Infrastructure and Capital Investment Committee

4th Report, 2013 (Session 4)

Annual Report 2012-13

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Infrastructure and Capital Investment Committee

Remit and membership

Remit:

To consider and report on infrastructure, capital investment, transport, housing, and other matters falling within the responsibility of the Cabinet Secretary for Investment and Cities apart from those covered by the remit of the Local Government and Regeneration Committee.

Membership:

Jim Eadie (from 19 September 2012)
Adam Ingram (Deputy Convener)
Alex Johnstone
Gordon Macdonald
Margaret McCulloch
Elaine Murray (from 16 January 2013)
Maureen Watt (Convener)

Committee Clerking Team:

Clerk to the Committee
Steve Farrell

Senior Assistant Clerk
Clare O'Neill

Assistant Clerk
Kelly Forbes

Committee Assistant
Myra Leckie
Infrastructure and Capital Investment Committee

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The Committee reports to the Parliament as follows—

Introduction

1. This report covers the work of the Infrastructure and Capital Investment (ICI) Committee during the parliamentary year between 11 May 2012 and 10 May 2013.

Legislation

Water Resources (Scotland) Bill

2. The Water Resources (Scotland) Bill was introduced in the Parliament in June 2012 and the ICI Committee was designated as the lead committee for scrutiny of the Bill at Stage 1. The Committee heard evidence at its meetings in September and October 2013 and in November 2013 it agreed to the general principles of the Bill in its Stage 1 report.

3. The Bill aimed to (a), set a framework for making the most of Scotland’s water resources and to (b), develop and improve the management of these resources as a key part of achieving the Government's wider Hydro Nation agenda. The Bill also proposed a broad range of provisions relating to the delivery of water and sewerage services in Scotland.

4. In its Stage 1 report, the Committee welcomed the concept of developing the value of Scotland’s water resources. It agreed with those who had given evidence expressing that the definition of that value in the Bill should be amended to highlight all three pillars of sustainability – environmental, social and economic. It also called on the Scottish Government to hold further discussions with stakeholders on the proposed regime for large-scale abstraction of water. The Committee considered the Bill at Stage 2 in January 2013 and the Bill was passed in February 2013.

Forth Road Bridge Bill

5. The Forth Road Bridge Bill was introduced in the Parliament in December 2012 and the ICI Committee was designated as the lead
committee for scrutiny of the Bill at Stage 1. The Committee heard evidence at meetings in December 2012 and in January and February 2013, and reported in March 2013 agreeing the general principles of the Bill.

6. The Bill made provision to—

- dissolve the Forth Estuary Transport Authority (FETA) which was responsible for the management and maintenance of the Forth Road Bridge; and,

- trunk the road over the Forth Road Bridge, with the Scottish Government becoming the roads authority; transfer all of FETA’s property, assets and liabilities to the Scottish Government.

7. The Bill also proposed the transfer of FETA’s employees directly into the employment of a bridge operating company appointed by Scottish Ministers.

8. In agreeing to the general principles of the Bill in its Stage 1 report, the Committee recognised the importance of the Bill as a key component in progress towards meeting the Scottish Government’s objective of delivering a co-ordinated, managed Forth crossing strategy. It was also satisfied that a single bridge operating company is the most appropriate and cost effective approach to the management and maintenance of both the existing and new crossings.

9. The Bill passed Stage 1 in March 2013. The Committee considered the Bill at Stage 2 in May 2013, and the Bill was passed in May 2013.

Marine Navigation (No. 2) Bill (UK Parliament Legislation)

10. The Committee considered one Legislative Consent Memorandum over the parliamentary year - The Marine Navigation (No. 2) Bill (UK Parliament Legislation). The Committee took evidence on the Memorandum from the Minister for Transport and Veterans in December 2012, and recommended in its report that the Parliament approve the subsequent Scottish Government motion.

Inquiries

11. The Committee undertook the following key pieces of inquiry and scrutiny work in the parliamentary year.

Low Carbon Scotland: the Scottish Government’s second draft report on proposals and policies

13. The Committee concluded that the transformational change required in the housing and transport sectors, in order to meet the challenging emissions reduction targets, must involve a combination of all the proposals and policies contained within the draft RPP2 being implemented and adequately funded. Appropriate timescales for action, and incentives for individuals and society as a whole must be allowed to make the necessary step change required.

Community transport
14. In March 2013, the Committee launched its inquiry into community transport and asked for views on what the inquiry should focus on. These views helped shape the inquiry and fed directly into oral evidence sessions with providers, coordinators and users of community transport services. The Committee took evidence in April and May 2013 with the aim of reporting its findings in June 2013.

Other evidence sessions

Forth Replacement Crossing
15. The Committee continued to monitor the progress of the Forth Replacement Crossing project and took evidence from the project team in September 2012 and March 2013. In advance of the session in March 2013, the Committee wrote to local community groups seeking their views on the impact of the construction work.

