Parliamentary Bureau – Committee request to meet at the same time as the parliament

Education, Children and Young People Committee

Introduction

1. The Parliamentary Bureau is invited to consider a request from the Education, Children and Young People Committee to meet at the same time as plenary proceedings on Tuesday 13 May and Tuesday 20 May, from approximately 1.30pm until 5pm each day (depending on Decision Time).

2. The purpose of this meeting is to take oral evidence from the former senior leadership team at the University of Dundee, alongside the current University Secretary and Chief Operating Officer.

Background to Request

3. The Committee has an ongoing interest in the University of Dundee's current financial crisis. It has previously taken evidence from the Interim Principal and members of the existing senior leadership team. The Committee has also heard evidence from the Scottish Funding Council.

4. The University of Dundee is currently facing extensive job losses, as a result of an unexpected £35 million shortfall in its budget.

5. A recovery plan for the University is being developed and an independent inquiry into the circumstances leading up to the £35 million shortfall is underway. It is anticipated that the Committee's scrutiny of these issues will potentially provide valuable additional evidence in relation to this work.

6. The Committee had previously invited these witnesses to appear before the Committee in early April, however, only one person was able to attend at that time. The Committee subsequently agreed to reschedule the session/s and to seek permission from the Bureau to meet at the same time as plenary proceedings.

7. The Committee currently has an exceptionally busy legislative programme, which means that the Committee meetings throughout late April and the whole of May are taken up with Stage 2 proceedings for the Education (Scotland) Bill and Stage 1 proceedings for the Tertiary Education and Training (Funding and Governance) (Scotland) Bill.

8. A number of additional evening meetings are also being planned as a contingency for Stage 2 of the Education (Scotland) Bill. As a result of this, there is very limited scope for the Committee to organise additional meetings in the morning, hence the request to meet at the same time as plenary proceedings.

Timings proposed for meeting

9. In terms of Chamber business, whilst the Committee recognises this is still to be confirmed, the timings above would potentially mean that the Committee is seeking approval to meet during Topical Questions.

Decision

10. The Bureau is invited to consider the Education, Children and Young People Committee's request and to recommend to the Parliament that the Committee be given permission to meet at the same time as the Chamber between approximately 1.30pm and 5pm on Tuesday 13 May and Tuesday 20 May 2025.

Committee clerking team
April 2025

Social Justice and Social Security Committee

Introduction

1. The Parliamentary Bureau is invited to consider a request from the Social Justice and Social Security Committee to meet at the same time as plenary proceedings on either Tuesday 29 April or Wednesday 30 April 2025, between 2 pm and 5 pm (it should be possible to indicate at the Bureau meeting which of these days is preferred by the SJSSC).

Background to request

2. The Housing (Scotland) Bill has been referred for Stage 2 to both the Social Justice and Social Security Committee (to consider Part 5 and sections 48-50 in Part 6) and to the Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee (to consider the rest of the Bill).

3. The plan was for the Social Justice and Social Security Committee to complete its Stage 2 consideration first, at meetings on 20 and 27 March and (if needed) 3 April, and for Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee to begin its Stage 2 consideration on 22 April.

4. Unfortunately, the Social Justice and Social Security Committee has not made as much progress as hoped. This is partly because of a higher than expected number of amendments, and partly due to the unanticipated suspension of the Committee on 27 March and the postponement of Stage 2 proceedings on 3 April due to the Minister being unexpectedly taken ill shortly beforehand.

5. As things currently stand, the Committee has spent just over 3 hours at Stage 2 and has disposed of 30 amendments out of 95. Perhaps more relevant in terms of timing, it has completed debates on 6 groups (and started a 7th debate) out of 14 groups in total.

6. At the Committee's next meeting on 24 April, up to 2.5 hours are available for Stage 2 in the normal meeting slot, and the Committee can also meet for up to an hour while the Chamber is suspended (between roughly 1.30 pm and 2.30 pm) – a total of up to 3.5 hours. This may be enough to work through the remainder of the Marshalled List – but it is also possible that a further meeting at Stage 2 will be required.

7. Accordingly, the Committee proposes to schedule a provisional extra meeting in the afternoon of either Tuesday 29 April or Wednesday 30 April. The choice of day has not yet been finalised, pending confirmation of the Minister's availability and possibly also depending on the availability of Committee members. The start-time of the extra meeting (if required) would be finalised only on 24 April, once it is clear how many amendments remain to be disposed of. In any event, the meeting would be closed no later than 4.50 pm (on the Tuesday) or 5 pm (on the Wednesday) to allow Committee members to get to the Chamber ahead of Decision Time.

Current committee membership

8. The current membership of the committee is as follows:
   - Collette Stevenson (Convener)
   - Bob Doris (Deputy Convener)
   - Jeremy Balfour
   - Mark Griffin
   - Gordon Macdonald
   - Marie McNair
   - Paul O'Kane
   - Liz Smith

Other members affected

9. Other MSPs who may need to attend the Stage 2 proceedings (to move or speak to amendments) are as follows. Those in bold are the most likely to need to be there (as their amendments are near the end of the Marshalled List). Those not in bold have amendments earlier in the List, which are likely to be disposed of on 24 April:
   - Sarah Boyack
   - **Maggie Chapman**
   - Katy Clark
   - **Meghan Gallacher**
   - Jamie Halcro Johnston
   - **Rachael Hamilton**
   - **Roz McCall**
   - Graham Simpson
   - **Alexander Stewart**
   - Kevin Stewart

Decision

10. The Bureau is invited to recommend to the Parliament that the Social Justice and Social Security Committee be given permission to meet at the same time as the

Parliament in the afternoon of either Tuesday 29 or Wednesday 30 April to allow the Committee to complete Stage 2 consideration of the Housing (Scotland) Bill should this be required (with the meeting ending by either 16:50 on Tuesday 29 or 17:00 on Wednesday 30 April.)

Social Justice and Social Security Committee clerking team

April 2025