TRANSPORT, INFRASTRUCTURE AND CLIMATE CHANGE COMMITTEE
MEETING

AGENDA

9th Meeting, 2007 (Session 3)
Tuesday 6 November 2007

The Committee will meet at 2.00 pm in Committee Room 6.

1. **Subordinate Legislation:** The Committee will consider the following negative instrument-

   The Road Traffic (Permitted Parking Area and Special Parking Area) (City of Edinburgh) Designation Amendment Order 2007 (SSI 2007/446).

2. **Petition:** The Committee will consider Petition PE894 on the provision of rail services between Inverness, Thurso and Wick.

3. **Ferry Links to the Scottish Islands:** The Committee will consider its approach to its inquiry into ferry links to the Scottish Islands.

4. **Climate Change:** The Committee will consider its approach to gathering information on climate change issues in advance of forthcoming legislation.

Steve Farrell
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The papers for this meeting are as follows:

**Agenda Item 1**
Cover note from the Clerk
*The Road Traffic (Permitted Parking Area and Special Parking Area) (City of Edinburgh) Designation Amendment Order 2007 (SSI 2007/446)*

**Agenda Item 2**
Cover note from the Clerk

**Agenda Item 3**
Paper from the Clerk

**Agenda Item 4**
Paper from the Clerk
SPICe Committee briefing paper
TRANSPORT, INFRASTRUCTURE AND CLIMATE CHANGE COMMITTEE

9th Meeting, 2007 (Session 3)

Tuesday 6 November 2007

Subordinate Legislation Cover Note

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title of Instrument</th>
<th>The Road Traffic (Permitted Parking Area and Special Parking Area) (City of Edinburgh) Designation Amendment Order 2007 (SSI 2007/446)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Standing Order</td>
<td>10.4 (Negative)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Laid Date</td>
<td>4 October 2007</td>
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<tr>
<td>Circulated to Members</td>
<td>1 November 2007</td>
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<td>Meeting Date</td>
<td>6 November 2007</td>
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<td>Reporting Deadline</td>
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Purpose

1. The purpose of this instrument is to amend the decriminalised parking regime within the City of Edinburgh’s Council area to allow the decriminalised enforcement of greenway’s parking and loading regulations.

Background

2. When the City of Edinburgh Council introduced decriminalised parking enforcement in 1998 under the provisions of the Road Traffic Act 1991, their policy was that enforcement of the Greenways’ bus priority lanes waiting and loading regulations throughout the city would remain the responsibility of the police and traffic wardens who are employed by Lothian and Borders Police. All other waiting and loading regulations would be enforced by themselves.

3. The Council have now approached the Scottish Government requesting that an amendment be made to their designation order to allow enforcement of the Greenways’ waiting and loading regulations to be undertaken by the Council rather than by the police and traffic wardens.

4. The Council has a number of reasons for wanting the enforcement of Greenways' waiting and loading regulations to be decriminalised, including:-

   i) there will only be one loading and waiting enforcement regime;
   ii) it will rationalise the loading and waiting enforcement throughout the city;
   iii) it will allow a more efficient and cost effective use of resources e.g. the criminalised/decriminalised boundaries between Greenways and rest of city are eliminated; and
iv) it will lead to better consistency and public understanding of the loading and waiting regulations will be improved.

5. Further information on the policy objectives and consultation can be found in the Executive note which is attached.

Subordinate Legislation Committee Report

6. The Subordinate Legislation Committee did not have any comments to make in relation to this instrument.

Recommendation

7. The Committee is invited to consider any issues which it wishes to raise in reporting to the Parliament on this instrument.

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Introduction

1. This note asks the Committee to consider for the first time the following petition which was lodged on 24 October 2005:

   *Petition by The Association of Caithness Community Councils calling for the Scottish Parliament to consider investment in infrastructure, rolling stock and timetabling as part of a strategic root and branch review of the provision of rail services between Inverness, Thurso and Wick, with unrestricted thinking on how best to shorten journey times and ensure the continuing future of the railway to these destinations. Thought should also be given to ensuring that the existing communities of the ‘Lairg loop’ are provided for.*

2. The Public Petitions Committee (PPC) considered the petition at its meeting on 2 October 2007 and agreed to refer it to the Transport, Infrastructure and Climate Change Committee for further consideration.

Petition PE 894

3. The petition has been open for a number of years and a substantial amount of material has been gathered by the previous PPC throughout its consideration of the petition.

4. A number of developments have occurred since the petition was lodged and this note focuses on the most recent action on the petition.

5. Additional background material providing information on the existing far north rail line and its services was prepared for the PPC’s consideration at its meeting on 2 October and can be found at Annexe A of this covering note.

Progress of the petition

6. The petition was first considered by the PPC in the last session at its meeting on 9 November 2005 and considered again at its meetings on 8 March 2006, 15 November 2006 and 20 March 2007. The previous PPC agreed the following actions:

   - 9 November 2005: write to the Scottish Executive, First ScotRail, Network Rail, the Highland Rail Partnership, Friends of the Far North Line and Friends of the Earth;
   - 8 March 2006: invite the views of the petitioner on the responses received;
• November 2006: seek information from the Scottish Executive on how the specific needs of the Far North Rail Line will be considered as part of ongoing work and to seek the views of the petitioner on the response received;
• 20 March 2007: seek information from HITRANS on the outcome of its consultation process and specifically on its position on the Dornoch Rail Link and to invite comments on the petition from the Caithness Partnership and the Caithness Transport Strategy Group.

Copies of all correspondence relating to the petition are available on request from the Clerk.

7. The relevant extracts from the Official Report from these PPC meetings are attached at Annexe B of this covering note.

Recent action on the petition

Scottish Executive response
8. In January 2007, Transport Scotland responded to the PPC’s request to the previous Administration seeking information on how the specific needs of the far north rail line will be considered as part of the Scottish Executive’s ongoing work. Their letter described the Room for Growth study which recommended that for the Far North Line, the key recommendations are line speed improvements, level crossing upgrades and points renewals at loops for higher speeds. The letter also mentions the then recently published National Transport Strategy (NTS) and the accompanying ‘Scotland’s Railways’ which was informed by the Scottish Planning Assessment, and set out the vision for the rail network for the next 20 years.

