

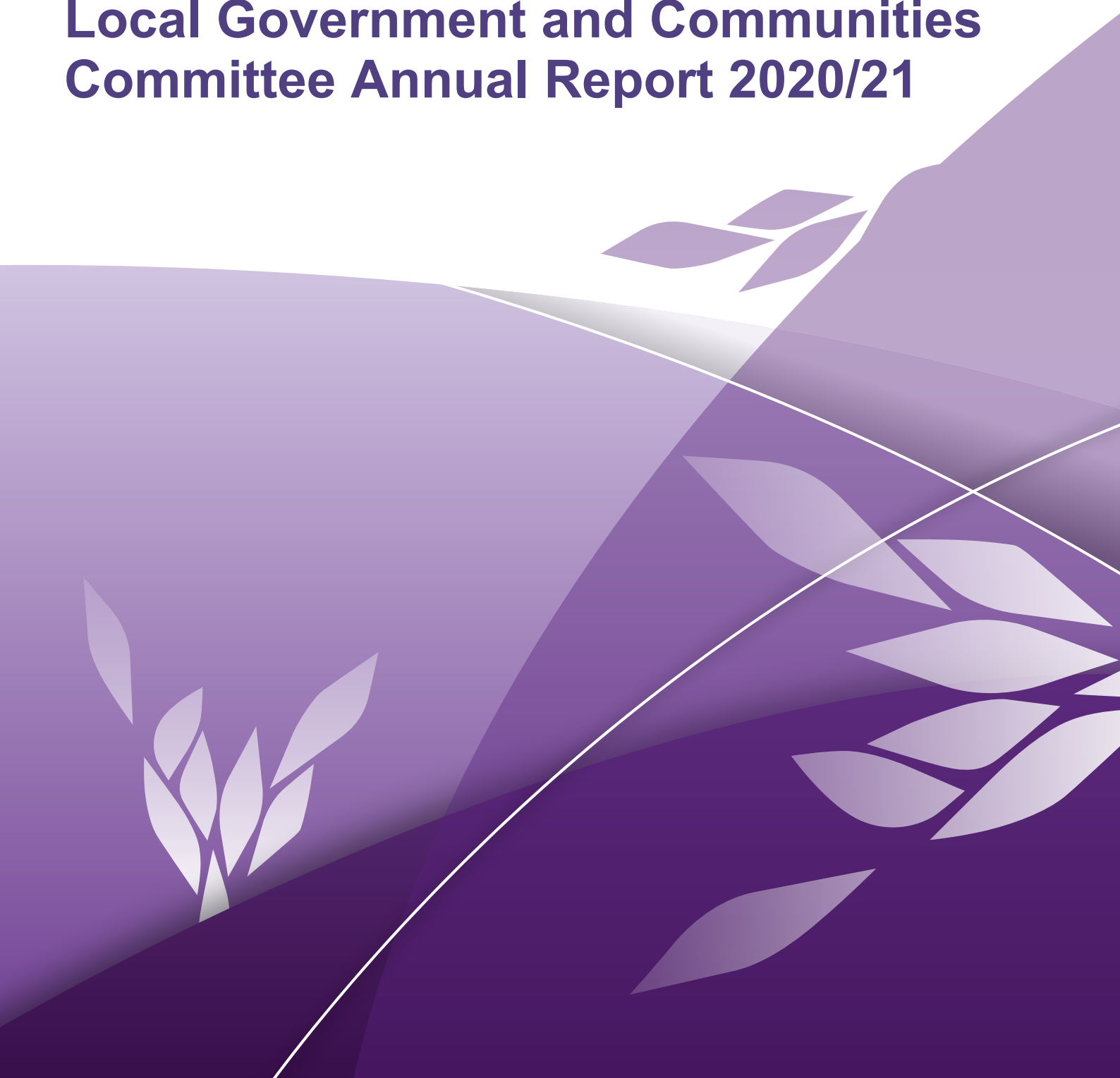


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Local Government and Communities Committee Comataidh Riaghaltas Ionadail is Coimhearsnachdan

Local Government and Communities Committee Annual Report 2020/21



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Local Government and Communities Committee

To consider and report on communities, housing, local government, measures against poverty, planning and regeneration matters falling within the responsibility of the Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Local Government.



