



The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

## **The Presiding Officer**

Martin Whitfield MSP  
Convener  
Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee

By email

28 June 2024

Dear Convener

Thank you for your letter of 12 June. I am grateful for the update on the Committee's consideration of the recommendations from the 'A Parliament for All' report that were referred to it.

The recommendations relating to gender balance on committees and other parliamentary bodies seek to embed more equal representation across the Parliament's structures through formal rule change. The recommendations were informed by the research and findings of the gender sensitive audit, and guided by international best practice. The Committee's role in considering how the Parliament can address these recommendations is important in setting a baseline expectation for equal participation.

While the cross-party advisory group is working to ensure that the recommendations contained in the report can be implemented, it recognises that some recommendations provide for more than one potential solution. I was interested to read the modelling work commissioned from SPICe about the possible effects of different committee configurations. The recommendations provide for the Committee to consider the most appropriate approach to any new rules, and the report recognised that there are practical issues that will need to be considered.

I would be happy to meet the Committee informally to discuss how best to make progress on these recommendations in a way that embeds measures for more equal participation in the Parliament's rules. I am sure that we can find solutions that will work and that can avoid unintended consequences, such as unequal workloads for certain Members.

I will ask my office to liaise with the Committee's clerk to arrange a suitable date, and will consider whether it would be helpful for any other members of the advisory group and officials to join me.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Alison Johnstone". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped 'A' and a trailing flourish at the end.

**Rt Hon Alison Johnstone MSP**  
Presiding Officer