

# **RURAL AFFAIRS AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE**

Wednesday 20 May 2009

Session 3

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## RURAL AFFAIRS AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

14<sup>th</sup> Meeting 2009, Session 3

### CONVENER

\*Maureen Watt (North East Scotland) (SNP)

### DEPUTY CONVENER

John Scott (Ayr) (Con)

### COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Karen Gillon (Clydesdale) (Lab)

Liam McArthur (Orkney) (LD)

\*Alasdair Morgan (South of Scotland) (SNP)

\*Elaine Murray (Dumfries) (Lab)

\*Peter Peacock (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)

\*Bill Wilson (West of Scotland) (SNP)

### COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTES

Rhoda Grant (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)

Jamie Hepburn (Central Scotland) (SNP)

Jim Hume (South of Scotland) (LD)

Nanette Milne (North East Scotland) (Con)

\*attended

### CLERK TO THE COMMITTEE

Peter McGrath

### SENIOR ASSISTANT CLERK

Roz Wheeler

### ASSISTANT CLERK

Lori Gray

### LOCATION

Committee Room 5



# Scottish Parliament

## Rural Affairs and Environment Committee

*Wednesday 20 May 2009*

[THE CONVENER *opened the meeting at 11:30*]

### Subordinate Legislation

#### Plant Health (Scotland) Amendment Order 2009 (SSI 2009/153)

#### Rural Development Contracts (Land Managers Options) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2009 (SSI 2009/155)

#### Community Right to Buy (Prescribed Form of Application and Notices) (Scotland) Regulations 2009 (SSI 2009/156)

**The Convener (Maureen Watt):** I welcome everybody to the committee's 14<sup>th</sup> meeting of the year. We have received apologies from John Scott and Liam McArthur. If anybody still has their mobile phone or pager switched on, can they please turn it off?

Agenda item 1 is consideration of three Scottish statutory instruments under the negative procedure. The Subordinate Legislation Committee has raised points on SSI 2009/153 and SSI 2009/155. The relevant extract from the Subordinate Legislation Committee's report has been circulated as paper RAE/S3/09/14/3. The Subordinate Legislation Committee did not make any comments on SSI 2009/156.

Last week, the committee took evidence from Government officials on SSI 2009/156, and additional information has been provided in members' papers. In addition, the Minister for Environment has written to the committee in response to issues that were raised by members last week on that SSI. The letter has been e-mailed to members and a hard copy has been circulated today.

Do members have any comments on the instruments, the supplementary information that the Government has provided, or the letter from the minister?

**Peter Peacock (Highlands and Islands) (Lab):** It was worth giving the issues relating to SSI 2009/156 an airing at last week's meeting. Having seen the additional paperwork, I recognise that re-registration is a complex process that can involve a lot of work. That said, the minister's letter

completely squares the circle and is a reasonable compromise from where we got to last week. I note her offer to discuss with some key people the potential for a new renewal form, and I am happy to leave the matter on that basis. I welcome the fact that the issue has been aired and that the minister has moved to address some of the issues that we raised.

**Alasdair Morgan (South of Scotland) (SNP):** I concur. Having looked at the supplementary information, I find it difficult to see how the renewal form could be radically different from the original application form. Some of the concerns that have been raised are not hugely valid anyway but, if the minister is happy to reconsider the matter, that is fine.

**Elaine Murray (Dumfries) (Lab):** I agree with both Peter Peacock and Alasdair Morgan. It was worth raising the concerns that had been brought to us. It was important that those things were discussed. However, I am content with the minister's response, which offers a good way forward.

**The Convener:** Peter McGrath has received an e-mail from Liam McArthur that more or less agrees with what other members have said.

Are we agreed not to make any recommendations in relation to the three Scottish statutory instruments as detailed on the agenda?

**Members indicated agreement.**

## Climate Change (Scotland) Bill

11:34

**The Convener:** Item 2 is consideration of whether members want to take any collective action as a committee at stage 2 of the Climate Change (Scotland) Bill. The original intention was to discuss the Government's amendments to part 5—the part that contains the sections on which we deliberated, which deal with forestry, muirburn and waste reduction and recycling. However, it turns out that the Government's amendments to part 5 will not be lodged until next Tuesday and that the Transport, Infrastructure and Climate Change Committee will not consider those amendments until Tuesday 2 June. If members are so minded, we can defer consideration of the item until next Wednesday's meeting, when members will have had a chance to refer to the Government's amendments. Alternatively, members may decide that there is no need for us to take collective action, such as the lodging of committee amendments. The committee could make that decision today.

**Elaine Murray:** The committee might want to consider the amendment that has been proposed by RSPB Scotland on a land use strategy. I have not had a lot of time to think about the proposed amendment, as it was received only yesterday. However, given the concerns over land use that have been raised in committee, we might want to take a look at it.

**Peter Peacock:** I concur with that. I had a quick look at the amendment that RSPB Scotland proposes, and it fits largely with comments that were made to the committee. I accept the suggestion that it would be wise not to finalise our position until next week, given that we have not seen the Government's amendments. It may, therefore, be better to return to the item next week. Meanwhile, we can ensure that the clerks have a copy of RSPB Scotland's proposed amendment and we can consider it openly at a future stage.

**The Convener:** Okay. We will defer the item until our next meeting, which will be on 27 May in committee room 1.

*Meeting closed at 11:36.*

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