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Annie Wells
Scottish Conservative
and Unionist Party



Gordon MacDonald
Scottish National Party



Alexander Stewart
Scottish Conservative
and Unionist Party

Introduction

1. This annual report covers the period of 12 May 2020 to 24 March 2021, after which the Scottish Parliament will go into the campaign recess period from 25 March to 4 May 2021. The Scottish Parliament agreed on 3 March 2021 to vary Standing Orders so that committees could not meet during the pre-election campaign period (with the exception of the COVID-19 Committee, which may be convened in an emergency). This decision was taken in response to the Scottish General Election (Coronavirus) Act 2021 which provides that the Scottish Parliament will not be dissolved until 5 May 2021 to permit the Parliament to meet to legislate for a new polling date if required.
2. During this parliamentary year the Committee considered four important Bills, Travelling Funfairs (Licensing) (Scotland) Bill, European Charter of Local Self-Government (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill, Period Products (Free Provision) (Scotland) Bill, and Fair Rents (Scotland) Bill. It undertook a number of one off evidence sessions and inquiries including, individuals with no recourse to public funds, the licensing rules of static mobile homes with permanent residents and the common framework on Hazardous Substances Planning. The Committee also considered 36 Scottish Statutory Instruments 25 of which were negative and 11 of which were positive.
3. The Committee continued to hold formal meetings remotely due to the COVID-19 crisis.

Membership Changes

4. There were 6 membership changes during the reporting year:
 - Jeremy Balfour left the Committee on 20 August 2020 and was replaced by Alexander Stewart;
 - Graham Simpson left the Committee on 20 August 2020 and was replaced by Annie Wells;
 - Annabelle Ewing left the Committee on 31 August 2020 and was replaced by Gail Ross;
 - Kenneth Gibson left the Committee on 1 September 2020 and was replaced by Keith Brown; and
 - Gail Ross left the Committee on 3 December 2020 and was replaced by Gordon MacDonald.

Committee substitute change:

- Alexander Stewart was replaced as a Committee substitute on 20 August 2020 by Jeremy Balfour.

Meetings

5. During the parliamentary year, the Committee met 35 times. Of these meetings 3 were wholly in private and 32 were partly in private. Items taken in private mainly comprised consideration of evidence heard and consideration of draft reports.
6. This year, of the 168 witness appearances, 54% of our witnesses were male and 46% were female.



168

Number of people
who gave evidence



36
SSIs considered



Reports published



Petitions considered



Witnesses who gave evidence

Equalities and Engagement

7. The Committee is keen to encourage diversity in the witnesses it invites, and asks organisations to consider this when identifying representatives to speak to the Committee. It has also made it a priority to ensure that under represented groups are able to contribute to the Committee's work and is particularly keen to hear from those with lived experience.
8. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, the Committee was not able to participate in its usual face-to-face engagement activities. However, the Committee continued to engage on matters of interest through targeted call for views and virtually held evidence sessions.
9. Members of the Committee took part in an online community meeting on 11 November 2020 hosted by Midlothian Voluntary Action as part of its post-legislative scrutiny of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015.

Legislation

Bills

10. During 2020-21 session the Committee considered the following four Bills:
 - Travelling Funfairs (Licensing) (Scotland) Bill;
 - European Charter of Local Self-Government (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill;
 - Period Products (Free Provision) (Scotland) Bill; and
 - Fair Rents (Scotland) Bill.

Travelling Funfairs (Licensing) (Scotland) Bill

11. This Member's Bill was introduced in the Scottish Parliament by Richard Lyle on 29 April 2020. It sought to change the licensing system for operators of travelling funfairs in Scotland.
12. The Bill aims to:
 - make the system simpler and quicker with councils asked to process applications by 21 days with a more uniformed approach across all 32 council areas;
 - set the fees for applying for a licence to £50;
 - help protect the threatened way of life of Scotland's showpeople, who are closely connected with the travelling funfair trade; and
 - limit the grounds for councils to refuse applications and / or their discretion to attach conditions to licences.
13. Following the introduction of the Bill the Committee issued a call for evidence and received 115 submissions. The vast majority of submissions were from people with connections to the travelling funfair business, who overwhelmingly supported the Bill's proposals.
14. The Committee took evidence at Stage 1 on the Bill at its meeting on 20 January 2021 and heard from the Scottish Section of the Showmen's Guild; an experienced showman, local authorities; and Fair Scotland, a collective of academics, researchers and Showpeople. The Committee took evidence from the Member in charge, Richard Lyle, on 3 February 2021.
15. The Committee published its Stage 1 Report on Monday 22 March 2021, which concluded that it had not been able to gather sufficient information to support the general principles of the Bill.
16. The Committee agreed that there is a desperate need for reform and set out three broad options:

