SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE

AGENDA

6th Meeting, 2002 (Session 1)

Wednesday 17 April 2002

The Committee will meet at 10.30 am in Committee Room 1

1. **Community Engagement in the Social Inclusion Process**: The Committee will take evidence from—

   Reid Howie Associates Ltd:
   Brian Henderson

2. **Housing Improvement Task Force First Report: Issues in Improving Quality in Private Housing**: The Committee will consider its approach to the Scottish Executive consultation.

3. **Draft Covenant between Local Government and the Scottish Parliament**: The Committee will consider a draft covenant between local government and the Scottish Parliament, proposed by the Local Government Committee.

4. **Finance Cross-cutting Expenditure Reviews**: The Committee will consider its role in relation to the Finance Committee’s cross-cutting reviews of voluntary sector funding and children and poverty.

5. **Petition**: The Committee will consider the following petition—

   PE 396: Petition by Mr Nick Fletcher calling for the Scottish Parliament to take the necessary steps to ensure that the citizens of Scotland continue to have access to free and independent advice services.

6. **Church Action on Poverty**: The Committee will consider an invitation from Church Action on Poverty for the Committee to be represented at its National Conference on Poverty and Social Inclusion.

7. **Budget 2003-04**: The Committee will take evidence from—

   Iain Gray, MSP (Minister for Social Justice)
   Ms Margaret Curran, MSP (Deputy Minister for Social Justice)
The following papers relate to the meeting:

**Agenda Item 1**
Community Engagement in the Social Inclusion Process – SJ/02/6/1 briefing paper

**Agenda Item 2**
Housing Improvement Task Force First Report: Issues in Improving Quality in Private Housing – briefing paper SJ/02/6/2

**Agenda Item 3**
Draft Covenant between Local Government and the Scottish Parliament SJ/02/6/3

**Agenda Item 4**
Finance Committee Cross-cutting Reviews – briefing paper SJ/02/6/4

**Agenda Item 5**
Petition – briefing paper SJ/02/6/5

**Agenda Item 6**
Church Action on Poverty – briefing paper SJ/02/6/6
Social Justice Committee


1. At its meeting on 4 July 2000, the Committee considered its approach to consideration of the social inclusion agenda. Following on from this, the following programme was developed:

- **Phase One – Notification of Interest** - As the first step, the Committee wished to hear from people and organisations with views on the structures, policies and realities of social inclusion in Scotland.

- **Phase Two – An Open Space Event** – An Open Space event was held in February 2000 aimed at exploring the current social inclusion agenda and raising and discussing the issues affecting those involved in the field.

- **Phase Three – Detailed Investigation** – Following the Open Space event the Committee agreed to commission further detailed investigation into the key issues raised which would provide the Committee with options for its approach to the social inclusion agenda.

2. Reid Howie Associates Ltd were commissioned to carry out the research to assess the extent and nature of community involvement in Social Inclusion Partnerships (SIPs).

3. The aims of the work were to:

- Provide information on the frameworks that exist for involving communities in decision-making and setting priorities in Social Inclusion Partnerships (SIPs).
- Assess the extent to which communities can and do have an impact in decision-making and setting priorities in SIPs.
- Identify factors that impact most on effective community involvement in SIPs.

4. At its away day on 11 February 2002, members considered the draft research and agreed that it would be helpful to have the researcher provide oral evidence to the Committee to expand on a number of areas of the research.

5. Brian Henderson of Reid Howie Associates Ltd will attend the meeting of the Committee on 17 April.

6. **Following oral evidence the Committee is invited to consider any further action in relation to the social inclusion agenda.**

Jim Johnston
Clerk to the Committee
1. The Scottish Executive published its first report of the Housing Improvement Task Force (HITF) titled “Issues in Improving Quality in Private Housing” on 13 March 2002 as a consultation. Views are sought by 14 June.

2. The report sets out the views of the Task Force on the key issues and challenges in improving the condition of Scotland’s private sector houses and modernising the buying and selling process. It brings to a close the first stage of the Task Force’s work and will provide the basis for the development of recommendations for action by the Scottish Executive and others.

3. In its Stage 1 Report on the Housing (Scotland) Bill, the Committee’s view was:

   **The Private Rented Sector**

   The Committee notes that some organisations expressed their disappointment that the Bill focuses mainly on the social rented sector. There are significant problems within the private rented and owner occupied sectors, notably on housing quality, that need to be addressed. In particular, the Committee wishes to highlight the difficulties that can occur in progressing common repairs and maintenance when housing contains a mixture of owner-occupiers and tenants of the social rented sector.

   The Committee welcomes the announcement of the establishment of the Housing Improvement Task Force and the Executive is to be commended for tackling this important part of housing policy in Scotland. The Committee wishes to ensure that the work of the Task Force is comprehensive and undertaken by those organisations and communities affected by the need to improve housing quality in Scotland. Additionally, the Committee requests that a detailed work plan and timescale for completion of the work be made public as soon as possible. The Committee looks forward to monitoring the work of this Task Force and providing input, as appropriate, to its work.

   In addition, the Committee notes the interest of the Homelessness Task Force in private sector tenancies in its long-term programme and the Executive’s work on private sector tenancies and owner occupation. In evidence to the Committee, the Minister stated:

   “...the homelessness task force has a real interest in the area of private sector tenancies. As part of its longer programme of work, it will consider any changes that may be required to address the needs of private rented tenants… as part of its 2001-02 research programme, the Executive has commissioned a piece of work on private sector occupation and tenancies” [OR, 14 February 2001, col 1866]
4. Members previously agreed at their awayday on 11 February that the following petitions be considered in the context of the HITF report:

- Petition PE356 from Hendry Williams on behalf of Troqueer Homeowners Committee calling for the Scottish Parliament to establish the mechanism and appropriate form for the resolution of disputes between local authorities and home owners of former local authority homes as a matter of urgency.

- Petition PE391 from Willie Scobie calling for the Scottish Parliament:
  - to consider whether the Housing (Scotland) Act under the Right to Buy provides proper protection to tenants who exercise their right to buy and thereafter have local authorities impose repairs without owner/occupiers’ consent.
  - to consider whether local authorities have an obligation at law or by policy to consult the owner/occupiers fully explaining work being considered with detailed costing, and seek owner/occupier consent before commencing the work;
  - to consider whether local authorities should be held responsible for the overall costs, or parts thereof, for negligence in not carrying out the work timeously with due diligence under the Housing (Scotland) Act regarding penetrating/rising dampness.

The Committee’s approach to the consultation

5. The Committee is invited to consider the following approach to developing its response to the consultation:

(a) a limited written evidence consultation exercise for response by 31 May;
(b) consideration of a draft response at its meeting on 12 June.

