Thank you for your letter, dated 15 September, regarding the Committee’s inquiry into reform of parliamentary business.

The Parliamentary Bureau discussed the letter at its meeting on 27 September 2011. The Bureau is generally supportive of the move to reform parliamentary business and supports the Committee in its considerations. Members of the Bureau noted your intention to invite Business Managers of the parties in the Parliament to give oral evidence to the Committee in November. The Bureau agreed that it was important to allow uninhibited debate within the parties to inform this evidence session, and, on that basis, the Bureau agreed that it did not wish to form an early opinion on the detail of the issues raised in your letter.

You raised in particular the timing of Bureau meetings, should the Committee recommend and the Parliament agree to a change in the current pattern of parliamentary sittings. Bureau Members considered various options but were agreed unanimously that the Bureau would, wherever necessary, alter its procedures and practices including meeting times to respond to the will of the Parliament in this regard. It was felt, as a consequence, that it was proper for the Bureau to await developments with the inquiry before reaching final decisions on these matters. In the meantime, Parliamentary officials will begin a dialogue with Members of the Bureau to gather views and opinions on adjustments that will be required to Bureau practices. This information will allow the Bureau to respond quickly to any proposed changes in due course.

I therefore welcome your intention to keep the Bureau informed of the progress of the Committee’s inquiry and look forward to hearing the Committee’s emerging thinking.

TRICIA MARWICK MSP
PRESIDING OFFICER
6 OCTOBER 2011