Public Service Reform Committee
Thursday 5 November 2026
10th Meeting, 2026 (Session 7)

Delivering public service reform

Note by the Clerk

1. To support its scrutiny of the Scottish Government's proposals for public service reform, the Committee agreed to hear evidence from witnesses with experience of previous reforms of the public sector.

2. This session will focus on witnesses' experiences of the outcomes and challenges associated with previous reforms of local government, and any lessons that can be learned from those experiences.

Witnesses

3. The Committee will hear evidence from George Thorley and Keith Yates of The Mercat Group.

4. The Mercat Group is an informal network of former chief executives of Scottish councils, which has been meeting since 2019. Keith Yates was previously Chief Executive of Stirling Council and George Thorley was previously Chief Executive of South Ayrshire Council. Both have experience of the regions and districts that existed between 1975 and 1996.

5. The Mercat Group describes itself as non-political and "offers considered experience and evidence-based views to stimulate debate and promote the enhancement of local democracy".

Committee Clerking Team
November 2026