Jim Johnston
Clerk to the Committee
Social Justice Committee

Draft covenant between local government and the Scottish Parliament

1. The attached letter from Trish Godman, Convener of the Local Government Committee, and draft covenant, have been referred to the Social Justice Committee by the Local Government Committee for comment by 26 April.

2. The draft covenant outlines the working relationship between local government and the Scottish Parliament and follows on from a recommendation of the Macintosh Commission.

3. The Social Justice Committee is invited to consider and, if appropriate, comment on the draft document. Thereafter, it is intended that the covenant should become a topic for committee business in the Chamber, with an accompanying motion that the Parliament approves the covenant.

4. The Committee is invited to comment on the draft covenant between local government and the Scottish Parliament.

Jim Johnston
Clerk to the Committee
Letter sent to all subject committee Conveners

6 March 2002

Dear Convener

Covenant between local government and the Scottish Parliament

You may recall that the report of the Commission on local government and the Scottish Parliament (The McIntosh Report) recommended, amongst other things, the establishment of a covenant and joint standing conference between local government and the Scottish Parliament.

Since the establishment of the Parliament, representatives of COSLA, on behalf of local government, and the Local Government Committee have been working towards the establishment of such a Covenant and joint standing conference. I am pleased to say that the attached draft document, which has resulted from that work, has now been endorsed by COSLA on behalf of its member councils and has also been passed for information to those councils who are currently not in membership. The draft text has been approved by the Parliament’s Legal Office.

The Local Government Committee agreed some time ago that once it had been signed off by representatives of local government, the Parliament’s subject committees together with the Procedures Committee should be invited to consider and, if appropriate, comment on the draft document. Thereafter, it is intended that the Covenant should become a topic for committee business in the Chamber, with an accompanying motion that the Parliament approves the Covenant.

I would be grateful if you would arrange for your committee to consider the draft document, and make comments on it if you wish to do so. Comments should be made in writing to Eugene Windsor, Clerk to the Local Government Committee, before Friday 26 April.

cont/
Copies of this letter go to Carol Devon, Director of Clerking and Reporting, Ann Nelson, Director of Legal Services, Elizabeth Watson, Head of Committee Office, Ken Hughes, Head of Chamber Office and the Clerks to the Committees referred to.

Yours sincerely

Trish Godman  
Convener – Local Government Committee

cc:  
Carol Devon, Director of Clerking and Reporting  
Ann Nelson, Director of Legal Services  
Elizabeth Watson, Head of Committee Office  
Ken Hughes, Head of Chamber Office  
Clerks to the Committee
THE SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT WORKING TOGETHER

"THE COVENANT"

COVENANT DEFINING WORKING RELATIONSHIPS AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A STANDING JOINT CONFERENCE
INTRODUCTION

1. This Covenant which has been adopted by the Scottish Parliament and Local Government\(^1\) is founded upon a recommendation from the McIntosh Commission which stated that:-

the Parliament and the 32 councils should commit themselves to a joint agreement – which we call a Covenant – setting out the basis of their working relationship; and that they should set up a standing Joint Conference to be a place where parliamentarians and local government representatives may hold a dialogue on a basis of equality

BACKGROUND

2. Councils, like Parliament, are democratically elected and consequently have their own legitimacy as part of the whole system of governance.

3. It is therefore essential and entirely in keeping with the power sharing and participation principles of devolution that the Parliament should develop a working relationship directly with local government.

4. Based on parity of esteem and the principles underlying the European Charter of Local Self Government, (text of the Charter is annexed) this Covenant sets out the understanding of, on the one hand the Scottish Parliament and on the other local government, of the principles that will underlie relations between them.

5. The arrangements acknowledge the need for the parties to work together in an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect, recognising the value and legitimacy of the role that both have to play in the governance of Scotland.

6. This Covenant does not constitute a legally enforceable contract or create any rights or obligations that are legally enforceable. It is intended to be a broad guidance document, binding in honour only and not an exhaustive text of those issues that might arise.

7. The Covenant is therefore founded upon mutual **Respect**, with a “Code of Operational Practices” covering **Recognition and Relationships** while a Standing Joint Conference will monitor **Review and Renew** the arrangements as appropriate.

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\(^1\) In this document, the “Scottish Parliament” means the Scottish Parliament and the powers devolved to it in terms of the Scotland Act 1998, and "local government" means the councils constituted under the Local Government Acts and COSLA as the representative organ.

5 October 2002 draft Covenant.doc
RESPECT AND RECOGNITION

8. In furtherance of the European Charter of Local Self Government the Parliament recognises the need to secure and maintain a strong and effective system of local government based on their parity of esteem and the principal of subsidiarity, underlying the European Charter of Local Self-Government. The parties also acknowledge and respect each other’s roles and functions, which are distinct and complementary:

- Within the powers conferred by the Scotland Act 1998 the Parliament has responsibility for determining the powers and duties of local government, while the Executive has responsibility for setting the national framework for local service provision.

- Councils have a democratic mandate to ascertain the needs of their communities and the priorities of their electorates; to plan, co-ordinate and ensure the delivery of local services accordingly, within the legal framework laid down by Parliament.

9. It is inherent in the McIntosh report that the Parliament, Executive and local government have a shared responsibility to serve the people of Scotland; and it is the clear intention of the report’s recommendations that so far as possible these several institutions should work in partnership towards this common objective.

10. The parties agree that for the relationship to be effective and meaningful it has as the core objective the establishment of operational arrangements which ensure that local government is fully engaged in all relevant aspects of the Parliament’s work and that working together, sharing information, experiences and views is integral to the whole process.

11. Noting that Her Majesty’s government has signed and ratified the European Charter of Local Self-Government, the parties also agree to work within the framework established by the Charter.

12. The parties agree to work to the Code of Operational Practice set out below.

13. The Covenant may be subject to review from time to time at the initiative of either party.

OPERATIONAL ASPECTS

14. This Code has at its core objective the establishment of clearly defined processes and procedures for engaging local government in all relevant aspects of the Parliament’s work.

ENGAGEMENT

15. Primarily through the Parliament’s committee arrangements there will be active involvement of local government on both the principle and practice of any proposals which impact upon local government.

CONSULTATION

16. The procedures adopted by the Scottish Parliament provide for a high level of consultation and discussion at all stages of the preparation and consideration of legislation, involving interested
bodies and individuals, the Executive and committees of the Parliament. Within that framework -

• The Parliament via its committee arrangements undertakes to facilitate consultation with local government on all proposals which affect or might affect the structure, role, functions and financing of local government. The financial effects of policy and legislative proposals on local government will be given specific attention; as will the impact of cross-cutting developments which span a number of service or policy areas.

• Local government undertakes to provide a considered, co-ordinated and timely response to issues on which it is consulted.

• The Parliament and Local Government undertake to respect confidentiality where that is required or requested; and otherwise to conduct their dialogue openly.