- reform of the 1982 Act to address the issues raised by travelling showpeople and highlighted in this Bill;
 - the creation of a separate licensing system for travelling funfairs, as proposed in this Bill; and
 - to remove travelling funfairs from the licensing system altogether, so that – as in England - controls on how a fair is run are negotiated as part of the lease of the land the fair takes place on.
17. The Committee recommended that the Scottish Government works with the sector to review these options in the next parliamentary session and brings forward proposals to support travelling funfairs.
18. Access to detailed information and documents relating to the Committee's scrutiny are available on the [Committee's bill page](#).

European Charter of Local Self-Government (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill

19. This Member's Bill was introduced in the Scottish Parliament by Andy Wightman on 5 May 2020. The Bill aims to strengthen local government by incorporating the European Charter of Local Self-Government into Scots law.
20. The Charter is an international treaty of the Council of Europe signed by the UK in 1997. The Council of Europe is an international organisation founded in 1949 to uphold human rights, democracy and the rule of law in Europe. The Charter sets out some principles to protect the basic powers of local authorities.
21. The member believed that extra legislation was needed to give the international treaty the same status in Scots law as domestic laws. That is the purpose of this Bill. Under this Bill, the following must be compatible with the Charter:
- actions that Scottish Ministers take within their devolved powers;
 - laws that are in the legislative competence of the Scottish Parliament.
22. It will mean action can be taken in the courts to challenge these actions and laws if someone believes they may not be compatible.
23. Following the introduction of the Bill, the Committee issued a call for evidence and received 22 submissions. There was strong support for all sections of the Bill, with an overriding message from respondents that saw the Bill as being the first step in moving towards further devolution of local government in Scotland. Many submissions saw the Bill as being essential in the context of Scotland (and the UK) not having a written constitution and suggested that the aims of the Bill were harmonious with the general move towards rights-based approaches in legislation.
24. On 18 November 2020, the Committee took evidence at Stage 1 on the Bill from academics from the University of Edinburgh; Queen Margaret University; Reform Scotland; COSLA; SOLAR (Society of Local Authority Lawyers and Administrators);

and Shetland Islands Council. Aileen Campbell, Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Local Government gave evidence on 2 December 2020 and the Committee heard from the member in charge, Andy Wightman, on 9 December 2020.

25. The Committee published its Stage 1 Report on 22 January 2021. It supported the general principles of the Bill and accepted that agreeing to the Bill would, to all intents amount to incorporating the Charter into Scots law, meaning that it could be directly relied upon as an authoritative legal source under certain circumstances.
26. At its meeting on 24 February 2021 the Committee considered the Bill at Stage 2.
27. The Stage 3 debate was held on 23 March 2021.
28. Access to detailed information and documents relating to the Committee's scrutiny are available on the [Committee's bill page](#).

Period Products (Free Provision) (Scotland) Bill

29. This is a Members' Bill, introduced by Monica Lennon. The aim of the Bill is to tackle "period poverty", which is when some people who need period products struggle to afford them. She sees these products as a basic necessity, and believes that providing access to them is important for people's dignity. The Committee had completed its Stage 1 scrutiny of this Member's Bill in the previous Parliamentary year.
30. At its meeting on 28 October 2020 the Committee considered the Bill at Stage 2.
31. The Stage 3 debate was held on 24 November 2020 and the Bill received Royal Assent on 12 January 2021.
32. Access to detailed information and documents relating to the Committee's scrutiny are available on the [Committee's bill page](#).

