



**OFFICIAL REPORT**  
AITHISG OIFIGEIL

# Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee

**Thursday 27 January 2022**

**Session 6**



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**Thursday 27 January 2022**

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**STANDARDS, PROCEDURES AND PUBLIC APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE**  
**3<sup>rd</sup> Meeting 2022, Session 6**

**CONVENER**

\*Martin Whitfield (South Scotland) (Lab)

**DEPUTY CONVENER**

\*Bob Doris (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (SNP)

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

Edward Mountain (Highlands and Islands) (Con)

\*Collette Stevenson (East Kilbride) (SNP)

\*Tess White (North East Scotland) (Con)

\*attended

**THE FOLLOWING ALSO PARTICIPATED:**

Jamie Halcro Johnston (Highlands and Islands) (Con)

Douglas Lumsden (North East Scotland) (Con)

Paul McLennan (East Lothian) (SNP)

Graham Simpson (Central Scotland) (Con)

Sue Webber (Lothian) (Con) (Committee Substitute)

**CLERK TO THE COMMITTEE**

Katy Orr

**LOCATION**

The Sir Alexander Fleming Room (CR3)



**Scottish Parliament**  
**Standards, Procedures and**  
**Public Appointments Committee**

*Thursday 27 January 2022*

*[The Convener opened the meeting at 09:30]*

**Interests**

**The Convener (Martin Whitfield):** Good morning. I welcome everyone to the third meeting in 2022 of the Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee.

Before we move to our first agenda item, I welcome our newest member, Collette Stevenson, and invite her to declare any relevant interests.

**Collette Stevenson (East Kilbride) (SNP):** Thank you, convener. Good morning, everyone. I am currently a sitting councillor on South Lanarkshire Council.

**The Convener:** Thank you. Collette Stevenson is joining the committee to replace Elena Whitham. I thank Elena for her work with the committee and seek the committee's approval to write to her to thank her for the time that she spent with us. Is that agreed?

**Members** *indicated agreement.*

**The Convener:** Excellent—thank you.

**Decision on Taking Business in**  
**Private**

09:31

**The Convener:** Our first agenda item is a decision on whether to take in private item 4, which is consideration of the committee's approach to its inquiry into future parliamentary procedures and practices.

Do members agree to take that item in private?

**Members** *indicated agreement.*

## Cross-Party Groups

09:31

**The Convener:** Our next agenda item is on cross-party groups. We have a number of applications before us today.

The first application that we will consider is for a proposed CPG on islands. I welcome Jamie Halcro Johnston, who is the convener of the proposed group. He joins us remotely.

Good morning, Jamie. Would you like to make an opening statement about the proposed CPG?

**Jamie Halcro Johnston (Highlands and Islands) (Con):** Thank you, convener. I take the opportunity to thank Sam Currie on the clerking team for all her support in getting the proposed CPG on islands to this stage.

Islands have been an area of considerable interest for the Parliament in recent years and, for those of us who were here in the previous session, the Islands (Scotland) Act 2018, with its aim of re-establishing the relationship between Scotland-wide public bodies and island communities, was a significant step forward. That legislation was part of a broader recognition of the distinctive status, challenges and opportunities that our island communities have.

There is a great deal of diversity among those areas. Some are represented by island authorities; some are connected with mainland local authorities; some have considerably better links to mainland Scotland than others; and, in recent decades, some have benefited from growth while others have faced problems around depopulation. However, it seemed clear to me that there is a great deal to be gained through collaboration, sharing of experiences and working to make the Parliament more aware of the island perspective.

The proposed CPG seeks to be a forum for discussion of issues that are relevant to those islands and to improve their links with the Scottish Parliament. When an initial meeting of the group was held on 14 December, five MSPs were in attendance, a number of others sent representatives and interest was expressed by parties across the Parliament.