• Consultation with local government will involve both COSLA and individual councils, on the understanding that, where appropriate and applicable, COSLA will undertake to provide a co-ordinated response which takes account of the views of the individual councils. On certain specialised topics some councils will have an interest and others will not: in these cases COSLA will facilitate more targeted consultation.

• Local government will be invited to submit views on the likely costs associated with legislative and other changes which impact on the services provided by local government.

• There will be opportunities for local government to bring to the Parliament's notice matters on which local government wishes to see legislation introduced or existing legislation amended.

• The parties will support arrangements where appropriate for secondments and/or regular job exchanges between local government officers and Parliamentary staff.

17. The working arrangements will require to evolve as the relationship between the Parliament and local government develops. However, the above represents the anticipated minimum level of participation of local government.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE

18. The following arrangements will operate in relation to working arrangements between the Parliament's Local Government Committee and local government, although they may also be taken up in whole or in part by any of the Parliament's committees:

• observer status for the Committee at COSLA meetings, with an understanding that observers may be excluded where required at private meetings.

• observer status for COSLA at meetings of the Local Government Committee, with an understanding that observers may be excluded where required at private meetings.

• regular meetings between the Committee and Council Leaders to consider issues of mutual interest.
• regular programme of visits to councils by the Committee or their representatives, although specific ground rules need to be set out and agreed for arranging and reporting back on visits.

**MONITORING THE AGREEMENTS**

**REVIEW AND RENEW**

19. In recognition of the key role that local government plays in the governance of Scotland, a Standing Joint Conference will be established with equal numbers (not more than 16 from each side) of representatives from Parliament and local government.

20. The Parliamentary membership of the Conference may include conveners of the Parliament's Committees and local government membership will be selected annually so that each council will be directly represented during a three year period and the selection process will have regard to the political balance of councils and geographical spread.

21. The main functions of the Conference are to:

- **Review** how the procedures set out within the Covenant are operating in practice and make proposals to **renew** the arrangements where appropriate.

- **Review** how the Partnership Agreement between the Executive and local government is operating in practice and make proposals for changes / improvements where appropriate.

- **Renew** and work towards the promotion of excellence in Government as a whole by improving governance and public service standards across the board. Exploit the opportunity for Parliament and local government to exchange ideas, review existing policy, discuss future policy and consider the impact of legislative changes. Consider views of a strategic nature as well as those of more immediate interest.

22. The Conference will develop its own set of agreed working practices, including the establishment of a clear work programme, procedures and protocols, however the following specific arrangements will apply:

- Conference meetings will be jointly chaired and will be serviced by a secretariat drawn from the Scottish Parliament and Local Government

- Conference meetings will be held on at least 2 occasions per year (provisionally April and October) with arrangements being made for special meetings as required

- Members of either side can initiate a special meeting of the Conference by presenting a notice of motion signed by at least 5 members of the Conference.

- Policy issues impacting upon local or central government services may be placed on the agenda by either side

- With agreement of the joint chairs any Minister, MSP, council or relevant body or person with a specific interest, has the right to submit papers on agenda items, or to be invited to attend and address the Conference
THE SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

“THE COVENANT”

OPERATIONAL ASPECTS CODE OF OPERATIONAL PRACTICES

RECOGNITION

RELATIONSHIPS

FOUNDATION OF COVENANT
RESPECT

REVIEW

RENEW

MONITORING THE COVENANT
STANDING JOINT CONFERENCE
FINANCE COMMITTEE CROSS-CUTTING EXPENDITURE REVIEWS

1. At its meeting on 12 March 2002 the Finance Committee agreed to consider two subjects for its cross-cutting expenditure review: Children and Poverty and Funding of the Voluntary Sector with the focus on regeneration issues.

2. Paper FI/02/6/2 which the Finance Committee agreed at its meeting on 26 March 2002 and which outlines the aim of each review is attached for the information of the Committee.

3. The remit of the cross-cutting expenditure review of Children and Poverty is:

   To consult with relevant organisations and individuals to identify and examine those budgets and programmes across Scottish Executive departments which provide funding specifically targeted at improving the position of children in poverty; to examine whether there is adequate co-operation, to identify any scope for removing barriers to effective co-operation; and to assess whether the individual programmes are meeting or are likely to meet the policy objectives.

4. The remit of the cross-cutting expenditure review of the voluntary sector is:

   To consult with relevant organisations and individuals to identify and examine those expenditure programmes across Scottish Executive departments which provide funding via the voluntary sector for projects specifically intended to contribute to the regeneration of communities; to examine whether there is scope for pooling or reprofiling of funding arrangements; to investigate whether there is adequate co-ordination between funding agencies and delivery agencies, especially non-government organisations and to identify any scope for removing barriers to effective co-ordination; and to assess whether the individual programmes are meeting or are likely to meet the overall policy objective.

5. The Finance Committee has agreed to appoint a reporter group for each review.

6. Given the potential relevance of each review, and the review of the voluntary sector in particular, to the work of the Social Justice Committee, Members are invited to consider whether they wish to appoint a reporter to each group. The role of each reporter could be to receive all written material in relation to the work of the reporter group, attend occasional meetings where appropriate and to report back to the Committee.

Jim Johnston
Clerk to the Committee
Finance Committee

Cross-Cutting Expenditure Reviews

Background

At its meeting on 12 March 2002, the Committee agreed to consider two subjects for its cross-cutting expenditure review: Children and Poverty, and the Funding of the Voluntary Sector with the focus on regeneration issues. This paper seeks the committee’s agreement to the conduct of the reviews in terms of remit and methodology. The Executive has agreed to give an informal presentation to the Committee on the conduct of its cross-cutting reviews and the arrangements for that will be finalised shortly.

Methodology

The Committee has agreed that the reviews will be completed by the end of the year. To take the work forward, it is suggested that, for each review, (1) a reporter group of at least two Committee members be appointed from the Committee and (2) to assist the reporters, **it is proposed that the Committee seeks the appointment of an adviser to each reporter group.**

The adviser will be an expert in the field and will be responsible for managing the review and procuring and distilling information as the review progresses. The reporters and the advisers will also wish to undertake evidence gathering from relevant organisations and individuals. The adviser will be responsible for drafting a final report for the reporter group to present to the Committee.

To further support the work, it is suggested that the reporter groups meet with relevant subject experts/consultees on a regular basis during the course of the review. Reporters may wish to do so three or four times over the course of the year: possibly in April to discuss a plan of work; in June and September to review progress and focus on issues arising; and in December to discuss the report back to the Committee.

The Clerks are currently considering ways in which the reporter groups can be supported in terms of individual research projects that may arise as the review progresses. **The Committee is asked to agree that the Convener approaches the Conveners’ Liaison Group with a bid for research support for the reporter groups.**

Children in Poverty

Remit

To consult with relevant organisations and individuals to identify and examine those budgets and programmes across Scottish Executive departments which provide funding specifically targeted at improving the position of children in poverty; to examine whether there is adequate co-operation, to identify any scope for removing barriers to effective co-operation; and to assess whether...
the individual programmes are meeting or are likely to meet the policy objectives.