HITRANS response
9. In April 2007 in response to the PPC, HISTRANS provided details of their consultation process and research undertaken in preparing their Regional Transport Study (RTS). They confirmed their position that the Dornoch Rail Link was not included in its RTS as the research undertaken had shown that it did not represent value for money.

Petitioner’s views on the responses to date
10. In its latest letter to the PPC in September 2007, the petitioner stated that the petition should be referred to this Committee and that an independent study be carried out into the economic and social aspects of the Dornoch Rail Link.

11. Copies of Transport Scotland’s response, HITRANS’ response and the petitioner’s letter have been circulated in hard copy with this note. Attachments referred to in the petitioner’s letter are available on request from the Clerk.
Recommendation

12. The Committee is invited to consider whether it wishes to take any further action in relation to this petition bearing in mind the work already carried out by the PPC and the responses received on this matter.

13. If it considers further action is merited, a possible option could be to write to the Scottish Government seeking a response to the petitioner’s latest letter. Specifically, a response could be sought on-

- how are studies such as Room for Growth, A Strategy for Caithness and North Sutherland and the regional transport strategy being taken forward and under what process will it consider line improvements and upgrades.

14. Should the Committee wish to take alternative action, the Committee may wish to ask the Clerks to bring forward a further options paper for consideration at a future meeting.

15. In summary, the Committee is invited to:

- Agree what action, if any, it wishes to take in relation to this petition.

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ANNEXE A

FURTHER BACKGROUND INFORMATION PREPARED FOR THE PPC MEETING 2 OCTOBER 2007.

1. The petitioner’s primary concern relates to journey times. The petitioner argues that while it takes 2-2½ hours to travel between Thurso and Inverness by car, it takes 3-3½ hours to complete the journey by train. Improving the journey time would bring wider benefit to the local economy and the environment.

2. The far north rail line runs for 161 miles between Inverness and Wick on the north-east coast; there is also a short branch from Georgemass Junction to Thurso. There are 25 stations along the line although only Inverness, Dingwall, Thurso and Wick are staffed. The line is predominantly single track, with short sections of double track to allow trains going in opposite directions to pass (passing loop). The maximum line speed is 75mph although it is considerably lower at many points.

3. The line infrastructure is owned and maintained by Network Rail, while the stations are managed by First ScotRail. Responsibility for specifying and funding any line upgrades lies with the Scottish Government.

4. First ScotRail runs three passenger return services Monday-Saturday and two return services on Sundays. A weekday morning Tain-Inverness commuter service also operates as part of the Invernet programme. The average end to end journey time is 4¼ hours. Passenger services use modern diesel multiple units capable of 90mph. Any new passenger services would likely require additional Scottish Government subsidy and an amendment to the passenger rail franchise. The line is lightly used by freight trains, mainly delivering freight containers to supermarkets in Wick and Thurso.

5. The line takes a substantial detour inland between Tain and Golspie, looping around the Dornoch Firth. This detour, known as the Lairg Loop, serves the stations of Ardgay, Culrain, Invershin, Lairg and Rogart.

6. The Lairg Loop bypasses Dornoch town, despite it being one of the largest settlements in the area. Traversing the Loop also adds between 30-45 minutes to the rail journey between Inverness and Wick. In 1984 the then Scottish Office decided to construct a bridge for the A9 across the Dornoch Firth at Tain. British Rail produced a proposal for a rail link parallel to the A9 from Tain to Golspie using this bridge. The proposal however failed to secure Government funding and did not proceed. The A9 road bridge was built but as a stand alone highway project.

7. This proposal for the Dornoch Firth route is supported by many highland rail campaigners. However, they also support the retention of the Lairg Loop, possibly running express services between Inverness and Wick/Thurso using the Dornoch Firth route and all stations services between Golspie and Inverness using the Lairg Loop.
8. The Scottish Executive provided funding for a three year pilot Invernet commuter rail services between Kingussie, Tain and Inverness. The pilot began in January 2005.

9. The Room for Growth study of March 2006, commissioned by Highlands and Islands Enterprise stated “for the Far North Line, the key recommendations are line speed improvements, level crossing upgrades and points renewals at loops for higher speeds”. However, a then HITRANS consultation document did not highlight investment in the line as ‘being a regional priority’.

10. Transport Scotland, in written evidence to the previous Committee, considered “for the Far North Line, the key recommendations are line speed improvements, level crossing upgrades and points renewals at loops for higher speeds”.

11. A Members’ Business debate on a motion in the name of Jamie Stone on the Caithness economy took place on 25 October 2006. Reference was made during this debate to the far north line but no specific response was made by the then Minister in his closing speech.
EXTRACTS FROM THE OFFICIAL REPORT OF PPC CONSIDERATION OF THE PETITION

9 November 2005

Railway Infrastructure and Services (Inverness, Thurso and Wick) (PE894)

The Convener: The next new petition is PE894, from the Association of Caithness Community Councils. It calls on the Scottish Parliament to consider investment in infrastructure, rolling stock and timetabling as part of a strategic root-and-branch review of provision of rail services between Inverness, Thurso and Wick, with unrestricted thinking on how best to shorten journey times and to ensure the future of the railway to those destinations.

The Scottish Executive has recently assumed new rail powers under the provisions of the Railways Act 2005, which give it greater control over the development of rail services and the rail network in Scotland.

We are joined—just in time—by Rob Gibson. I hope that it was not the train that held you up. Do you wish to say something before we hear from committee members?

Rob Gibson (Highlands and Islands) (SNP): No, thank you, convener. I am happy for committee members to speak first.

The Convener: Members have seen the briefing papers. Do you have any comments to make on the subject of the petition?

Jackie Baillie: I am curious about a point that Rob Gibson will probably be able to amplify. There seems to be a suggestion that the current train route is slow and that, if it is made quicker, more people will use it. I buy that theory, but the petitioners go on to say that they want to keep the Lairg loop, with the trains stopping at every wee village en route. I am not sure how that squares with the desire to make the trains quicker, although I confess to a lack of local knowledge.

The Convener: It is not quite all of us who are in that position, but I certainly am. I would like to know a bit more about the difficulties involved. Does anybody have any questions based on the information that we have so far?

John Scott: I question Jackie Baillie's assumption that people would use the train if it were quicker than the road. What evidence is there to suggest that that would happen in Caithness when it does not happen anywhere else in Scotland?

Jackie Baillie: First, I base my evidence on the fact that the petitioners say that that would be the case. I defer to their local knowledge about travelling habits in that part of the world. Secondly, it is much quicker getting from Glasgow to Edinburgh by train than it is by car.

