



The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

## INFRASTRUCTURE AND CAPITAL INVESTMENT COMMITTEE

### AGENDA

5th Meeting, 2012 (Session 4)

Wednesday 7 March 2012

The Committee will meet at 10.00 am in Committee Room 4.

1. **Declaration of interests:** Aileen McLeod will be invited to declare any relevant interests.
2. **Choice of Deputy Convener:** The Committee will choose a Deputy Convener.
3. **Subordinate legislation and the Scottish Social Housing Charter:** The Committee will take evidence on the Housing Support Grant (Scotland) Order 2012 [draft] and the Scottish Social Housing Charter from—

Keith Brown, Minister for Housing and Transport, William Fleming, Branch Head, Social Housing and Strategy Unit, Jamie Hamilton, Policy Analyst, Housing Supply Division, and Deborah Blair, Solicitor, Scottish Government.

4. **Subordinate legislation:** Keith Brown MSP to move S4M-02166 —

That the Infrastructure and Capital Investment Committee recommends that the Housing Support Grant (Scotland) Order 2012 [draft] be approved.

5. **Scottish Social Housing Charter:** Keith Brown MSP to move S4M-02201—

That the Infrastructure and Capital Investment Committee recommends that the Scottish Social Housing Charter [draft] be approved.

6. **Appointment of European Union Reporter:** The Committee will appoint a member to serve as its European Union Reporter.
7. **Broadband infrastructure in Scotland (in private):** The Committee will consider a draft report.
8. **Homelessness (in private):** The Committee will consider a draft report.

**ICI/S4/12/5/A**

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Clerk to the Infrastructure and Capital Investment Committee  
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The papers for this meeting are as follows—

**Agenda item 2**

Paper by the Clerk

ICI/S4/12/5/6

**Agenda item 3**

Cover note

ICI/S4/12/5/1

Cover note

ICI/S4/12/5/2

[Housing Support Grant \(Scotland\) Order 2012 \[draft\]](#)

**Agenda item 6**

Paper from the Clerk

ICI/S4/12/5/3

**Agenda item 7**

PRIVATE PAPER

ICI/S4/12/5/4 (P)

[Written evidence received by the Committee](#)

**Agenda item 8**

PRIVATE PAPER

ICI/S4/12/5/5 (P)

[Written evidence received by the Committee](#)

**Infrastructure and Capital Investment Committee**

**5<sup>th</sup> Meeting, 2012 (Session 4), Wednesday, 7 March 2012**

**Subordinate Legislation**

<b>Title of Instrument</b>	Housing Support Grant (Scotland) Order 2012 [draft]
<b>Type of Instrument</b>	Affirmative
<b>Laid Date</b>	30 January 2012
<b>Circulated to Members</b>	2 March 2012
<b>Meeting Date</b>	7 March 2012
<b>Minister to attend the meeting</b>	Yes
<b>SSI drawn to the Parliament's attention by Subordinate Legislation Committee</b>	No
<b>Reporting Deadline</b>	<b>18 March 2012</b>

**Purpose**

1. This Order sets for the year 2012-2013 the aggregate amount of the housing support grants payable under section 191 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 (article 2).

**Further Information**

2. Housing Support Grant (HSG) is a central government subsidy paid to those councils unable to balance their Housing Revenue Accounts (HRA). These are costs that relate to the day-to-day maintenance of the Council's housing stock, including supplies and services for improvement and repairs to the buildings, as well as the cost of council employees that are involved in the management of the housing function.

3. Though other councils have, in the past, been in a position where they need to claim HSG, since 2006 only Shetland Islands Council has qualified for payment. The other 25 councils which have retained their housing stock are currently able to secure sufficient income from rents to balance their Housing Revenue Accounts.

4. The main policy objective of the grant is not only to balance the account, but to protect tenants from having to pay substantially higher rents. Without

this subsidy, Shetland Islands Council would be required to increase council house rents.

5. HSG is expected to be abolished in the forthcoming Local Government Finance (Unoccupied Properties Etc.) (Scotland) Bill, and as such, 2012-13 should be the final year that this grant payment is made.

### **Procedure**

6. The Infrastructure and Capital Investment Committee has been designated lead committee and is required to report to the Parliament by 18 March 2012.

7. The Subordinate Legislation Committee did not have any comments to make in relation to this instrument.

8. Under Rule 10.6.1 (b), the Order is subject to affirmative resolution before it can be made. It is for the Infrastructure and Capital Investment Committee to recommend to the Parliament whether the Order should be approved. The Minister for Housing and Transport has, by motion S4M-02166 (set out in the agenda), proposed that the Committee should recommend the approval of this Order. The Minister will attend in order to speak to and move the motion. The formal debate may last for up to 90 minutes. Ahead of the formal debate (as part of an earlier agenda item), there will be an opportunity for members to ask questions of the Minister and his officials.