Fair Rents (Scotland) Bill

33. This Member's Bill was introduced in the Scottish Parliament by Pauline McNeill, on 1 June 2020.
34. The Bill would:
 - prevent a landlord from increasing rent for a tenant with a private residential tenancy by more than CPI+1%;
 - allow a tenant to apply to the rent officer to have a 'fair open market rent' set for the property (a tenant can do this only once in any 12-month period); and
 - require private landlords to include details of the rent they charge in the Scottish Landlord Register. They would have to do this at the point of registration or when they re-register (which happens every 3 years).
35. Following the introduction of the Bill, the Committee issued a call for evidence and

received 203 submissions. There were mixed views on the proposals. The key theme from respondents supporting the Bill was that it would result in a positive outcome for tenants, rebalancing the power in their favour. Others felt that there was a potentially negative impact on the supply of private rented accommodation.

36. on 24 February 2021, the Committee took evidence at Stage 1 on the Bill and heard from Scottish Association of Landlords; Association of Local Authority Chief Housing Officers; Living Rent; Citizen's Advice Scotland; and Professor Douglas Robertson. On 3 March 2021, the committee heard from Kevin Stewart, Minister for Local Government, Housing and Planning, and the Member in charge, Pauline McNeill.
37. The Committee agreed to reflect key themes raised in its scrutiny of the Bill in its legacy paper for the Session 6 Committee.
38. Access to detailed information and documents relating to the Committee's scrutiny are available on the [Committee's bill page](#).

Subordinate Legislation

39. During the Parliamentary year, the Committee considered 36 Scottish Statutory Instruments (SSIs), 11 under the affirmative procedure and 25 under the negative procedure. Amongst significant instruments considered by the Committee were:
 - The Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982 (Licensing of Short-term Lets) Order 2021 and the Town and Country Planning (Short Term Let Control Areas) Regulations 2021. These instruments were both introduced to manage the rise in short term holiday lets. The proposals aimed to create a licensing scheme for local authorities to regulate properties and to give them the ability to introduce short-term let control areas. The Committee received close to 300 written submissions on the proposals. Owners of guest houses and bed and breakfasts had expressed their concerns over the cost of obtaining a license. Some felt that the proposed rules were suited to tackle the rise of urban based short-term lets and that established, traditional bed and breakfasts should not be included. Following its meeting on 3 February 2021, the Scottish Government withdrew their proposals for licensing short-term lets to give them further consideration. The rules on control areas received Parliamentary consent.
 - The Housing (Scotland) Act 2006 (Modification of the Repairing Standard) Amendment Regulations 2020 and the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 (Tolerable Standard) (Extension of Criteria) Amendment Order 2020. Both instruments create a new minimum standard for fire and smoke detectors across all housing, regardless of whether the house is owner-occupied or rented in the social or private sector.

Inquiries and Reports

40. The Committee undertook a number of inquiries over the Parliamentary year.

COVID-19

41. After the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Committee continued to scrutinise the actions of the Scottish Government in its response to the public health emergency. It agreed to focus on the impact the pandemic had on the local government, housing planning, licensing and communities sectors and the support being made available to them to enable them to meet the challenges. The Committee held five oral evidence sessions during this Parliamentary year.
42. On 15 May 2020 the Committee took evidence from Aileen Campbell, Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Local Government. This session addressed all major matters with the Minister's remit in relation to the pandemic.

Homelessness and COVID-19

43. On 28 May 2020 the Committee took evidence from Bethany Christian Trust, Homelessness Network Scotland, and Cyrenians. This was followed up in a second evidence session on 14 August where the Committee heard from Kevin Stewart, Minister for Local Government, Housing and Planning.

Local Authorities and COVID-19

44. The Committee took evidence from COSLA and SOLACE Scotland (the Scottish Branch of the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers) on 3 June 2020.

The Third Sector and COVID-19

45. On 26 June 2020, the Committee took evidence from Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations, Firstport, Midlothian Third Sector Interface, Voluntary Action North Lanarkshire, and Western Isles Third Sector Interface.
46. The key issues explored over the series of evidence sessions included:
- efforts to support homeless people and rough sleepers since social distancing measures were introduced; the extent to which this has reduced rough sleeping; and examples of good practice;
 - the short and long-term impact of measures to postpone tenant evictions contained in The Coronavirus (Scotland) Act 2020;
 - how COVID-19 is affecting the implementation of Housing First and Rapid Rehousing policies, which aim to prioritise the most vulnerable homeless people in terms of housing and support;
 - the effect of the Scottish Government's decision to pause the Affordable Housing Supply Programme and how Covid-19 has impacted housebuilding; and

- the impact of Covid-19 on demand for social housing.
47. Access to detailed information and documents relating to the Committee's scrutiny are available on the [Committee's Inquiry page](#).

