



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Official Report

ECONOMY, ENERGY AND TOURISM COMMITTEE

Wednesday 9 November 2011

Session 4

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ECONOMY, ENERGY AND TOURISM COMMITTEE

11th Meeting 2011, Session 4

CONVENER

*Gavin Brown (Lothian) (Con)

DEPUTY CONVENER

*John Wilson (Central Scotland) (SNP)

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

*Chic Brodie (South Scotland) (SNP)

*Rhoda Grant (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)

*Patrick Harvie (Glasgow) (Green)

*Angus MacDonald (Falkirk East) (SNP)

*Mike MacKenzie (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)

*Stuart McMillan (West Scotland) (SNP)

*Anne McTaggart (Glasgow) (Lab)

*attended

CLERK TO THE COMMITTEE

Stephen Imrie

LOCATION

Committee Room 5

Scottish Parliament

Economy, Energy and Tourism Committee

Wednesday 9 November 2011

[The Convener opened the meeting at 09:32]

Decision on Taking Business in Private

The Convener (Gavin Brown): I welcome everyone to the 11th meeting of the Economy, Energy and Tourism Committee in the fourth session. As ever, I remind members and others to ensure that their mobile phones et cetera are switched off.

Agenda item 1 is a decision on taking business in private. Are members content to take item 3 in private?

Members indicated agreement.

Subordinate Legislation

Home Energy Assistance Scheme (Scotland) Amendment (No 2) Regulations 2011 (SSI 2011/350)

09:32

The Convener: Item 2 is consideration of a Scottish statutory instrument. The main objective of the regulations, which are subject to the negative procedure, is to extend the home energy assistance scheme's eligibility to carers who live in energy-inefficient dwellings. A paper has been circulated to the committee and I seek members' comments or questions on the regulations.

Rhoda Grant (Highlands and Islands) (Lab): Although I welcome the regulations and the extension of the scheme to carers, I am disappointed that additional funds have not been made available, as it means that carers will have to compete with elderly people and other eligible groups for the support. Nevertheless, I welcome the move.

Patrick Harvie (Glasgow) (Green): I was going to make largely the same point. I would have hoped that, at the very least, the "Financial Effects" section of the paper that was circulated would have given a sense of the scale of the financial pressure that this move will add to the existing budget. The Government has made it clear that any additional demand for the energy assistance package generated by this measure will be managed within existing budgets but, as we have heard in evidence at previous meetings, that budget is already under significant pressure and is simply not up to the task. Although I am willing to approve the regulations—like Rhoda Grant, I support the intention behind them—I wonder whether, in addition to agreeing them, we should write to the minister, asking for more detail on the additional financial pressure that the move will put on the energy assistance budget.

The Convener: Are members content to write to the Government to find out the impact of the regulations on the budget?

Members indicated agreement.

The Convener: We now move to what I suppose is the more important question. Bearing in mind the comments made by Rhoda Grant and Patrick Harvie, are members content to approve the regulations?

Members indicated agreement.

The Convener: That concludes the public part
of the meeting.

09:35

Meeting continued in private until 12:36.

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