9. At the end of debate, the Committee must decide whether or not to agree the motion, and then report to Parliament accordingly. Such a report need only be a short statement of the Committee's recommendation.

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**Infrastructure and Capital Investment Committee**

**5<sup>th</sup> Meeting, 2012 (Session 4), Wednesday, 7 March 2012**

**Subordinate Legislation**

<b>Title of Instrument</b>	The Scottish Social Housing Charter (SG 2012/20)
<b>Type of Instrument</b>	Affirmative
<b>Laid Date</b>	22 February 2012
<b>Circulated to Members</b>	2 March 2012
<b>Meeting Date</b>	7 March 2012
<b>Minister to attend the meeting</b>	Yes
<b>SSI drawn to the Parliament's attention by Subordinate Legislation Committee</b>	No
<b>Reporting Deadline</b>	<b>31 March 2012</b>

**Purpose**

1. As required by section 31 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2010, the Scottish Ministers, in this Scottish Social Housing Charter, set out the standards and outcomes that all social landlords should aim to achieve when performing their housing activities.

2. The Charter aims to improve the quality and value of the services that social landlords provide by:

- increasing the clarity of what tenants and other customers can expect from social landlords, and helping them to hold landlords to account;
- focusing the efforts of social landlords on achieving outcomes that matter to their customers; and
- establishing a basis for the Scottish Housing Regulator to assess and report on how well landlords are performing in order to enable the Regulator, social landlords, tenants and other customers to identify areas in need of improvement. This aims to make it easier for the Scottish Government ensure that public investment in new social housing goes only to landlords assessed as performing well.

### **Further Information**

3. The Committee took evidence on the Draft Charter at its meeting on 25 January 2012, when it heard the views of local authority housing associations and tenant support services. The Committee then took evidence from the Scottish Government at its meeting on 8 February 2012, following which it agreed to write to the Minister for Housing and Transport with its comments on the Draft Charter and suggestions for minor amendments (see Annexe A to this note). The Minister subsequently responded to the Committee indicating that the Scottish Government would incorporate these suggested changes into the final version of the Charter (Annexe B).

### **Procedure**

4. The Infrastructure and Capital Investment Committee has been designated lead committee and is required to report to the Parliament by 31 March 2012.

5. The Subordinate Legislation Committee did not have any comments to make in relation to this instrument.

6. Under Rule 10.6.1 (b), the Order is subject to affirmative resolution before it can be made. It is for the Infrastructure and Capital Investment Committee to recommend to the Parliament whether the Order should be approved. The Minister for Housing and Transport has, by motion S4M-02201 (set out in the agenda), proposed that the Committee recommends the approval of this Order. The Minister will attend in order to speak to and move the motion. The debate on the motion may last for up to 90 minutes. Ahead of the formal debate (as part of an earlier agenda item), there will be an opportunity for members to ask questions of the Minister and his officials.

7. At the end of debate, the Committee must decide whether or not to agree the motion, and then report to Parliament accordingly. Such a report need only be a short statement of the Committee's recommendation.

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ANNEXE A



The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

**INFRASTRUCTURE AND CAPITAL INVESTMENT COMMITTEE**

Mr Keith Brown  
Minister for Housing and Transport  
The Scottish Government

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The Scottish Parliament  
Edinburgh  
EH99 1SP

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9 February 2012

Dear Keith

**Scottish Social Housing Charter**

Thank you for the evidence you provided on the Scottish Social Housing Charter at the Infrastructure and Capital Investment Committee meeting yesterday.

The Committee recognises the extensive consultation that has been undertaken in respect of the Charter and the considerable work carried out to reflect the views heard in the final draft.

The Committee understands that the Charter is to operate as a document of measurement that is compatible with statutory obligations and that as such it is not appropriate or necessary for the detail of all of these obligations to be included in the Charter. However, in response to views heard during evidence taking, the Committee is of the view that it is important to include reference to the 2012 commitment to settled accommodation for every homeless person and suggests the following revision included in square brackets—

**Outcome 12**

Local authorities perform their duties on homelessness so that:

- *homeless people get prompt and easy access to help and advice, are provided with suitable, good quality temporary or emergency accommodation, when this is needed, and are offered continuing*

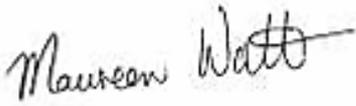
**ANNEXE A**

*support to help them get and keep ~~a home~~ [the home they are entitled to]*

I should therefore be grateful if you would consider including this or an appropriate alternative reference in the final version of the Charter.

