

Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee – Review of Cross-Party Group Rules (November 2025)

Individual responses

Response 2

Re-establishment of CPGs

Q1. Following an election, the Code allows CPGs that were recognised at the end of the previous session to re-register without, subject to certain criteria, requiring the approval of the SPPA Committee. Such re-registration currently requires to be completed within 90 days (not including any period of recess longer than 4 days) of the first meeting of the Parliament in the Session. This would mean that re-registrations could take place until around the end of October. The Committee considers that allowing a longer period for re-registration to take place would assist MSPs in being able to build a fuller picture of their commitments. The Committee proposes extending the deadline for re-registration to 120 calendar days. Do you support this proposal?

No. I do not think automatic re-registration is a good thing. I believe all CPGs should have to make the case for existing and be subject to questioning on the commitment of MSP members.

CPG membership and office bearers

Q2. At present there is no limit on the number of CPGs of which an MSP can be a member. The Committee is of the view that there should be a limit of 10 CPGs of which an MSP can be a member. Do you agree with this proposal?

No. I think this total should be tied to office-bearer roles. Total number of groups should reduce at a ratio of 2:1 for each office-bearer role.

Q3. Similarly, there is no limit on the number of CPGs of which an MSP can be an office-bearer. The Committee considers that there should be a maximum limit of 5 CPGs on which a member can be an office-bearer. Do you agree with this proposal?

Yes. This seems about right.

Q4. The Code requires that a CPG must have at least 5 MSP members, with at least one member from each party or group represented on the Parliamentary Bureau (a waiver can be applied to the cross-party element of this

requirement). It is natural in the lifecycle of a Session that a CPGs members may resign from CPGs. The Code does not currently provide any information about the deadline for any membership issues to be rectified, if necessary, following a resignation. The Committee proposes that a requirement be added to the Code that CPGs have 90 days from the date of a resignation to rectify any non-compliance in membership that may arise from that resignation. Do you support this change?

Yes

Q5. The Code sets out that election of office-bearers should take place at a CPG's initial meeting and at each annual general meeting. The guidance on the Code also makes clear that election of office-bearers can be carried out electronically outwith a CPG meeting. However, the Code does not provide a deadline for a CPG to rectify any compliance issues should any MSP officer-bearer resign from their position. The Committee proposes that a requirement is added to the Code that CPGs have 90 days from the date of a resignation to rectify any non-compliance in office-bearers that may arise from that resignation. Do you agree with this suggestion?

Yes

Operation of CPGs

Q6. CPGs are required to provide the Standards Clerks with notification of meetings at least 10 calendar days in advance. However, there is no requirement to notify cancellation of meetings. Do you think the Code should be changed to required notification of cancellation to be provided on or before the date of a meeting?

Yes. However, I think this whole system should be automated. Or that CPGs should be given access/responsability for updating their own meeting dates on an online calander.

Q7. CPGs are required to provide minutes of meetings but the Code does not currently set out a deadline for minutes to be provided. The Code does not currently set out what the minutes of meetings should contain other than in relation to attendance. The Committee is proposing to introduce a requirement for minutes to be submitted within 30 calendar days of the meeting taking place and to stipulate that minutes should include details of those present at the meeting and a brief summary of the issues discussed and actions agreed. Minutes that are substantially verbatim transcripts of a meeting or which are not in the required template would not be accepted. Do you agree with this proposal?

No. I am concerned about this as it does not allow CPGs to meet again and agree minutes which is in my view best practice. Perhaps draft minutes signed off by an MSP office-bearer would be more appropriate.

Compliance

Q8. To assist compliance, the Committee is proposing that there should be a maximum of three contacts for each Group – the Convener, the Secretary (where secretariat support is provided by an external organisation this must be a named individual within that organisation) and one other contact. Any changes to the contact point would require to be notified by the Convener. The Committee is also proposing that any documentation required under the terms of the Code (registration form, minutes and annual returns) must be submitted by the Convener from their own parliamentary email address. Do you agree with this proposal?

