



The Scottish
Parliament



Annual Report 2005 - 2006

Scottish Parliament Annual Report 2005 to 2006

Cover photo: Members of the Scottish Parliament in the Garden Lobby at Holyrood.

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Annual Report

2 July 2005 to 30 June 2006



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A People's Parliament...



Foreword by the Presiding Officer



The main focus of this report, which covers the period 2 July 2005 to 30 June 2006, is on the day-to-day work of the Parliament. It therefore includes in-depth information on each of the Parliament's committees as well as a look at the Chamber debates and the significant amount of legislation passed – the Parliament has now passed its 100th Act of the Scottish Parliament.

However, engaging with you, the public, has been one of our key aims this year and so the report also looks at the steps we have taken to open our doors. For instance, last August we held the first ever *Festival of Politics*, a ground-breaking, award-winning event which attracted nearly 3,000 people to 22 events in the Parliament over three days. Our schools programme is also continuing to prove extremely popular: more than 14,000 young people and teachers have now visited Holyrood since September 2004.

The Parliament has also taken its place on the international stage in the last 12 months hosting a number of high profile, global events including the Andrew Carnegie Medal of Philanthropy award ceremony and the Scotland-Malawi Partnership Conference. Further information on these, and other events, can also be found in the report.

We will continue to build on the progress we have made in the last year to make the Scottish Parliament not only one of the most efficient and open legislatures in the world but to truly make it your Parliament, the People's Parliament.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'George Reid'. The signature is stylized and fluid, with a large 'G' and 'R'.

The Rt. Hon George Reid MSP

Parliament at Work

The Chamber

The Chamber is at the heart of parliamentary business, playing host to debates on a wide range of political issues, policy proposals and legislation. Weekly question time sessions, where Members of the Scottish Parliament (MSPs) hold the First Minister and other Scottish ministers to account on high-profile topical issues, tend to generate particularly lively exchanges.

The agenda for meetings of the Parliament is proposed by the Parliamentary Bureau on a business motion which, once approved, forms a rolling programme of business for the coming weeks. The members of the Bureau are the Presiding Officer, who chairs the meetings, and a representative from each of the main political parties and the Independents Group.

Debates

Debating time in the Chamber is allocated to political parties on the basis of the proportion of seats held. It is for each party to select subjects for their debating time. During the past year, the Labour/Liberal Democrat Executive, with the largest proportion of debating time, led debates on topics such as:

- progress on national health service—NHS—waiting times
- the future of rail in Scotland
- quality teachers for the 21st century
- antisocial behaviour
- planning reform
- skills and training for a modern Scotland
- waste strategy
- tackling serious organised crime.

Non-Executive business led by other political parties has included high-profile debates on:

- replacement of Trident (Scottish Green Party)
- decline of Scottish manufacturing (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party)
- council tax and pensioner poverty (Scottish National Party)
- Scottish Enterprise (Scottish National Party).





Business in the Parliament Conference

The Scottish Parliament welcomed business leaders to the second Business in the Parliament Conference on 8-9 September 2005, following the success of the previous year's inaugural event.

The conference, run jointly with the Scottish Executive, attracted more than 200 delegates from Scotland's business community.

The aim of the conference was to foster a dialogue between politicians and the business community. This year's conference focused on the theme of business growth, and tackled subjects as diverse as stimulating investment, tackling Scotland's infrastructure and creating a skilled and flexible workforce. Delegates attending the conference heard from four leading businesspeople in Scotland, senior ministers in the Scottish Executive and the convener of the Parliament's Enterprise and Culture Committee as keynote speakers.

More than 85 per cent of the delegates who replied to the survey considered that the event was useful to them and their businesses, and over 98 per cent thought that there should be a similar event in the future. Consequently, the third Business in the Parliament Conference is being organised for 2-3 November 2006.

Committee Debates

Committees are entitled to set business to be debated on a number of days each year. In the past year there have been 15 committee debates in the Chamber, covering such wide-ranging issues as:

- climate change (Environment and Rural Development Committee)
- the Scottish Executive's Fresh Talent initiative (European and External Relations Committee)
- a draft code of practice for ministerial appointments (Standards and Public Appointments Committee)
- business growth – the next 10 years (Enterprise and Culture Committee)
- European Commission green papers (Justice 1 Committee)
- private bill committee assessors (Procedures Committee)
- youth justice (Justice 2 Committee).

On 29 October 2005, the Communities Committee hosted a one-day event in the Chamber on 'Modernising the Planning System'. The event was attended by more than 80 members of the public and representatives from community groups across Scotland. Participants' views were gathered and used to assist the committee in its scrutiny of the Planning etc (Scotland) Bill.

Ministerial Statements

Ministerial Statements (followed by questions from members) inform the Parliament of urgent matters or policy announcements. There have been 20 Ministerial Statements on a diverse range of topics during the past year, including:

- the Scottish Fingerprint Service
- influenza contingency plans
- tolled bridge reviews
- major public transport updates
- forests for Scotland
- business rates
- energy performance of buildings
- the Cultural Commission.



Below: Business in the Parliament Conference.



Time for Reflection

The Chamber opens business each week with Time for Reflection, giving people of different faiths and beliefs the chance to share their views with the Parliament. Representatives from a broad range of religious groups, faiths and of no faith have taken part in Time for Reflection during the past year, including:

- Sir Jonathan Sacks, chief rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth
- Monsignor John Tormey, parish priest of St Mary's Roman Catholic Church in Greenock
- Reverend Peter Macdonald, St George's West Church, Edinburgh
- Reverend Favian Straughan, Order of Buddhist Contemplatives, Portobello Buddhist Priory, Edinburgh
- Miss Maariya Masud, Scottish Inter Faith Council youth steering committee
- Mrs Carrie Varjavandi, Bahá'í Council for Scotland
- Ms Irene Khan, secretary general of Amnesty International.

Members' Business

Members' Business is normally held at the end of each meeting of the Parliament, and allows individual members from any party or group to highlight issues that might not be given prominence in main proceedings. Members' Business is often used to raise a particular constituency or regional matter or to highlight an awareness-raising event.

Examples of such debates held during the past year include:

- post office card accounts
- Fairtrade Fortnight
- Clydeside shipyards
- victims' rights
- supporting local producers
- community and village halls
- childhood obesity.

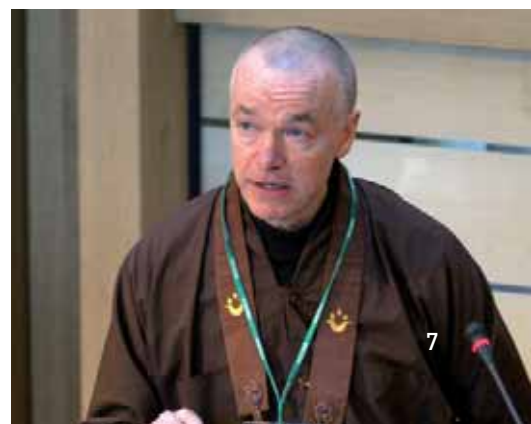
New Members

Following the death of Margaret Ewing and the subsequent resignations of regional members Richard Lochhead and Mary Scanlon to contest the vacant constituency seat, two new members joined the Scottish Parliament in April 2006: Maureen Watt (SNP) and Dave Petrie (Conservative). Mr Lochhead was returned after having secured the Moray seat at a by-election on 27 April 2006.



Above: Two new members joined the Scottish Parliament in April 2006: Maureen Watt (SNP) and Dave Petrie (Conservative).

Below: Contributors to Time for Reflection.





Bills Introduced (24)

The following bills were introduced to the Parliament between 2 July 2005 and 30 June 2006. Some are still being considered, but others have been passed. They are listed below in order of date of introduction. Once they have been passed, it takes about one month before they receive royal assent and become Acts of the Scottish Parliament. There is a list of Acts on page 10.

- Interests of Members of the Scottish Parliament Bill (Committee)
- Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Bill (Executive)
- Police, Public Order and Criminal Justice (Scotland) Bill (Executive)
- Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Bill (Executive)
- Scottish Commissioner for Human Rights Bill (Executive)
- Joint Inspection of Children's Services and Inspection of Social Work Services (Scotland) Bill (Executive)
- Bankruptcy and Diligence etc (Scotland) Bill (Executive)
- Planning etc (Scotland) Bill (Executive)
- Local Electoral Administration and Registration Services (Scotland) Bill (Executive)
- Budget (Scotland) (No. 3) Bill (Executive)
- Glasgow Airport Rail Link Bill (Private)
- Criminal Proceedings etc (Reform) (Scotland) Bill (Executive)
- Legal Profession and Legal Aid (Scotland) Bill (Executive)
- Crofting Reform etc Bill (Executive)
- Edinburgh Airport Rail Link Bill (Private)
- Christmas Day and New Year's Day Trading (Scotland) Bill (Member's)
- Tourist Boards (Scotland) Bill (Executive)
- Adoption and Children (Scotland) Bill (Executive)
- Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Bill (Executive)
- Health Board Elections (Scotland) Bill (Member's)
- Airdrie-Bathgate Railway and Linked Improvements Bill (Private)
- Senior Judiciary (Vacancies and Incapacity) (Scotland) Bill (Executive) (Emergency)
- Transport and Works (Scotland) Bill (Executive)
- Aquaculture and Fisheries (Scotland) Bill (Executive)



Legislation

The Parliament makes laws which are known as Acts of the Scottish Parliament. Proposed Acts are called bills. They can be either public, seeking to change the general law, or private, seeking powers for a particular individual or organisation.