Consultees
As stated above, the reporter group may wish to consult with subject experts over the course of the review. **Members are asked to decide who these consultees should be.** It is suggested that the aim should be to identify the main players as consultees, with the reporter group deciding on the organisations and individuals from whom evidence can be taken. It is further suggested that both the Committee’s standing adviser and a nominated member from Audit Scotland should be consultees. The standing adviser will be responsible for the financial aspects of the review.

The remainder of the consultees could include the following:

- Child Poverty Action Group
- Scottish Poverty Research Unit
- National Lottery Funding Board
- Convention of Scottish Local Authorities
- Scottish Executive (observer status)?

**The Voluntary Sector**

**Remit**
To consult with relevant organisations and individuals to identify and examine those expenditure programmes across Scottish Executive departments which provide funding via the voluntary sector for projects specifically intended to contribute to the regeneration of communities; to examine whether there is scope for pooling or reprofiling of funding arrangements; to investigate whether there is adequate co-ordination between funding agencies and delivery agencies, especially non-government organisations and to identify any scope for removing barriers to effective co-ordination; and to assess whether the individual programmes are meeting or are likely to meet the overall policy objective.

**Consultees**
As with the previous review, it is suggested that the reporter group may wish to consult with subject experts over the course of the review. **Members are asked to decide who these consultees should be.** It is again suggested that both the Committee’s standing adviser and a nominated member from Audit Scotland be consultees. The standing adviser will again be responsible for the financial aspects of the review.

The remainder of the group could be drawn from the following:

- Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations
- CoSLA
- Scottish Enterprise
- The Wise Group
• Strathclyde European Partnership

Summary

The Committee is asked to agree the following:

• to set up reporter groups to take each review forward
• the remit and membership of each Group
• that an adviser to each group should be appointed
• a list of consultees from whom soundings will be taken during the course of the reviews

Should the Committee agree the above, the early appointment of advisers will be sought in order that the reviews can commence as soon as possible.

David McGill
20 March 2002
SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE
17 APRIL 2002

Petition PE 396

Introduction

1. The Local Government Committee agreed at its meeting on 5 March 2002 to refer the following petition to the Social Justice Committee:

   PE396 - Petition by Mr Nick Fletcher calling for the Scottish Parliament to take the necessary steps to ensure that the citizens of Scotland continue to have access to free and independent advice services.

2. The Local Government Committee agreed that the issues raised in the petition could merit further investigation and agreed, therefore, to refer it to the Social Justice Committee for further consideration on the basis that its remit covers both the provision of advice services and the voluntary sector.

3. Attached for Members' information is a copy of the petition along with copies of the following:

   - Response to the Public Petitions Committee from the Scottish Executive;
   - Response to the Public Petitions Committee from the City of Edinburgh Council;
   - Response to the Public Petitions Committee from Citizens Advice Scotland;
   - Response to the Public Petitions Committee from COSLA;
   - Submission to the Local Government Committee from Citizens Advice Scotland.

Background

5. The Public Petitions Committee (PPC) considered the petition at its meetings on 2 October 2001 and 18 December 2001. At its meeting on 18 December 2001 it considered responses from the Scottish Executive, City of Edinburgh Council, COSLA and Citizens Advice Scotland. These responses can be summarised as follows:

Scottish Executive – stated that the funding of Citizens Advice Bureaux is a matter for local authorities.

City of Edinburgh Council – stated that cuts sustained by CABx were matched by cuts sustained by the funding department. The Council prepared a joint letter with Citizens Advice Scotland to the former Minister for Finance and Local Government requesting that the Scottish Executive consider ring-fencing additional funds for advice services in Scotland.
Citizens Advice Scotland stated that the funding difficulties referred to in the petition reflect a situation that exists across Scotland. They also stated that funding from local authorities is not adequate and does not take account of increased costs or increased workload.

COSLA – stated that it had no direct comment to make on the petition, indicating however, that it would be prepared to consult its member councils on this matter if this would be helpful to the Parliament.

6. In referring the petition to the Local Government Committee the PPC took the view that difficulties have arisen as a result of funding being passed from central government to local authorities since the 1980s.

Options

7. The Committee may wish to consider whether to hold an inquiry or to write to the Executive for further information.

Inquiry

8. The Committee could agree to hold an inquiry into the provision of free and independent advice services. However, given the current workload of the Committee it is unlikely that such an inquiry could begin until early 2003.

Write to the Executive

9. The Committee has already addressed the issue of advice services in other areas of its work. In paragraph 49 of its Stage 1 Report on the Housing (Scotland) Bill the Committee raised the point that:

   the role of local authority and RSL advice centres is crucial and recognises that independent advice from organisations such as Citizens Advice Bureaux and Shelter should be available. The Committee recognises that the Executive is undertaking a review of advice services throughout Scotland and believes that this will provide information about the current provision of services and the action required to ensure consistent access to advice services across Scotland.

10. Further, in paragraph 51 of the same report the Committee stated that:

    The Parliament’s attention is drawn to the Committee’s conclusions on the issues of advice services in the Stage 1 reports of both the Mortgage Rights (Scotland) Bill and the Family Homes and Homelessness (Scotland) Bill. The Committee reiterates its recommendation that the Executive should continue and expand its support to such advice organisations.

11. The Committee may wish to write to the Minister for Social Justice with a view to ascertaining the outcome of the Executive’s review of advice services and reaffirming its recommendation that the Executive should continue its support to advice organisations.
Conclusion

12. Members are invited to agree the Committee’s approach to Petition PE 396.

Jim Johnston
Clerk to the Committee
Dear Mr Farrell

Thank you for your letter of 4 October to Linda Sinclair concerning the petition (PE396) from Edinburgh Citizens Advice Bureau. I am replying due to this Division's interest in consumer matters.

The Scottish Executive recognises the excellent service provided by advice centres across Scotland, including Citizens Advice Bureaux. However, funding of local advice organisations is a matter for local authorities, who are best placed to decide on the allocation of resources according to the needs of their particular areas.

The local government settlement provided for all councils to receive above inflation increases in grant from 2001-02 to 2003-04. Total Scottish Executive revenue grant for Scottish local authorities has increased by over £1 billion or 19% over this and the next 2 years to more than £6.7 billion by 2003-04. The City of Edinburgh Council has received an increase in grant support of 6.3% in the current year and will receive further above inflation increases in the following 2 years. The settlement totals include provision for specific policy commitments but also acknowledge the need for councils to invest across the full range of their service responsibilities. It is a matter for the Service to determine its local spending priorities.