John Scott: Not everybody uses the train, though—that is my point.

Helen Eadie: One of the points that are made in the papers supporting the petition is about heavy goods vehicles and the aim of getting more freight on to the railway line. I absolutely applaud every effort that is being made in that direction, and I know that the Lib-Lab coalition Executive has worked hard to increase the amount of freight that is carried by rail, so I strongly support that part of the petition. Perhaps we should ask Rob Gibson to elaborate on
those points, because increased rail use would reduce polluting emissions from heavy goods
vehicles and lighten traffic on the roads, so that motorists could enjoy their car journeys more.

John Farquhar Munro (Ross, Skye and Inverness West) (LD): The proposal to improve
facilities on the line to the far north has been promoted by various organisations in the
Highlands for many years. In the past, I have been involved with many organisations that
have tried to achieve that. There are various suggestions about how it might happen but, as
members will appreciate, a huge budget would be required, even to secure a journey time just
a quarter of an hour faster. There are many reasons for that. The argument about the Lairg
loop and the possibility of crossing the Dornoch firth with a new railway bridge has been
debated over the past 20 or 30 years in the Highlands, but it has not happened and the
debate continues.

The petition seems to suggest that the Scottish Executive is not doing enough for the far north
line. I question that, because some years ago quite a substantial amount of money was
invested in improving the rolling stock on the north line. As a consequence, we have a
commuter service running between Tain and Inverness two or three times a day, which is
proving to be successful; it is part of the far north line. I know that more improvements are
desired, but such things take time and money.

In addition, the Scottish Executive awarded a freight facilities grant to supermarkets to put
their containers on to flatbed trailers—a new investment—and Network Rail was encouraged
to increase the height of the Killiecrankie tunnel so that those containers could go through.
Large amounts of money were given to the supermarkets to make use of the facility, so that
containers could be taken off the road up to the far north, but very little has happened. I see
now that the supermarkets say that they will not use the service. I do not know why. However,
the Government has invested in the far north line.

John Scott: I would like to ask John Farquhar Munro and Rob Gibson to comment further on
costs. Is there any suggestion of costed proposals, perhaps with regard to benefits such as
repopulation of the area? I am from the other end of the country, as you know, but I would be
happy to hear the members make those arguments on behalf of the petitioners.

The Convener: It would be appropriate to hear from Rob Gibson. A bit more knowledge of
the matter might help us.

Rob Gibson: I shall try to take the points in the order in which they were stated. The railway
was designed back in the 1890s so that the Duke of Sutherland, who was a rail buff, could
have more railways on his land. It loops in towards Lairg and then back to the coast. If one
could cut across by the Dornoch firth, that would reduce the time taken to get to the far north
by anything up to 40 minutes, according to modern estimates.

Two thousand to 3,000 people now live in the Lairg area in central Sutherland, but there are
potentially 30,000 customers in north Sutherland, Caithness and Orkney who would use the
railway if it was a good deal faster. Corus rail engineering consultants have done a
preliminary study that suggests that a bridge at Dornoch and improvements to the railway in
the far north, such as creating a loop at Hallkirk, would speed up the train to Thurso and could
reduce the journey time to roughly the same as that for the road journey.

Last winter, a picture appeared of a service bus that had gone off the road on an icy stretch
near the Ord of Caithness. In most parts of the country, people have a choice between road
and rail. Currently, it takes more than four hours to travel by rail a distance that is not as far as
the distance from Inverness to Edinburgh, which takes much less time to travel by rail. Fewer
and fewer people in the north are willing to use the railway and the service is hanging on by a
thread.

The Lairg loop issue could be partly dealt with by commuter services, to which John Farquhar
Munro just referred. A new service called Invernet, which will start in December, will run
commuter trains from Kingussie to Inverness and through to Tain. There will be five commuter trains a day to Tain. However, it was announced yesterday that one of the trains will start in the morning at Lairg. Therefore, the new commuter train will serve the commuter area that is furthest from Inverness.

A faster service to Caithness would not stop at the stations between Inverness and Tain, but would speed up over that section to get passengers to the north more quickly. A recent study—one of many—showed that the vast bulk of passengers who use the line go the whole distance up to Thurso and Wick. Currently, those who want to get to Wick must go to Thurso first because the route is T-shaped—the train comes to a junction where it must go west to Thurso, then come back to the junction to go on to Wick. That has been the arrangement for the past 20 years or so, but the train used to split into two to take passengers in both directions. Frankly, the railway is hanging on by a thread. If the service was improved, that could lead to a far greater number of people living in the area.

I was a member of the Stirling-Alloa-Kincardine Railway and Linked Improvements Bill Committee. One of the major arguments for having a rail service for Alloa, which is 8 miles from Stirling, was that it was needed to encourage people to travel to places where there is work. Currently, people in the north cannot afford to take the chance of travelling by road because of the particularly awful weather that we get. The committee has received petitions on maternity services in Caithness, which stressed that the 100-mile road route to Inverness can be very dangerous. It is important to give people a choice.

I dispute John Farquhar Munro’s view that the rolling stock has improved. The longest journeys are between Inverness and Thurso and the service has some of the poorest rolling stock in Scotland. The modern trains that run between Glasgow and Edinburgh are fine, but the service in the north is not a commuter service; it is a long-distance service between communities, with many smaller communities in between.

The developments that we seek will take time and money, but the petition asks the Executive to be open-minded and consider innovative solutions. Indeed, as I said earlier, Corus rail consultants—who were formerly British Rail people—have produced a scheme that could reduce journey times. They are involved in major developments in Scotland and Britain and are up-to-date, railway people to the core. They believe that journey times in the north can be improved and that the costs can be justified. Any long-distance line must stand or fall on the costs issue.

John Scott might be right that many people choose to go by car rather than by rail, but older people, including older visitors, and travellers who take bikes increasingly prefer to use the railway.

The line is scenic, but that is not the point. We must apply an appraisal system that allows longer-distance lines to be considered for investment. The Scottish transport appraisal guidelines favour short-distance routes, such as the proposed Bathgate to Airdrie line, which create natural links. However, there are questions about other developments in the Executive’s current consultation on rail priorities. The far north of Scotland could do with an increase in population through the decentralisation of jobs from the central belt. When Alloa was considered as a place to which decentralised jobs might go, one criterion was that it should have a railway that was suitable for carrying people there in a decent time.