A total of 24 bills have been introduced between 2 July 2005 and 30 June 2006.

Bills are only passed after full public consultation and debate in the Parliament, both in committee and in the Chamber.

As is normally the case, the majority of these bills have been introduced by Scottish ministers to further the Executive's policy aims on matters such as criminal justice, animal welfare, health, education, and planning. But committees and individual members also have the right to introduce legislation. One bill introduced this year – on the public registration of members' interests – was a committee bill, while two bills were introduced by individual members who are not ministers. These two members' bills concerned the prohibition of trading in certain shops on Christmas and New Year's Day, and proposals for area Health Boards to be partly directly elected. There have also been three private bills introduced, all dealing with major rail projects.

The Parliament can, and often does, change the detail in a bill as it progresses through the Parliament.

Subordinate Legislation

Very often, the detailed law is not in an Act, but in the regulations or orders made under that Act. Most of this kind of law, known as subordinate or secondary legislation (because Acts are called primary legislation), has to be looked at by the Parliament. The laws themselves are made by Scottish ministers. Unlike bills, the Parliament cannot amend a piece of subordinate legislation but it can, and does, question Scottish ministers about the content. This is part of the Parliament's important scrutiny function on behalf of the public.





Acts (17)

17 bills received royal assent and became Acts of the Scottish Parliament between 2 July 2005 and 30 June 2006. Of these, three were private bills, and 14 were Executive bills. They are listed below in order of the date they received royal assent.

Protection of Children and Prevention of Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act 2005 (Executive)

Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 (Executive)

Baird Trust Reorganisation Act 2005 (Private)

Transport (Scotland) Act 2005 (Executive)

Smoking, Health and Social Care (Scotland) Act 2005 (Executive)

Management of Offenders etc (Scotland) Act 2005 (Executive)

Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 (Executive)

Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005 (Executive)

Housing (Scotland) Act 2006 (Executive)

Family Law (Scotland) Act 2006 (Executive)

Joint Inspection of Children's Services and Inspection of Social Work Services (Scotland) Act 2006 (Executive)

Human Tissue (Scotland) Act 2006 (Executive)

Budget (Scotland) Act 2006 (Executive)

Edinburgh Tram (Line Two) Act 2006 (Private)

Edinburgh Tram (Line One) Act 2006 (Private)

Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006 (Executive)

Senior Judiciary (Vacancies and Incapacity) (Scotland) Act 2006 (Executive) (Emergency)





Parliamentary Questions

MSPs have the opportunity, on a weekly basis, to put questions directly to the First Minister and his ministerial colleagues.

Six topical questions, put forward by party leaders and individual MSPs, are selected by the Presiding Officer and are asked during First Minister's Question Time on a Thursday. These sessions are among the best-attended parliamentary occasions and are regularly viewed by a full public gallery.

MSPs can also enter their names to a ballot to ask general and themed questions to the Scottish ministers. Thirty MSPs, randomly selected in the ballot, submit their questions in advance for publication in the *Business Bulletin*. At Question Time the relevant minister provides an answer to the published question and a related supplementary question about which no notice is given.

Any question not reached by the end of Question Time receives a written answer, which appears in the *Official Report's* weekly written answers report. This report also contains the answers to written parliamentary questions, and can be accessed through the Parliament's website.

Parliamentary Questions Lodged from 2 July 2005 to 30 June 2006

	Lodged	Answered in Chamber	Received written answer
First Minister's Question Time	623	210	6
Question Time	2,562	729	221

More than 9,000 questions were also lodged for written answer in the same period. First Minister's Questions that are not selected by the Presiding Officer are not published and do not receive an answer.



Motions

MSPs use parliamentary motions for a number of purposes: to highlight an issue or event, to generate support for a cause, or to stimulate debate on a subject. Motions lodged by MSPs appear in the following day's *Business Bulletin* along with the names of other members who support them.

The motions for debate in the Chamber are lodged on the basis of the business programme agreed by the Parliament. Amendments to these motions can also be lodged, and it is for the Presiding Officer to select which amendments will be debated. However, the majority of motions are not intended for debate.

1,780 motions were lodged this year on a range of topics. Those lodged but not debated dealt with a wide variety of issues, including:

- National Epilepsy Week
- the earthquake in Kashmir
- International Nurses' Day
- volunteering and disability
- the Golden Jubilee of Linlithgow Reed Band.

Temporary Relocation

Chamber business was temporarily relocated during the period 2 March to 4 May 2006, while structural repairs to the Chamber roof were carried out. The main hall at The Hub, a venue already familiar to members and staff, was transformed into a temporary debating chamber for the first two weeks, with Committee Rooms 2 and 6 within the parliamentary complex used for the remainder of the relocation.

Extensive work was undertaken on layout design and equipping and testing the alternative venues to ensure that both locations were ready to operate as a fully functioning and accessible Parliament. Chamber business was only lost on one afternoon, and proceedings continued as scheduled the following week. Meanwhile, initial repairs on the Chamber roof were completed a week early, allowing parliamentary business to return to its natural home on 10 May.



Freedom of Information

The Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002, which came into force in January 2005, gave people the right to access information held by public bodies in Scotland.

There is a huge amount of information available, backed up by staff trained to help people to find it.

The Scottish Parliament was founded on the principles of openness and transparency, so the Parliament's publication scheme (required by the Act) merely described the categories of information that were already being published. The Parliament's website is extensive, and includes all its publications as well as additional information about parliamentary business, events and how the Parliament operates. The public information service answers public enquiries about the Parliament, and provides educational materials to schools and community groups. In short, there is a huge amount of information already available, backed up by staff trained to help people to find it.

The Parliament receives an average of 25 FOI requests per month. Approximately 60 per cent of requests come from members of the public, and 40 per cent from journalists or media representatives. The most popular subject, accounting for about a third of all requests, has been allowances claimed by individual MSPs. The Parliament recently launched an allowances search, a new facility on the website that allows people to search directly for expenses claimed by each MSP. As well as showing what each MSP has claimed under each type of allowance, it also displays the relevant receipts. As far as is known this is a world first in making this information available to the public.

The Parliament records as freedom of information (FOI) requests those requests that ask for information not covered by the publication scheme: in other words, information that has not already been published or otherwise put into the public domain. There are clear procedures in place for handling these requests. Where the requester is not satisfied, we conduct independent reviews of our decisions, some of which have resulted in further releases.





Conveners Group

Convener:
Trish Godman

Conveners Group

During the period of this report the Conveners Group met 11 times.

The group provides a forum where conveners of the Parliament's 16 subject and mandatory committees can discuss matters of practice and procedure relevant to the work of the committees. As a result of a recommendation from the group, a practice has been introduced by the Presiding Officer of calling a representative of the lead committee, normally the convener, to speak in that capacity in support of the committee's report in the debate in the Chamber at the end of the stage 1 consideration of a bill. This practice reinforces the important role of committee scrutiny at stage 1.

The group has also considered and agreed updated and expanded guidance on the operation of committees, which gives details of current procedures and good practice in the subject and mandatory committees. Although aimed primarily at members and staff, the guidance should also be an invaluable tool for anyone interested in following the work of the committees. The Conveners Group has now referred the guidance to the Procedures Committee for clearance prior to publication.

The group also maintains an external perspective. There have been presentations from both the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman and the Auditor General about the relevance of their work to the mandatory and subject committees.

The group provides a forum where conveners of the Parliament's committees can discuss matters of practice and procedure relevant to the work of the committees.

Mandatory committees must be established at the beginning of each session according to parliamentary rules and include the Procedures, Finance and Public Petitions Committees.

Subject committees are established usually at the beginning of each parliamentary session to deal with particular subjects such as health, education and justice.





Further to an update from the Equal Opportunities Committee convener on progress in mainstreaming equalities in the work of the committees, the group was given a presentation by representatives from the Equalities Co-ordinating Group, a strategic forum including organisations covering all equalities strands. The Equalities Co-ordinating Group re-emphasised the importance of mainstreaming and of equalities issues in general, and put on record its recognition of the good work done by the committees in the Scottish Parliament.