I am keen to ensure that the group does not focus only on the Highlands and Islands, because a number of important island communities exist in other regions, too. During the meeting in December, a discussion was held on potential areas of work, which highlighted island transport—ferries, in particular—and energy, as well as the wider issue of the impact on island economies of population and depopulation. There was broad agreement that a future policy of, at least, hybrid

meetings would be beneficial to the aim of increasing participation for those organisations and individuals who are at a distance from Edinburgh.

There is an existing all-party parliamentary group on United Kingdom islands, which a number of MPs with Scottish constituencies are involved in. As we go forward, I hope that we can explore collaboration—and, potentially, the holding of meetings—with that UK group. Naturally, there will be areas of overlap, because issues such as sustainable transport and energy are areas of interest across Scotland, but I hope that the proposed CPG will bring a uniquely islands-based perspective to those matters.

**The Convener:** Thank you. Do members have questions for Jamie?

**Bob Doris (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (SNP):** As a city MSP whose constituency is quite far away from the islands, I wondered what interest I might have in relation to the proposed cross-party group. I thought about how vital tourism is for many island communities and how important the idea of sustainable and responsible tourism is. Everyone in Scotland and beyond has a responsibility to be aware of that and to make sure that, when we visit island communities, we are respectful and that our tourism is sustainable. Might the cross-party group consider that at some point in the future?

**Jamie Halcro Johnston:** That is a very good question. In the Highlands and Islands region, in particular, there are a number of examples of island communities that face pressure from the impact of their success with tourism offerings. That has created issues that are unique to the islands. For example, capacity on ferries is stretched, and local people and businesses sometimes do not have access to them. However, the issue goes wider than that.

As I said, there will be overlap with other cross-party groups. I hope that we will work with other groups on areas of potential collaboration, but our approach will be to look at issues from a distinct islands perspective, because the solutions for us, in island communities, are often different from those for other parts of Scotland.

**The Convener:** I have a question about the organisations that are listed in your application, which came in before Christmas. A substantial number of interested bodies are listed, but the application states that, at that time, none was formally intending to affiliate with the proposed CPG. Has that position changed, or are you still waiting to hear? I know that a lot of bodies have been invited to do so.

**Jamie Halcro Johnston:** In some cases, the interest has been discussed but not yet

formalised. The key thing was to go through the process and ensure that, once the proposed cross-party group gets approval, which I hope will happen today, we can have a clear agenda with timelines. We also wanted to help some of the bodies to be part of the development, certainly on the policy areas that we aim to cover.

There has been quite a long process. The work has not been done only in the current parliamentary session; it comes on the back of conversations with different groups during my previous four years as an MSP and, beyond that, when I was a candidate. I also have an interest as somebody who lives on the islands.

We know that the interest exists, and firming up that interest and ensuring that organisations that want to take part can do so will be the next process. The list is also not exhaustive. If there are other organisations in the Highlands and Islands in particular that want to get involved, we want to give them the opportunity to do so.

**The Convener:** That is excellent.

Thank you for attending the meeting. The committee will formally consider whether to approve the application for recognition under the next agenda item, and the clerks will be in touch with you once that decision has been made.

We will now consider a proposed CPG on rugby development in Scotland. I welcome Douglas Lumsden, who is the proposed convener of the group.

**Douglas Lumsden (North East Scotland) (Con):** Thank you, convener. I thank colleagues for their time today.

As a new member of Parliament, I confess that I was surprised to discover that the Parliament did not have a cross-party group that focused on rugby. Scotland has a long history with the game, although some years are better than others. I always like to point out that we are still the holders of the five nations championship, which was last held back in 1999, and I am sure that we always will be. It is important that rugby's contribution to our cultural history and our future development be recognised through a cross-party group in the Parliament.

Rugby is changing. The first ever international rugby match was played on 27 March 1871 at Raeburn Place in Edinburgh. In front of 4,000 people, Scotland beat England that day—amazingly, the score was 1-0, which shows how much the game has changed. I hope that that result can be replicated in a couple of weeks.