There are many arguments to support the view that the issue must be considered in detail. The problem is a long-standing one that cannot be solved just by plumping for roads instead. We need to give people choice. We need a modern form of transport that meets our needs, that responds to climate change and that contributes to the sustainability of communities in such areas, which feel isolated.

Helen Eadie: We need to get more views to allow us to ascertain what to do with the petition. I suggest that we seek the views of the Scottish Executive, First ScotRail and Network Rail.
We should also seek views from the Highland Rail Partnership—I have met representatives of that group and am aware of some of their concerns. Equally, we should seek the views of the Friends of the Far North Line and Friends of the Earth Scotland. Would that be appropriate, convener?

**The Convener:** That would be entirely appropriate.

**John Scott:** I ask Rob Gibson to address the central point of my question, which was about cost. He talked about that, but he did not say what the cost would be.

**Rob Gibson:** The fact is that a proper assessment must be carried out before we know what the costs would be. We bandy around figures such as £300 million for a tramline in Edinburgh, £500 million for the M74 extension and similar figures for rail links to the airports in the central belt, but we could deal with the Killiecrankie tunnel, the Orton loop, the line from Inverness to Aberdeen and the improvements in the far north for about £150 million. Those measures would extend the network to the whole country, so it would be quicker for freight to travel from the far north to the central belt. Working out an exact cost would be part of the development of the petition into a proper study. I cannot give an exact figure, but I know that the cost today would be far greater than it would have been when the Tory Government turned down the possibility in the mid-1980s, at which point European money was available.

A solution to the injustice is long overdue. We must give people in Caithness the feeling that they are part of the whole nation and that we are taking into account their transport wishes. The community councils are asking for that, not me. The people who live in the far north—not the Friends of the Far North Line, who do not live there—are looking for your help to have the matter dealt with rationally.

**John Scott:** There are 25 signatures on the petition. Do the proposals attract cross-party support?

**Rob Gibson:** Yes, although some people are more strongly in favour than others. We want to reflect the views of people in the community, not my views or those of other members. I doubt whether any local members would question either the right of people to make the proposal or their intent, as stated in the careful wording that is before the committee, to take into account not just the needs of Caithness, but those of central Sutherland.

**Helen Eadie:** Is Jamie Stone the local member?

**Rob Gibson:** Yes.

**The Convener:** Helen Eadie made a recommendation about groups that we can contact for their views. Are members happy to deal with the petition by sending it to those bodies and asking for their responses?

**Members indicated agreement.**
8 March 2006

Railway Infrastructure and Services (Inverness, Thurso and Wick) (PE894)

The Convener: Our final current petition is PE894, which is from the association of Caithness community councils. It calls on the Scottish Parliament to consider investment in infrastructure, rolling stock and timetabling as part of a strategic root-and-branch review of the provision of rail services between Inverness, Thurso and Wick.

At its meeting on 9 November 2005, the committee agreed to seek the views of the Scottish Executive, First ScotRail, Network Rail, the Highland Rail Partnership, Friends of the Far North Line and Friends of the Earth. Responses have been circulated to members. Since the petition was last considered, the committee has received 145 letters in support of it.

Helen Eadie: Shall we seek the petitioners' views on the responses?

The Convener: Yes.

John Scott: We should also note the largely helpful tone of the responses, which is positive. That augurs well.

The Convener: We look forward to receiving the petitioners' responses.

That was the last of our petitions. I thank everyone for their attention.

15 November 2006

Railway Infrastructure and Services (Inverness, Thurso and Wick) (PE894)

The Convener: Petition PE894, from the association of Caithness community councils, calls on the Scottish Parliament to consider investment in infrastructure, rolling stock and timetabling as part of a strategic root-and-branch review of the provision of rail services between Inverness, Thurso and Wick, with unrestricted thinking on how best to shorten journey times and ensure the continuing future of the railway to those destinations. Thought should also be given to ensuring that the communities of the Lairg loop are provided for.

At its meeting on 8 March, the committee agreed to invite the views of the petitioner on the responses received. That response is now with us and has been circulated. Should we write back to the Executive, asking for its views on the specific needs of the far north rail line and on how it will consider those as part of the work that is continuing? Once we get that response, we can pass it to the petitioner and ask for a comment. Are members happy with that?

Members indicated agreement.
20 March 2007

Railway Infrastructure and Services (Inverness, Thurso and Wick) (PE894)

The Convener: Petition PE894, from S Gordon, on behalf of the association of Caithness community councils, calls on the Scottish Parliament to consider investment in infrastructure, rolling stock and timetabling as part of a strategic root-and-branch review of the provision of rail services between Inverness, Thurso and Wick, with unrestricted thinking on how best to shorten journey times and to ensure the future of the railway to those destinations. The petition also calls for thought to be given to ensuring that the communities of the Lairg loop are provided for.

At its meeting on 15 November 2006, the committee considered the petitioner's comments on the responses received. We agreed to seek information from the Scottish Executive on how the specific needs of the far north rail line will be considered as part of on-going work, and to seek the petitioner's views on that response, when it was received. The Executive's response has now been received and circulated. Members’ papers also include a submission in support of the petition that has been made by the Caithness west community council.

Helen Eadie: The petition is getting some support from others, especially the Caithness west community council. I recommend that the committee write to the Highlands and Islands strategic transport partnership seeking information on the outcome of its consultation process and, specifically, on its position on the Dornoch rail link. We could also invite comments on the petition from the Caithness Partnership and the Caithness transport strategy group.

John Farquhar Munro: I support that recommendation.

The Convener: Would Rob Gibson like to comment on the petition?

Rob Gibson (Highlands and Islands) (SNP): I am happy with the recommendation that has been made. This is a live issue and the petition must be kept live, because we are in the process of trying to create a strategy. The committee’s involvement is helpful.

The Convener: We will keep the petition live.
Railway Infrastructure and Services (Inverness, Thurso and Wick) (PE894)

The Convener: The next petition is PE894, in which Rob Gibson has expressed a particular interest. It is by the association of Caithness community councils, and it calls for the Scottish Parliament to consider investment in infrastructure, rolling stock and timetabling as part of a strategic root-and-branch review of the provision of rail services between Inverness, Thurso and Wick, with unrestricted thinking—that is a lovely phrase—on how best to shorten journey times and ensure the continuing future of the railway to those destinations. Thought should also be given to ensuring that the existing communities of the Lairg loop are provided for.