One of the core tasks of the Conveners Group is to consider requests from committees to undertake travel for committee meetings outside Edinburgh or on fact-finding trips. Activities of this kind are an important element in ensuring that the committees obtain a wide range of views to inform their work, and that their proceedings are accessible to people with an interest in the topics they are considering. With that in mind, the group (jointly with the Parliamentary Bureau) approved seven meetings outside Edinburgh. This allowed, for example, the Enterprise and Culture Committee to take evidence from Highland and Islands Enterprise in Thurso as part of its Business Growth inquiry, and the Environment and Rural Development Committee to take

evidence on the Crofting Reform etc Bill in Stornoway. The group also considered requests from committees to undertake a range of fact-finding visits within Scotland and, jointly with the Bureau, to undertake fact-finding abroad.

The proposals approved included an extensive programme of visits by the Equal Opportunities Committee to venues throughout Scotland, which allowed members to discuss and see for themselves the challenges faced by disabled people in connection with its Disability inquiry. Approval was also given to the Health Committee to travel to Wales, where members met general practitioners, pharmacists and patient representatives to discuss their experience as part of the committee's consideration of the Abolition of NHS Prescription Charges (Scotland) Bill at stage 1.

In carrying out this work, the group is able to facilitate access and participation in the work of the committees while ensuring that expenditure on committee travel is subject to scrutiny to confirm that public money is properly spent.

It has been a busy and stimulating year for the group, which is now looking forward to the challenges of the year ahead.



Committees

The following pages provide an insight into the work of the Parliament's committees. The committees continue to play a key role in holding the Executive to account and in scrutinising draft legislation.

During the reporting period the committees held 512 meetings lasting a total of 1,110 hours. During this time they carried out a total of 63 inquiries, and scrutinised 37 bills and 497 pieces of subordinate legislation.

Input from stakeholders, both individuals and groups, is a key element of the work of the committees.

Committees publicise their work on their individual pages on the Parliament's website. Each inquiry or consideration of a bill starts with an invitation to anyone interested to submit written

evidence to the committee. The committees also invite witnesses to come to their meetings to give evidence. This forms part of the proceedings of the Parliament. A total of 2,229 witnesses drawn from stakeholder groups and individuals appeared before committees during the year to give evidence.

Even in the formal setting of a committee meeting, committees are experimenting with formats that allow witnesses to interact more with each other and with members. These are usually referred to as round-tables, and can involve up to approximately 20 witnesses sitting at the table with members, allowing a dialogue to develop. This format has proved useful in enabling members to test a range of views and opinions in a single evidence-taking session.

Taking evidence in a formal setting is not the only technique used by committees to inform their work. During the year committee members have undertaken fact-finding visits to a range of venues throughout Scotland and, where appropriate, internationally. These visits, such as the ones undertaken by the Local Government and Transport Committee to freight terminals in Scotland, have allowed members

to put evidence heard by them in context and to meet people directly engaged in the object of the inquiry. Committees also sponsor a range of informal events, such as the workshop run by the Education Committee involving about 30 stakeholders to discuss the interim findings of its Pupil Motivation report, and the Health Committee event involving about 100 stakeholders and individuals to help it scope the remit for its post-legislative scrutiny into the care legislation. Events of this kind allow wide engagement and participation in the committees' work.

This annual report gives highlights from the busy work programmes of the committees. More details can be found on the committees' webpages, including agendas and public papers for all committee meetings, together with committee reports and information about current and future business.





Audit Committee

Convener:
Mr Brian Monteith

Susan Deacon

Margaret Jamieson

Mrs Mary Mulligan

Eleanor Scott

Margaret Smith

Mr Andrew Welsh

Audit Committee

The Audit Committee holds to account those who are charged with spending taxpayers' money, and ensures that public funds are spent wisely. This year the committee held two meetings outside the Parliament in order to engage more directly with those affected by its work, and visited Denmark to share good practice with members of the Danish Parliament.

The committee published several reports during this period, including:

- Bowel Cancer Services
- Further Education Colleges
- Supporting New Initiatives and Leadership Development
- Tackling NHS Waiting Times.

This year, the committee has continued to devote considerable time to issues affecting the NHS in Scotland. The committee undertook inquiries into bowel cancer services, NHS waiting times and the implementation of the consultant contract in Scotland. The committee took evidence at the Golden Jubilee National Hospital, Clydebank on its waiting times inquiry, and met with staff and patients at the hospital.

In October 2005, the committee published a report on the 2003-04 finances of three further education colleges: Lews Castle College, West Lothian College and Inverness

College. Subsequently, Inverness College's 2004-05 accounts showed a worsening financial picture, and the committee agreed to hold a further inquiry. The committee held an evidence session in Inverness in May. Its report found that there had been poor financial management at the college over a number of years. This second inquiry demonstrates the committee's emphasis on following up earlier inquiries if issues of concern have not been addressed.

In September 2005, three members of the Audit Committee and the convener of the Scottish Commission for Public Audit visited the Danish Parliament's audit committee. The visit was an important opportunity to share good practice.





Communities Committee

Convener:
Karen Whitefield

Scott Barrie

Cathie Craigie

Linda Fabiani
(until 14.9.05)

Donald Gorrie
(until 21.9.05)

Christine Grahame

Patrick Harvie

John Home Robertson

Tricia Marwick
(from 15.9.05)

Mr Dave Petrie
(from 20.4.06)

Euan Robson
(from 21.9.05)

Mary Scanlon
(until 7.4.06)

Communities Committee

The committee's main focus during this year has been the consideration of Scottish Executive legislation.

It considered the Housing (Scotland) Bill which aims to improve the quality of private sector housing. The bill included provisions to increase the powers of local authorities to deal with disrepair in the private sector, including the provision of assistance to owners; standards in the private rented sector; improving information for home owners; and the rights of mobile home owners.

The committee also considered the Planning etc (Scotland) Bill. The bill contains a wide range of measures intended to modernise the planning system. It includes proposals to place the National Planning Framework on a statutory footing, bring in a new system of strategic and local development plans, and introduce a range of measures to encourage public participation in the planning process.

Prior to the introduction of the Planning etc (Scotland) Bill, the committee held four pre-legislative events, allowing members to hear a wide range of views on the proposals to reform the planning system. These included a one-day event in the Chamber of the Scottish Parliament which was attended by 118 individuals, community councils, community representatives and representatives of umbrella organisations from across Scotland. The committee held three half-day events for business interests, planning professionals and local authority planning conveners.

The committee also considered a number of planning-related public petitions which were referred to it, and took evidence on key pieces of planning policy guidance relating to green belts and minerals which were under review.

Below: Committee members and members of the public debate the topic of 'Modernising the planning system' at the committee's civic participation event in the Parliament's Chamber.





Education Committee

Convener:
Iain Smith
(from 8.9.05)

Ms Wendy Alexander

Ms Rosemary Byrne

**Lord James
Douglas-Hamilton**

Fiona Hyslop

Mr Adam Ingram

Mr Kenneth Macintosh

Mr Frank McAveety

Dr Elaine Murray

Education Committee

This year the Education Committee scrutinised a total of three Scottish Executive bills and concluded two major inquiries.

The Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Bill, which replaced school boards with new bodies to be known as parent forums and parent councils, was introduced in October 2005. It completed its parliamentary passage in May 2006.

The Joint Inspection of Children's Services and Inspection of Social Work Services (Scotland) Bill, also introduced in October, gave the various agencies inspecting children's services powers to carry out inspections jointly, and also provided a legislative framework for the Social Work Inspection Agency. This bill completed its passage in January 2006.

Finally the Adoption and Children (Scotland) Bill, which seeks to modernise the adoption system in Scotland, was introduced in March 2006.

The committee continued its Early Years inquiry, which examined care and education for children under five. As part of the inquiry, delegations visited Sweden and Finland in October 2005 to

investigate early years provision in these countries. Members also visited early years centres in Glasgow and West Lothian. A round-table event for private sector early years providers was also held in January 2006.

The Pupil Motivation inquiry, commenced in 2004, was also continued. The committee published an interim report of its findings in October 2005. This report formed the basis of a stakeholder event held at Our Dynamic Earth in February 2006. The committee's final report was published in April 2006.

The committee also considered 20 items of subordinate legislation, and continued its commitment to consider regularly the Scottish Executive's progress in relation to school closures and school transport, and the child protection reform programme. The committee also considered formally the annual reports of public bodies that fall within its remit.





Enterprise and Culture Committee

Convener:
Alex Neil

Shiona Baird

Richard Baker

Susan Deacon

Murdo Fraser

Karen Gillon
(from 6.10.05)

Michael Matheson

Christine May

Mr Jamie Stone

Mike Watson
(until 3.9.05)

Enterprise and Culture Committee

The committee has had a particularly busy workload, taking in completion of a major inquiry and scrutiny of a large and technical bill. The year has also seen the committee undertake a number of fact-finding visits and hold several round-table style evidence sessions in addition to conventional methods of gathering evidence.

