



OFFICIAL REPORT
AITHISG OIFIGEIL

Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee

Thursday 2 December 2021

Session 6



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STANDARDS, PROCEDURES AND PUBLIC APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE
10th Meeting 2021, Session 6

CONVENER

*Martin Whitfield (South Scotland) (Lab)

DEPUTY CONVENER

*Bob Doris (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (SNP)

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Edward Mountain (Highlands and Islands) (Con)

*Tess White (North East Scotland) (Con)

*Elena Whitham (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP)

*attended

THE FOLLOWING ALSO PARTICIPATED:

Rachael Hamilton (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)

Gillian Mackay (Central Scotland) (Green)

Sue Webber (Lothian) (Con) (Committee Substitute)

CLERK TO THE COMMITTEE

Katy Orr

LOCATION

The Sir Alexander Fleming Room (CR3)

Scottish Parliament

Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee

Thursday 2 December 2021

[The Convener opened the meeting at 09:00]

Interests

The Convener (Martin Whitfield): Good morning. I welcome everyone to the 10th meeting of the Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee in session 6. I remind members who are on the BlueJeans platform to put an R in the chat function to request to speak.

Before we move to the main agenda item, I invite our new member, Elena Whitham, to declare any relevant interests.

Elena Whitham (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP): I refer everyone to my entry in the register of members' interests, which states that I am a sitting councillor in East Ayrshire.

The Convener: Excellent. I welcome you to the committee, Elena.

Elena is joining us today to replace Paul McLennan. I place on record my thanks for the work that Paul did with the committee. With the consent of the committee, I would like to write to Paul, thanking him for his work. Are we in agreement on that?

Members indicated agreement.

The Convener: I am grateful.

Apologies have been received from Edward Mountain. I welcome Sue Webber, who joins us today as his substitute, and I invite her to declare any relevant interests.

Sue Webber (Lothian) (Con) (Committee Substitute): Like Ms Whitham, I am a sitting councillor, but with City of Edinburgh Council. That is recorded in my entry in the register of members' interests.

The Convener: I am grateful for that. Welcome to the committee.

Cross-Party Groups

09:01

The Convener: Under our main item, we will hear about two proposed cross-party groups. The first group that we will consider is the proposed CPG on gardening and horticulture. I welcome Rachael Hamilton, who will be the convener of the proposed group if it is agreed to.

Welcome, Rachael. Would you like to outline the purposes of the CPG for us?

Rachael Hamilton (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con): Thank you, convener. The aim of the group is to promote the world of gardening and horticulture, to facilitate an understanding between its representatives and members of the Scottish Parliament and to give the sector an important independent voice for the first time.

We know that the relationship that people have with the environment is strong. Witnessing the devastation of rare tree species caused by storm Arwen has caused much distress, which demonstrates how important plants, nature and green spaces are to us human beings.

It is also important to recognise the value of the Scottish garden retail sector to the Scottish economy. It has a total impact on gross domestic product of £277 million annually, and it supports 6,700 jobs. The need to grasp the opportunity that Covid has thrown at us and to strengthen the link between growing and eating is vital. Green spaces can also have a positive affect on mental wellbeing and health. The 26th United Nations climate change conference of the parties—COP26—amplified the need for green spaces like never before, particularly with regard to the importance of resilient supply chains in the horticultural industry.

The Good Food Nation (Scotland) Bill is before the Parliament, and many individuals are concerned about food and healthy living. According to a national representative YouGov survey commissioned by the Horticultural Trades Association in 2019, 31 per cent of British adults with a garden—approximately 14 million people—grow their own fruit and vegetables. That speaks volumes.

That leads me on to the importance of climate change. The gardening and horticultural sector is essential in fulfilling the Scottish Government's environment plan and the wider ambitions around climate change. It is important to bring stakeholders around the table to discuss it. We have attracted members to the CPG from the National Trust for Scotland, Greenspace Scotland,

the Scottish Allotments and Gardens Society and Scotland's Gardens Scheme.