Committee members received written submissions from the Highlands and Islands strategic transport partnership on 25 April 2007, from Caithness Partnership on 4 and 15 June and from the petitioner on 22 September. We have also received a number of unsolicited responses that support a Dornoch rail link and draw attention to the consultation process undertaken by HITRANS.

Do members have any strong views? I am sure that, as the Green committee member, Robin has a view.

Robin Harper: As someone who has travelled frequently on the network in question and who intends to travel on it during the coming break, I sympathise with the petitioners. Network Rail is making general improvements to parts of the line that runs along the coast, but a reduction in journey times, in particular, would meet with considerable approval in the Highlands—I speak as a visitor, rather than a resident, although I was born in Thurso.

Rhoda Grant: Substantial work is needed on the petition. The speeding up of journey times would be a huge improvement and would open up the north. Much work is going on to consider economic development in the area in the context of the decommissioning of Dounreay. The rail line and journey times are important.

I have concerns about the Lairg loop. It would be wrong to have a crossing of the Dornoch Firth that bypassed Lairg, because the Lairg area needs good transport links. Sutherland is probably more economically deprived than other areas.

We should refer the petition to the Transport, Infrastructure and Climate Change Committee. I know that the Public Petitions Committee does not often refer petitions, but the work that is needed falls outwith the scope of this committee and would benefit from the scrutiny of a subject committee.

John Farquhar Munro: The issue has been on the agenda of Highland Council and Network Rail for many years. I am sympathetic to the implementation of any measure that could cut journey times between destinations. It is estimated that the journey time between the far north and Inverness could be cut by half an hour or more.

Like Rhoda Grant, I am conscious of the problem that would be created by a crossing of the Dornoch Firth that cut out the Lairg loop, which has been served by rail for many years. However, we cannot halt progress. There is a strong lobby for a rail crossing of the Dornoch Firth in the communities of Caithness, Sutherland and the wider Highlands. We could support such a crossing. I am not sure to whom we should refer the petition, but I note the suggestion that it be referred first to the Transport, Infrastructure and Climate Change Committee of the Scottish Parliament.

The Convener: If no other member of the committee wants to comment, I will bring in Rob Gibson, who has expressed an interest in the petition.
Rob Gibson (Highlands and Islands) (SNP): Thank you. I have been involved with the issue for a while, but now that I am a member of the Transport, Infrastructure and Climate Change Committee I am aware of discussion about the Scottish Government's tier 3 rail projects, which are being costed. Of course, other projects must form a queue.

The issue that the petition raises has been discussed since the 1980s, but it is becoming more urgent as a result of the decommissioning of Dounréay and the development of the far north, as Rhoda Grant said. The 45 minutes that could be saved by building the Dornoch rail link between Tain and Golspie, via a new station at Dornoch, would start to make rail competitive with road. In the context of climate change, that is more relevant than it has ever been.

There have been many arguments about the Lairg loop, which affects 2,000 or 3,000 people. Those people's interests must be looked after. However, there are commuter links between Lairg and Inverness. The 50,000 people who live north of Golspie, in east Sutherland, Caithness and Orkney, are greatly disadvantaged by a service that takes well over four hours to make a journey of 100 or so miles. It takes longer to get from Wick to Inverness than to get from Inverness to Edinburgh, although the distance is far shorter. The Transport, Infrastructure and Climate Change Committee could consider what studies are required, because often the Government, through HITRANS, has asked the wrong questions. That has forced the Dornoch link action group to commission its own studies, the first of which cost £15,000, from Corus rail engineering. That showed the intent of people in the far north to find the money for such studies. A second study, which will consider the potential impact of the project on passenger numbers, is to follow.

I do not want to take up too much of the committee's time, but it would be a good idea for the Transport, Infrastructure and Climate Change Committee to consider the complex issues that have been raised. It would help the discussions of how tier 3 rail projects stack up if this project were put into the pot. We have an opportunity to do that and to take the issue forward. At present it is in the hands of the Public Petitions Committee and is unresolved.

The Convener: There is a reasonable consensus on what the next stage should be. I am sure that I will endear myself further to the Transport, Infrastructure and Climate Change Committee by referring another petition to it; I await the committee's letter with interest. The Public Petitions Committee has been cautious about referring petitions to other committees when we think that we can take up the issues that they raise. However, given the detail of this petition and the fact that major organisations such as the local authority have been involved in the history of the transport network in that part of the country, it strikes me that a policy committee would bring more rigour to the process. Do we want to draw attention to particular issues that the petition raises, or should we allow the Transport, Infrastructure and Climate Change Committee to determine the matters that it wishes to pursue?

Rhoda Grant: We should allow the committee to take on the petition without any constraints.

John Farquhar Munro: Plenty of information has been gathered over the years, so there is no scarcity of documentation.

The Convener: I note with interest that the members for the Highland region did not declare an interest before we discussed the petition, but what can we expect? I thank Rob Gibson for his time. We will refer the petition to the Transport, Infrastructure and Climate Change Committee. That is a Glaswegian's response to such issues.
Transport, Infrastructure and Climate Change Committee

Inquiry into Ferry Links to the Scottish Islands

Approach Paper

Introduction
1. The Committee, at its meeting on 18 September 2007, considered its future work programme and agreed to hold an inquiry into ferry links to the Scottish islands. It also agreed to consider an approach to the inquiry at a future meeting.

2. This paper sets out suggestions for developing the remit of the inquiry and taking forward a programme of evidence-gathering.

Scottish Government policy on ferries
3. The Lifeline ferry services to Western Isles and certain remote points on the Scottish mainland are provided by Caledonian MacBrayne Ltd (CalMac) while services to Orkney and Shetland are provided by Northlink Orkney and Shetland Ferries Ltd. Both these companies are wholly owned by the Scottish Government.

4. The Scottish Government also provides financial assistance for the development and improvement of lifeline piers and harbour infrastructure within the Highlands and Islands. Ports policy is devolved to Scottish Ministers.

5. The Scottish Government has never produced a separate ferry strategy document. However, the National Transport Strategy does briefly mention lifeline ferry services, stating:

“Once the tendering of the Clyde and Hebrides ferry service has been completed in 2007 we will undertake a comprehensive review of lifeline ferry services to develop a long-term strategy for lifeline services to 2025. The review will include a detailed appraisal of routes to determine whether a better configuration could be developed in response to calls for new and faster connections serving these isolated communities and a review of fares structures as part of a broader review of the affordability of public transport.”