City Region Deals

48. The Committee held an inquiry into City Region Deals in 2017-18 and agreed to keep a watching brief with key partners. Following evidence sessions in the previous Parliamentary year, the Committee continued its scrutiny with an evidence session on Wednesday 4 November from Michael Matheson, Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity and Iain Stewart, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Scotland Office.
49. Both Governments gave an update on the progress of City Region Deals and the wider 'Growth Deals'.
50. Access to detailed information and documents relating to the Committee's scrutiny are available on the [Committee's Inquiry page](#).

Building regulations and fire safety in Scotland

51. Following the Grenfell Tower tragedy in London, the Committee published its report on Building Regulations and Fire Safety in Scotland in 2017. The Committee continued its scrutiny on the efforts to reform regulations and the Scottish Government's response.
52. The Committee held three further oral evidence sessions during this Parliamentary year. On 19 June 2020, it heard from Fire Protection Association; Scottish Fire and Rescue Service; High Rise Scotland Action Group; Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors; and Homes for Scotland. On 4 September 2020, the Committee heard from Minister for Local Government, Housing and Planning. On 11 November 2020, the Committee took evidence from the National House Building Council Scotland; the Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland; and the Building Standards Compliance and Enforcement Review Panel.
53. During these sessions, the Committee explored:
- The progress made in relation to 'zero valued' homes (where a home receives a "zero" valuation from a surveyor due to cladding or other external wall systems not meeting safety standards);
 - The EWS1 (External Wall Systems) certification system whereby a surveyor with a specialism in fire safety verifies whether or not the external wall systems on a property contains combustible material to a degree that constitutes a significant risk; and
 - why the fire safety of new and refurbished buildings has come to be doubted by major financial institutions.

54. Access to detailed information and documents relating to the Committee's scrutiny are available on the [Committee's Inquiry page](#).

Common Frameworks - Hazardous Substances Planning

55. Following the exit from the European Union, the UK and devolved Governments and administrations have developed UK-wide “common frameworks” to ensure stability after the end of the transition period (31 December 2020). These frameworks will cover key issues across the UK including governance and decision-making, the UK internal market, the future relationship with the EU, domestic trade and international obligations, and Northern Ireland.
56. The objective of the hazardous substances planning system is to prevent major accidents and, where these do occur, to limit their impact on human health and the environment.
57. On 18 November 2020 the Committee issued a targeted calls for views to look at the Framework and received two responses. It is believed that the low level of response reflects how little the Framework proposed to alter the rules already established. The Committee took evidence on 16 December 2020 from Kevin Stewart, Minister for Local Government, Housing and Planning. The Committee responded to the Scottish Government asking to be kept informed of how the Framework is working in practice in the next Parliamentary session.
58. Access to detailed information and documents relating to the Committee's scrutiny are available on the [Committee's Inquiry page](#).

Climate Change Plan Update

59. Following the Scottish Government's Climate Change plan Update, the Committee was one of four Committees that scrutinised the Scottish Government's ambitious climate change targets. The Committee focused on the Buildings chapter centred around planning and building. The Committee's scrutiny also looked at how local government plays a role in helping achieve the target of a net zero society by 2045.
60. The Committee held a joint calls for views that ended on 12 January 2021. The Committee received 33 responses from stakeholders and individuals. On 27 January 2021 the Committee took evidence from Rural Housing Scotland, Energy Saving Trust, Rural and Islands Housing Association Forum, Existing Homes Alliance Scotland, and Royal Town Planning Institute. The Committee heard evidence from COSLA on Wednesday 17 February 2021.
61. During the sessions, the Committee explored:
- the need to tighten up on building standards, and to build more durable homes;
 - the need for public to adopt the changes required to bring emissions down from their homes, and how they will be incentivised; and

- how the Scottish Government can work with local government to design solutions tailored to their circumstances, and to consider increased flexibility of funding that will allow each local authority to meet the needs unique to their own area in relation to decarbonisation.
62. A joint Committee debate on the Updated Plan took place in the Chamber on 9 March 2021.
63. Access to detailed information and documents relating to the Committee's scrutiny are available on the [Committee's Inquiry page](#).

