Economy, Energy and Tourism Committee

9th Report, 2013 (Session 4)

Annual Report 2012-2013

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Economy, Energy and Tourism Committee

Remit and membership

Remit:

The remit of the Committee is to consider and report on the Scottish economy, enterprise, energy, tourism and renewables and all other matters within the responsibility of the Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Employment and Sustainable Growth apart from those covered by the remit of the Local Government and Regeneration Committee and matters relating to the Cities Strategy falling within the responsibility of the Cabinet Secretary for Health, Wellbeing and Cities Strategy.

Membership:

Marco Biagi (from 19 September 2012)
Chic Brodie
Murdo Fraser (Convener)
Rhoda Grant
Patrick Harvie (1 June 2011 - 1 November 2013)
Alison Johnstone (from 1 November 2012)
Angus MacDonald (1 June 2011 - 19 September 2012)
Mike MacKenzie
Margaret McDougall (from 12 December 2012)
Stuart McMillan (1 June 2012 - 19 September 2012)
John Park (22 December 2011 - 7 December 2012)
Dennis Robertson (Deputy Convener) (from 19 September 2012)
David Torrance (19 September 2012)
John Wilson (Deputy Convener) (8 June 2011 - 19 September 2012)

Committee Clerking Team:

Clerk to the Committee
Jane Williams
Senior Assistant Clerk
Katy Orr
Assistant Clerk
Diane Barr
Committee Assistant
Vikki Little
Introduction

1. During the parliamentary year from 11 May 2012 to 10 May 2013 the Economy, Energy and Tourism Committee has concluded 5 inquiries, a number of one-off evidence sessions, considered a Scottish Government bill, as well as other forms of legislation.

Inquiries and reports

The achievability of the Scottish Government's renewable energy targets

2. A significant piece of work for the Committee, this inquiry lasted over eleven months and generated over 600 submissions. A number of fact-finding visits were held to inform Committee members of various issues relating to the achievability of said targets. The report concluded that the targets are achievable, but only if a number of issues are addressed.

Draft budget 2013-14 and spending review

3. Consideration of the draft budget 2013-14 and spending review took place in October to November 2012. The Committee chose to focus on specific areas: – does the budget contribute to sustainable economic growth and the support of structural change in the long term; does it match the plans within the Governments Economic Strategy; whether and how resources allocated will be applied effectively to assist economic recovery and long term growth in the Tourism industry; and how it will impact on reducing poverty.

Report on Proposals and Policies 2

4. The Committee co-ordinated its evidence-taking and report publication on the Scottish Government’s draft report on Low Carbon Scotland: Meeting our Emissions Reduction Targets 2013-2027 with three other parliamentary committees. It took evidence in February and March of this year and published its report on 22 March 2013.
Inquiry into Underemployment in Scotland
5. This Committee took evidence on this inquiry in January and February and published its report in April. A launch was held at Napier University.

Winning Years Strategy
6. The Committee held a short, focussed inquiry on VisitScotland's "Winning Years" strategy in September 2012. A short report recommended that the Committee receive a yearly update from VisitScotland, with the first update due in September 2013.

Bannockburn 2014
7. At the conclusion of its “Winning Years” inquiry, the Committee heard of concerns regarding Homecoming 2014 and agreed to seek information from a number of key stakeholders on the planning, accountability and governance of the event. A one-off evidence session to discuss these issues was held in April 2013.

Business Gateway
8. The Committee conducted a one-off oral evidence session in September 2012, focussed on the changes to the contract process, the contract terms and the governance and performance of the Business Gateway service. Following the session, the Committee wrote to the Convener of Business Gateway Scotland Board asking for comment on the continuing concerns of the Committee in relation to elements of the process and invited him to provide an update to the Committee in September 2013. This was a follow-up piece of work to the Committee’s short inquiry on the contract renewal process in 2011.

Alternatives to GDP
9. In February 2013 the Committee took evidence via a video-link from the Nobel prize-winning economist, Professor Joseph Stiglitz, on the adequacy of current methods of measuring economic performance. This was the first time that Professor Stiglitz had provided evidence to a Scottish parliamentary committee and it was covered widely in both the local and national press.

Cities
10. The Committee held a one-off evidence session with the Cabinet Secretary for Infrastructure, Capital Investment and Cities on 21 November 2012 to provide an update on the Cities strategy.

The Crown Estate
11. A one-off evidence session was held to provide Members with an update on the current work of the Crown Estate in Scotland.

Commissioner Oettinger
12. Committee members had an informal meeting to discuss European Union issues with the European Commissioner for Energy. This was the first time the Commissioner had visited the Parliament and met with a Committee.

Committee on Climate Change
13. Lord Deben, Chairman of the Committee on Climate Change, met with the Committee to discuss emissions targets and progress made in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and preparing for climate change.
Bills

Land Registration (Scotland) Bill
14. The Committee completed its consideration of this bill in late May 2012. The Bill received royal assent in July 2012.

Regulatory Reform (Scotland) Bill
15. This Bill was introduced in March 2013 and referred to the Committee on 16 April 2013. A number of oral evidence sessions are scheduled, beginning in May 2013, with the conclusion of Stage 1 expected to be in October 2013.

Subordinate legislation
16. In this parliamentary year the committee dealt with four negative instruments:-
   • Diligence against Earnings (Variation) (Scotland) Regulations (SSI 2012/308)

17. Electricity (Applications for Consent) Amendment (Scotland) Regulations 2013 (SSI 2013/58)
   • Fees in the Register of Scotland (Consequential Provisions) Amendment Order 2013 (SSI 2013/59)
   • the Late Payment of Commercial Debts (Scotland) Regulations 2013 (SSI 2013/77) and a Public Body Consent Motion on
   • The Public Bodies (Abolition of British Shipbuilders) Order [2013].

Legislative Consent Memorandums
18. The Committee has also considered the following LCMs:-
   • the UK Energy Bill (LCM (S4) 20.1)
   • the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Bill (LCM(S4)14.3)
   • the Growth and Infrastructure Bill (LCM (S4)17.1)

Engagement and Innovation
19. The Committee recently launched its report into Underemployment in Scotland at Napier University. During this inquiry, members met with a graduate who was able to discuss with them in detail the issues he faced in being underemployed.

20. To ensure that the Committee is kept well informed of topics within its varied remit, Committee members have participated in a number of informal briefing sessions.

Equalities
21. The Committee sought evidence from groups representing people with protected characteristics for its inquiry into underemployment in Scotland and as part of its consideration of the impact of the Draft Budget 2013-14.
22. The Committee has ensured that all meetings organised reflect the Parliament’s equalities policies and guidance.

Meetings

23. During the parliamentary year (from 11 May 2012 to 10 May 2013) the Committee met 33 times. Three meetings were held entirely in private and 26 were partly in private. Of the 29 meetings where some or all of the items were in private, this was to consider draft reports or to discuss approaches to inquiries or review evidence heard.
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