In March 2006, the committee published its report on *Business Growth – the next 10 years*, the culmination of an extensive inquiry into how to increase the rate of sustainable business growth over the next decade. In addition to formal evidence-taking on a broad range of themes, delegations of the committee undertook fact-finding visits to Dundee, Caithness, Scandinavia and Germany, and held informal round-table debates with representatives of the life sciences, financial and social enterprise sectors. The report emphasised the importance of agreeing a national consensus on business growth, promoting an investment-led strategy, creating an effective and focused decision-making process, improving the functioning of the labour market, enhancing Scotland's international outreach and fostering stakeholder collaboration.

A major and complex bill, the Bankruptcy and Diligence etc (Scotland) Bill, was referred to the committee in late 2005, and scrutiny of its proposals has been a significant area of work for the committee. In addition to submissions of evidence, the committee included in its formal evidence-taking a special round-table debate with stakeholder groups on the practical implications of the proposed bankruptcy law reform.

Other business has included inquiries on the reform of Scottish football and the implications of BBC Scotland's internal reviews; stage 1 scrutiny of the St Andrew's Day Bank Holiday (Scotland) Bill and the Tourist Boards (Scotland) Bill, and consideration of two petitions, two UK bills under the Sewel convention and 19 statutory instruments.





Environment and Rural Development Committee

Convener:
Sarah Boyack

Mr Ted Brocklebank
(from 6.9.05)

Rob Gibson

Alex Johnstone
(until 21.7.05)

Richard Lochhead
(until 7.4.06; then again
from 4.5.06)

Maureen Macmillan

Mr Alasdair Morrison

Nora Radcliffe

Mr Mark Ruskell
(until 7.6.06)

Eleanor Scott
(from 8.6.06)

Elaine Smith

Environment and Rural Development Committee

In autumn 2005 the committee concluded its inquiry into climate change with a debate in the Chamber. It also published a booklet summary version which was widely distributed through witnesses, schools and interest groups. As a follow-up, the committee conducted a short inquiry in early 2006 on developments in the biomass energy industry.

The committee completed an inquiry into economic development in accessible rural areas. In early 2006 it also began an inquiry into how relationships in the Scottish food supply chain can be developed in a way that will sustain the rural economy. It heard evidence from farmers, food processors, supermarkets and consumer groups.

The committee examined the Environmental Levy on Plastic Bags (Scotland) Bill, which provides for a levy on plastic bags provided to customers, and for proceeds to be used by local authorities for environmental projects. More than 1,200 submissions were received. This scrutiny will continue in the autumn of 2006. The committee also scrutinised the Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Bill, which updates measures for controlling animal disease, and modernises provisions for the welfare of animals under human control.

In spring 2006 the committee began to examine the Crofting Reform etc Bill, which includes revising regulation of crofting tenure and provisions for the creation of new crofts. This has included meetings in Stornoway, Oban and Inverness to allow people in crofting communities to participate. Consideration will continue over the next year.

The committee reported to the Finance Committee in November 2005 on the Scottish Executive's budget for 2006-07. It also scrutinised a high volume of subordinate legislation, including several measures aimed at preventing the spread of avian influenza and measures relating to the water industry and the water environment. The committee continued with an agreed system of scrutiny of relevant European Union developments.





Equal Opportunities Committee

Convener:
Cathy Peattie

Frances Curran

Phil Gallie
(until 21.7.05)

Marlyn Glen

Marilyn Livingstone

Mr Jamie McGrigor
(from 7.9.05)

Nora Radcliffe

Elaine Smith

John Swinburne

Ms Sandra White

Equal Opportunities Committee

This year has seen the committee continue its major inquiry to identify and recommend solutions to overcome the barriers that prevent disabled people from accessing work, further and higher education, and leisure facilities.

The committee concluded its inclusive inquiry visits programme by holding consultation events in Thurso, Dundee, Edinburgh and Kirkwall, which allowed it to hear about the experiences of disabled people in those areas. The Edinburgh event was held in the Scottish Parliament building, and focused specifically on the barriers faced by young disabled people. In November 2005 the committee began hearing oral evidence from employers, government agencies, service providers, local authorities, voluntary organisations, business representatives and the Scottish Executive.

The committee published its report, *Preliminary Findings on Gypsy/Travellers: Review of Progress*, in October 2005. This report gave an indication of the committee's view of progress made since its 2001 report on the provision of services to Scotland's Gypsy/Travellers. The committee agreed to defer making final recommendations until the Scottish Executive's short-life

strategic group on Gypsy/Travellers concludes its work.

The committee issued a call for evidence to ask organisations working on age issues, and people of all ages, about the discrimination people face in life because of their age. This taking-stock exercise will help the committee to identify issues and inform its approach to age issues in the future.

The committee also agreed to conduct an Equalities review. The key objectives of the review will be to identify progress achieved against the equalities agenda in Scotland since 1999, and to develop a list of priorities for future action.





European and External Relations Committee

Convener:

Linda Fabiani

(member from 15.9.05 and convener from 27.9.05)

Dennis Canavan

Bruce Crawford

(from 20.4.06)

Margaret Ewing

(until 21.3.06)

Phil Gallie

Karen Gillon

(until 5.10.05)

Mr Charlie Gordon

(from 6.10.05)

John Home Robertson

Gordon Jackson

Irene Oldfather

Mr John Swinney

(member and convener until 14.9.05)

Mr Jim Wallace

European and External Relations Committee

This has been a full and varied year for the committee.

In addition to reviewing more than 1,000 documents relating to European Community/European Union legislation and policy and bringing these to the attention of the relevant subject committees, the committee has undertaken its own busy programme of inquiries. These have included an inquiry into the Scottish Executive's Fresh Talent initiative. The committee's report was debated in the Chamber on 16 March 2006. The committee also led a debate in the Chamber in April on the European Commission's Legislative and Work Programme following the committee's annual visit to the European Union institutions.

The committee is also considering responses to two European Commission consultations, on communications policy and energy, as well as undertaking a major inquiry into the delivery of structural funds in Scotland following the committee's response to the Department of Trade and Industry's National Strategic Reference Framework. Work is also under way on an inquiry into Scotland's performance against the

targets set for the Lisbon Strategy for Growth and Jobs.

Use continues to be made of committee reporters, and during the year the committee published a report following the inquiry conducted on its behalf by Dennis Canavan into possible co-operation between Scotland and Ireland. Mr Jim Wallace continues to work on another reporter-led inquiry into the transposition and implementation of European Union directives in Scotland.

Delegations from the committee have attended two meetings of the Network of Regional Parliamentary European Committees, and the committee has also met a range of visitors to the Parliament, and hosted public meetings with Douglas Alexander MP, UK Minister for Europe during the UK presidency of the European Union, (pictured below left) and with the Austrian ambassador, Dr Gabriele Matzner-Holzer, who spoke on the priorities for the Austrian presidency of the European Union (pictured below right).





Finance Committee

Convener:
Des McNulty

Ms Wendy Alexander

Mr Andrew Arbuckle

Mark Ballard

Mr Ted Brocklebank
(until 21.7.05)

Derek Brownlee
(from 7.9.05)

Jim Mather

Mr Frank McAveety

Alasdair Morgan
(until 14.9.05)

Dr Elaine Murray

Mr John Swinney
(from 20.9.05)

Finance Committee

As well as considering the 2006-07 budget and the financial implications of 21 bills, the committee completed work on two major investigations.

The committee's budget report highlighted problems with the level of the local government settlement and with the monitoring of the Executive's Efficient Government initiative.

During the course of its budget scrutiny, the committee held a meeting in Elgin to which it invited representatives from business and from voluntary and community groups to discuss local issues of concern and the budget process itself.

The committee published its review of spending on deprivation on 13 April 2006. For this review, work included a round-table discussion and site visits to Drumchapel and Pollok to meet those involved in tackling community deprivation. Report recommendations included reducing bureaucracy through a single deprivation fund, national performance indicators and outcome agreements at community level.

The committee completed an inquiry into the cost of the local authority single status agreement in March. Given that the agreement was reached in 1999, the report recommended that the issue be resolved by local authorities and trade unions within 12 months.

The committee has continued to scrutinise the Scottish Executive's Efficient Government initiative through formal evidence and case-study visits. In addition, it submitted written evidence in July to the Public Administration Select Committee—PASC—Effectiveness of the Civil Service inquiry.

The committee is currently undertaking an inquiry into the accountability and governance of commissioners and ombudsmen, following recommendations in its 2006-07 budget report. As part of this, it held a seminar with members of the Study of Parliament Group, and met the PASC, which is undertaking a similar inquiry at Westminster. The committee will publish its report later in the year.





Health Committee

The Health Committee this year undertook a major inquiry into care provision in Scotland, looking into the legislation from the first session of the Parliament which introduced free personal care for the elderly and established the Care Commission.