The Committee noted concerns that were raised in respect of tenant participation during evidence taking and will examine this further within the context of monitoring the implementation of the Charter and the work of the Scottish Housing Regulator.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Maureen Watt". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

**MAUREEN WATT MSP  
CONVENER**

**ANNEXE B**

Minister for Housing and Transport  
Keith Brown MSP

Maureen Watt MSP  
Convenor  
Infrastructure & Capital Investment Committee  
The Scottish Parliament  
Edinburgh  
EH99 1SP

22 February 2012

Dear Maureen

**Scottish Social Housing Charter**

Thank you for your letter of the 9 February 2012 and for the keen interest the Committee has taken in the development of Scotland's first Social Housing Charter.

I welcome the Committee's suggestion for strengthening the Charter's outcome on homelessness and am pleased to confirm that we have reflected it in the version of the Charter that we are laying before the Parliament for its approval. This version has been amended at a number of points on the recommendation of the Plain Language Commission and has been awarded the Clear English Standard. A copy of the revised Charter showing all changes that we have made is enclosed for the Committee's information.

I share the Committee's concerns in respect of tenant participation and I plan to use the launch of the Charter as an opportunity to impress upon landlords and the Scottish Housing Regulator the importance that Alex Neil and I attach to landlords achieving the participation outcome in the Charter. We will also be paying particular attention to the Regulator's assessments of landlord performance in this area.

Kind regards

**KEITH BROWN**

## Infrastructure and Capital Investment Committee

5th Meeting, 2012 (Session 4), Wednesday, 7 March 2012

### Appointment of EU Reporter

#### Purpose

1. The purpose of this paper is to elect a new EU Reporter, following the resignation from the Committee of the previous Reporter, Jamie Hepburn MSP.

#### Background

##### *The Scottish Parliament's European Strategy*

2. The debate on the European and External Relations Committee (EERC) report on the impact of the Treaty of Lisbon took place on 9 December 2010 and the following motion was agreed to—

[S3M-07496 Irene Oldfather \(Cunninghame South\) \(Labour Party\) on behalf of the European and External Relations Committee: Report on the impact of the Treaty of Lisbon on Scotland—](#)That the Parliament notes the European and External Relations Committee's 4th Report 2010 (Session 3), Inquiry into the Impact of the Treaty of Lisbon on Scotland (SP Paper 469) and agrees to the introduction of a Parliament-wide strategy for European Union engagement and scrutiny, including the introduction on a pilot basis and if successful, permanently, of an early warning system for EU legislative proposals, as outlined in Annexe B to the Report.

3. The Scottish Parliament's European Strategy is available on the Parliament's website—

<http://archive.scottish.parliament.uk/s3/committees/europe/reports-11/eur11-03.htm#annb>

4. The European Strategy outlines the enhanced role of subject committees in early engagement and in the scrutiny of emerging EU legislative proposals. Subject committees will be responsible for appointing EU Reporters and for scrutinising EU proposals within their area.

##### *The Role of the EU Reporter*

5. The role of the EU Reporter is to act as 'champion' for EU matters within the Committee. This will involve promoting the European dimension in the work of the Committee, taking the lead on EU early engagement and in developing relationships with the European Commission and European Parliament, leading the Committee's EU scrutiny work, promoting and speaking to European issues, highlighting the European dimension within policy debates and acting as a conduit between the Committee and the European Committee of the Scottish Parliament.

6. The elected EU Reporter will also be expected to participate on behalf of the Committee in the forthcoming debate on the Commission's Work Programme, which

is scheduled to take place on 21 March. In doing so, the EU Reporter will wish to refer to the Committee's EU priorities, which were agreed at the last meeting.

**Recommendation**

7. The Committee is invited to nominate a member to act as EU Reporter for the Committee.

Steve Farrell  
Clerk to the Committee  
March 2012

**Infrastructure and Capital Investment Committee**

**5<sup>th</sup> Meeting, 2012 (Session 4), 7 March 2012**

**Choice of Deputy Convener**

**Purpose of paper**

1. Due to the resignation from the Committee of its Deputy Convener, it is required to elect another Member to fulfil this role. This paper explains the procedure for choosing a Deputy Convener.

**Choice of Deputy Convener**

2. On 1 June 2011, the Parliament agreed to motion S4M-00165, which resolved that members of the Scottish National Party are eligible to be chosen as Deputy Convener of the Infrastructure and Capital Investment Committee. The Convener of the Committee will invite nominations from members of that party for the deputy convenueership. There is no requirement for nominations to be submitted in advance of the meeting or to be seconded.
3. Where only one nomination is received, Members will be asked to agree to the appointment.

Steve Farrell  
Clerk to the Committee  
March 2012