Budget Scrutiny

64. This was the third year the Committee continued to take a "full-year" approach to its budget scrutiny, as envisaged under the revised process recommended by the [Budget Process Review Group's report of June 2017](#). This year's focus was the impact of COVID-19 on Scotland's councils, within the wider context of the long-term financial sustainability of local government.
65. The Committee launched a call for written evidence between Thursday 23 July 2020 and Friday 4 September 2020. Organisations and individuals with an interest in local government and local services were invited to submit written evidence to the Committee setting out their views about how best to ensure that the sector has a sustainable future. The Committee received 28 responses.
66. On 28 August 2020, the Committee held its first session in advance of the 2021-22 Scottish Government budget with Audit Scotland and the Accounts Commission. It looked at the [Local Government in Scotland Overview 2020 report](#), which was published on 23 June 2020 (a delayed publication due to COVID 19).
67. The Committee held two oral further evidence sessions.
- On 30 September 2020, the Committee heard from Citizen Advice Scotland; Scottish Commission for Learning Disability; Unison; Chartered Institute of Housing; and Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisation. The session explored the service users' perspective regarding how council services have changed or been affected by Covid-19;
 - On 7 October 2020, the Committee heard from Comhairle nan Eilean Siar; Dumfries and Galloway Council; Aberdeen City Council; COSLA; SOLACE; (the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives); and CIPFA (the Chartered Institute of Public Finance & Accountability Directors of Finance). The session explored the services local authorities deliver from an island, rural and city perspective, and changes to services and funding.
68. On 17 November 2020, the Committee wrote the Scottish Government with its views on the 2021-22 budget in relation to local government, communities and housing and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.
69. Following the publication of the Scottish Government's budget proposals (January 2021), the Committee took evidence from senior local government representatives

on 10 February 2021. The session explored local government's views on the Scottish Government's budgetary plans.

70. On 17 February 2021 the Committee took evidence from Aileen Campbell, Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Local Government; and Kate Forbes, Cabinet Secretary for Finance.
71. Access to detailed information and documents relating to the Committee's scrutiny are available on the [Committee's Inquiry page](#).

Post-Legislative Scrutiny of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, parts 3 and 5

72. The Committee carried out post-legislative scrutiny of two parts of the [Community Empowerment \(Scotland\) Act 2015](#) (passed in Session 4):
 - Part 3 on participation requests, and
 - Part 5 on asset transfers.
73. The Committee issued surveys to community organisations and public bodies to gather views on their experiences of participation requests and asset transfers over September and October 2020. 104 community organisations from around Scotland responded including community councils, community or housing development trusts and sports clubs. 14 public bodies also completed the survey.
74. The Committee held five evidence sessions:
 - On 9 September 2020, the Committee met with OFFICALS from Caledonian University; Development Trust Association Scotland; and Scottish Community Development Centre. The session explored how Parts 3 and 5 had bedded-in in communities and heard from organisations with experience of assisting community groups seeking to use the powers.
 - On 16 September 2020, it heard from Scottish Community Alliance; Community Land Scotland; Community Development Alliance Scotland; and Community Enterprise. During the session we heard that the legislation had been welcomed but implementation of the rules on the ground was patchy.
 - On 2 December 2020, the Committee heard from Cramond and Barnton Community Council; F.R.I.E.N.D.S. (Stevenston Conservation); and Community Out West Trust. The session explored the experiences organisations have had when dealing with participation requests and asset transfers.
 - On Wednesday 13 January 2021, the Committee concluded it's evidence from Aileen Campbell, Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Local Government.
75. Members of the Committee took part in an online community meeting on November 11 hosted by Midlothian Voluntary Action. Participants, which included a number of community organisations, discussed asset transfers and participation requests.

76. Access to detailed information and documents relating to the Committee's scrutiny are available on the [Committee's Inquiry page](#).

