



The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

## Official Report

# LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE

Wednesday 15 June 2011

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**Wednesday 15 June 2011**

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**LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE**

**1<sup>st</sup> Meeting 2011, Session 4**

**CONVENER**

\*Joe FitzPatrick (Dundee City West) (SNP)

**DEPUTY CONVENER**

\*Kevin Stewart (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

\*Ruth Davidson (Glasgow) (Con)

\*Kezia Dugdale (Lothian) (Lab)

\*Mark Griffin (Central Scotland) (Lab)

\*David Torrance (Kirkcaldy) (SNP)

\*Bill Walker (Dunfermline) (SNP)

\*attended

**CLERK TO THE COMMITTEE**

Eugene Windsor

**LOCATION**

Committee Room 6



# Scottish Parliament

## Local Government and Regeneration Committee

Wednesday 15 June 2011

[Bill Walker opened the meeting at 10:00]

### Interests

**Bill Walker (Dunfermline) (SNP):** Good morning, everyone. Welcome to the first meeting of the Local Government and Regeneration Committee in the fourth session of the Scottish Parliament.

First, I remind all those present, including members, that mobile phones and BlackBerrys should be turned off completely as they interfere with the sound system even when they are switched to silent. I have just realised that I have one here. I beg your pardon. I did this in the last committee as well. Tut, tut.

For the benefit of new members, I point out that the sound operator will switch on your microphone when you speak. You do not need to fiddle about with the gubbins yourself.

Under rule 12.1.6 of standing orders, the first meeting of a committee after it is established by Parliament shall be chaired by the oldest member of the committee until a convener is chosen. I am that member, so welcome to all you dreadfully young people. [*Laughter.*]

The first item on the agenda is a declaration of interests. In accordance with section 3 of the code of conduct for members of the Scottish Parliament, I invite members to declare any interests that are relevant to the committee's remit. I remind members that any declaration should be brief but sufficiently detailed to make the nature of the interest clear to any listener. I will start, then we will go round the table. I ask each member to give their name and then declare any interests.

Like several of you, I am an existing councillor—I am a member of Fife Council—so that is my first interest. Obviously, I will state that when anything comes up regarding Fife Council, and similarly for the regeneration aspect of the committee's work. I am also involved in various voluntary organisations as a Fife councillor but I am trying to extricate myself from some of those as the year goes on. I will be a councillor only until next May. I plan to declare anything that touches at all on what we might do during the year.

**Kevin Stewart (Aberdeen Central) (SNP):** I am a member of Aberdeen City Council.

**Joe FitzPatrick (Dundee City West) (SNP):** I have no relevant interests to declare.

**David Torrance (Kirkcaldy) (SNP):** I am an elected member of Fife Council.

**Ruth Davidson (Glasgow) (Con):** I have no relevant interests to declare.

**Mark Griffin (Central Scotland) (Lab):** I am an elected member of North Lanarkshire Council.

**Kezia Dugdale (Lothian) (Lab):** I have no relevant interests to declare.

**Bill Walker:** Thank you, everyone. I obviously spoke far too much.

## Convener

10:03

**Bill Walker:** The second item of business is to choose a convener. The Parliament has agreed that only members of the Scottish National Party are eligible for nomination as convener of the committee. That being the case, I seek nominations for the position of convener.

**Kevin Stewart:** I nominate Joe FitzPatrick.

**Bill Walker:** Are there any other nominations?

**Members** *indicated disagreement.*

**Bill Walker:** Are you prepared to serve, Joe?

**Joe FitzPatrick** *indicated agreement.*

**Bill Walker:** One nomination has been received. I therefore ask the committee to agree that Joe FitzPatrick MSP be chosen as convener of the committee.

*Joe FitzPatrick was chosen as convener.*

**Bill Walker:** I congratulate Joe on his appointment and hand over the chair to him for the remainder of proceedings. Thank you, everyone.

**The Convener (Joe FitzPatrick):** Thank you. It is a real honour for me to have been asked to serve in this post on what is a very important committee in the Parliament. People have commented that, apart from me, all the members of the committee are from the new intake of MSPs. As a new convener, I am hoping that that will give me a little bit of leeway and that if I make any mistakes, you will not notice.

Despite the array of fresh faces on the committee, I know that members' collective expertise, particularly with regard to local government and from work with previous MSPs, will serve us well as we take our work forward.

## Deputy Convener

10:05

**The Convener:** The first piece of work under my convenership is the selection of a deputy convener, and we have received a paper from the clerk setting out the procedure. As the Parliament has agreed that only members of the Scottish National Party are eligible to be chosen as deputy convener, I invite nominations for the position.

**David Torrance:** I nominate Kevin Stewart.

*Kevin Stewart was chosen as deputy convener.*

**The Convener:** Congratulations, Kevin.

**Kevin Stewart:** Thank you.

## Work Programme

10:06

**The Convener:** We come now to the meat of the meeting—item 4—which is on our approach to developing our work programme. Members will have received and have had a chance to look at a paper from the clerk to which the previous committee's legacy paper is annexed. I propose that we invite the Minister for Local Government and Planning to our next meeting to give her a chance to tell us the Scottish Government's plans and proposals with regard to activity within the committee's remit and that, when we have heard from her, we have preliminary discussions about how we take our work programme forward. Obviously the clerks and the Scottish Parliament information centre will help us with the process.

The clerk's paper also proposes that we have a business planning day that will be held towards the end of the summer recess and which will allow us to finalise our work programme when we come back after recess. Do members have any comments on the paper?

**Kezia Dugdale:** Would it be relevant to get an analysis of what is left in the committee's remit with the removal of communities and what has been gained with the introduction of regeneration?

**The Convener:** I think that that would be useful. It will certainly form part of what the minister will have to say to us, but perhaps we should get SPICe to prepare a briefing on that.

**Kezia Dugdale:** That would be very helpful.

**The Convener:** If there are no other comments, I formally propose that we invite the Minister for Local Government and Planning to our next meeting on 22 June to give evidence on the Scottish Government's priorities in relation to local government and regeneration.

**Bill Walker:** Excuse me, convener, but I think that you said that she is the Minister for Local Government and Planning. Is she not minister for local government and regeneration?

**The Convener:** Did I say planning? I meant regeneration.

**Bill Walker:** Have I got that wrong?

**The Convener:** I am sorry—she is the Minister for Local Government and Planning.

**Bill Walker:** I beg your pardon.

**The Convener:** Her title is slightly different from the name of our committee.

Do members agree to my proposal?

**Members indicated agreement.**

**The Convener:** Do members also agree to have a discussion in private after that meeting?

**Members indicated agreement.**

**The Convener:** Finally, I ask the committee whether it agrees to hold towards the end of the summer recess a planning day, the details of which the clerks will discuss with members in due course.

**Members indicated agreement.**

**The Convener:** Our next meeting will be on Wednesday 22 June at 10 am.

*Meeting closed at 10:08.*



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