Health Committee

Convener:
Roseanna Cunningham

Helen Eadie

Janis Hughes

Kate Maclean

Mr Duncan McNeil

Mrs Nanette Milne

Shona Robison

Euan Robson
(from 20.4.06)

Mike Rumbles
(until 30.3.06)

Dr Jean Turner

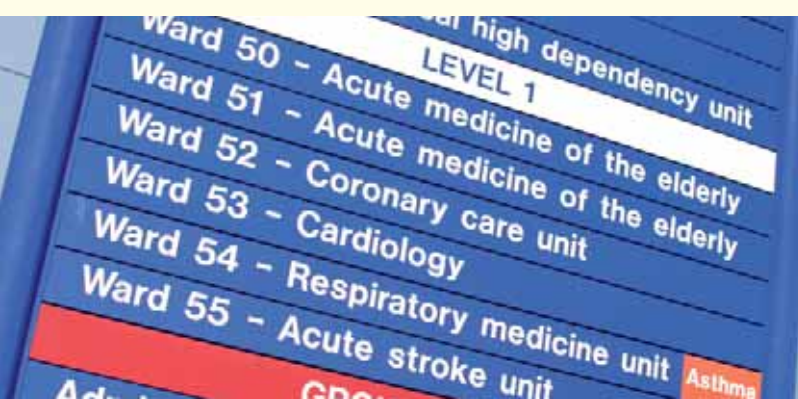
To ensure those with a day-to-day interest in this field have been involved, the committee has adopted a number of innovative approaches, including hosting a consultation event in Perth, at which more than 100 such stakeholders were invited to help focus the Care inquiry's remit; visiting care homes and carers across Scotland; meeting with the Care Commission; participating in care inspections; taking evidence in the form of round-table discussions, where members let users and providers debate the issues; and holding a formal committee meeting in Dundee.

Additionally, the committee looked at calls for holding a public inquiry into how some people acquired Hepatitis C as a result of NHS treatment, and wrote to the Minister for Health and Community Care recommending that such an inquiry take place.

The Smoking, Health and Social Care (Scotland) Bill was scrutinised in depth. This legislation not only proposed to outlaw smoking in enclosed public spaces, but also introduced other measures such as universal free eye and dental checks.

The committee also closely examined the Human Tissue (Scotland) Bill, which introduced a new framework for organ donation, and a member's bill, the Abolition of NHS Prescription Charges (Scotland) Bill, which the committee supported in its stage 1 report. As part of the consideration of this bill, four members of the committee visited Wales to see how similar legislation works there.

The committee has also considered a number of petitions throughout the year which were incorporated into the Care inquiry and work on the Human Tissue (Scotland) Bill.





Justice 1 Committee

Convener:
Pauline McNeill

Marlyn Glen

Mr Bruce McFee

Margaret Mitchell

Mrs Mary Mulligan

Mike Pringle

Stewart Stevenson

Justice 1 Committee

The Justice 1 Committee, with the Justice 2 Committee, plays a key role in scrutinising the justice system.

This year the committee carried out thorough scrutiny of the Family Law (Scotland) Bill and the Scottish Commissioner for Human Rights Bill. The committee also began scrutinising the Criminal Proceedings etc (Reform) (Scotland) Bill at stage 1.

In addition to line-by-line scrutiny of the Family Law (Scotland) Bill, the committee was determined to focus on addressing real-life problems with how existing family law works in practice, in relation to issues including domestic violence and the rights of non-resident parents. Various non-legislative measures were initiated as a direct result of the committee's concerns, including a three-year pilot project to create family contact facilitators and additional funding being given for local mediation and counselling services.

As a result of scrutiny of the Family Law (Scotland) Bill, the committee launched a reporter-led inquiry into the provision of family support services in Scotland. The committee also initiated a wide-ranging inquiry into the efficient running of the Scottish Criminal

Record Office and Scottish Fingerprint Service.

The committee also took an active role in the scrutiny of European Union justice and home affairs matters. Following scrutiny of two European Commission green papers on family law, the committee submitted a critical response to the Commission which led to a committee debate in the Chamber.

The committee declined to endorse the general principles of the Scottish Commissioner for Human Rights Bill, the first time an Executive bill has failed to obtain the endorsement of the lead committee. The committee was particularly concerned about the lack of a clearly defined role for the Commissioner.





Justice 2 Committee

Convener:

Mr David Davidson

(member from 22.2.06 and convener from 28.2.06)

Jackie Baillie

Bill Butler

Colin Fox

Miss Annabel Goldie

(member and convener until 20.2.06)

Maureen Macmillan

Mr Stewart Maxwell

Jeremy Purvis

Justice 2 Committee

The Justice 2 Committee spent much of the year scrutinising legislation. The committee completed consideration of the Management of Offenders etc (Scotland) Bill.

The committee also considered the Police, Public Order and Criminal Justice (Scotland) Bill. This wide-ranging bill aimed to reform the structure and organisation of police services in Scotland, modify police powers to protect the public from the dangers associated with the holding of events or the possession of dangerous items such as fireworks and knives, and provided for the enforcement of criminal law. The committee considered over 270 stage 2 amendments, including significant amendments in relation to the prevention of knife crime, the retention of DNA and the management of sex offenders.

The committee also began its stage 1 scrutiny of the Legal Profession and Legal Aid (Scotland) Bill, which provides for an independent Scottish Legal Complaints Commission and for improved delivery of publicly funded legal assistance.

The committee considered and reported on a legislative consent memorandum on the Police and Justice Bill, legislation that was before the UK Parliament. The committee expressed concerns regarding the operation of the Extradition Act 2003, and agreed to seek to amend the legislative consent motion to reflect these concerns.

The committee also took evidence on the implementation of the Adults with Incapacity (Scotland) Act 2000 and on the Scottish Prison Complaints Commissioner's annual report.

The committee considered four petitions on issues including police complaints, regulation of the legal profession, complainers' rights and the management of child sex offenders.





Local Government and Transport Committee

Convener:
Bristow Muldoon

Mr Andrew Arbuckle
(22.9.05-11.5.06)

Bruce Crawford
(until 19.4.06)

Mr David Davidson
(6.9.05-16.2.06)

Fergus Ewing

Dr Sylvia Jackson

Paul Martin

David McLetchie
(from 22.2.06)

Michael McMahon

Euan Robson
(until 20.9.05)

Mike Rumbles
(from 17.5.06)

Tommy Sheridan

Ms Maureen Watt
(from 20.4.06)

Local Government and Transport Committee

The committee undertook a major inquiry into freight transport, receiving more than 50 written submissions and taking oral evidence from key relevant organisations and individuals.

The committee met in Motherwell as part of the inquiry, and members of the committee visited the Eurocentral freight terminal, Prestwick airport and Grangemouth docks.

The committee's long-running interest in the proposed tendering of ferry services in the Clyde and Hebrides culminated with an evidence session with the Minister for Transport.

The committee also held informative evidence-gathering sessions with the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman, the Improvement Service for Local Government and the Accounts Commission. In November, the committee took oral evidence from ministers on the Scottish Executive's 2006-07 budget proposals.

The committee considered a number of bills. The Transport (Scotland) Bill established regional transport partnerships, a road works commissioner and a national

concessionary fares scheme. The committee agreed various amendments to the Licensing (Scotland) Bill which aimed to modernise the licensing system and curb 'irresponsible' drinks promotions.

The committee concluded consideration of the Council Tax Abolition and Service Tax Introduction (Scotland) Bill. It also began scrutiny of the Local Electoral Administration and Registration Services (Scotland) Bill. Finally, the committee reported to the Communities Committee on proposals for business improvement districts in the Planning etc (Scotland) Bill.

The committee considered four petitions during the year. Work continues on a petition by the Scottish Accident Prevention Council, calling for the Scottish Executive to place a statutory requirement on all local authorities to employ and fund home safety officers.





Procedures Committee

Convener:

Donald Gorrie

(member from 22.9.05 and convener from 27.9.05)

Richard Baker

Chris Ballance

(until 24.3.06; then again from 28.6.06)

Cathie Craigie

Karen Gillon

Robin Harper

(29.3.06-28.6.06)

Alex Johnstone

(from 7.9.05)

Mr Bruce McFee

Mr Jamie McGrigor

(until 27.7.05)

Iain Smith

(member and convener until 14.9.05)

Procedures Committee

The Procedures Committee reviews parliamentary procedure and, where appropriate, proposes changes to standing orders (the Parliament's rule book). During 2005-06, its main reports were on petitions, the Sewel convention, private bills and Crown appointments.

On petitions, the main changes recommended by the committee were to prevent them from being lodged by MSPs or being resubmitted within a year.

According to the Sewel convention, Westminster does not legislate on devolved matters (or alter the powers devolved to the Parliament or to Scottish ministers) without the Parliament's consent. Following the committee's inquiry, previously informal arrangements are now governed by standing orders. This should enhance accountability and transparency, while giving MSPs more time to scrutinise relevant Westminster legislation.

On private bills, the committee recommended, as an interim measure, allowing the use of assessors in the scrutiny of rail and tram projects. In the longer term, the committee wants more radical changes to how private legislation is dealt with, and these are to be taken forward by means of an Executive bill.

