



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

SPCB Supported Bodies Landscape Review Committee

Jamie Hepburn MSP
Minister for Parliamentary Business
Scottish Government

1 May 2025

Dear Minister/Jamie,

SPCB Supported Bodies Landscape Review

As you will be aware, the Scottish Parliament agreed in October 2024 that there should be a moratorium on creating any new SPCB supported bodies, or expanding the remits of existing bodies, while a dedicated Committee carries out a 'root and branch' review of the SPCB supported body landscape (motion S6M-15086 attached at Annexe A). This moratorium excluded those Bills already before the Parliament at that time, in relation to Victims and Witnesses and a Disability Commissioner.

The Parliament has tasked the SPCB Supported Bodies Landscape Committee (SSBLRC) with undertaking this comprehensive review of the SPCB supported bodies landscape. This includes examining the criteria for the establishment for new bodies. The full remit of the Committee is:

To consider, review and report on the SPCB supported bodies landscape in accordance with the Parliament's resolution of 31 October 2024 and develop a clear strategic framework to underpin and provide coherence and structure to the SPCB supported bodies landscape by the end of June 2025, including —

- creating effective accountability and scrutiny mechanisms,
- formalising strengthened criteria for creating new supported bodies; and
- identifying and addressing any barriers to sharing services and offices.

The SSBLRC notes that Members Bills proposing the creation of a Commissioner for Older People, and a Futures Generations Commissioner have recently been introduced in Parliament. We understand that the Parliament resolved on 23 April 2025 to refer the Commissioner for Older People (Scotland) Bill to the Equalities, Human Rights and Civil Justice Committee (EHRCJC) for scrutiny at Stage 1, and that discussions are ongoing regarding referral of the Wellbeing and Sustainable Development (Scotland) Bill.

Contact: SSBLR Committee, The Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh, EH99 1SP. Email SSBLR.committee@parliament.scot. We welcome calls through Relay UK and in BSL through Contact Scotland BSL.

We recognise and respect the importance of referring Bills to lead Committees in a timely manner to allow for the completion of the legislative process wherever possible. However, given Parliament has tasked the SSBLRC with carrying out the landscape review described above, we ask that the Bureau considers this Committee's remaining scrutiny timetable in its planning. We would propose that it would be beneficial to enable the review findings to properly inform the Parliament's deliberations. As you and the Bureau are aware, the Committee will report its findings by the end of June 2025, and we hope to receive responses to them by September.

The Committee has also written to the Convener of the Equalities, Human Rights and Civil Justice Committee to set out the timetable for our work.

I would of course be happy to discuss the SSBLRC's work with you if that would be helpful.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ben', written in a cursive style.

Ben Macpherson MSP
Convener

Annexe: Motion S6M-15086, 31 October 2024

Motion: That the Parliament welcomes the Finance and Public Administration Committee's 7th Report, 2024 (Session 6), Scotland's Commissioner Landscape: A Strategic Approach (SP Paper 642); agrees with the recommendation that a dedicated committee should be established to carry out a "root and branch" review, with the purpose of creating a clear strategic framework to underpin and provide more coherence and structure to the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body (SPCB) supported body landscape, which should complete its work by June 2025, and further agrees that, while this review is undertaken, there should be a moratorium on creating any new SPCB supported bodies, or expanding the remit of existing bodies, while recognising that, for proposals within bills that have already been introduced, these are now for the Parliament to take a decision on, respecting the lead committees' roles in scrutinising legislation within their remits.

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