

Stage 3 Proceedings: Community Empowerment (Scotland) Bill

Parliamentary Briefing 2015

The Carnegie UK Trust is an independent, charitable trust, which for 100 years has worked to improve the lives and wellbeing of people across the United Kingdom and Ireland. Find more information on our website www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk.

The Carnegie United Kingdom (UK) Trust welcomes the opportunity to provide a briefing for Stage 3 Proceedings of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Bill. We support the Bill and have been pleased to participate in the Reference Group which has helped to support its development. We have restricted our comments to **Part 1: National Outcomes**.

Our work on Scotland Performs and the National Performance Framework

The Carnegie UK Trust was set up in 1913 to improve the wellbeing of the people. Over the past 5 years we have taken an active role in research and practice evidence on wellbeing frameworks, of which the National Performance Framework is a leading example.

- [The Carnegie Round Table on Measuring Economic Performance and Social Progress in Scotland](#) (CUKT, 2011) was the first report to recommend that the National Performance Framework be subject to public engagement.
- [Shifting the Dial in Scotland](#) (CUKT, 2013) was based on international evidence on wellbeing frameworks and was the first report to recommend that it be placed on a statutory footing. It also reiterated the need for public engagement to be at the heart of the framework.
- We are represented on the cross-party Scotland Performs Roundtable, chaired by John Swinney MSP, Deputy First Minister, which has met four times since 2013. We have participated actively in the public engagement sub-group.
- We supported the Scottish Universities Insight Institute Wellbeing Programme which encouraged knowledge transfer on wellbeing from academic to policy environments.
- We recently completed the [Carnegie Roundtable on Measuring Wellbeing in Northern Ireland](#) (CUKT, 2015) and have been pleased to encourage sharing between the two jurisdictions on wellbeing. See our short video at www.vimeo.com/cukt.

National Outcomes

The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Bill will, if passed, place a duty on Scottish Ministers to determine and publish National Outcomes. The Carnegie UK Trust supports this legislation.

We have argued that the National Performance Framework should be placed on a legislative footing (CUKT, 2013). The Framework, and its supporting website, Scotland Performs are recognised as world leading by Professor Stiglitz. The proposed legislation would take the National Performance Framework to the next step, moving from performance management of public services to a firmer focus on outcomes achieved for citizens and communities.

The National Outcomes, and the performance framework underneath them, are a wellbeing framework of the type endorsed by the OECD (see, for example, *Hows Life*, OECD 2013 and *Hows Life in Your Region?* OECD, 2014). They provide a clear and accessible method of holding the Scottish Government to account and understanding how Scotland is progressing.

Research by Carnegie UK Trust and others has concluded that a wellbeing frameworks such as the National Outcomes can:

- provide an overarching narrative for what governments are aiming to achieve linked to programmes for government that put these ambitions into action.
- hold governments to account by providing up to date and clear information on social progress.
- balance economic and non-economic aspects of society and ensure that inequalities are tackled.
- balance objective indicators with perception and subjective data to give a holistic view of social progress, with a strong focus on how it is experienced by the public.
- improve the quality of evidence on which policy is based.

- break down silos, support a shift to prevention and refocus on outcomes at local as well as national level.

Meaningful consultation

CUKT has repeatedly argued for the importance of community engagement in the setting of the National Performance Framework and we are currently trialling a number of approaches. This is essential because community engagement is both a means and an end to greater wellbeing – it is a means because it helps us understand what wellbeing is to the people of Scotland and an end because civic engagement itself is known to impact positively on wellbeing.

Without community engagement there is a risk that the selection of National Outcomes will be seen as a technocratic issue, focused on what measures are currently available, rather than a democratic issue of what measures should we be collecting to understand social progress.

We are therefore pleased that the Community Empowerment Bill includes requirements to consult with the people of Scotland. At Stage 2 there were two separate mechanism for consultation introduced. It is unclear whether these can work together and so understandably both Government and non-Government amendments have been proposed at Stage 3, each seeking to remove the mechanism introduced by the other:

- Amendments by Marco Biagi MSP, Minister for Local Government & Community Empowerment, **remove** a two-stage parliamentary process whereby the National Outcomes are laid before parliament for 60 days and concurrently subject to public engagement followed by a further 40 days for Parliamentary approval. A separate 40 day consultation period **would remain** in the Bill if these amendments were accepted. If passed, these amendments would require consultation with ‘communities of interest, identity and

geography' prior to laying the National Outcomes before the Scottish Parliament. A report of that consultation must accompany the National Outcomes. This process applies to both the setting and reviewing of national outcomes.

- Amendments by Alex Rowley MSP **remove** a 40 day consultation period with the Parliament the two-stage parliamentary process described above **would remain** (60 days concurrent with community engagement followed by 40 days for Parliamentary approval). They also change the list of consultees and the definition of 'community'.

We have considered this issue in-depth. We have argued for greater public engagement in the National Performance Framework since the 2011 publication of the Carnegie Round Table on Measuring Economic Performance and Social Progress in Scotland. On balance, CUKT supports the Scottish Government amendments proposed by Marco Biagi MSP. This is for two reasons:

1. We are concerned that the list of consultees on the face of the Bill is unnecessarily restrictive and could exclude groups of society as a consequence of them not being considered 'normally resident in a local authority area'. The Stage 3 amendment proposed by Marco Biagi MSP defines community as based on 'common interest, identity or geography' which we believe provides welcome clarity and a clear focus on communities without being overly restrictive.
2. We are concerned that the Stage 2 amendments introduced a potentially bureaucratic process, comprising 100 parliamentary sitting days and would tie the public consultation to the 60 parliamentary sitting days for the first phase. We have encouraged the Scottish Government to consider community engagement of the style carried out during the Welsh national

conversation [The Wales We Want](#) (itself mirrored on the UN "World We Want" process). This process was designed to be as inclusive as possible, based on community conversations and crucially intended to take place where people already meet rather than traditional methods of focus groups or written consultation responses. This flexible approach led the Welsh Government to engage directly with almost 7000 people. Our ambitions for Scotland are that we exceed the engagement carried out in Wales.

We welcome the Scottish Government amendment by Marco Biagi MSP, Minister for Local Government & Community Empowerment, that requires Scottish Ministers to lay a document before Parliament describing the consultation process on the National Outcomes; any representations received in response to that consultation; and where revisions are proposed to the National Outcomes, whether and if so how these representations have been taken into account. We believe that this will hold Scottish Ministers to account for the quality of the consultation and allow it to evolve as best practice on public engagement develops, without restricting the timetable or process.

Reporting

We support Marco Biagi MSPs amendments to Section 3 and 3A which would remove the requirement to report every 2 years on the National Outcomes. We are concerned that the 2 year timescale would unintentionally limit the potential for Scotland Performs to deliver 'real time' updates on progress towards the National Outcomes (measured currently through 61 indicators available on the Scotland Performs website). The real time publication of data allows it to be used by policy makers and others immediately.

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