On Crown appointments, the committee recommended new procedures to be followed where someone is to be reappointed as a commissioner or ombudsman.

The committee's ongoing review of parliamentary time is considering the Parliament's sitting pattern, how subjects are chosen for debate and how speakers are selected. As well as taking evidence in Edinburgh, committee members have visited the Norwegian, Catalan, Finnish and Estonian parliaments for comparative purposes. The committee has also examined consolidation bill procedure, and whether MSPs promoting members' bills should be allowed to sit on committees scrutinising those bills.

Legislative consent motions, which are also known as Sewel motions, seek approval that the UK Parliament can legislate on certain devolved matters as detailed in a legislative consent memorandum.





Public Petitions Committee

Convener:
Michael McMahon

Jackie Baillie

Helen Eadie

Mr Charlie Gordon
(from 6.10.05)

Rosie Kane

Campbell Martin

John Farquhar Munro

John Scott

Mike Watson
(until 3.9.05)

Ms Sandra White

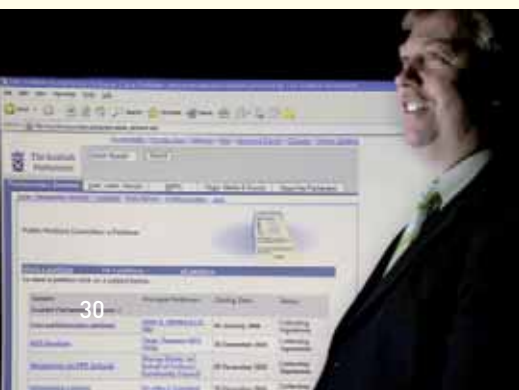
Public Petitions Committee

The public petitions system provides members of the public with direct access to the political process and the opportunity to achieve real change. The existence of a parliamentary committee dedicated to the consideration of petitions means that petitioners can have confidence that the issues they raise will be given due consideration by the Parliament.

During the period of this report, the committee considered 122 new petitions and heard oral evidence on 51 of these. The committee welcomes the continued effectiveness and positive impact of many petitions. For example, in response to a petition from the Scottish Burned Children's Club, the Scottish Building Standards Agency has agreed changes to regulations from 1 May 2006 aimed at preventing children from being scalded by hot bath water.

The committee has also continued its programme of events promoting the system, and held formal committee meetings in Dunfermline in January 2006 and Jedburgh in June 2006. In response to a suggestion at the committee's outreach event in Dundee in June 2004, the committee has developed an educational DVD, *Petitioning the Scottish Parliament*, which was launched in December 2005.

The Parliament's e-petitions system also continues to be influential, with the German Bundestag launching a pilot of e-petitioner in September 2005. The system has also been awarded an eGovernment good practice label, and made the final shortlist of four from more than 100 submissions for an eEurope award on eGovernment at the European Union Ministerial Conference in Manchester in November 2005.





Standards and Public Appointments Committee

Convener:
Brian Adam

Bill Butler

Linda Fabiani

Alex Fergusson

Donald Gorrie

Christine May

Karen Whitefield

Standards and Public Appointments Committee

Over the past year, the focus of the Standards and Public Appointments Committee's work programme has been the continued development of the legislation that is intended to replace the current members' interests order.

The introduction of the bill is the culmination of work by the Standards Committees in session 1 and session 2. The bill requires that members should register those interests that the public might reasonably think could influence their actions, using an objective 'influence' test. The code of conduct for MSPs will need to be redrafted to reflect the requirements of the new bill, and it is planned to have a revised code of conduct ready for members at the start of the next session from May 2007.

The convener of the committee attended a two-day workshop, held in Belgrade, Serbia on 27-28 September 2005. The convener presented a seminar on the significance of a parliamentary code of conduct. The seminar was organised by the Organisation for Security and Co-Operation in Europe as part of its Parliamentary Support Programme in Serbia and Montenegro. This was followed

by another seminar held on 17 May 2006 in Belgrade on how committees engage with the public and civic society.

Representatives of the committee met with a number of visiting parliamentary delegations during the year, including the speaker and a delegation of members from Valencia in September 2005, Malawi members in November 2005, and a delegation of cross-party parliamentarians from the National Assembly of Bulgaria on 9 March 2006. This last delegation was participating in a study visit to the United Kingdom which focused on standards and integrity in public life, and which was sponsored by the British Association for Central and Eastern Europe.





Subordinate Legislation Committee

Convener:
Dr Sylvia Jackson

Mr Adam Ingram

Gordon Jackson

Mr Kenneth Macintosh

Mr Stewart Maxwell

Mike Pringle
(until 20.10.05)

Mr Jamie Stone
(from 23.2.06)

Murray Tosh

Subordinate Legislation Committee

The role of the committee is to scrutinise the regulations and orders that implement the detail of our legislation, and which affect all of us in various ways. In 2005-06, the committee considered 497 Scottish statutory instruments, and the relevant provisions in 17 bills at stage 1. In 11 of those bills the powers being given to ministers to make subordinate legislation were amended at stage 2, following the committee's reports.

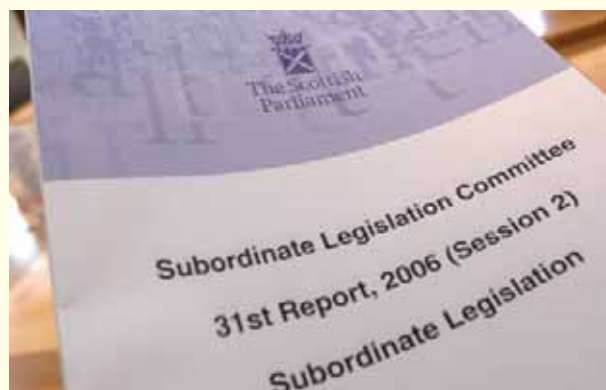
The committee also proceeded with phase 2 of its inquiry into the Regulatory Framework in Scotland, with a view to making recommendations to replace the current transitional system for the Parliament to scrutinise subordinate legislation, which is both complex and unwieldy.

It has always been the Parliament's intention to devise a system that is fit for purpose in a new institution. The committee has had seven years' experience of scrutinising subordinate legislation, and so is well placed to consider options for change.

The committee received evidence from a wide range of individuals and organisations during 2005, and in May 2006 it published a draft report recommending the introduction of a new streamlined system. If adopted by the Parliament, this would replace the existing system of scrutiny.

As its recommendations will have a wide impact, not only on the Parliament but also on Scottish ministers and other makers, as well as users, of subordinate legislation, the committee decided to consult upon the draft report before it makes its mind up on what to finally recommend to the Parliament. There was a debate in the Parliament on 8 June 2006 on the committee's draft report. The committee aims to finalise its report by the end of the year.

Subordinate legislation is law made by Scottish ministers, or other persons, under specific powers granted to them by Acts of Parliament. Examples include statutory instruments that put in place regulations that are required by an Act.



Airdrie-Bathgate Railway and Linked Improvements Bill Committee (from 15.6.06)

Convener:
Phil Gallie

Janis Hughes
Alasdair Morgan
Cathy Peattie
Jeremy Purvis

Baird Trust Reorganisation Bill Committee (until 19.7.05)

Convener:
Mr Andrew Arbuckle

Scott Barrie
Mr David Davidson
Trish Godman
Mr Kenny MacAskill

Edinburgh Airport Rail Link Bill Committee (from 30.3.06)

Convener:
Scott Barrie

Mr Charlie Gordon
Christine Grahame
Mr Jamie McGrigor
Iain Smith

Private Bill Committees

A private bill seeks to obtain for an individual or business (the promoter) power to undertake action currently not permitted under the general law of the country. Private bills this year have been about the reconstruction of the Borders railway, the construction and operation of the Edinburgh tram lines and the construction of airport rail links in Glasgow and Edinburgh.

Private bills have distinct procedures starting with a 60-day objection period. This is followed by three stages: the preliminary stage, consideration stage and final stage.

Officials from the private bills unit hold meetings for objectors at the beginning of each stage to explain the parliamentary process. The meetings aim to assist individuals engaging in the process with a view to reducing strain on them. Meetings are held at venues local to the proposed bill.

At the preliminary stage the committee gathers evidence and considers objections before reporting to the Parliament on the general principles of the bill. Parliament then votes on whether the bill should proceed.

The consideration stage has two phases. Phase one gives objectors the opportunity to provide evidence to the committee and question the promoter, with a view to mitigating impacts on themselves. The committee reports on every outstanding objection, and indicates where it expects the bill to be amended. At phase two the bill is amended based on the phase one evidence and as

identified in the committee's consideration stage report. Only committee members may propose amendments.

Parliament then considers the bill at final stage, when any MSP may propose amendments.