Yes

Q9. In light of the rates of non-compliance with the rules, the Committee is also proposing that the rules set out that recognition will automatically be withdrawn from CPGs that fail to fully meet the requirements of the Code for more than one year in a row. Do you support this proposal?

Yes: I do think there should be an appeal system to allow for exceptional circumstances

Q10. It has been suggested that there may be circumstances in which a Group may wish to request permission from the SPPA Committee to suspend its activities for a period of time, potentially up to a year, during a Session without recognition being withdrawn. Do you support this suggestion?

No: Think in these circumstances it is not unreasonable for a CPG to meet briefly every quarter and confirm with the wider membership that there is no business to discuss

Response 3

Re-establishment of CPGs

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Yes

CPG membership and office bearers

Q2. At present there is no limit on the number of CPGs of which an MSP can be a member. The Committee is of the view that there should be a limit of 10 CPGs of which an MSP can be a member. Do you agree with this proposal?

Yes. There must be a limit, as too much membership reduces roles to job titles. That said some CPGs have MSP members that never attend, i know of one where a MSP has never attended.

Q3. Similarly, there is no limit on the number of CPGs of which an MSP can be an office-bearer. The Committee considers that there should be a maximum limit of 5 CPGs on which a member can be an office-bearer. Do you agree with this proposal?

Yes

Q4. The Code requires that a CPG must have at least 5 MSP members, with at least one member from each party or group represented on the Parliamentary Bureau (a waiver can be applied to the cross-party element of this requirement). It is natural in the lifecycle of a Session that a CPGs members may resign from CPGs. The Code does not currently provide any information about the deadline for any membership issues to be rectified, if necessary, following a resignation. The Committee proposes that a requirement be added to the Code that CPGs have 90 days from the date of a resignation to rectify any non-compliance in membership that may arise from that resignation. Do you support this change?

Yes. But those members should actually attend. If a party joins then sends no-one then there should be a process to address this.

Q5. The Code sets out that election of office-bearers should take place at a CPG's initial meeting and at each annual general meeting. The guidance on the Code also makes clear that election of office-bearers can be carried out electronically outwith a CPG meeting. However, the Code does not provide a deadline for a CPG to rectify any compliance issues should any MSP officer-bearer resign from their position. The Committee proposes that a requirement is added to the Code that CPGs have 90 days from the date of a resignation to rectify any non-compliance in office-bearers that may arise from that resignation. Do you agree with this suggestion?

Yes

Operation of CPGs

Q6. CPGs are required to provide the Standards Clerks with notification of meetings at least 10 calendar days in advance. However, there is no requirement to notify cancellation of meetings. Do you think the Code should be changed to required notification of cancellation to be provided on or before the date of a meeting?

Yes

Q7. CPGs are required to provide minutes of meetings but the Code does not currently set out a deadline for minutes to be provided. The Code does not currently set out what the minutes of meetings should contain other than in relation to attendance. The Committee is proposing to introduce a requirement for minutes to be submitted within 30 calendar days of the meeting taking place and to stipulate that minutes should include details of those present at the meeting and a brief summary of the issues discussed and actions agreed. Minutes that are substantially verbatim transcripts of a meeting or which are not in the required template would not be accepted. Do you agree with this proposal?

Prefer to self-describe (please specify): High level bullet points and actions would suffice. The burden for this should fall on MSP offices, some disabled groups will not be able to do this and would be penalised doing this without assistance. It would be a bar to participation. There has to be an adjustment.

Compliance

Q8. To assist compliance, the Committee is proposing that there should be a maximum of three contacts for each Group – the Convener, the Secretary (where secretariat support is provided by an external organisation this must be a named individual within that organisation) and one other contact. Any changes to the contact point would require to be notified by the Convener. The Committee is also proposing that any documentation required under the terms of the Code (registration form, minutes and annual returns) must be submitted by the Convener from their own parliamentary email address. Do you agree with this proposal?