6. Any such review of lifeline services would also have to consider the inter-island ferry services provided by Shetland Islands Council and Orkney Islands Council and the routes operated/subsidised by Strathclyde Partnership for Transport, Highland Council and Argyll and Bute Council.
7. In addition on 13 August 2007 the Scottish Government announced its intention to undertake a three stage pilot study into the possibility of establishing a ‘road equivalent tariff’ (RET) fares system for ferries in Scotland. Stage 1 is a desk based study, aimed at designing a workable RET fares system. Stage 2 will be the operation of the RET fares system on a CalMac route and Stage 3 will be an evaluation of this trial and report to Ministers on how the scheme could be taken forward. The Scottish Government anticipates Stage 1 to be completed by the end of 2007, although timescales for stages 2 and 3 remain to be defined.

8. While ferry provision is dominated by public sector operators it is important to remember that the private sector does provide unsubsidised services in some locations, most notably Western Ferries on the Gourock-Dunoon route and Pentland Ferries on the Scottish mainland to Orkney route. Both these routes operate without subsidy and in competition with services provided by CalMac and Northlink.

9. SPICe are in the process of producing a briefing on Ferry Services in Scotland, which will be issued separately.

Terms of Reference

10. An inquiry into ferry links to the Scottish islands could potentially cover a wide range of issues, such as:
- Clyde and Hebrides service tendering process
- Funding issues
- Routes
  - Mainland to island/island to island etc.
  - Effectiveness of existing routes
  - Potential for the development of new routes
- Frequency and timetables
- Capacity issues
- Fares (bearing in mind that the Scottish Government’s Road Equivalent Tariff pilot is currently underway)
- Concessionary fares
- Sunday sailings
- Integration with other transport modes
- Freight transportation
- Effect on:
  - Economy/inward investment
  - environment
  - tourism
- Accessibility of ferries

11. It is suggested that all of these issues, to varying degrees, may be worthy of consideration as part of a ferries inquiry. However, it is recommended that the inquiry remit should be reasonably tightly drawn, perhaps covering
a smaller number of related issues. In this regard, members may wish to use the above list to assist them in identifying priorities and focussed objectives for the inquiry.

12. It is considered important that members take into account the statement contained in the National Transport Strategy that a comprehensive review of lifeline ferry services is to be carried out leading to the development of a long-term strategy for ferries to 2025. It is suggested that members may wish to avoid undertaking work as part of the inquiry which might duplicate that which will be carried out as part of such a review. \textit{It is suggested that the Committee should consider writing to the Minister for Transport, Infrastructure and Climate Change requesting an indication as to whether the new administration intends to proceed with this review as well as asking for details of the likely scope of any such exercise.}

13. Following the receipt of a response from the Minister, the Committee could consider how its inquiry might be taken forward in a manner which would avoid unnecessary duplication.

14. The Committee may also wish to consider consulting on the detailed remit of its inquiry, thus allowing ferry users to identify what they view as the priority areas. The Committee could use the information received to assist it in reaching decisions on the key objectives of the exercise.

15. The Committee could consider a variety of techniques to gather views of users, such as by :

- publishing a leaflet to be made available at ferry terminals, on board ferries and in public buildings and other appropriate locations in communities which rely on ferries. Gaelic translation and alternative formats would be made available;
- publicising the consultation on the Committee’s website;
- placing articles/advertisements in local newspapers and interviews on local radio;
- inviting business interests, freight operators etc. to participate
- holding a series of reporter visits around Scotland to hear from ferry users about their concerns.

16. Such an approach would be consistent with one of the Parliament’s key objectives of encouraging engagement by the public in its work. It would bring benefits in terms of the standing of the inquiry if ferry users were to be seen to have been involved in its development. It would also make good use of the period of time during the winter months where it would be difficult logistically for the Committee to hold formal external meetings in island areas.
17. Members’ views are invited on the use of consultation to assist in the development of the inquiry remit.

**Written and oral evidence**

18. When the Committee has finalised the terms of reference for the inquiry, a public call for written evidence would be issued and the attention of stakeholders drawn to the call for evidence.

19. Approximately 6-8 weeks will need to be allowed for the submission of written evidence after which a summary of the written evidence received will be made available to the Committee. However, during this period, the Committee could undertake a programme of oral evidence, concluding with evidence from the Minister.

**External meetings**

20. It is suggested that it would be wholly appropriate for the evidence-gathering programme to include formal meetings at external venues in areas directly affected by ferries. The Committee could consider meeting in the northern isles (Shetland has already been suggested) and also in a community in the Western Isles or at location which serves as a ferry hub for these islands. This would provide geographical balance but would also recognise the different issues affecting ferry users across Scotland. If members are minded to pursue this suggestion, proposals for external meetings will be brought forward by the clerks. Any such proposals would require the approval of the Parliamentary Bureau and the Conveners’ Group. Members’ views are invited on this suggestion.

21. Other evidence-gathering techniques could also be considered, such as the use of video-conferencing on either a formal or informal basis.

**Programme/ timetable**

22. If members agree the above suggestions, then an approximate timetable for the inquiry would be:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nov 2007</td>
<td>Request information from Minister on Scottish Government proposals on ferry services &amp; consider response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec 2007</td>
<td>Issue consultation on inquiry remit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan/Feb 2008</td>
<td>Reporter visits/meetings x 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>End-Feb 2008</td>
<td>Deadline for consultation responses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2008</td>
<td>Committee considers consultation responses and finalises remit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April-May 2008</td>
<td>Call for evidence and oral evidence (including external meetings).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 2008</td>
<td>Consider draft report.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>End-June 2008</td>
<td>Publish report</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conclusion

23. Members’ comments are invited on whether they wish to:
   • write to the Minister for Transport, Infrastructure and Climate Change requesting information on (a) whether the new administration intends to proceed with the review of lifeline ferry services as set out in the National Transport Strategy and (b) details of the nature and extent any such review;
   • further consider the development of the inquiry remit following receipt of a response from the Minister;
   • agree to a consultation on the detailed remit; and
   • agree that suitable locations for external committee meetings to take evidence as part of the inquiry be identified.

