The University
attracts over 3,100 international students for over 100 countries each year. About 550 students each year participate in faculty led exchanges or 'Immersion Study Abroad' programmes in many cities across the world which is another way of the University ‘internationalising’ its work and promoting itself as a place of learning for foreign students.

The discussions were of particular interest to the European and External Relations Committee’s ‘Connecting Scotland’ inquiry and its focus on ‘How other organisations connect internationally’.

The Presiding Officer undertook a speaking engagement at the University of Chicago. The theme for the speech, which was followed by a Q&A session with the audience, was: *Scotland’s journey to and beyond the referendum on independence*.

This was an open event attended by students, faculty staff and members of the public. The Presiding Officer’s speech can be accessed via this link: [www.scottish.parliament.uk/abouttheparliament/41197.aspx](http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/abouttheparliament/41197.aspx)

**WEDNESDAY 15 APRIL 2015**
The delegation attended City Hall to observe a meeting of the City Council, chaired by Mayor Rahm Emanuel.

The delegation then departed for the airport for the overnight flight to Dublin and then the early Thursday morning connection to Edinburgh.
THURSDAY 9 APRIL 2015
- Depart Edinburgh
- Arrive JFK International Airport
- All: Briefing meeting with Danny Lopez, HM Consul-General New York and Director General Trade & Investment USA and Matthew Windrum, Vice-Consul and Head of Political Affairs

FRIDAY 10 APRIL 2015
- **Mary Scanlon**: Meeting on mental health issues with Ann Marie T. Sullivan MD, Commissioner, New York State Office of Mental Health
- **Christina McKelvie**: Meeting on ‘Connecting Scotland’ with Ms Mireia Rozas-Simon, Deputy Head of the Delegation, Delegation of Catalonia in the United States
- **Mary Fee**: Visit to East Side Access project and meeting with Metropolitan Transportation Authority on transport
- **Christina McKelvie**: Meeting on ‘Connecting Scotland’ with Nicolas Polet, Deputy General Representative of the Government of Flanders to the United States
- **Presiding Officer**: Speaking engagement at New York University Wagner Graduate School of Public Service: *Democratic engagement in the 21st Century: Scotland’s Constitutional Journey*
- **Mary Fee**: Meeting with Hayes Lord, NYC Department of Transportation to discuss ‘Bicycle program’:
- **All**: Meeting with UN Women to discuss its work
- **All**: Scottish Government reception at Glasgow Caledonian University Campus
SATURDAY 11 APRIL 2015

- **All:** St Andrew's Society Kirkin' of the Tartan
- **Presiding Officer:** Joint leading of the Tartan Day Parade
- **All:** Participation in Parade
- **All:** Attendance at American Scottish Foundation post parade reception
- **All:** NYC Tartan Day Committee post-parade reception

SUNDAY 12 APRIL 2015

- **All:** Transfer New York to Chicago:

MONDAY 13 APRIL 2015

- **Presiding Officer:** Meeting with Stephen Bridges, British Consul General in Chicago
- **Mary Scanlon:** Meeting on educational attainment issues with Alderman Latasha Thomas, Chair of the Committee on Education and Child Development, Chicago Council
- **Christina McKelvie and Mary Fee:** Meeting with State Senator Pamela Althoff
- **Presiding Officer:** Meeting with Allan Garraway and Gus Noble, Chicago Scots board members
- **Mary Scanlon:** Meeting on educational attainment with Melina Wright, No Child Left Behind Initiative
- **Christina McKelvie:** Meeting on 'Connecting Scotland' with the Chicago Council on Foreign Affairs:
- **Mary Fee:** Meeting with Danielle DuMerer on digital infrastructure and broadband with Chicago City Council Digital Excelence Initiative

TUESDAY 14 APRIL 2015

- **Mary Scanlon:** Meeting on mental health with Alderman George Cardenas, Chair of the Committee on Health and Environmental Protection, Chicago Council
- **Christina McKelvie** meeting on ‘Connecting Scotland’ with David Anderson, Senior Vice President, Scottish Development International
- **Mary Fee:** Meeting on transport with Vice President of the Planning Department, Michael Connelly, and Maria-Teresa Román, Chicago Transit Authority
- **Presiding Officer:** Meeting with Chicago Tribune Editorial Board:
- **Mary Fee:** Meeting on transport with Doug Whitley, Executive Director of the Supply Chain Innovation Network of Chicago, World Business Chicago
• **Presiding Officer:** Speaking engagement, University of Chicago: *Scotland’s journey to and beyond the referendum on independence*

• **Christina McKelvie:** Meeting on ‘Connecting Scotland’ with Ian Solomon, Vice President for Global Engagement, University of Chicago

• **Presiding Officer:** Meeting on civic engagement with Derek R B Douglas, Vice President for Civic Engagement, University of Chicago

**WEDNESDAY 15 APRIL 2015**
- **All:** City Council meeting with Mayor Rahm Emanuel
- **All:** Observe meeting of Chicago City Council
- **All:** Depart Chicago for Dublin

**THURSDAY 16 APRIL 2015**
- **All:** Arrive Dublin
- **All:** Depart Dublin for Edinburgh