Private bills can take considerable time to complete their parliamentary passage. The amount of time required depends on factors such as the number of objections lodged and the amount of evidence the committee wishes to hear. The Edinburgh Tram (Line One) Bill Committee held 27 meetings spanning almost 90 hours at consideration stage. In contrast the Edinburgh Tram (Line Two) Bill Committee held 11 meetings lasting just over 18 hours. Both bills have gained royal assent.



Edinburgh Tram (Line One) Bill Committee (until 8.5.06)

Convener:
Jackie Baillie

Helen Eadie

Phil Gallie

Rob Gibson

The Waverley Railway (Scotland) Bill Committee held oral evidence meetings at the Parliament, Galashiels and Newtongrange, with 11 meetings covering almost 30 hours. The committee published its consideration stage report on 9 May 2006. This report was complemented by an appropriate assessment report on the River Tweed Special Area of Conservation. The final stage debate was held on 14 June 2006 when Parliament passed the bill.

Waverley Railway (Scotland) Bill Committee

Convener:
Tricia Marwick

Ted Brocklebank

Gordon Jackson

Christine May

Margaret Smith

Edinburgh Tram (Line Two) Bill Committee (until 27.4.06)

Convener:
Bill Aitken

Marilyn Livingstone

Kate Maclean

Alasdair Morgan

Jeremy Purvis

Bills for the Glasgow airport rail link—GARL, the Edinburgh airport rail link—EARL—and the Airdrie-Bathgate railway have all been introduced in 2006 with GARL completing its preliminary stage at the end of June.

For these later bills, the committees now have the option at consideration stage of using an independent assessor to hear evidence on objections and report to the committee. If they adopt this approach, the committees will still be required to make the final decision on all objections before reporting and thereafter considering any necessary amendments.

It is hoped each of these bills will complete its parliamentary passage by the expected dissolution in March 2007.

Glasgow Airport Rail Link Bill Committee (from 1.3.06)

Convener:
Margaret Jamieson

Mr Andrew Arbuckle

Marlyn Glen

Michael Matheson

Mr Brian Monteith





Influence at Home and Abroad

The Parliament continued to place emphasis on engaging on the wider world stage, taking part in major events and seeking to develop relationships and influence decisions that impact on Scotland.

Working with the Scottish Executive and the Scotland-Malawi Partnership, the Parliament strengthened Scotland's links with Malawi by hosting the high-level Malawi after Gleneagles: A Commission for Africa Case-Study Conference in November 2005. This was followed up by a cross-party delegation visit of MSPs to Malawi in February 2006, organised by the Scotland branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. The visit led to the drawing up of specific proposals on how the Parliament could support Malawian development.

A cross-party delegation of MSPs visited the USA as part of the 2006 Tartan Week celebrations. The delegation's agenda in the USA included audit, education, youth justice and enterprise. Activities included visiting the Maryland General Assembly, celebrating Scotland's literature with author Alexander McCall Smith at George Washington University, showcasing Scottish business and culture at the Scotland Village in Grand Central station, and taking part in the annual Tartan Day parade in New York.

The Presiding Officer addressed more than 400 legislators from across the USA at the National Conference of State Legislatures' spring forum in Washington DC. He explained the Scottish Parliament's work in relation to its founding principles of accessibility, accountability, equal opportunities and the sharing of power.







Page 36, clockwise from top left:

Tartan Week 2006: Presiding Officer Rt. Hon George Reid MSP addresses the National Conference of State Legislatures' Spring Forum in Washington DC.

Jeremy Purvis MSP and Brian Monteith MSP in Washington DC.

October 2005: Sir David Steel addresses the Scotland-Malawi Partnership Conference.

August 2005: Barbara Hachipuka at the closing ceremony of the World Youth Congress.

May 2006: HRH Prince Charles, Duke of Rothesay views the Honours of Scotland sculpture.

Karen Gillon MSP and Dr Sylvia Jackson MSP on a visit to Malawi.

Members of the Tartan Week delegation find out about Washington DC's education voucher scheme.

This page, clockwise from left:

President of the Basque Parliament, Ms Izaskun Bilbao Barandica, with Presiding Officer Rt. Hon George Reid MSP.

Deputy Presiding Officer Murray Tosh MSP with HE Mr Valdas Adamkus, President of the Republic of Lithuania and Mrs Alma Nutautaite Adamkus.

Carnegie Medal of Philanthropy awards: Recipients with Andrew Carnegie's great-grandson William Thomson CBE and the Presiding Officer.

Kumi Naidoo, the Secretary General of CIVICUS and Chair, Global Call to Action Against Poverty during a Carnegie debate.

First Minister Rt. Hon Jack McConnell MSP presented Sir Tom Farmer with his Carnegie Medal.

Former Secretary General of NATO, Lord Robertson of Port Ellen and Former President of Ireland and United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Mary Robinson during the Carnegie ceremony.

To coincide with the G8 World Leaders summit at Gleneagles, the closing ceremony of the J8 summit was held in the Scottish Parliament. The J8 is a global citizenship initiative involving secondary schools across the United Kingdom, using the G8 summit as a framework within which to investigate global issues such as international development, trade and climate change. Later in the summer the Parliament also hosted the closing plenary session of the World Youth Congress.

In October 2005 the Parliament played host to the Carnegie Medal of Philanthropy awards, the first time this major event had taken place outside the USA. Six of the world's leading philanthropists were presented with the awards. The awards were preceded by a symposium attended by more than 350 influential philanthropy figures from across the world, who discussed how progressive philanthropy can play a role in tackling global problems.

More than 100 delegations from fellow parliaments across the world have visited over the last year. Relationships with European nations and regions have been consolidated, with MSPs meeting delegations from, among others, Finland, Romania, Bavaria and Extremadura to discuss and share aspects of policy and legislation. In June 2006 President Izaskun Bilbao Barandika led a cross-party



delegation from the Basque Parliament on a major visit to Scotland, which took in discussions across a wide range of political issues.



To coincide with the UK's presidency of the Council of the European Union, during the second half of 2005 the Parliament hosted several important conferences with a European dimension. The European Economic and Social Committee held a public debate on active citizenship and the role of civil society, while the Committee of the Regions debated economic restructuring and employment. In Brussels, Deputy Presiding Officer, Trish Godman, hosted a reception for over 300 people in the European Parliament to celebrate the opening of Best of Scotland Week.

The European theme continued in 2006, when to mark Europe Day the Parliament hosted a youth forum where sixth-formers from eight schools across Scotland took part in a series of debates and workshops on the subject of 'What Europe means to me'. The themes taken up by the young people provided the basis for the Scottish Parliament's submission to the European Commission's Plan D (for democracy, dialogue and debate), which aims to stimulate debate among citizens about the future direction of the European Union.



In August 2005, the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body created Scotland's Futures Forum to help MSPs, along with policy makers, businesses, academics and the wider community of Scotland, to look beyond immediate horizons to some of the challenges and opportunities that Scotland will face in the future.

Looking beyond the four-year electoral cycle and away from party politics, the forum has been stimulating public debate in Scotland, bringing fresh perspectives, ideas and creativity on how to prepare for the future now.

Through participation the Futures Forum has hosted a wide range of lectures, workshops and events including a futures project to produce positive responses to Scotland's ageing population. More information can be found about the forum at:
www.scotlandfutureforum.org



This page, left: Our Voice on Europe Youth Forum.

Page 39, clockwise from top left:

A European Economic and Social Committee event in the Chamber.

Deputy Presiding Officer Trish Godman MSP with Josep Borrell Fontelles MEP, President of the European Parliament.

A Futures Forum event on Scotland's ageing population in December 2005.

The Board of Scotland's Futures Forum.

The J8 closing ceremony.



Engaging with the Public

Parliamentary staff and members continue to work to make the work of the Parliament accessible and participative for local communities throughout Scotland.



In 2005-06 the outreach team held 18 events in venues as far apart as Thurso and Gretna. These large-scale public meetings were attended by more than 900 members of the public keen to meet their MSPs, learn more about the Scottish Parliament and about how they could become involved.

The team delivered over 60 presentations in response to approaches from local community groups. In total more than 3,000 people, from Shetland to Stranraer and from Peterhead to Tarbert, attended these sessions.

The team worked with a co-investigation team of learners and with Workers' Educational Association Scotland (Edinburgh and Lothians), Second Chance to Learn and the Outlook Project to produce an innovative learning pack for literacy and adult education tutors. This supports adult learners in finding out how they can engage with the Parliament.



Working with Scottish Interfaith, the team set up a programme aimed at informing and encouraging faith groups across Scotland to engage with the Parliament. It was launched with the Buddhist community at Samye Ling in Dumfries and Galloway in November, and has continued with sessions for Jewish (East Renfrewshire) and Hindu (Glasgow) groups.

'MSPs in Schools' is the team's flagship outreach programme for primary and secondary schools. This free service has proved extremely successful, with sessions so far reaching Baltasound, the most northerly school in Scotland, the whole of a small rural primary school near Lairg, and secondary students at the Royal Blind School in Edinburgh. Ninety-five sessions were run in 59 schools, reaching 2,224 students at levels from primary 1 to senior 6, including through the medium of Gaelic, with 143 attendances by MSPs. The outcomes included petitions to Parliament on the issues that the young people explored with their local MSPs.