Public Petitions

77. The Committee considered the following Public Petitions during this Parliamentary year:

Petition PE1778: Review the Scottish Landlords Register scheme by David Findleton

The petition called on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to review the effectiveness of the Scottish Landlords Register scheme.

Petition PE1743: Amend the law to protect the rights of pre-1989 Scottish Secure Tenant

The petition called on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to amend the Rent (Scotland) Act 1984 to prevent disproportionate rent increases being set for Scottish Secure Tenants.

78. Petition PE1778 was referred to the Session 5 Local Government and Communities Committee by the Public Petitions Committee on 9 October 2020. The Committee agreed to write to the Scottish Government, COSLA and the Scottish Landlords Association to seek views on issues raised in the petition. The Committee agreed to continue this petition and include it in its legacy paper for its successor Committee.
79. Access to detailed information and documents relating to the Committee's scrutiny are available on the [Committee's Petition page](#).
80. Petition PE1743 was referred to the Session 5 Local Government and Communities Committee by the Public Petitions Committee on 19 March 2020. The Committee agreed to write to the Scottish Government expressing agreement with the aims of the petition. The Committee agreed to continue this petition and include it in its legacy paper for its successor Committee.
81. Access to detailed information and documents relating to the Committee's scrutiny are available on the [Committee's Petition page](#).

Other Committee Work

No Recourse to Public Funds

82. The Committee's attention was drawn to the vulnerability of asylum seekers and those with insecure immigration status following the tragic events of last summer 2020. In particular, the Committee was concerned at the plight of people with no recourse to public funds (NRPF) and the gaps that those seeking to help them in local authorities and the third sector have found in the system.
83. The Committee wrote to a range of organisations to seek information on the support and assistance provided to individuals who have NRPF. The evidence returned highlighted a stark situation that had worsened due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Scottish and UK Government also provided an update to the Committee setting out their provisions to assist those with NRPF.
84. The Committee held an evidence session on Wednesday 10 March and heard from Glasgow City Health and Social Care Partnership, COSLA, Shakti Women's Aid, Positive Action in Housing, JustRight Scotland, and Scottish Refugee Council.
85. The session raised a number of concerns for the plight of those with NRPF and has asked its successor Committee to do some further work on this issue in the next parliamentary session.
86. Access to detailed information and documents relating to the Committee's scrutiny are available on the [Committee's web page](#).

Licensing of Static Mobile Homes with Permanent Residents

87. On 20 January 2021, the Committee agreed to issue a targeted call for views about the effectiveness of the current licensing system for static mobile homes parks and how well it protects permanent residents. This followed the receipt of a letter from Alex Burnett MSP to the Committee highlighting various concerns with the current system.
88. The Committee received 73 responses with the vast majority coming from those that live in static mobile homes.
89. The main concerns about the licensing system (which were shared by councils and organisational respondents) were:
 - lack of enforcement of licensing requirements (although council and legal respondents blamed this on poorly drafted legislation);
 - the problem of enforcement where permanent residents lived in parks designated for holiday use only;
 - the fit and proper person test – and its failure to weed out unscrupulous site

owners; and

- the lack of opportunity for permanent residents to feed their views into licensing decisions.

In addition, council and legal respondents highlighted:

- the practical difficulties in applying the two-stage decision-making process contained in the legislation; and
- their inability to get information from bodies like Police Scotland and the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service because they were not statutory consultees.

The main concerns around consumer rights for mobile home owners were:

- the unfairness of allowing site owners to take 10% commission on mobile home sales;
- ongoing overcharging for utilities; and
- the need for a tribunal to deal with enforcement of consumer rights, such as the rights from the Mobile Homes Act 1983.

90. The Committee is aware that these issues have been a long standing problem for this community and asks the successor Committee to continue the scrutiny of the issue as a priority.
91. Access to detailed information and documents relating to the Committee's scrutiny are available on the [Committee's web page](#).

Evidence from Public Bodies

92. During the year the Committee took evidence from the Scottish Housing Regulator on its annual report. The focus of the session included the office-holder's performance over the past year, whether it considered it had adequate powers to fulfil its role, and key challenges as we continue to move through the COVID-19 pandemic.

