

Parliamentary Bureau – Pre-election Campaign Period

Introduction

1. The Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments (SPPA) Committee recently considered and [reported on the Scottish Parliament \(Elections etc.\) \(Miscellaneous Amendments\) Order 2025](#). The Order was considered and agreed by the Parliament on 30 October.

Dissolution and Campaign Period

2. At its meeting on 9 September, the Bureau considered the implications of the Order for the upcoming dissolution and pre-election campaign period.
3. In brief, the Order amends the “minimum period” for determining the start of dissolution, reducing the dissolution period of the Scottish Parliament before a general election from 28 days to 20 days and making consequential changes to the dissolution date.
4. This paper invites the Bureau to consider a pre-election recess period from 26 March to 8 April 2025 inclusive, which will also form part of the campaign period. The purpose of this is to replicate the usual six-week dissolution period as far as possible for the 2026 election and to ensure that all candidates are on an equal footing. The expectation is that the Parliament will go into a pre-election recess during which no parliamentary business will take place unless Parliament is recalled. That includes the lodging of questions and motions. As with 2021, MSPs will retain their status as MSPs during the pre-election campaign period up to the date of dissolution on 9 April 2026.
5. It is expected that the SPCB will issue its Elections Guidance following the agreement by Parliament of these Motions.

Recommendation

6. Business Managers are invited to lodge the following motions setting the recess dates for the pre-election campaign period and detailing to the office of the clerk, committee meetings and written questions:

Motion on Recess Dates

That the Parliament agrees, for the purposes of the pre-election campaign period from 26 March to 8 April 2026 (inclusive), the following parliamentary recess dates under Rule 2.3.1: 26 March to 8 April 2026 (inclusive).

Motion on Campaign Recess

That the Parliament agrees—

(a) for the purpose of the pre-election campaign period from 26 March to 8 April 2026 (inclusive), that the office of the clerk be closed from 26 March to 8 April 2026 (inclusive);

(b) in respect of meetings of committees and sub-committees during the pre-election campaign period, that, in rule 12.3.3, the word “normally” in the second sentence be suspended; and

(c) for the purpose of the lodging of written questions immediately prior to the pre-election campaign period, that rule 13.3.4A be suspended and replaced with—

“The last day on which written questions may be lodged in the current session is Thursday 12 March 2026.”

Parliamentary Business Team
October 2025