The 1999 Consumer White Paper included a commitment to promote a more joined-up network of advice agencies, delivering a seamless and high-quality service: more visible, more accessible and more consistent. This has led to the development of Consumer Support Networks, which will encourage existing local providers, such as Citizens Advice Bureaux, to join up their services, offering quality advice to the public. Given the reservation of consumer protection matters, the initiative is being organised by the Department of Trade and Industry. It has attracted considerable interest from Scottish advice providers.

The Scottish Executive recognises the difficulties many people face with debt issues and we agree that more needs to be done to ensure people have access to free and independent advice services in this area. It is for this reason we are supporting the establishment of a National Debttline for Scotland which will give everyone in Scotland, no matter where they live, access to free, quality money and debt advice. It is hoped that the Debttline will ease the burden on local providers, freeing them to
concentrate on cases which require their particular expertise. In addition to this work we are funding Money Advice Scotland’s research into the quality of money advice in Scotland and are actively looking at what more the Executive could do to support the national infrastructure of money advice.

I hope this information is of interest to the Public Petitions Committee.

Yours sincerely

Andrew McConnell

ANDREW McCONNELL
Dear Mr Farrell

Petition no. PE396 - Advice Services

Thank you for your letter of 4 October in which you advise me of Mr Nick Fletcher's petition concerning advice services in Edinburgh.

There are two main developments in the City of Edinburgh Council that are relevant to the petition and that contribute to the aim of "free and independent advice services":

(i) The Council is currently reviewing its funding award mechanisms to allow better co-ordination and targeting of financial support; and

(ii) The Council is undertaking a corporate review of advice services. This aims to develop a more co-ordinated approach between advice providers from both within the Council and from other organisations.

Review of funding

With regard to the review of funding, the City of Edinburgh Council has recently installed a new grants management system that offers external organisations the opportunity to achieve 3-year agreements for funding. This new system incorporates the requirement for clear business planning and measurable performance of activity. All funded activities must also link in with the Council's stated strategic aims. This approach will give advice providers the opportunity to demonstrate commitment to the continued delivery and quality of their service.

Corporate Advice Review

The Corporate Advice Review aims to promote better co-ordination between the many advice providers within the City. This would best be achieved through developing mutually agreed standards of advice provision and, where possible, ways of cross working such as referral and information sharing. This would help to ensure, for example, that services such as translation and representation could be better accessed from the various advice points in the City.
One model for provision would be a front-line service to offer information and more straightforward advice; with referral as required to specialist advisors who would deal with more involved cases. An advice network such as this would allow the Council to better plan and manage its funding in relation to advice. This could best be developed and implemented through a multi-organisation working group of practitioners. The independent status of advice organisations would be respected in developing such an advice network.

Once the Council has formally approved the Corporate Advice Review proposals, we intend to consult with key advice representatives from external organisations in order to progress this initiative.

**Funding Issues concerning Citizens Advice Bureaux (CABx)**

With regard to the specific situation of the CABx in Edinburgh, I understand that subsequent to the petition, representatives of the Council met with the same representatives of the Edinburgh CABx to discuss these issues. The CABx representatives were assured that the Council valued their work as one of a number of advice providing voluntary sector organisations. Indeed, subsequent to this meeting, Cllr. Brian Fallon and Professor Averil Stewart, the Convener of the Edinburgh CABx Steering Group, prepared a joint letter sent to Angus MacKay requesting that the Scottish Executive consider earmarking additional funds for advice services in Scotland, including CABx.

Further points discussed at that meeting that are relevant to the petition include:

- The Council too faces difficult decisions in managing its budgets. For example, the cuts the CABx had sustained in their grants were matched by cuts that the funding department had also sustained.

- The CABx have also been advised to seek funding from other sources to avoid what currently amounts to a virtual total reliance on the Council for funding. It is worth noting that it was councils that came to the assistance of the CABx in the 1980s when the Government in office withdrew their funding. Whilst some income has been secured through grant awards from banks such as Lloyds TSB and through project fees, efforts to raise any significant funds from elsewhere have largely proved unsuccessful.

- The CABx themselves had commissioned a report by a consultancy firm some time ago which recommended they look to some form of amalgamation. It was suggested that this could yield substantial savings in management and premises costs. I understand that to date, however, these recommendations have not been implemented.
I trust that this information is helpful to you in addressing the petition. I am optimistic that
greater joint working between the Council and other organisations will help to ensure that
advice services continue to develop to meet the needs of our most vulnerable citizens.
Please contact me should you require any further information.

Yours sincerely

[Signature]

T N AITCHISON
Chief Executive
Mr Steve Farrell  
Clerk  
Public Petitions Committee  
Scottish Parliament  
George IV Bridge  
EDINBURGH  
EH99 1SP  

4 December 2001

Dear Steve

Please find enclosed a response (two documents) from Citizens Advice Scotland to the Public Petitions Committee’s request for information pertaining to the petition regarding funding of Citizens Advice Bureaux in Edinburgh which came before the committee on 3 October.

I apologise for the delay in responding to your request and I hope you will find our response useful.

With best wishes

Yours sincerely

MYLES FITT  
(Parliamentary Officer)
CITIZENS ADVICE SCOTLAND

Response to Scottish Parliament Public Petitions Committee

Funding of Citizens Advice Bureaux

Information on the funding position of Citizens Advice Bureaux in Scotland was requested by the Public Petitions Committee following consideration of a petition from Edinburgh Citizens Advice Bureaux (CABx) on the funding of advice services in Scotland.

The funding difficulties of Edinburgh CABx (40% cut in funding over the past six years) are perhaps the most severe, but they reflect a situation that exists in many other parts of the country. The attached table gives a full picture of the funding position of all CABx in Scotland. As this shows, many CABx have faced or face cuts or standstill in funding, have funding agreements with local authorities which do not take account increased costs, or are dependent on short-term project funding to supplement core funding.

Vulnerability of CAB funding

The starting point for the funding difficulties that face Scotland’s CAB Service is the fact that core funding from local authorities is invariably not enough. This is not a criticism of local authorities who we appreciate deal with enormous demands on limited resources, but is a fact that bureaux have to live with.

CABx are dependent on local authorities for their core funding, which usually covers basic running costs and the salary of a Manager (sometimes only part-time) and may include part-time administrative support. This is in most cases completely inadequate to meet the increasing demand for information an advice on the broad range of topics that the CAB covers. 90% of the workforce in CABx are volunteers, and they require to be trained and supported by experienced staff to ensure a high quality of service.

Many local authorities have continued to allocate the same amount of money each year, ignoring the increased costs which bureaux inevitably incur, so they face an increasingly uphill struggle to maintain services. The story of standstill core funding is repeated across the country, for example in Angus, where the bureau’s local authority funding has not increased since the council came into existence 8 years ago.

