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Economy and Fair Work Committee

Annual Report of the Economy and Fair Work Committee 2022-23



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Economy and Fair Work Committee

To consider and report on matters relating to the economy falling within the responsibility of the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and the Economy.



economyandfairwork.committee@parliament.scot

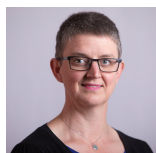
Committee Membership



Convener
Claire Baker
Scottish Labour



Deputy Convener
Colin Beattie
Scottish National Party



Maggie Chapman
Scottish Green Party



Jamie Halcro Johnston
Scottish Conservative
and Unionist Party



Fiona Hyslop
Scottish National Party



Gordon MacDonald
Scottish National Party



Graham Simpson
Scottish Conservative
and Unionist Party



Colin Smyth
Scottish Labour



Michelle Thomson
Scottish National Party

Introduction

1. This report covers the work of the Economy and Fair Work Committee during the parliamentary year from 13 May 2022 to 12 May 2023.
2. The following changes to Committee membership occurred during the course of this parliamentary year—
 - On 22 September 2022, Graham Simpson MSP replaced Alexander Burnett MSP.

Meetings

3. The Committee met 32 times during the reporting period. Six of these meetings were held entirely in private, and 26 meetings included items in private. No meetings were held entirely in public. The reasons for taking business in private were—
 - Consideration of correspondence;
 - Consideration of draft reports;
 - Consideration of evidence received; and
 - Consideration of the Committee's work programme.
4. During the reporting year, the Committee heard from 98 witnesses, representing 55 businesses and organisations.



32

Committee meetings



98

Number of people
who gave evidence
representing 55
organisations

Legislation

5. No primary legislation was referred to the Committee during the period covered by this report.

Secondary Legislation

6. The Committee considered six Scottish Statutory Instruments—
 - Four affirmative; and
 - Two negative instruments.

Legislative Consent Memorandums

7. The Committee considered three Legislative Consent Memorandums (LCMs)—
 - The Procurement Bill;
 - The Trade (Australia and New Zealand) Bill; and
 - The UK Infrastructure Bank Bill
8. The Committee recommended withholding consent for all three LCMs. Consent was withheld, in part, due to concerns that there was no requirement for UK Ministers to obtain the consent of the Scottish Ministers when exercising power in relation to devolved matters.
9. The Committee then considered supplementary LCMs on the Procurement Bill and the UK Infrastructure Bank Bill. The Committee recommended partial consent to the Procurement Bill, noting that while a number of amendments addressed some of the issues highlighted, there were others still outstanding. In the case of the UK Infrastructure Bank Bill, the Committee recommended consent as the requested assurances had been given.

Inquiries

10. The Committee undertook three inquiries—

- [Town Centres and Retail](#)
- [A Just Transition for the Grangemouth area](#)
- [Disability Employment Gap](#)

A call for views has recently been issued on [Royal Mail service changes](#).

Town Centres and Retail

11. The remit for the inquiry was to—

- Identify the new realities of retail and e-commerce in Scotland and the resulting impact on town centres.
- Find out the subsequent policy response needed to create living and resilient town centres.
- Discover innovative ways to keep town centres alive and how to support communities to regenerate their town centres.

12. The Committee heard evidence over eight meetings, received written evidence, undertook visits to Burntisland, Dumfries, Hamilton, Inverurie, and Fraserburgh and commissioned external research.

13. The Committee reported its findings in November 2022 and held a Chamber debate in February 2023.

Visit to Burntisland



Visit to Fraserburgh and Inverurie



Visit to Hamilton



A Just Transition for the Grangemouth area

14. This inquiry is looking at how best to support, incentivise and de-risk the transition to net zero in a way that will benefit industry, employees and the community. The Committee received written views, took evidence over eight meetings and visited the INEOS Grangemouth site. The Committee will report its findings in the next reporting period.

Committee visit to INEOS

Members of the Committee and representatives from INEOS at the Grangemouth site



Disability Employment Gap

15. The Committee undertook preliminary work to consider the disability employment gap in Scotland. It issued a call for views, held two evidence sessions and undertook two visits to—

1. ENABLE Works / All in Dundee and Dovetail Enterprises.
2. The National Autistic Society Scotland (NASS)

The Committee intends to return to this work.

Committee members with ENABLE Works focus group members



Committee members meeting Employees of Dovetail Enterprises



Committee members with the NASS focus group



Royal Mail service change

16. At the end of this reporting period, the Committee issued a call for views on the Royal Mail's proposed service changes and the impact of recent associated industrial action on businesses and communities in Scotland. The Committee expects to take evidence from Royal Mail later in the year.

Other evidence sessions

17. A key feature of all the Committee's work is consideration of the economic impacts of policy. Following publication of the UK Government budget, the Committee held evidence sessions to consider Scotland's economic outlook, the outlook for business investment and specifically the economic outlook for the renewables sector. Throughout the year, the Committee also held focussed sessions on a range of issues including broadband connectivity and recent reports of the Fair Work Convention. The Committee also took evidence from the Just Transition Commission.

2023-24 Budget Scrutiny

18. The Committee held evidence sessions during September and October 2022. The focus included women's contribution to the economy, the impact of the cost crisis on the tourism and hospitality sectors and on high energy usage industries.

Registers of Scotland

19. The Committee held an evidence session with the Keeper of the Registers of Scotland in September and continues to receive monthly written updates.

Business in the Parliament

20. The 15th Business in the Parliament Conference (a joint venture between the Scottish Parliament and the Scottish Government) was held in February. There were 210 attendees. The event is sponsored by the Committee and was opened by the Convener. Members supported the conference at workshops and contributed to cross-party panel discussions.

Business in the Parliament



Equalities and Engagement

21. The Committee has issued BSL accessible calls for views and easy-read versions. The call for views for the Just Transition for the Grangemouth area inquiry was promoted locally using posters with QR codes in local shops and through targeted Facebook advertising.
22. The Committee's twitter account @SP_Economy has 2,957 followers, and is used to promote inquiries, reports, calls for views, key correspondence and to highlight evidence sessions.



2,957 followers

90 tweets

*as of 11 May 2023

Post-Legislative Scrutiny

23. The Committee has agreed to undertake post-legislative scrutiny of the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014 and will take this forward in the coming months.