Steve Farrell
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Introduction

1. On 21 June 2007, the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Sustainable Growth announced the Scottish Government’s intention to introduce a Scottish climate change bill, which will set mandatory targets for emissions reductions. The First Minister, when announcing the Scottish Government’s Programme for Government on 4 September 2007, indicated that there would be a consultation on the proposed bill. It is anticipated that the proposed bill will be introduced towards the end of 2008.

2. The Committee, at its meeting on 18 September 2007, considered its future work programme and agreed that, in advance of the proposed legislation, it would develop a programme of awareness-raising and information gathering.

3. This paper brings forward initial suggestions for developing such a programme. It sets out proposals for:
   - monitoring the scrutiny of the UK Climate Change Bill and activity at EU level
   - engagement with counterpart committees at Westminster and in Brussels
   - a pre-legislative Committee participation event
   - exchange of information with the Cross-Party Group on Climate Change
   - Committee Reporters

Monitoring of policy and other developments on climate change

4. There is significant ongoing activity in relation to climate change at international, European and UK levels. This is summarised in a SPICe Committee Briefing Paper which has been circulated as meeting paper TIC/S3/07/9/5.

5. It is anticipated that the UK Climate Change Bill will be introduced in November 2007. Climate change is also very high up on the agenda of EU institutions and a European Commission White Paper on adapting to climate change in Europe is likely in 2008. The clerks and SPICe will closely monitor the passage of the UK Bill and the EU policy development in view of the association between these exercises and legislative proposals which are expected to be brought forward in Scotland.
6. Other Parliamentary committees are carrying out work in related areas, in particular the Economy Energy and Tourism Committee's agreement to carry out an energy inquiry with a focus on demand reduction and decentralised energy (amongst other policy areas); and the Local Government and Communities committee work on fuel poverty.

7. Members should also note that SPICe are currently preparing a suite of climate and energy related briefings which should be available over the next few months.

Engagement with counterpart committees
8. It is suggested that the activity on climate change at both UK and EU level presents an ideal opportunity to develop members’ awareness of legislative and policy developments in advance of the introduction of legislation in Scotland. It would seem essential that the Committee should have a good understanding of this activity and the implications that it may have in terms of the legislative proposals in Scotland.

9. It is therefore suggested that the Committee may wish to arrange visits by a representative group of members to both the UK and European Parliaments. Meetings could be arranged with counterpart committees to allow an exchange of views and information on the processes being undertaken at Scottish, UK and European levels. It is envisaged that such visits might take place in late January/early February 2008 with a likely time commitment of 3 full days required by participants.

10. If members agreed to undertake these visits, they could be combined in a single trip, travelling by rail to London and then on to Brussels by Eurostar. The return could be made by the same route or, alternatively, consideration could be given to using the Zeebrugge to Rosyth Ferry. This would provide members with an opportunity not only to experience this service, but also perhaps to meet with the operators and users.

11. Members’ views are invited on this proposal. If they are keen to pursue these visits a detailed programme will be drawn up and approval sought from both the Conveners’ Group and the Parliamentary Bureau.

Cross-Party Group on Climate Change
12. Members will be aware that a Cross-Party Group on Climate Change has been established. It is suggested to the Committee that there would be value in establishing links with the CPG to set up an exchange of information in relation to activities and work which will be undertaken. Members’ views on this proposal are invited.
Committee Reporters

13. As members will be aware, Parliamentary committees often nominate members as Reporters to gather information on certain issues and feed it back to colleagues. Reporters can meet stakeholders and undertake visits as part of this process. This approach can potentially allow committees to gather information and identify issues which they may later wish to explore when taking oral evidence.

14. The Committee may wish to consider whether nominating Reporters covering key policy areas which may be affected by the climate change legislation would be advantageous. There could, for example, be merit in having Reporters look at climate change issues in relation to transport, energy, business & the economy, planning and building etc. It should however, be borne in mind that there is a possibility that other subject committees with specific remit responsibility for some of these policy areas may seek secondary committee status when the climate change bill is introduced. Members’ comments are invited on the value of developing a Reporter system.

Pre-legislative Committee event

15. The Committee may wish to consider holding a participation event in the Parliament to provide stakeholders with an opportunity to make members aware of their priorities for addressing climate change. An event of this nature would allow members to engage directly with a wide range of organisations and individuals and would serve as a useful platform from which to begin their scrutiny of legislative proposals. This event could be timed to take place in early summer 2008 at a point when stakeholders will have had an opportunity to develop their respective positions on the proposals set out in the Scottish Government’s consultation paper.

16. It is suggested that firm decisions on the format for such an event or on the themes and issues which might be explored would be best left until the Scottish Government has issued its consultation document early in 2008. This would allow the Committee to consider how it might add value to the pre-legislative process and, importantly, help avoid duplication of any work which might be undertaken by the Scottish Government.

17. Members are invited to consider whether they agree that a Committee event on climate change should be held prior to the introduction of the proposed legislation. If they wish to pursue this suggestion, the clerks will bring forward a detailed proposal early in 2008.
Conclusion
18. Members’ comments are invited on whether they would wish to:

- undertake fact-finding visits on climate change to both Westminster and Brussels;
- develop a means of exchanging information with the Cross-Party Group on Climate Change;
- further consider the development of a Reporter system to look at climate change issues; and
- develop proposals for a Committee event on climate change in 2008.

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TRANSPORT, INFRASTRUCTURE AND CLIMATE CHANGE COMMITTEE

BRIEFING PAPER

CLIMATE CHANGE POLICY UPDATE – INTERNATIONAL, EUROPEAN AND UK DEVELOPMENTS

A synopsis of scientific and political developments on climate change, up to August 2007, can be found in the SPICe Briefing Averting Dangerous Climate Change? A Science and Policy Update. However even since this briefing, the debate has moved on apace with political developments at international, European and UK level.

International climate change developments
The largest meeting ever of world leaders on climate change took place in New York on 24 September 2007. Convened by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the UK was represented by the Secretary of State for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs. The meeting was a precursor to the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Bali in December 2007. The Bali meeting is of the utmost importance, as it will focus on developing a more comprehensive international climate agreement post-2012, when the first commitments under the Kyoto Protocol come to an end.