The game has changed completely since then. It is now a game for everyone. We have seen the incredible emergence of women's rugby and clan rugby. Safety standards have improved, and there

is now professionalism in the game, but it is still important that grass-roots games are protected and can evolve. The proposal invites the Parliament to consider that development and how we can go further—how we can make the game more inclusive and ensure that it is as safe as possible in the years to come.

I am pleased to have two key partners on board with the group: the Scottish Rugby Union, which is providing secretariat support to the group, and the School of Hard Knocks, which is a fantastic charity that uses rugby to support young people in Scotland.

Again, I thank the committee for its time. I am happy to answer any questions.

**The Convener:** Thank you very much. Do any members of the committee have questions for Douglas Lumsden?

**Bob Doris:** I have a brief question. I should point out that my first ever engagement with cross-party groups in the Parliament was sport related. The first email that I received as an MSP in 2007 was from the late David McLetchie and it related to a cross-party group on golf. There is a long tradition of sporting cross-party groups in the Parliament.

I am interested in the involvement of the School of Hard Knocks in the proposed cross-party group, as I have seen at first hand in my Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn constituency how it has worked with local partners to get not only young people but various sections of society that otherwise would not think about rugby as a sport for them to use it as a way of team building, team bonding, learning skills and even signposting to college for further education opportunities.

If the proposed cross-party group were to receive recognition and do any work in relation to deprived communities and vulnerable groups, I think that a wider range of MSPs would be interested in following that, even if they were not formal members of the group, because the School of Hard Knocks has a strong reputation.

**Douglas Lumsden:** I absolutely agree, and I am delighted to have it on board. As I have said, the group's key intention is to get more people involved in rugby. The School of Hard Knocks is probably using rugby as a medium to engage more with different people who might not think about rugby in that way and to improve their lives and outcomes.

I also mentioned clan rugby, which I was not aware of before I became a member of Parliament. It tries to engage with people with disabilities—whether that is a physical disability or a learning disability—in an effort to get them involved in clubs and mixing with people without

disabilities. There is a camaraderie, and its work has been key in that respect.

If the cross-party group can engage a lot more with the School of Hard Knocks and engage on the clan rugby side to get everyone working together in order to improve outcomes, that would be good.

**Collette Stevenson:** Good morning. You touched on inclusivity. I looked at the list of members of the proposed group and noted that they are all males. What are you doing with fellow members on that list to attract female members to the group to improve its inclusivity?

**Douglas Lumsden:** You are right. That occurred to me when I put in the application. I am happy to report that I have recruited another member to the proposed CPG. Jackie Dunbar has agreed to join us—I managed to rope her in. I am aware of the issue that you raise.

On the issue of wider involvement, in our initial meeting prior to the formalisation of the group, there were suggestions about whether we could try to get women's rugby clubs involved. That issue will be addressed.

**Sue Webber (Lothian) (Con) (Committee Substitute):** To pick up on the gender issue, I am more of a hockey player, which probably distracts me a little from joining the group. However, I am very aware of the benefits of team sport and of how that can be a great leveller in tackling inequalities. I have a lot of connections, even with rugby clubs in Edinburgh. Currie Chieftains have a great women's set-up, and I know that women's rugby in the city is thriving. Spartans, too—

**Douglas Lumsden:** That is good to hear. Maybe I have a new member already.

**Sue Webber:** I will dip in and out.

**The Convener:** Be careful who you poach.

The School of Hard Knocks, which has rightly been spoken of very favourably, and the Scottish Rugby Union are the two organisations that are named. I assume that you will look to other organisations for input. I was thinking particularly about the club level.

**Douglas Lumsden:** Yes. We spoke about that, as well. It is not all about the international game; it is also about the grass roots. We are talking to local clubs as well, to get them involved.

**The Convener:** That is very helpful.

Thank you for attending the meeting. The committee will consider whether to approve the application for recognition under the next agenda item. The clerks will be in touch after that to inform you of our decision.

