

Update Note from SG Location Director for Highland: April 2018

1. Delivering new powers – Fair Start Scotland commences

We recently marked a major milestone in the devolution of new powers. Fair Start Scotland, our new fully devolved employment support service launches, delivering one of the first powers to be devolved under the 2016 Scotland Act and aiming to provide a minimum of 38,000 people access to personalised support to find and stay in work. The service reflects broader policy ambitions on Fair Work, Social Justice and Inclusive Growth – building these features into the design of the new service and ensuring that Scotland’s employment support offer is more flexible and responsive to the changing labour market, tackles labour market inequalities and grows Scotland’s economy by helping more people into work.

The recent launch of ‘No One Left Behind – Next Steps for the Integration and Alignment of Employability Support in Scotland’ outlines how we are working across policy areas including community justice, housing, and health to ensure that we have a collective basis upon which to build a platform for successful delivery of new devolved powers that will make a difference to people’s lives.

2. Scottish Crown Estate Bill

The Scottish Crown Estate Bill was introduced to the Scottish Parliament on 24 January 2018. The Bill disapplies the Crown Estate Act 1961 as regards Crown Estate Scotland (Interim Management) and the management of the property, rights and interests to which section 90B(5) of the Scotland Act 1998 applies. The Bill renames these the ‘Scottish Crown Estate’ and changes the name of CES(IM) to Crown Estate Scotland. The Bill provides for changes in the management of Scottish Crown Estate assets, including the duties of managers and charging for assets. There is also a national governance framework which applies to all managers.

The Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform committee is currently taking evidence on the Bill at Stage 1, with the Stage 1 Debate by the end of June with Stage 2 scheduled for September. The Bill and its accompanying documents can be found at <http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/Bills/107415.aspx>

3. Best Value Audits

Audit Scotland have announced that their current plans for Best Value Audits this coming year are for:

Fife Council – May 2018

West Dunbartonshire & East Ayrshire Councils – June 2018

Glasgow City Council – August 2018

East Lothian Council – October 2018

Dumfries & Galloway Council – November 2018

Best Value is about ensuring that there is good governance and effective management of resources, with a focus on improvement, to deliver the best possible outcomes for the public. The duty of Best Value applies to all public bodies in Scotland. In October 2016, Audit Scotland began a new approach to auditing best value in councils, increasing the focus on the pace and depth of improvement at each council.

4. Accounts Commission - members

Recent public body recruitment has taken place in order to recruit up to 4 new members of the Accounts Commission with the successful candidates to be announced in due course.

5. Fairer Scotland Duty

The Fairer Scotland duty came into force in Scotland from 1st April 2018. The duty, part 1 of the Equality Act 2010 formerly known as the 'socio-economic duty', places a legal duty on public bodies to consider how they can reduce inequalities of outcome when making strategic decisions.

Interim guidance will be issued shortly, dovetailed as far as possible with existing practice in other related areas. The guidance will cover a three year implementation period, during which we will look to share best practice across the public sector and learn lessons for updated versions of the guidance in due course. In addition, we will fund a new National Coordinator post at the Improvement Service to help public bodies to implement the duty successfully.

6. Islands (Scotland) Bill

The Islands (Scotland) Bill was introduced to the Scottish Parliament on 9 June 2017. Key provisions include: commitment to prepare and publish a National Islands Plan; Statutory duty to island-proof future public sector policies and legislation; Protection for the Na h Eileanan an Iar Scottish parliamentary constituency; Greater flexibility around Councillor representation of island communities to allow for 1 or 2 member wards; and extension of powers to island councils in relation to marine licencing to provide more local control and decision making.

The Scottish Parliament agreed the Bill's general principles at its Stage 1 Debate on 8 February with Stage 2 taking place on 21 and 28 March. The Bill and its accompanying documents can be found at <http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/Bills/105168.aspx>

7. Planning Bill

Planning (Scotland) Bill – current position:

- Local Government and Communities Committee are currently at stage 1. <http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/CurrentCommittees/107202.aspx>

- Stage 1 is expected to continue until the end of May 2018, with stage 2 in June and stage 3 in September.
- LGC Committee stakeholder evidence sessions on 28th February, 7th March and 14th March, with Kevin Stewart giving evidence on 21st March.
- Reports of further community and stakeholder events (5 February) are online
- LGC committee has also launched an online discussion forum on the Bill.
<https://scotparl.dialogue-app.com/planning-scotland-bill>

If you have a query on any of the above, or if you have information which you would like to share with my colleagues, please get in touch.

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