Scottish Water
16. In November 2012, the Committee heard from Scottish Water (SW) and the Water Industry Commission for Scotland (WICS) following the publication of their annual reports for 2011-12. In scrutinising the performance of SW, the Committee explored a number of issues such as water and sewerage charges, finances, performance targets and SW charges post-2015.

High Speed Rail
17. In February 2013, the Committee took evidence from the Minister of Transport and Veterans on the Scottish Government’s proposal for a high speed rail link between Edinburgh and Glasgow and its discussions with the UK Government in relation to the High Speed Rail 2 project.

Infrastructure Investment Plan Update
18. In March 2013, the Scottish Government published its progress report on the Infrastructure Investment Plan (IIP) 2011, which detailed its key capital spending priorities until 2020. The Committee took evidence in January 2012 from the Cabinet Secretary for Infrastructure and Capital Investment on progress in developing and implementing these commitments.

Budget processes

Draft Budget Scrutiny 2013–14
19. The Committee scrutinised the Scottish Government’s Draft Budget 2013-14 and made a number of recommendations in relation to the draft
budget, calling for greater transparency of budgetary information, particularly in relation to affordable housing. In addition, as in previous years, the Committee expressed concern about the level of investment in active travel.

**European Issues**

20. In June 2012 and in January 2013, the Committee considered the European Commission’s work programme and identified its own strategic priorities for scrutiny. The Committee also wrote to the Scottish Government seeking further information on its EU priorities.

21. The Committee considered subsidiarity issues in respect of two European legislative proposals. In March 2013, it considered a Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on the deployment of alternative fuels infrastructure. In May 2013, it considered a Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on measures to reduce the cost of deploying high speed electronic communications networks. On both occasions the Committee agreed to ask the Presiding Officer to write to the Chairmen of the relevant Committees of the House of Commons and the House of Lords with the Committee’s views.

22. Due to a Committee membership change in June 2012, the Committee agreed to nominate Jim Eadie MSP as its new EU reporter.

**Petitions**

23. The Committee considered four petitions over the course of the parliamentary year. In June 2012, the Committee considered PE1115 on the campaign to open Blackford Railway station. The issues raised had been considered previously by the Committee as part of its rail inquiry in the previous parliamentary year. The Committee agreed to close the petition.

24. In January 2013, the Committee considered PE1424 on improving transport provision for older people in remote and rural areas. The Committee agreed to consider the issues raised in the petition as part of its community transport inquiry.

25. In December 2012, the Committee considered Petition PE1425 on the adverse impact of Driver Vehicle Licences Centre local office closures. The Committee agreed to write to the Scottish Government requesting information on its engagement with the UK Government on issues raised by the petition.

26. The Committee extensively considered Petition PE1236 on A90-A937 safety improvements over the parliamentary year. In March 2013, the Committee held an oral evidence session with a community representative,
Angus Council, Aberdeenshire Council, North East of Scotland Transport Partnership and Transport Scotland.

**Equalities**

27. The Committee mainstreamed equalities issues throughout its work in the parliamentary year. Examples include taking evidence in November 2012 from the Mobility and Access Committee for Scotland on its annual report and considering the needs of older and disabled people as part of the Committee’s community transport inquiry.

**Engagement and Innovation**

*Community transport Inquiry*

28. In April and May 2013, the Committee engaged with stakeholders prior to and during its inquiry into community transport. The Committee adapted its approach to encourage participation from those who would not normally connect with the Parliament, such as producing an electronic poster advertising its call for views, making a series of videos throughout the inquiry, use of social media outlets, and seeking people’s views on the evidence emerging during the inquiry.

29. As a result of the Committee’s innovative approach to stakeholder engagement the Committee’s call for views was widely reported in local and third sector press, with stakeholders actively disseminating the message, and as a result the inquiry received 81 written submissions.

*Report on Policies and Proposals (RPP2)*

30. In February 2013, this Committee together with the Rural Affairs, Climate Change and Environment Committee, Economy Energy and Tourism Committee and the Local Government and Regeneration Committee considered the Scottish Government’s report on meeting climate change targets as it related to their individual remits. Each Committee took written and oral evidence from stakeholders and reported individually to the Parliament on their findings. This innovative, coordinated and collaborative approach resulted in more effective scrutiny of the document than would otherwise have been the case.

*Public Procurement Debate*

31. In April 2013, the Committee held a Chamber debate on the Scottish Government’s proposed public procurement reform bill. Whilst it was unusual to hold a Chamber debate in advance of the introduction of legislation, it was considered to be a helpful exercise which would assist the Committee in its scrutiny of the forthcoming bill.

**Subordinate Legislation**

32. The Committee considered 39 statutory instruments of which 31 were negative, 6 were affirmative and 2 were not subject to parliamentary procedure.
Meetings

33. During the parliamentary year, the Committee met 23 times. Of these meetings, 1 was wholly in private and 12 were partly in private. Most of the items taken in private were to consider draft reports and the Committee’s work programme. All meetings were held in Edinburgh.
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