

Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee

14th Meeting, 2023 (Session 6), Wednesday
4 October 2023

Public Participation Inquiry

(1) Topic selection for post-legislative scrutiny people's panel

Background

The Committee's recent report, *Embedding Public Participation in the Work of the Parliament*, recommended that "the Parliament [should] commit itself to further embedding deliberative democracy within its scrutiny function" (paragraph 49).

One of the recommendations in the report was to run two further people's panels between now and early/mid-2025, including one panel that would specifically focus on post-legislative scrutiny. The Committee agreed that it should have a role in relation to these pilots, which will help to inform a blueprint for deliberative democracy in Session 7.

At its meeting on 20 September, the Conveners Group endorsed a set of principles to guide the choice of topic for deliberative panels and agreed that officials should continue to explore proposed topics for a panel on post-legislative scrutiny and proceed with the one which has best fit with the principles and can realistically be delivered in February and March 2024.

The principles agreed by CG are:

Problem: The topic focuses on an issue that needs solved & would benefit from deliberative input. In the context of post-legislative scrutiny this means assessing if a review of the implementation and impact of an Act would benefit from consideration by a panel of informed and broadly representative members of the public.

Scope: The topic is sufficiently broad in scope; it is an issue that will affect various members of the public and have an impact on broader society

Framing: the topic can be posed as a question or in the form of a problem to solve. For example, is an Act achieving its intended purpose? Is it benefitting people in the way originally intended by lawmakers?

Timing: It is a timely topic - both the public and politicians are still in the process of forming opinions on the issue. In the context of post-legislative scrutiny, it would mean that the Act being scrutinised has the potential to be considered for amendment in the near future.

Impact: the topic is relevant to a current or forthcoming committee inquiry, committee members and staff see potential benefit from a deliberative panel and there is a commitment to considering and responding to the panel recommendations as part of the committee's inquiry

Evaluation of potential topics

The Participation and Communities Team (PACT) has worked with clerks and SPICe researchers to identify two potential topics for a deliberative event to take place in February/March 2024.

Recommendation

Based on its assessment, PACT recommends the delivery of a people's panel to support the Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee's post-legislative scrutiny of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009, Part 6 (91, 92, 93).

The Committee is invited to give a view today on whether it is content with this recommendation. The final decision will be taken by the Conveners Group at its meeting on 25 October.

(2) Chamber debate on Committee's report

The Committee has secured a slot for a debate in the Chamber on its report – which will take place in the afternoon of Thursday 26 October.

It is for the Convener to lodge a motion for the debate on behalf of the Committee, and a draft motion is included in the separate private paper for members' consideration.

Clerk to the Committee