The following papers are attached:

Agenda

HS/00/14/1 Paper on Petition PE53
HS/00/14/2 Paper on Petition PE106
HS/0014/4 Paper on annual budget process

The following papers will be tabled:

Report on voluntary sector issues (Karen Whitefield MSP)
Evidence from Youthlink, the Scout Association, Volunteer Development Scotland
HS/00/14/3 Paper on the logistics of the drug inquiry

Martin Verity
Clerk to the Committee
Room G.11 Committee Chambers
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The Committee will meet at 10.00 am in Committee Room 2 Committee Chambers, George IV Bridge, Edinburgh.

1. **Item to be taken in private:** Convener to move that item 7 be taken in private.

2. **Petitions:** The committee will consider the response from Scottish Homes on the following public petition—

   Petition PE53 from Frank Harvey calling for the Scottish Parliament to take steps to ensure that young people are not discriminated against by Partick Housing Association and their housing allocations policy.

3. **Petitions:** The committee will consider the following public petition—

   Petition PE106 from Frank Harvey calling for the Scottish Parliament to ban the sale of Glasgow’s local authority housing stock to private landlords and take positive action to resolve poor council housing issues.

4. **Voluntary sector report:** The committee will consider a report from Karen Whitefield, reporter for voluntary sector issues.

5. **Scottish Criminal Record Office Checks:** The committee will take evidence on SCRO checks from Youthlink, the Scout Association and Volunteer Development Scotland.

6. **Drug misuse and deprived communities:** The committee will consider an update on the logistics of the drug inquiry.

7. **Annual budget process:** The committee will consider the annual budget process.
The following papers are attached:

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HS/00/14/2 Paper on Petition PE106
HS/0014/4 Paper on annual budget process

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SOCIAL INCLUSION, HOUSING AND VOLUNTARY SECTOR COMMITTEE

The role of the Social Inclusion, Housing and Voluntary Sector Committee in the Annual Budget Process

Introduction

1. The subject committees are involved in stage 1 of the budget process which will take place in April-May 2000. It allows committees to examine the departmental budget for 2001-2002 a full year before it will come into effect.

Proposed procedure

2. The Executive has indicated that, on Friday 31 March, it will publish the chapter of the report covering the Development Department. If it is available, a copy will be enclosed with this paper. If not, it will be sent to members as soon as possible, or tabled.

3. It should be noted that, at stage 1, only the main programme expenditure figure for the department (the level 1 figure) will be available. This will however be accompanied by the level 2 (i.e. broken down to more detail) out-turn figures for previous years, and expenditure plans for future years.

4. Murray McVicar, (SPICE) will be in attendance at the committee’s meeting on 5 April, to assist the committee on planning its consideration of the budget process. The committee could then consider factual questions about the budget. Any areas of interest or concern that members identify could be drawn to the attention of the Executive at this stage.

5. It is proposed that the committee will invite the Minister for Communities to give evidence on the budget and answer members questions on matters of policy as well as information in the mid May.

6. The Social Inclusion, Housing and Voluntary Sector Committee’s input to the process is made via the Finance Committee, which receives reports from all the subject committees. To aid the process, the Finance Committee has created a standard set of questions and a template for committees to utilise to respond (attached).

7. Following the Minister’s appearance in mid May, the committee could initially consider its response at the same meeting. A draft response could then be tabled at the committee’s next meeting. This would allow the committee to meet the timetable set for it by the Finance Committee, of responding by the end of May.

Additional Options

8. The committee may also wish to appoint a Reporter on the budget issue, in particular to act as a liaison point between the Social Inclusion, Housing and
Voluntary Sector Committee and the Finance Committees. The Reporter would represent the views of this committee to the Finance Committee, and might require to play a role later in the process also. It is understood that those members of the Finance Committee who also sit on subject committees are unlikely to wish to be Reporters in order to avoid any potential conflict of interest;

9. The Reporter could also identify the main areas of interest to his or her committee as well as any immediate queries or areas of opacity which could then be raised with relevant officials;

10. The committee could conduct a public consultation exercise. Relevant groups may be invited to comment on the current year’s allocations and their perceived adequacies or inadequacies. Alternatively, the committee could refer back to evidence taken through the course of the year;

11. The committee might want to consider the allocation of spending in cross-cutting areas (such as drugs policy) or the extent to which central government can manage and control spending at local level (e.g. by local authorities in spending social work budgets).

Recommendations

12. The committee is invited to approve the proposed procedure outlined above, and consider and decide on additional options.