We will now have a short suspension for a changeover of witnesses.

09:44

*Meeting suspended.*

09:45

*On resuming—*

**The Convener:** The next group that we will consider is the proposed CPG on sustainable transport. I welcome Graham Simpson, the proposed convener, to the meeting. You are here in person, so we will not face the information technology problems that we had last time. Will you explain the intentions of the group again?

**Graham Simpson (Central Scotland) (Con):** I thought that it would be much safer to turn up in person than to rely on technology. For the new member of the committee, I note that, two weeks ago, I tried to make my pitch but my parliamentary Surface device decided to turn itself off as I was in mid-flow and about to get into the meat of the issue.

I will go over some old ground. In the previous parliamentary session, two cross-party groups covered work related to that of the proposed CPG on sustainable transport. There was a CPG on cycling, walking and buses, of which I was co-convener, and a separate CPG on rail, of which John Mason was co-convener.

In the previous session, a number of us who were involved in the two groups got together and thought that it might make sense to merge them into one group in the next session. Those talks have continued, and we decided that it made far more sense to have just one group.

As you will be aware, convener, part of the reason behind that is the problem—which we will probably face as we go through this parliamentary session—of MSPs attending CPGs. There is a rush of enthusiasm at the start, then numbers start to tail off. Perhaps that is an issue that the committee could monitor. That situation is not fair on the groups that turn up, particularly if it is an in-person meeting.

I turn to what the proposed CPG would intend to do. In the past, CPGs have tended to become talking shops, where people who agree with each other speak to one another. They go away and everybody is happy but then nothing happens. To make it worth while, a CPG should actually do something—it should do some work, do research and produce reports. I want to be involved in the CPG on sustainable transport because everyone who is involved in it agrees with that.



We have a programme for the first year. If the establishment of the CPG is approved, the first piece of work would be to look at traffic reduction policy. Last week, the Scottish Government produced a paper spelling out how it would like to see car miles reduced over the next few years. We would drill down into that.

If our establishment is given approval this morning, the CPG will meet at lunchtime and we will have a presentation from Scottish Government officials and someone from Transport Scotland, to get that ball rolling. We would probably like to meet every month. We have quite a programme of work. We would seek to produce reports with recommendations.

We would look at traffic demand management and at how to get the modal shift so that people walk, cycle and use public transport more. I know that there is at least one committee member who has strong views on that. That issue is really important.

Whatever you think of cars, getting people more active is a positive thing. That is what the group will consider. It will also look at public transport. It is vital that we consider ways to help public transport to build back better, if I can borrow a phrase, and get more people on to buses and trains. The CPG will not be a talking shop; it will be a working group.

I am happy to take any questions.

**Sue Webber:** Graham, you have perhaps portrayed me as some anti-sustainable transport guru and I am not. I am very much a believer in making public transport accessible to all. That is where my challenge comes from.

In relation to the active travel agenda, I am passionate about eco-ableism and have grave concerns that many active travel policies discriminate against disabled people and people with mobility issues. As you will know if you watched my committee contributions on Tuesday, I also have concerns about sweeping statements about going from walking to wheeling. There is a lot in the range of mobility from walking to wheeling.

Are you involving groups in the CPG that will help the voices of people with mobility issues to be heard? Will people who are disabled, are blind or have hearing and mobility impairments be represented on the CPG? Without their voices, it does not matter what reports are presented, you will create more inequalities in society.

**Graham Simpson:** You are absolutely right. We need to cover all sectors of society, including people who are disabled, elderly people and young people. I am looking at the extensive list of organisations that we have, which is our initial

group of members—more have wanted to join since that list was compiled—and I do not see any disability-specific groups.

**The Convener:** You have Midlothian Disability Access Panel, which is phenomenal.

**Graham Simpson:** That is encouraging. There are also groups in the list that speak up for disabled people even if they are not specifically disability groups.