Yes

Q9. In light of the rates of non-compliance with the rules, the Committee is also proposing that the rules set out that recognition will automatically be withdrawn from CPGs that fail to fully meet the requirements of the Code for more than one year in a row. Do you support this proposal?

Prefer to self-describe (please specify): There should be a formal review with that group to examine issues.

Q10. It has been suggested that there may be circumstances in which a Group may wish to request permission from the SPPA Committee to suspend its activities for a period of time, potentially up to a year, during a Session without recognition being withdrawn. Do you support this suggestion?

No: Either it exists or it doesn't.

Response 4

Re-establishment of CPGs

Q1. Following an election, the Code allows CPGs that were recognised at the end of the previous session to re-register without, subject to certain criteria, requiring the approval of the SPPA Committee. Such re-registration currently requires to be completed within 90 days (not including any period of recess longer than 4 days) of the first meeting of the Parliament in the Session. This would mean that re-registrations could take place until around the end of October. The Committee considers that allowing a longer period for re-registration to take place would assist MSPs in being able to build a fuller picture of their commitments. The Committee proposes extending the deadline for re-registration to 120 calendar days. Do you support this proposal?

Yes

CPG membership and office bearers

Q2. At present there is no limit on the number of CPGs of which an MSP can be a member. The Committee is of the view that there should be a limit of 10 CPGs of which an MSP can be a member. Do you agree with this proposal?

Yes: Some members are on far too many and cannot actually attend or engage with them all. If there was a set number it would mean members could prioritise their workload and save them from themselves!

Q3. Similarly, there is no limit on the number of CPGs of which an MSP can be an office-bearer. The Committee considers that there should be a maximum limit of 5 CPGs on which a member can be an office-bearer. Do you agree with this proposal?

Yes: As above. Might mean CPG standards are carried out appropriately.

Q4. The Code requires that a CPG must have at least 5 MSP members, with at least one member from each party or group represented on the Parliamentary Bureau (a waiver can be applied to the cross-party element of this requirement). It is natural in the lifecycle of a Session that a CPGs members may resign from CPGs. The Code does not currently provide any information about the deadline for any membership issues to be rectified, if necessary, following a resignation. The Committee proposes that a requirement be added to the Code that CPGs have 90 days from the date of a resignation to rectify any non-compliance in membership that may arise from that resignation. Do you support this change?

Yes: Makes sense

Q5. The Code sets out that election of office-bearers should take place at a CPG's initial meeting and at each annual general meeting. The guidance on the Code also makes clear that election of office-bearers can be carried out electronically outwith a CPG meeting. However, the Code does not provide a deadline for a CPG to rectify any compliance issues should any MSP officer-bearer resign from their position. The Committee proposes that a requirement is added to the Code that CPGs have 90 days from the date of a resignation to

rectify any non-compliance in office-bearers that may arise from that resignation. Do you agree with this suggestion?

Yes

Operation of CPGs

Q6. CPGs are required to provide the Standards Clerks with notification of meetings at least 10 calendar days in advance. However, there is no requirement to notify cancellation of meetings. Do you think the Code should be changed to required notification of cancellation to be provided on or before the date of a meeting?

Yes: Good practice

Q7. CPGs are required to provide minutes of meetings but the Code does not currently set out a deadline for minutes to be provided. The Code does not currently set out what the minutes of meetings should contain other than in relation to attendance. The Committee is proposing to introduce a requirement for minutes to be submitted within 30 calendar days of the meeting taking place and to stipulate that minutes should include details of those present at the meeting and a brief summary of the issues discussed and actions agreed. Minutes that are substantially verbatim transcripts of a meeting or which are not in the required template would not be accepted. Do you agree with this proposal?