I understand that we have many cross-party groups at the moment. However, I believe it is important that we represent this very important sector. I urge the committee to support me, whether you think that roses or ranunculus are better, and whether pansies or petunias are your preference.

The Convener: Thank you very much for that, Rachael. You have cross-party support here from among the different groups in the chamber, and a substantial list of external individuals and organisations are interested. I think I am right in saying that a significant number of them do not appear on any other CPG or have a voice at the table in this place.

No one on the committee has any questions: we all seem content. Thank you for attending today, Rachael. The committee will consider the CPG and the clerks will be in touch in the near future.

Rachael Hamilton: Thank you for your time.

09:05

Meeting suspended.

09:05

On resuming—

The Convener: The next group that we will consider is the proposed CPG on stroke. Gillian Mackay will be the convener of that group. Good morning, Gillian. Will you explain to the committee the purposes and intentions of the proposed CPG?

Gillian Mackay (Central Scotland) (Green): The purpose of the cross-party group on stroke is to provide oversight, encouragement and support in the implementation of a progressive stroke service in all health boards, based on the recommendations of the new stroke action plan, which will be published next year. Increased political awareness of the scale and impact of stroke and the benefits that implementation of a progressive stroke service will make, as well as increased political awareness of stroke as a national clinical priority, will help to ensure that stroke is treated as a clinical priority in all health boards.

Stroke is the third most common cause of death in Scotland. In addition, it can be a very disabling event for those people who survive their stroke. It accounts for about 7 per cent of the health spend. The ethos of the CPG will be about focusing all meetings on the current stroke improvement work. The CPG will be part of forming the conditions in which those stroke improvements can take place.

It will contribute to and support the opportunity for the significant change promised by the commitments in the 2019-20 programme for government and the subsequent good work to date.

Although there are currently no external members listed for the group, apart from the secretariat, we will invite a range of other organisations to join shortly, and we will update Parliament on that once we have done so. That will include third sector charities, regulatory bodies and other health and social care organisations. Individuals will also be invited to join the group, including clinicians and those with lived experience of stroke. Those names will be provided to Parliament as soon as possible, so that the web page can be updated.

We are aware that a similar group existed previously as part of the cross-party group on heart disease and stroke. As the Government treats the two conditions separately, with their own action plans, we believe that it is better to separate into two CPGs so that both conditions can receive the attention that they require. Where appropriate, we will seek to work with the proposed cross-party group on heart disease. Given that our proposed group's aim is to scrutinise the upcoming stroke improvement work, I do not envisage there being a huge amount of crossover.

The Convener: Thank you, Gillian. It was good of you to point out the external groups and individuals that will be interested in the group, because the papers state simply that the Stroke Association will provide the secretariat. Given that one of the very important purposes of the group is to draw conclusions and produce recommendations on the basis of people's lived experience, that outreach is crucial.

Do you see any conflict between the proposed CPG on heart disease and the proposed separate CPG on stroke?

Gillian Mackay: No. It is recognised by both of the proposed CPGs that specific work needs to be done in each area. We could spend years discussing the work that is needed in both of the spheres relating to those conditions, which is why the decision has been taken in this session that they should have their own dedicated cross-party groups.

The Convener: Are you proposing that now is the right time to do that?

Gillian Mackay: Yes.

The Convener: Do committee members have any questions? We appear to have lost Bob Doris. Bob, do you have any questions?

Bob Doris (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (SNP): No, I do not.

The Convener: Thank you for attending the committee, Gillian. We will consider the proposed CPG and the clerks will notify you of the decision in the near future.

The next agenda item is consideration of whether to accord recognition to the proposed cross-party groups on gardening and horticulture and on stroke. Are members content to accord recognition to the proposed new CPGs?

Members *indicated agreement.*

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

09:09

Meeting continued in private until 10:55.

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