

Initial meeting of the Cross-Party Group on Social Science

Minutes

Date: Tuesday, 28 February 2017

Venue: Q1.04, Scottish Parliament

Agenda:

- 1) Name and Purpose of the Group
- 2) Election of Convenor
- 3) Election of Deputy Convenor
- 4) Election of Secretary
- 5) Other Office Bearers
- 6) Non MSP Members and Groups
- 7) Topics for discussion
- 8) Dates and regularity of future meetings
- 9) AOCB

Present: Jackie Baillie MSP, Daniel Johnson MSP (Chair), Richard Leonard MSP, Andy Wightman MSP, Nick Bibby (Campaign for Social Science)

Apologies: Alex Cole-Hamilton MSP

- 1) Name and Purpose of the Group

It was agreed that the group should be called the Cross party Group on Social Science and the following was agreed as a statement of the groups aims:

The Group will provide a forum to draw together social science research on policy topics of interest to MSPs. Doing so will further broaden the evidence base for debate of contemporary issues and the scrutiny of legislation. In addition it will help strengthen the relationships between parliamentarians and academics, encouraging interaction beyond those subjects specifically discussed by the group.

The public has an interest both in improving the evidence base available to policymakers but also in ensuring that publically-funded research is put to use for the public good.

The group will agree policy areas of particular interest at any given time and then identify, through the secretariat or other means, researchers currently investigating those issues. As a result it is quite likely that there will be overlap with other CPGs in terms of the content of discussion but that this Group will frequently take a different approach. As a result, joint meetings with other CPGs are not only anticipated but enthusiastically awaited.

Possible topics for discussion include homelessness, education, 'What is productivity', budgetary scrutiny, the impact of robots in the workplace on policymaking, detailed analysis of who actually makes up Scotland's workforce, what can domestic policymaking learn from the experience of international development, how can sustainable development goals be applied across the policymaking agenda, what would a rights-based approach to policymaking look like, the current health of social science in Scotland.

- 2) **Election of Convenor**

Daniel Johnson MSP was nominated by Jackie Baillie MSP and seconded by Andy Wightman MSP. There being no other nominations, **Mr Johnson was elected.**

3) **Election of Deputy Convenor**

Andy Wightman MSP was nominated by Richard Leonard MSP and seconded by Jackie Baillie MSP. There being no other nominations, **Mr Wightman was elected.**

4) **Election of Secretary**

Nick Bibby of the Campaign for Social Science was nominated by Jackie Baillie MSP and seconded by Richard Wightman MSP. There being no other nominations, **Mr Bibby was elected.**

5) **Election of Other Office Bearers**

The Group decided that there was no need for any other office bearers.

6) **Non-MSP Members of the Group**

The Group agreed to invite the following organisations as institutional members¹.

[Academy of Government](#) (Prof James Mitchell, University of Edinburgh),

[Centre for Remote and Rural Studies](#) (Dr Philomena de Lima, UHI)

[Centre for Science, Knowledge and Policy \(SKaPE\)](#) (Dr Sotiria Grek and Dr Katherine Smith, University of Edinburgh)

[Centre on Constitutional Change](#) (Prof Michael Keating & Prof Nicola McEwen, Universities of Aberdeen & Edinburgh)

[Fraser of Allander Institute](#) (Prof Graeme Roy, University of Strathclyde)

[Institute for Social Policy, Housing, Equalities Research](#) (Prof Suzanne Fitzpatrick, Heriot Watt University)

[International Public Policy Institute](#), (David Wilson, University of Strathclyde)

[MORI Scotland](#) (tbc)

[Policy Scotland](#) (Des McNulty, University of Glasgow)

[Public Services and Governance Research Group](#) (Dr Peter Matthews, University of Stirling)

[ScotCen](#) (Paul Bradshaw)

[RSE Young Academy of Scotland](#) (Prof Nasar Meer, University of Edinburgh)

¹ Those centres designated as (tbc) had not confirmed their involvement at the time of writing. Names given in brackets indicate the main contact for those centres that have confirmed.

[SRUC Rural Policy Centre](#) (Prof Sarah Skerratt, SRUC)

[What Works Scotland](#) (Dr Sarah Morton, University of Edinburgh)

No individual members were identified at this point.

7) **Topics for Discussion**

Possible topics for discussion include homelessness, education, 'What is productivity', budgetary scrutiny, the impact of robots in the workplace on policymaking, detailed analysis of who actually makes up Scotland's workforce, what can domestic policymaking learn from the experience of international development, how can sustainable development goals be applied across the policymaking agenda, what would a rights-based approach to policymaking look like, the current health of social science in Scotland.

Andy Wightman indicated that the Cross-Party Group on Housing may be interested in a joint meeting on homelessness.

Members also expressed their openness to receiving suggestions for topics from researchers.

8) **Dates and regularity of future meetings**

It was agreed that the group would meet quarterly, avoiding recesses and periods of purdah. It was suggested that the first viable date for a meeting was likely to be after the local elections on 4 May 2017. The secretary agreed to contact members with suggestions of topics, dates and speakers.

9) **AOCB**

The secretary informed members about the creation of the CfSS Scotland Committee.

The meeting closed at 18.00