The Gaelic team held four bilingual community outreach sessions at locations throughout the Highlands. The Parliament was represented at the Royal National Mòd, A' Chuisle (the national Gaelic teachers' conference) and other major Gaelic events.

The Gaelic team participated in the Comunn na Gàidhlig national Gaelic schools' week and the Eurosgoil project, which brought together minority-language speaking children from different European countries. More than 700 adults and children, both Gaelic learners and fluent speakers, participated in sessions.

The Gaelic webpages were updated regularly with parliamentary news in Gaelic for the general public and the Gaelic media, and various interviews and articles were supplied to the Gaelic media. Online versions of public information leaflets were published in Gaelic, as were the new cartoon booklets for primary schools. The Gaelic information service continues to be well used.

The education service welcomed more than 6,000 young people to Parliament as the visits programme continued to be popular with schools. These visits allow young people to find out how the Parliament works, to question MSPs and to see business in the Chamber at first hand. In order to reach new groups the education service offered a more diverse programme in 2005-06 than in previous years, including some more specialised sessions such as a journalism day for further education students and an advanced higher modern studies seminar for senior pupils.

A teacher seminar programme attracted 350 teachers and student teachers. The aim was for this to significantly increase the number of school pupils the Parliament can reach indirectly.

A new lively cartoon booklet series aimed at 10 to 14-year-olds has proved popular with schools.

The 2005-06 year was focused on establishing new partnerships and building on existing projects. The education service continued to work with the Citizenship Foundation, and piloted new projects with the Scottish Poetry Library and Edinburgh University Widening Participation project. Its work with Careers Scotland's

Excellence in Education through Business Links project allowed teachers from various disciplines to be seconded to Parliament to develop new resources for schools, in subjects such as art and design, English and modern languages. This was aimed at widening the ways in which the Parliament can be used as a stimulus for learning in schools.



More than 130,000 visitors had joined guided tours of Holyrood by June 2006.

By the end of June 2006, more than 775,600 visitors had visited Holyrood.

The people of Scotland proved keen to see and engage with their Parliament, visiting the building, their MSPs, and viewing parliamentary business in the Chamber and committees. Improvements to services included alterations to the Chamber ticketing process, which increased the number of tickets available on business days, and raising the profile of the crèche.

A Doors Open Day in September 2005 saw the Parliament building's single busiest day, with more than 4,200 guests from all over the world visiting Holyrood.

The Parliament shop introduced a number of new product ranges, including architectural postcards and giftware, and a wider range of books on Scottish history, politics and culture. Postcards remained the best-selling item, with 50,000 sold in 2005-06, with whisky the second most popular item.

More than 130,000 visitors had joined guided tours of Holyrood by the end of June 2006. New tours are planned for the next 12 months, including a dedicated art and architecture tour.

From July 2005 to June 2006 the Scottish Parliament welcomed more than 16,000 participants at over 250 receptions, conferences and briefings. The key aim of these events was to provide an opportunity for organisations and individuals to engage with MSPs on specific issues of relevance to the Parliament and to Scotland. The themes included health, business entrepreneurship, homelessness and education, as well as briefings on international initiatives such as the Make Poverty History campaign.







The broadcasting and production services office continues to provide high-quality television coverage of all Chamber and committee proceedings. These are used by broadcasters for news and political programmes, and kept for the national archive. All parliamentary proceedings are also broadcast live on the internet at www.holyrood.tv

In 2005-06 the office was heavily involved in the varied events programme that has taken place at Holyrood, televising many events including the Commission for Africa, the G8 International Parliamentarians' Conference, the World Youth Congress, the Scotland-Malawi Partnership and the Andrew Carnegie Medal of Philanthropy award ceremony. Television footage of the latter two events was supplied to international broadcasters.

The office also produced a range of short videos including a high-definition film of the Holyrood building, a Public Petitions Committee film and a British Sign Language video.

The public information service answers enquiries from the public and provides information about the Scottish Parliament, its membership, business and procedures. In the period from July 2005 to June 2006, it handled around 75,000 calls to the telephone enquiry line and dealt with more than 13,000 detailed enquiries received by email, telephone and letter.

The public information service can provide information in a number of formats, and responds to written enquiries in any language. For example, it provided detailed replies to enquiries in Chinese, French, Italian and Spanish. It also distributed a weekly electronic bulletin with information on forthcoming parliamentary business to around 1,000 subscribers.

In addition to their work at Holyrood, public information service staff travelled with committees when they held meetings outside Edinburgh, answering questions from members of the public and distributing publications. Among the areas they travelled to were Galashiels, Dundee, Inverness and Stornoway. The range of publications explaining how the Parliament works was extended to include leaflets on MSPs, the

work of Scottish Parliament committees and the relationship between the Parliament and other organisations. Braille, audio and large-print versions of these are available free of charge. There is a British Sign Language video containing a short tour of the building and information about the facilities available, which can be viewed on the Parliament website. Bookmarks featuring colour images of the Scottish Parliament building have also been produced and are available from the public information service.



e-democracy

The Scottish Parliament continues to be viewed as a genuine world leader in utilising information communication technologies to facilitate greater public engagement and participation in the political process.

The Parliament's e-democracy initiatives were well received, for example, in the Presiding Officer's presentations at the Microsoft Government Leaders' Forum Europe in Lisbon in January 2006, at the World Summit of Cities and Local Authorities in Bilbao in November 2005 and at the Sixth Worldwide Forum on e-democracy in Paris in September 2005.

In particular, the Parliament's pioneering webcasting service, Holyrood.tv and the e-petitioner system continued to attract international interest. Officials from the European Parliament visited Holyrood in November 2005 and are working on developing their own web channel. The German Bundestag recently agreed to extend its pilot of an e-petitions system based on the Scottish Parliament system. E-petitioner has also been awarded an eGovernment good practice label at the Ministerial eGovernment Conference in Manchester in November 2005, which was hosted jointly by the European Commission and the UK presidency of the European Union.

The Parliament has also established a staff e-democracy group whose remit is to suggest ways forward in this area. This group is exploring the usage of e-democracy tools and techniques in other representative assemblies. It has also liaised with other practitioners in this area, including the Hansard Society, the International Centre for Teledemocracy and the International Centre of Excellence in Local Democracy.

The Parliament's pioneering webcasting service, Holyrood.tv and the e-petitioner system continued to attract international interest.





Festival of Politics

The Parliament's dramatic architecture provided a stimulating setting for the newest addition to the Edinburgh Festival scene, with the ground-breaking Festival of Politics.

Over three days from 24 to 26 August 2005, the Parliament hosted a series of public events exploring politics in a lively and informal way. People were welcomed into the Parliament to meet famous faces from the worlds of politics, the media and arts, and to take part in debate, workshops, song and drama.

Oscar-winning actress Vanessa Redgrave shared her views on the importance of human rights, the BBC's Andrew Marr examined the relationship between the media and democracy, and former Labour Party leader Neil Kinnock reminisced with the Presiding

Officer about the road to devolution. Community groups came together with their MSPs and looked at people's relationship with the land in Scotland, in Africa, in the city and in a rural context. Festival sessions asked what devolution had done for animal welfare and for Scottish identity. They looked at whether politics is still too male, and what needs to be done to encourage ethnic minority participation in a democracy. Participants learned protest songs from Glasgow and Cape Town, explored the life and death of Mary Queen of Scots, and focused on trends in contemporary Scottish politics.

The public and media reaction to the Festival of Politics was overwhelmingly positive, with over 80 per cent of available tickets taken up and 96 per cent of respondents to a feedback questionnaire saying they would like to do it again. More than 100 articles and features on the festival appeared in the media. *The Scotsman* described the Festival of Politics as 'a service to democracy and a showcase for devolved Scotland'. *The List* said the festival 'really does transcend the tedious back and forth of bread-and-butter politics'. It even won an 'Editor's top ten award' from *ThreeWeeks*, the Edinburgh festivals' review publication.

The Parliament responded to that enthusiasm by extending the Festival to four days in 2006.

This page, right: The Grassroots performing arts organisation from Zimbabwe, and Dr Anne Lorne Gillies as Lady Nairne

Page 46, clockwise from top left:

Professor Sir Neil MacCormick, Baroness Williams and Peter Duncan discussing 'The Changing Face of British Democracy'.

Andrew Marr on 'Reporting Democracy'.

Festival-goers enjoying a Chamber event.

Vanessa Redgrave discussing her years of work for human rights.

Lord Kinnock of Bedwellty in conversation with Presiding Officer Rt. Hon George Reid MSP.

Ashok Viswanathan of Operation Black Vote at the 'Politics for All' event.



Contact Details

The public information service provides information about the business, membership and procedures of the Scottish Parliament.



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