Even those areas which might be expected to have access to local funds, such as Orkney, face a deficit this year approaching £10,000. Inadequate core funding levels mean that if bureau cannot secure other funds, they have to cut services. This happened in the Borders and in Perth last year, when the three Borders CABx and Perth CAB had to cut their opening hours, before Partnership funding agreement was reached between the local authorities and
Citizens Advice Scotland. All bureaux who have a deficit in funding this year face making cuts in services, if they cannot secure sufficient funds to operate.

Because of this, CABx in Scotland must find other ways to supplement shortfalls in income. This is done by:

• Funds from outside organisations such as Trust Funds, usually for specific projects, usually for periods of one to three years
• Securing funding from other agencies such a Health Board to provide specific services, which may also be on a short-term basis
• Fundraising, for example through local 'Friends of CAB', which may raise small sums e.g., for minor items of equipment

The problem with all these methods of raising funds is that they are short-term and insecure. CAB have no control over such funding or levels of operational costs and while it is the Edinburgh bureaux who are clearly suffering the hardest, other bureau are only an increase in rent or service charges away from crisis. Examples include the impact of Atlantic telecom going bust, and proposed increase in water charges.

The other problem this poses is the time taken up by bureaux seeking and raising funds. As almost all of this type of additional funding is short term with no guarantee of continuation at the end of the term, the CAB has to spend an increasing proportion of its time seeking and raising funds. This can detract from the core business of providing and developing advice services to meet local need. Once new services have been developed, and the demand for them established, they need to be funded on a long-term basis.

More Workload, Same Resources

A further growing problem is the level of work that bureau carry out as a result of parliamentary and policy-making decisions. While we welcome the recognition of the CAB Service as a partner in delivering the effect of such decisions on the ground, this action is causing increasing pressure on bureau workload without a reciprocal increase in resources. For example, 77% of all Department of Social Security forms advise claimants to go to Citizens Advice Bureau if assistance in required with the claim. The recently passed Mortgage Rights Act, in the notices associated to the Act that are served on those in debt, advise debtors to seek advice from Citizens Advice Bureau. The Service was recently informed by the Scottish Executive that, as a consequence of the Protection From Abuse Bill which will come into force in February 2002, there will be a "...rush of cases' as people seek advice on the effects of this new law. The proposals in 'Striking the balance' report conclude that money advice services should be available to people in debt, and CABx are the principle providers of money advice.

There are more examples of this but it underlines the key role the CAB Service plays in delivering government objectives on the front-line. However, the government does not seem to appreciate the extra workload that is placed on bureaux and because of this, already over-burdened bureaux are being asked to do more and more but with the same level of funding.
Helping meet national social policy objectives

CAB need adequate funding to provide advice and assistance to people on issues that dovetail with the social policy objectives of the Scottish Parliament and the Scottish Executive. These issues include:

- Empowering communities: Community accountability and empowerment are central to the ethos of the CAB Service and, with an emphasis clearly on a voluntary service, the CAB Service exemplifies the idea of ‘active communities’.
- Access to justice: while legal remedies exist, many people don’t know what their rights are. Lack of access to legal advice, information and representation all contribute to social exclusion. Even when people are aware of their rights, many need representation to assist them. Early access can prevent problems escalating into more complex legal issues that require more elaborate and expensive help.
- Anti-poverty: by providing advice and practical assistance, the CAB Service works to reduce poverty and financial exclusion and increase the individuals’ ability to manage their finances.
- Other devolved issues that CAB deal with include housing, homelessness and health inequalities.
- Some issues related to poverty that the CAB Service deals with are reserved to Westminster, such as consumer debt (the single biggest issue brought to bureau). However, while the regulation of the credit industry is a reserved matter, the effect of debt is very much an issue for the Scottish Parliament. This same applies to benefits.

Conclusion

The people of Scotland need and deserve high quality advice services, and the CAB service needs to be adequately and securely resourced to deliver such services across Scotland. This would involve, at the very least, ensuring that chronic under-funding such as that suffered by the Edinburgh CABx is reversed, and that funding is maintained at a level that allows all CABx to continue to provide services at current levels. Where these services are provided through short-term project funding, and are demonstrably meeting real need, funding should be at an adequate level to enable such services to continue.

However, what is really needed is sufficient funding to be made available for CAB services to be enhanced to enable them to fully meet local need, and to be able to develop in response to new and changing need. The Scottish Executive recently issued a report recently on the Review of Legal information and Advice Provision in Scotland. This confirms that there are significant shortcomings in the provision of legal advice and information in Scotland which have to be resolved before justice can be accessible to all. Ensuring that sufficient resources are available to enable CABx to continue to provide and develop services in every locality would go a good way to remediating this shortfall.
We would welcome action by the Scottish Parliament to ensure that all citizens of Scotland have access to the high quality, independent, impartial, confidential, free advice services which are provided by CABx.
CITIZENS ADVICE SCOTLAND

Scottish CABx Funding 2001/02

Aberdeen City Council CABx

Aberdeen

Core funding supplemented by various projects including Money Advice and Health projects.

Aberdeenshire Council CABx

Banff & Buchan CAB faced closure two years ago when Aberdeenshire Council withdrew funding. A 6-year partnership agreement with CAS has helped to secure its future as long as the Council continues to honour the agreement.

Banff and Buchan

Partnership agreement between Aberdeenshire Council and Citizens Advice Scotland to develop service is due to run to 2003. Limited project funding only until 2002.

Angus CABx

Angus CAB, which operates from three offices, has had no increase in funding from Angus Council since local government reorganisation.

Angus

Service Level Agreement in place but standstill in core funding for past 6 years is causing severe financial difficulties. Depends on project funding from Community Fund + other income (30% of total funding).

City of Dundee CABx

Dundee

Standstill in core funding until 2000, resulting in staff redundancy in 2000/01. Funding levels have since increased, but not sufficient to restore staffing levels.

City of Edinburgh Council CABx

The five Edinburgh CABx received from City of Edinburgh Council a 1.9% increase in their core funding for 2001/2. This did little to alleviate the effect of more than a 40% core funding cut in the past six years. The CABx therefore remain in an extremely precarious financial position. Negotiations with the Council have so far proved fruitless owing to their own financial constraints. Furthermore, the financial difficulties being experienced by Gorgie/Dalry CAB have been compounded by their Council landlord raising the rent significantly, with no corresponding increase in core funding.

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1 Project Funding: The approximate proportion of total funds which the CAB receives from short term project funding is shown by the percentage figure (x%).

2 Partnerships: Partnership funding provided by Citizens Advice Scotland (CAS), using funds designated for this purpose from DTI. Partnerships run for 3 – 5 years and support the operating costs of a new bureau or bureaux expansion on the condition that the local authority commits itself to longer term support and development of the CABx at the end of the Partnership period.

