

ECONOMY AND FAIR WORK COMMITTEE

**5th Meeting, 2024 (Session 6), Wednesday
7 February 2024**

Post-legislative scrutiny of the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014

Note by the Clerk

Background

1. Under the [Procurement Reform \(Scotland\) Act 2014](#) (“the Act”), public bodies are required to consider how their procurement activities can be used to improve the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of their area and how they will facilitate the involvement of SMEs, third sector and supported businesses, and support innovation. The Act places some administrative requirements on higher spending public bodies to publish procurement strategies and annual procurement reports.
2. The legacy report of the previous session committee noted work in this area had started but was curtailed due to the pandemic. It drew attention to a summary of evidence it had gathered which could be used as a foundation for future work.
3. This Committee noted that procurement issues had come up in its work and agreed it would be useful to undertake post-legislative scrutiny of the Act. At its meeting on 21 June, a thematic approach was agreed and call for views was issued. At the meeting on 13 December, the Committee considered responses to the nine questions asked in the call for views and noted key emerging themes. The Committee then agreed the structure, themes and witnesses for the oral evidence sessions.

Inquiry Structure

4. The call for written views ran from 29 June to 3 October. Written responses [can be accessed online](#). The inquiry will be held over five sessions. Session 1 - the experience of businesses with procurement in Scotland. Session 2 – the third sector and social enterprise experience, week 3 – contracting authorities, week 4 – support for business and contracting authorities and week 5 – Scottish Government.

5. As discussed last week, the Committee also agreed to hold an online informal engagement event to hear directly from a local authority and suppliers to get a local snapshot of good practice. Arrangements will be taken forward and details shared in due course.

Today's Witnesses

6. This is the first evidence session. The Committee will hear from—
 - Joanne Davidson, Scottish Chambers of Commerce Network, Scottish Chambers of Commerce;
 - Stacey Dingwall, Head of Policy and External Affairs, Federation of Small Businesses Scotland;
 - Lindsey Millen, Head of Policy Development, Close the Gap; and
 - Colin Smith, Chief Executive, Scottish Wholesale Association.

**Economy and Fair Work Committee Clerks
February 2024**