On 27-28 September 2007 the US Government invited certain countries to discuss energy security and climate change issues. On 20 October 2007 the International Carbon Action Partnership was launched by a coalition of European Union countries, the European Commission, US states, Canadian provinces, New Zealand and Norway. The partnership will provide an international forum in which governments and public authorities adopting mandatory greenhouse gas emissions cap and trade systems will share experiences and best practices on the design of emissions trading schemes. The UK Prime Minister described this as “a truly significant step forward in the global effort to combat climate change”.

Published on 25 October 2007, the latest Global Environment Outlook report from the UN states that climate change remains unresolved, and puts humanity at risk. On 17 November 2007 the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) will publish a synthesis report on the present state of knowledge on global climate change. A new report to the UN indicates that biofuels development could have a catastrophic effect on access to food for some of the global population.
Developments at European level
Climate and energy matters are as high up the agenda of the European Union as they have ever been, and the European Commission’s work programme for 2008 reflects this. It includes:

- A second EU strategic energy review to act as a basis for decisions to be taken by heads of state in 2009
- Revision of the energy performance of buildings directive
- Energy labelling scheme to be extended beyond domestic appliances
- Review of the energy tax directive

The work programme was published before a decision to postpone, until early in 2008, an existing package of climate and energy proposals. This package will include:

- New targets on greenhouse gas emissions
- New targets on renewable energy promotion
- Revision of the carbon trading scheme
- Limits on carbon emissions from cars
- Carbon capture and storage framework
- Strategic energy technologies review

The European Commission is carrying out a consultation on its Green Paper on adapting to climate change in Europe - options for EU action. A White Paper is expected in 2008. There are other related items highlighted in the Commission work programme, including policy papers on greening the transport sector, internalising the environmental and social costs of transport, and on a possible new EU maritime transport policy. An EU action plan on production and consumption is also expected in 2008.

On emissions trading, the European Commission has set an EU-wide CO2 cap of 2.08 billion tonnes for 2008-2012, giving member states 10% less CO2 allowances than requested for the second trading period of the EU Emissions Trading Scheme. The theory is that more stringent targets should see the avoidance of the collapse of the carbon trading price, as was the case with the first round of allocations. The European Commission is expected to publish, by the end of 2007, draft legislation requiring more stringent limits on large combustion plants. The legislation will revise the 1996 integrated pollution prevention and control (IPPC) directive.

The European Parliament runs Joint Parliamentary meetings on certain topics, chaired by the president of the Parliament and co-chaired by the president of the National Parliament representing the holder of the EU Presidency. The Joint Parliamentary Meeting on Climate Change was held on 2 October 2007 and concluded that the “window of opportunity for tackling climate change - at both EU and international levels - is still open, but time is running out”. The European Parliament also has a Temporary Committee on Climate Change, in existence until May 2008.
United Kingdom Climate Change Bill
The UK Climate Change Bill is expected to be in the Queen’s Speech on 6 November 2007. A UK Energy Bill is also expected in the Queen’s Speech. A Draft UK Climate Change Bill has already been published and included proposals such as:

- Statutory targets to reduce UK carbon dioxide emissions by at least 60% by 2050 and 26-32% by 2020, against a 1990 baseline
- Introduction of five year carbon budgets with three budgets set ahead to help businesses plan and invest
- Establishment of an independent body – the Committee on Climate Change – to advise on the setting of carbon budgets and the pathway to the 2050 target and to report annually on progress
- Enabling powers to introduce new trading schemes
- A new system of annual Government reporting to Parliament in response to the annual report by the Committee on Climate Change
- Requiring the Government to assess the risks that climate change poses to the UK, and to report to Parliament on these risks and on its programme to address them.

The Draft Bill has come under heavy scrutiny by committees at Westminster including:
- **Joint Committee of the House of Commons and House of Lords**
- **Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee**
- **Environmental Audit Committee**

On 29 October 2007 the UK Government responded to these committees, published a **Command Paper** on taking forward the UK Climate Change Bill, and announced that a strengthened Bill would be introduced at the earliest legislative opportunity with new associated proposals including:

- Strengthening the role and responsibilities of the Committee on Climate Change and strengthening the Committee’s independence from Government
- Asking the Committee to report on whether the Government's target to reduce CO2 emissions by at least 60 percent by 2050 should be strengthened further
- Asking the Committee to look at the implications of including other emissions from international aviation and shipping in the UK's targets
- Increased transparency, by requiring the Committee to publish its analysis and advice to Government on setting five-yearly carbon budgets
- Strengthening Parliament's ability to hold Government to account, by requiring the Government to explain its reasons to Parliament if it does not accept the Committee's advice on the level of the carbon budget, or if it does not meet a budget or target

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1. The Prime Minister accepted in PMQ's on 24 October that this target may not be ambitious enough
• Providing better information and streamlining reporting, including requiring the Government to report annually to Parliament on emissions from international aviation and shipping
• Strengthening the country’s preparedness for climate change by requiring the Government regularly to assess the risks of climate change to the UK, and to report to Parliament on its proposals and policies for sustainable adaptation to climate change.

UK Climate Change Bill and Devolution
The Command Paper outlines how the devolved position will be reflected. Backed up by a concordat, the Bill will see:

• The Committee on Climate Change set up as a jointly-sponsored body, and its membership as a whole to include an understanding of the differences across the UK and the devolved context of climate change
• In establishing carbon budgets, the Committee and the Government will need to take into account the differences across the UK
• The Government consulting the Devolved Administrations prior to taking decisions on targets and budgets under the Bill. The period for consultation will be specified in the Bill, to ensure that the Devolved Administrations have sufficient time to consider the Committee’s advice and participate fully in the decision-making process
• The enabling powers under the Bill to be available to all four administrations to establish trading schemes within their existing competence, and for trading schemes to be set up jointly by more than one administration.

Other recent scrutiny of climate change matters at Westminster includes:

• Environmental Audit Committee ongoing inquiry into Reducing carbon emissions from UK business: The role of the Climate Change Levy and Agreements.
• Environmental Audit Committee report into The structure and operation of Government and the challenge of Climate Change – the Committee called for a cabinet minister to have a climate change remit, with powers across departments, and that “Government must lead to end confusion and bring coordination to climate change policy”.

The Royal Commission has called for views on its next study, on adapting the UK to climate change.

Graeme Cook
SPICe Research
October 2007

Note: Committee briefing papers are provided by SPICe for the use of Scottish Parliament Committees and clerking staff. They provide focused information or respond to specific questions or areas of interest to committees and are not intended to offer comprehensive coverage of a subject area.