3 SLA: Service Level Agreements between local authority and Citizens Advice Bureau.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Status Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Edinburgh – Central</td>
<td>Core funding cut by over 40% over past 6 years. Has survived by securing a range of project funding projects (in the past up to double core funding, now 30% of total funding), is safe from rent increases as they own their premises.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edinburgh – Gorgie</td>
<td>Under threat of imminent closure due to rent increase, received temporary funding from CAS to stay open in 2000/01.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edinburgh – Leith</td>
<td>Core funding cut by over 40% over past 6 years, and facing rent increase from private landlord</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edinburgh – Pilton</td>
<td>Core funding cut by over 40% over past 6 years, and facing rent increase from private landlord</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edinburgh – Portobello</td>
<td>Core funding cut by over 40% over past 6 years. The resulting uncertainty has caused recruitment problems, leading to the CAB contracting management services from Edinburgh Central CAB</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Clackmannanshire CABx**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Status Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clackmannanshire</td>
<td>Council is supportive, but their own funding constraints have led to a standstill in core funding for the CAB over the past 4 years. The CAB therefore relies on short-term project funding to maintain service levels, which are provided under the terms of a SLA. (Project funding is substantially more than core funding)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Dumfries and Galloway CABx**

Council funded a new CAB service with four main offices which became a new member of CAS from 2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Status Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dumfries &amp; Galloway Citizens Advice Service</td>
<td>Initial shortfall in core funding, then frozen for 3 years to 2001/02. This year's funding includes an amount for inflation but no increase for staff costs, (incremental increases and pay rises which they are contractually obliged to pay). Current deficit, offset by increasing income and reducing staff, is still approx. £7000. Project funding being developed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**East Ayrshire CABx**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Status Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>East Ayrshire</td>
<td>Operates a service level agreement with council, and has project funding including from Coalfields Regeneration Trust due to cease in March 2002. (15% of total funding)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**East Dunbartonshire CABx**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Status Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>East Dunbartonshire</td>
<td>Service level agreement with council + Community Fund project (30% of total funding)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**East Lothian CABx**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Status Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Haddington</td>
<td>East Lothian Council and Citizens Advice Scotland agreed a funding partnership that enabled this CAB to go from part time to full time from 2000/01. This new full time status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Musselburgh</td>
<td>Standstill in core funding, and project funding from Coalfields Regeneration Trust due to cease in March 2002.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**East Renfrewshire CABx**

**Barhead**

Standstill in core funding over past three years, but recently agreed Partnership between East Renfrewshire Council and Citizens Advice Scotland to take effect from November 2001 will enable service to be developed and extended over the authority area. Planned project funding will enable further development.

**Falkirk CABx**

In the four years up to 1999 the three CABx funded by Falkirk Council had a standstill in core funding. They are all now in year two of a three-year service level agreement with the council.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Denny &amp; Dunlopread</td>
<td>A part-time CAB with a funding agreement which does not allow for inflation, resulting in financial constraints. Project funding from Coalfield Regeneration Trust due to end in March 2002, and from Lloyds TSB Foundation due to end in June 2002 (30% project funding).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Falkirk</td>
<td>A full-time CAB with a funding agreement which does not allow for inflation, resulting in financial constraints. Funding for Coalfields project due to end in March 2002 (35% of total income from project funding).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grangemouth &amp; Bo'ness</td>
<td>A part-time CAB with a funding agreement which does not allow for inflation, resulting in financial constraints. Funding for Coalfields project due to end in March 2002, when it is likely to have to once again cease its well used outreach service in Bo'ness. Scottish Executive funds an Urban Regeneration project, also coming to an end. (Project funding 30%).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Glasgow City Council CABx**

Glasgow CABx are in year four of a five-year Partnership funding agreement between Glasgow City Council and Citizens Advice Scotland. The funding agreement does not include inflation or cost of living increases, so resulting in ongoing financial difficulties as CAB income does not keep pace with rising costs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Glasgow – Albion Street</td>
<td>Partnership to 2003 + project funding (30%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glasgow – Bridgeton</td>
<td>Partnership to 2003 + project funding (30%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glasgow – Castlemilk</td>
<td>Partnership to 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glasgow – Drumchapel</td>
<td>Partnership to 2003, facing £8000 deficit in 2001/02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glasgow – Easterhouse</td>
<td>Partnership to 2003 + projects + other income (amounting to more than the total of core funding)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glasgow – Greater Pollok</td>
<td>New bureau funded through Partnership between Citizens Advice Scotland and Greater Pollok Social Inclusion Partnership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glasgow – Maryhill</td>
<td>Partnership to 2003 + project funding (20%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region</td>
<td>Funding Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highland Council</td>
<td>Service level agreement has now been agreed with Highland Council for three years up to 2008.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caithness</td>
<td>SLA + Community Fund project (amounting to 30% of total funding)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inverness</td>
<td>Project funding, contributes management fees to core costs. Core funding does not cover running costs, may face cuts in future. New project recently funded by Health Board (20% of total funding)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lochaber</td>
<td>SLA + various projects (amounting of almost 30% of total funding)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nairn</td>
<td>SLA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ross &amp; Cromarty</td>
<td>SLA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skye &amp; Lochalsh</td>
<td>New member from 2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midlothian CABx</td>
<td>Funding Partnership with Citizens Advice Scotland enabled a Money advice project to be developed jointly with Penicuik, funded to 2005. The Coalfields Regeneration Trust funds an outreach project until to March 2002 (both joint with Penicuik) (Project funding 33% of total)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dalkeith</td>
<td>As above, funding Partnership with Citizens Advice Scotland for a joint Money advice project with Dalkeith, funded to 2005 + a Coalfields outreach project funded until to March 2002. (Project and other funding almost 30% to total)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Penicuik</td>
<td>Core funding cut by 25% in 97/98, then standstill for four years. SLA with Council, but problems anticipated from 2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moray CABx</td>
<td>Core funding not at sufficient level, and development needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Ayrshire CABx</td>
<td>North Ayrshire Council funded a new CAB service with four main offices which became a new member of CAS from 2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Lanarkshire CABx</td>
<td>Core funding increased over past 4 years, funding from other income + various projects (amounting to more than 50% of total income) includes Coalfields project funding due to end March 2002.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Airdrie</td>
<td>Part-time CAB, needs increased funding to develop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coatbridge</td>
<td>Various project funding + other income (totalling more than double what is received in core funding) including</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area</td>
<td>Status or Details</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coalfields project funding</td>
<td>Due to end March 2002.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cumbernauld</td>
<td>Community Fund project amounts to half total funding, needs increased funding to develop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motherwell &amp; Wishaw</td>
<td>Various project funding + other income (amounting to 75% to total funding) includes Coalfield project funding to March 2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orkney Council CABx</td>
<td>Orkney SLA but facing £10,000 shortfall in core funding 2001/02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perth and Kinross CABx</td>
<td>Newly established Partnership between Perth &amp; Kinross Council and Citizens Advice Scotland, over five years to 2006. Various project funding including Community Fund project (50% from other sources) some due to end in 2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renfrewshire CABx</td>
<td>Paisley Partnership agreed with Renfrewshire Council until 2001, with potential to develop service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scottish Borders CABx</td>
<td>Borders CABx have Partnership funding which does not include inflation or cost of living increases, resulting in on-going financial difficulties in meeting rising costs. They have combined to run a fundraising project operating to 2002. They have service level agreements with Scottish Borders Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Borders</td>
<td>Partnership to 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peebles</td>
<td>Partnership to 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roxburgh</td>
<td>Partnership to 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shetland Council CABx</td>
<td>Shetland Funded from Trust Fund administered by council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Lanarkshire CABx</td>
<td>Clydesdale Various project funding including Community Fund and Coalfields project due to end in March 2002 (more than 60% of total funding from project funds)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>East Kilbride Core funding does not cover full running costs, and needs increased funding to develop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hamilton Standstill in core funding + low level of project funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rutherglen &amp; Cambuslang Coalfields project funding due to end in March 2002, (amounts to more than core funding)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stirling CABx</td>
<td>Stirling CAB provides services under a Service level agreement with Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Dunbartonshire CABx</td>
<td>Dumbarton Various project funding + other income (more than core funding)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clydebank</td>
<td>Currently developing in new premises</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Western Isles CABx