Papers attached:

Diagram of the annual budget process

Martin Verity
Clerk to the Committee
BUDGET 2000/2001: STAGE 1

Committee: ……………………………………………………………………

Questions in each section should be read in conjunction with the relevant chapter of the Scottish Executive Departmental Report

SECTION ONE: DEPARTMENTAL AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The Committee is asked to consider the primary and secondary aims of the Department as set out in the Departmental report and to respond to the following questions:-

1. Are the Department’s aims and objectives sufficiently clear and unambiguous?

2. Are the targets identified by Ministers appropriate and realistic? Can they be supported by evidence?

3. How reliably can outcomes be measured in this policy area?

4. Are the objectives and specific targets designed in a way which makes it easy to audit whether or not they have been achieved? How will this audit be undertaken within the Executive and by whom?

5. To what extent is the achievement of targets in this policy area dependent upon resources or upon other factors?

6. Where, if at all would the Committee recommend adjustment of the aims and objectives? Why?

This report should be completed and returned to the Clerk to the Finance Committee no later than [ ]
SECTION TWO: PLANNED CURRENT AND CAPITAL EXPENDITURE

The Committee is asked to consider the breakdown of expenditure as set out in the relevant section of the Departmental report and to respond to the following questions.

(In doing so, the Committee should bear in mind that it has before it projected outturns for years 1999-2000 and 2000-2001. The sub-programme levels of expenditure for 2001-2002 have not yet been set and previous years should be taken as a guide only.)

1. Do the details of expenditure on the Departmental programme in total and for each of the main sub-programmes (as at 2000-01) adequately support the Department’s stated objectives? If not, why not?

2. If the Committee has suggested revised objectives under Section 1, how would it allocate resources to these?

3. Looking at last year’s level 2 figures, is the Committee satisfied that it understands the factors which underpin them, including:
   • the breakdown of types of spending which constitute the sub-programme expenditure figures;
   • any inflationary pressures which apply to the different elements of expenditure within sub-programmes;
   • any levels of assumed efficiency, or re-engineering, savings that have been built into the expenditure figures, including the targets these are based upon and whether these are realistic and achievable;
   • invest-to-save programmes, especially where the savings do not register until beyond the current horizon.

4. What elements of expenditure are allocated centrally and what are the elements whose disbursement is determined at a local level? In the case of the latter expenditure, to what extent can central government direct how this expenditure is applied or determine what are the priorities? What is the effect of the Executive ring-fencing money (where applicable)?

5. Other issues the Committee may wish to consider include:
   • is the Department pursuing a Research and Development approach? If so, how is investment in this allocated and prioritised?
• is the Department funding pilot schemes under any of these headings? If so, what provision is there for rolling these out in the event that they are a success?

• Is the Department able to identify where there may be unused resources at the end of the current financial year? Where such surplus exists, how are decisions taken about redeploying it?

• Does the Department participate in any cross-cutting policy areas with other Departments of the Executive? If so, how is funding disbursed across the various partners? Have you any comments to make on this?

• What if any income streams feed into this Department’s expenditure totals? Is there any scope to alter these?
Petition PE53 – response from Scottish Homes.

Petition from Mr Frank Harvey
1. Petition No. PE53, submitted by Mr Frank Harvey, called for the Scottish Parliament to take steps to ensure that young people are not discriminated against by Partick Housing Association and their housing allocations policy. A copy of the petition is enclosed.

2. The committee considered the petition at its meeting of 16 February 2000, and agreed that it be passed to Scottish Homes for comment.

Response from Scottish Homes
3. Scottish Homes has responded to the committee by letter dated 22 March 2000 (copy enclosed). Scottish Homes states that:
   Its Performance Standards require that access to all housing association property is based on housing need, and that the selection and allocation process should be fair and non-discriminatory. Beyond these principles, it is not prescriptive about the content of an association’s allocation policy. When it last audited Partick Housing Association in 1997, Scottish Homes made a number of recommendations related to its allocations process based on the good practice guidance current at that time. When it visits again this year, it will expect the Association to have made improvements.

Recommendation to the committee
4. The committee is invited to note the response from Scottish Homes and to forward a copy of Scottish Homes letter of 22 March 2000 to Mr Frank Harvey.

Martin Verity
Clerk to the Committee
Reference from Public Petitions Committee
1. The Public Petitions Committee has referred Petition No. PE106, submitted by Mr Frank Harvey, to the Social Inclusion, Housing and Voluntary Sector Committee. A copy of the petition is enclosed with this paper.

Substance of petition
2. The petition calls for the Scottish Parliament to ban the sale of Glasgow’s local authority housing stock to private landlords and take positive action to resolve poor council housing issues.

Decision of Public Petitions Committee
3. The Public Petitions Committee agreed that, as with other recent petitions submitted on this topic, the Social Inclusion, Housing and Voluntary Sector Committee should be asked to take the issues raised into account as part of its wider consideration of the housing stock transfer issue.

Recommendation
4. The committee is invited to take the issues raised in the petition into account as part of its wider consideration of the housing stock transfer issue.

Martin Verity
Clerk to the Committee