**Sue Webber:** I am concerned that the voice of cycling will be overrepresented and I want to ensure that there is balance. I have had, and continue to have, that challenge in Edinburgh, where 40km of cycle lanes have created 40km of road space that people with disabled badges can no longer access. I will be gravely concerned if the CPG's membership does not reflect a more balanced view and include people with mobility issues.

**Graham Simpson:** If you look at the membership list, which you should have in front of you, you will see that the CPG is not just about cycling. As you know, Ms Webber, I am a cyclist but I am not a man in Lycra. I cannot achieve any great speed and cause alarm while I am cycling about.

The name of the CPG is sustainable transport, not cycling. We cover ferries, trains, buses, walking and cycling. It is not just about cycling.

**The Convener:** One of your first submissions was about bringing together two former CPGs to create a full and wide voice. I will now presume rather than assume that the list of organisations is not finite and that other groups, organisations and voices that need to be heard will find favour and be listened to when the CPG produces a report.

There are a number of questions from the committee, you will be glad to know, Graham.

**Graham Simpson:** Good.

**The Convener:** I will pass over to Collette Stevenson.

**Collette Stevenson:** I welcome the establishment of the CPG. Having previously worked in outdoor education, I completely understand the benefits that come from outdoor education, in particular. As a fellow East Kilbridian, I also understand the benefits of some of the cycle routes that we have in East Kilbride. I am all for promoting those.

Sue Webber has already touched on this, but, looking at the list of members, I wonder whether the group's membership should also include the voice of a young person. I know, from speaking to my daughter, the young people with whom I worked and some of the children's homes that got involved in outdoor education, that more young

people should have a voice, particularly with regard to cycling but also on transport links and what not. Would you consider having a young person on the cross-party group?

**Graham Simpson:** Yes. That is a really good idea. One of the challenges that I found, particularly when I was a councillor, was that kids used to take their bicycles to primary school but, when they got a bit older, that became uncool. You might find lots of bikes outside primary schools, but you will not find any outside high schools.

As you were speaking, it occurred to me that it might be an idea for the cross-party group to reach out to the Scottish Youth Parliament and see whether it wants to get involved. I do not know whether it is involved in any groups, but the idea just occurred to me.

If the group were to get the go-ahead, I would invite Collette Stevenson to become involved, too. I had not realised that she had outdoor education experience—she would be a very useful voice.

**The Convener:** A number of potential CPGs have been trying to poach members this morning.

I believe that Tess White has a question.

**Tess White (North East Scotland) (Con):** I, too, welcome this CPG, but I have a question about the rural areas versus cities issue. I realise that you cannot focus on everything, but a lot of people in rural areas have issues, too. For example, they might not have a car or buses might be infrequent. You could, of course, just focus on cities. Are we talking about a 70:30 or 50:50 split, or is the focus 100 per cent on cities?

**Graham Simpson:** No, it is not 100 per cent on cities. When I was on the cycling, walking and buses cross-party group in the previous session, I found it to be quite Edinburgh-centric, and I am keen for that not to be the case with this group. I am very alive to the issue. As with all of the groups, this is a cross-party group for the whole of Scotland, not just urban Scotland. There are, as you well know, specific issues in rural areas, particularly around public transport.

**Tess White:** So, will the split be 50:50 or 70:30?

**Graham Simpson:** I do not want to put a figure on it. We are looking at issues in general, which means that, when we produce a report, it will reflect the whole country.

**Bob Doris:** Following some of the exchanges, I have been inspired to ask a question. I was taken by the inclusivity of your approach to the cross-party group in response to members who want other voices to be represented. You have made it clear that your door is always open, be it to other

third-party groups or MSPs, and I commend you for that.