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WICAS</th>
<th>SLA for three years for four CAB offices in Western Isles, small reduction in funding will mean risk of future cuts in services. Substantial Community Fund funding for Lewis and Barra CABx</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### West Lothian CABx

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>West Lothian (formerly Livingston &amp; District)</th>
<th>West Lothian Council recently agreed a funding Partnership with Citizens Advice Scotland that has enabled the CAB to expand to cover the whole of the West Lothian area. Coalfield project due to end March 2002. New pilot Legal Aid project (jointly with other agencies) funded from 2001/02.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

27/11/01

SPetitionable
12 December 2001

Steve Farrell
Clerk to the Public Petitions Committee
Room 5.16
Parliamentary Headquarters
EDINBURGH
EH99 1SP

Dear Steve

PETITIONS PE396 AND PE400

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the petitions concerning access to free and independent advice services and the need for adequate provision of Social Work Services to deaf and hard of hearing people.

Without knowing the background to these petitions, it is difficult to comment in any detail other than to say that any consideration of the adequacy of provision of services to deaf and hard of hearing people should not be limited to Social Work Services.

COSLA recognises the importance of these services to communities across Scotland and if we were given time, we would be able to consult our member councils. If this is something the committee would like to see happen, we could discuss how we might go about taking evidence in a structured way from our member councils.

Yours sincerely

Jon Harris
Director of Policy and Legislation
Citizens Advice Scotland Briefing Paper

Petition PE 396: Advice Services

PURPOSE
1. The purpose of the paper is to elaborate to members of the Local Government Committee on some of the points raised about Citizens Advice Scotland and the CAB Service during the consideration of Petition PE 396: Advice Services in the Public Petitions Committee.

PUBLIC PETITIONS COMMITTEE MEETING, 2 OCTOBER 2001

2. In column 1293, it is stated that:
   "Several bureaux have legal advisers who undertake evening surgeries. There are also advisers who represent our clients at tribunals and in other situations, depending on the specific training of the individual volunteers."

FURTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION:
- Citizens Advice Bureaux deal with enquiries on all aspects of welfare law, in particular benefits, debt, housing and employment, and deal with complex areas of the law within these headings, including representation at tribunal for which legal aid is not normally available.
- Citizens Advice Bureaux will refer clients on to solicitors where appropriate and some will run legal clinics in the evenings, where solicitors are available.

3. In column 1293, there is the following exchange:

Phil Gallie: The petition calls for free and independent access to advice services for citizens throughout Scotland, as many areas are not fortunate enough to have citizens advice bureaux. I presume that the decision-making train would involve local government and national Government. The only way in which your objective could be guaranteed would be for legislation to be put in place along those lines. Given that the National
Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux is a voluntary organisation, would you favour a legislative approach and statutory bodies?
Professor Stewart: Yes, if it were necessary to adopt such an approach to ensure equal opportunities. I do not know whether I have enough experience to weigh up all the pros and cons. However, if such a process ensured equality and standards throughout, I favour such an approach.

FURTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION:
- The only way to ensure that CAB Services are available to every citizens in Scotland is to place a statutory obligation on local authorities to fund independent advice services.

4. In column 1295, it is stated that:

"Local authorities are required to give a service because previously the money to fund citizens advice bureaux came from central Government. Such a service was then given to local authorities to provide."

FURTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION:
- This is not the case. Funding for Citizens Advice Bureaux did not previously come from central government.

5. In column 1296, it is stated that:

"Citizens Advice Scotland will receive funding from the banks, insurance companies and bodies that the Edinburgh CABx may approach through our steering group."

FURTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION:
- This is not the case. Citizens Advice Scotland does not receive funding from banks or insurance companies. Funding comes from the Department of Trade and Industry.
Social Justice Committee

Invitation from Church Action on Poverty

1. An invitation has been received from Church Action on Poverty (letter attached) for members of the Committee to attend the national conference on Poverty and Social Justice to be held in Edinburgh on 15 June 2002.

2. Members are asked to consider whether the Social Justice Committee should be represented at the conference.

Jim Johnston
Clerk to the Committee
Johann Lamont MSP  
Social Justice Committee

28th January 2002

Dear Johann Lamont

We spoke a couple of weeks ago at the Scottish Churches Social Inclusion Network, the members of which greatly appreciated your visit. I mentioned then that Church Action on Poverty is organising a series of meetings in different parts of Scotland in the next few months with three main objectives:

- To allow those working in churches or church-based community work to share experience, information and hopes for promoting social justice and overcoming poverty
- To allow the voices of those with direct experience to be heard
- To draw on our experience and knowledge to reflect on our relationship to the Executive's Social Justice Strategy in the context of what is happening, what is working and where the gaps are

These meetings will be taking place in Glasgow, Dundee, Edinburgh, Aberdeen and Inverness. They will be followed up by and feed into a national conference on poverty and social justice to be held in St Columba's by the Castle, Edinburgh on Saturday 15th June 2002.

Therefore, I am writing to invite the members of the Social Justice Committee to be our guests in attendance at this national event. Since social justice is also at the heart of the work of the Scottish Churches Social Inclusion Network, we are encouraged by the words of the 2001 Social Justice Annual Report that: The social justice strategy provides a way of building consensus on where focus is needed and connecting national and local priorities. Only by working together can we deliver social justice for all.'

In this process, we believe we are making a serious response to the invitation to partnership made in the Social Justice Report, and contributing to the connection of national and local priorities.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Kathy Galloway

Church Action on Poverty  
260 Bath Street  
Glasgow  
G2 4JF  
Tel: 0141 333 1890  
Email: kathy@churchpoverty.org.uk  
Linkworker for Scotland  
Kathy Galloway