I also commend you for trying to be more efficient, and you have made some pretty important points about streamlining the approach to cross-party groups. I am not involved in it, but I know that there is a cross-party group on disability, and I have been looking at the list of non-MSP members on it. Given some of the considerations that have been floated—they are not concerns as such—it might be worth your while to keep that cross-party group aware of your work. I am not saying that it will necessarily want to work on the same issues, but it has a pretty strong network of groups through which it could disseminate information on the work of your own group. It is just a suggestion, Mr Simpson.

**Graham Simpson:** That is a really good idea. Actually, as Jamie Halcro Johnston said earlier in the meeting, cross-party groups can work together, which has happened in the past. There is a big opportunity in that respect.

My door is always open to you, Mr Doris, and to any other member who wishes to pop in.

**Bob Doris:** Put the kettle on then, Mr Simpson.

**The Convener:** I thank Mr Doris and Mr Simpson for that. If the cross-party nature of the committee could be reflected in the cross-party group that you seek to form, Mr Simpson, it would be very beneficial.

Thank you for attending this morning. The committee will consider approval of the application at agenda item 3, and the clerks will be in touch with you after that.

There will now be a short suspension as we change over witnesses.

10:00

*Meeting suspended.*

10:00

*On resuming—*

**The Convener:** The final group to consider is the proposed CPG on sustainable uplands management. I welcome back Paul McLennan MSP—with a slightly different hat on—who is the co-convener of the proposed group. Good morning, Paul. Would you like to make a statement about the group's purpose?

**Paul McLennan (East Lothian) (SNP):** Thank you. It is good to be back at the committee, although in another guise. To give a bit of background, East Lothian is a rural constituency. In my first few months as an MSP, I was touring some of its areas and there are about seven

grouse moors, for example. When I was speaking to some of the landowners and other groups about that, it became clear that there was a need for the CPG because there are different views.

The purpose of the group is to try to bring together those different views. A lot of legislation is going on in this sphere; topics to discuss include biodiversity, climate change issues, grouse moor management, deer management and the just transition. The purpose is to bring together those with different opinions to try to get a reasoned debate and inform legislation. That is the main idea behind the group and that is why quite a wide range of organisations—again, with differing opinions—will be involved as group members.

The intention is to bring people together. We looked at existing groups—there are CPGs on rural policy, crofting, animal welfare and other areas, as we mention in the application form. There might be an opportunity to work with some of those groups as we develop our work programme, but we believe that there is a specific need for a group on sustainable upland management.

The CPG will bring together groups that have different opinions to try to get a reasoned discussion. It has been a very emotive issue over a number of months and years, so the purpose is to see whether we can get some mutual co-operation and mutual understanding around the issues that are out there. That is the reasoning behind the CPG.

**The Convener:** Thank you. Do committee members have any questions?

**Sue Webber:** Let me know whether this is in scope—I am not sure whether it is. I have a half-urban and half-rural constituency in that it includes the Pentland hills, so I get a lot of questions about the balance between the right to access and the right to roam and the need to do those things in a responsible way. Just out of curiosity, is that something that your proposed group might consider?

**Paul McLennan:** We have had initial discussions on the issues around the right to roam and the right to access. Again, that is probably an example of the need to try to balance different opinions. I have similar issues in my own constituency and I know that there are issues in other constituencies. The matter has been discussed and part of it is about education and engagement with different groups and organisations. I am sure that it will be raised in the group meetings.

**Collette Stevenson:** I note from the name of the proposed CPG that the focus is on upland management. As the constituency MSP for East Kilbride, I have been looking at lowland deer

management. You touched on upland deer management, which involves a different type of deer. Every day is a school day at the moment. You learn something new. Has there been talk about sharing information on that? We have little in the way of lowland deer management in the central belt of Scotland. Are we isolating that? I do not want to be left out, Paul.

**Paul McLennan:** I get that point. We are talking about grouse management and deer management. Those are predominantly but not exclusively for uplands management. There is an opportunity to consider lowland management. It is a good point to raise. If the CPG is approved, we can say at the next meeting that there is an issue with lowland management and ask whether we can discuss it.

A lot of the groups that are involved in the CPG will also be involved in lowland management. We have tried to include as diverse a range of groups as possible in the CPG membership. It is a relevant point to address. How do we define “uplands”? Where do lowlands become uplands and vice versa?

I visited Schiehallion a few months ago. People there were talking about that issue and asking about where the border was between uplands and lowlands for deer management. That was a specific issue, but the overall point is relevant and I will take it to the next discussion that the group has.

How do we define uplands management? Where does it stop? Does it have to take place above a certain height? There is no clear definition of what it is, but, when something becomes uplands management, it goes into issues that can prove to be controversial. Raptor protection is a relevant one. I am sure that we have all had correspondence on that.

**The Convener:** I am sure that the deer are not concerned about whether we define an area as upland or lowland. They are just after food.

**Bob Doris:** With the convener’s indulgence, I will put on the public record some information that is not particularly pertinent to the cross-party group.

Paul McLennan, you mentioned raptor persecution. I am the species champion for the peregrine falcon. I note that it can often be an urban bird as well, because its habitats can include high-rise flats and industrial cranes. Therefore, all of Scotland is covered by parts of your work.

**Paul McLennan:** That is an important point. As you know, raptor protection is an emotive issue. How do we balance the management of a grouse moor with raptor protection? We have RSPB

Scotland involved in that matter. We are trying to get a balanced approach to it. There are two sides of that debate and the purpose of the group is to try to hear both sides of it, have an informed discussion and move forward together if we can. There will not always be agreement on all the issues, but it is important to try to discuss and debate them because there is a lot of legislation and a lot of things are happening in the sector. It affects all parts, urban or rural, so it affects most constituencies in Scotland.

**The Convener:** I can confirm that Scottish Land & Estates is providing the secretariat to cover the CPG. Indeed, Edward Mountain, who is a member of the committee, is one of the group's deputy conveners, but he cannot be with us today.

I will mention one other point for the record. This is in no way a criticism, but the "Code of Conduct for Members of The Scottish Parliament" requires all cross-party groups to provide 10 calendar days' notice of all meetings. That has to be notified to the standards clerks. However, I know that you, as a former member of the committee, are aware of that.

I thank you for attending. As you are aware, the committee will consider whether to approve the application for recognition under agenda item 3. The clerks will inform you of the committee's decision thereafter.

**Paul McLennan:** Thank you.

**The Convener:** Agenda item 3 is the approval of cross-party groups. Under this item, the committee will consider whether to accord recognition to the proposed cross-party groups for islands, rugby development in Scotland, sustainable transport and sustainable uplands management.

Do members have any questions or comments before I put the question?

**Sue Webber:** I have an issue with the CPG on sustainable transport. The "Highway Code" is changing this week to reinforce the point that pedestrians are top of the transport hierarchy, but they are poorly represented in the cross-party group. There are only two organisations that represent them, against nine for cyclists and 10 for the rail sector. There needs to be far more representation from pedestrians groups and those that represent people with mobility issues and disabilities. That is my grave concern.

**The Convener:** Thank you for that. As far as the technical side of the committee's consideration of cross-party groups is concerned, there is cross-party representation on the proposed CPG.

We had an interesting discussion with the proposed CPG's convener about what groups and individuals are represented on it and can feed into

it. Committee members' views about the people who should be listened to are on the record. The workload that the CPG proposes to do certainly seems to be strong. As Bob Doris suggested, it can reach out to other cross-party groups for input and evidence. I hope that, should we agree to recognise the group, it will take up that suggestion and all the suggestions that were made.

If no other members wish to comment, do we agree to accord recognition to the proposed cross-party groups on islands, rugby development in Scotland, sustainable transport and sustainable uplands management?

**Members indicated agreement.**

**The Convener:** I close the public part of the meeting.

10:11

*Meeting continued in private until 11:11.*

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