Yes

Compliance

Q8. To assist compliance, the Committee is proposing that there should be a maximum of three contacts for each Group – the Convener, the Secretary (where secretariat support is provided by an external organisation this must be a named individual within that organisation) and one other contact. Any changes to the contact point would require to be notified by the Convener. The Committee is also proposing that any documentation required under the terms of the Code (registration form, minutes and annual returns) must be submitted by the Convener from their own parliamentary email address. Do you agree with this proposal?

Yes

Q9. In light of the rates of non-compliance with the rules, the Committee is also proposing that the rules set out that recognition will automatically be withdrawn from CPGs that fail to fully meet the requirements of the Code for more than one year in a row. Do you support this proposal?

Yes

Q10. It has been suggested that there may be circumstances in which a Group may wish to request permission from the SPPA Committee to suspend its activities for a period of time, potentially up to a year, during a Session without recognition being withdrawn. Do you support this suggestion?

Yes

Response 5

Re-establishment of CPGs

Q1. Following an election, the Code allows CPGs that were recognised at the end of the previous session to re-register without, subject to certain criteria, requiring the approval of the SPPA Committee. Such re-registration currently requires to be completed within 90 days (not including any period of recess longer than 4 days) of the first meeting of the Parliament in the Session. This would mean that re-registrations could take place until around the end of October. The Committee considers that allowing a longer period for re-registration to take place would assist MSPs in being able to build a fuller picture of their commitments. The Committee proposes extending the deadline for re-registration to 120 calendar days. Do you support this proposal?

Yes: Particularly for new members the extra time will better allow them to judge what their commitment to CPG's might be.

CPG membership and office bearers

Q2. At present there is no limit on the number of CPGs of which an MSP can be a member. The Committee is of the view that there should be a limit of 10 CPGs of which an MSP can be a member. Do you agree with this proposal?

No: I believe it should be up to the member to decide how many CPG's they wish to commit to. Such a limit would leave far too many CPG's at risk due to scarcity of members. While there are far too many CPG's this is not the way to reduce them.

Q3. Similarly, there is no limit on the number of CPGs of which an MSP can be an office-bearer. The Committee considers that there should be a maximum limit of 5 CPGs on which a member can be an office-bearer. Do you agree with this proposal?

No: Again I believe it is up to the member to determine what their commitment might be. I currently convene 5 CPG's. At that it is a substantial commitment time-wise. But it is my decision how to allocate my time.

Q4. The Code requires that a CPG must have at least 5 MSP members, with at least one member from each party or group represented on the Parliamentary Bureau (a waiver can be applied to the cross-party element of this requirement). It is natural in the lifecycle of a Session that a CPGs members may resign from CPGs. The Code does not currently provide any information about the deadline for any membership issues to be rectified, if necessary, following a resignation. The Committee proposes that a requirement be added

to the Code that CPGs have 90 days from the date of a resignation to rectify any non-compliance in membership that may arise from that resignation. Do you support this change?

Yes: However, reality is that there is a shortage of available MSP's for CPG's. It can be incredibly difficult to secure replacements due to MSP's bring committed to other CPG's. It would be embarrassing for a major CPG to be left without representation. Representation will be doubly difficult if MSP's are limited to 5 office bearer posts and have no capacity to extend even if they wish to.

Q5. The Code sets out that election of office-bearers should take place at a CPG's initial meeting and at each annual general meeting. The guidance on the Code also makes clear that election of office-bearers can be carried out electronically outwith a CPG meeting. However, the Code does not provide a deadline for a CPG to rectify any compliance issues should any MSP officer-bearer resign from their position. The Committee proposes that a requirement is added to the Code that CPGs have 90 days from the date of a resignation to rectify any non-compliance in office-bearers that may arise from that resignation. Do you agree with this suggestion?

No: In reality this would only arise if the Convenor resigned. Vice convenors are varied and there is often no need to replace a Vice convenor who steps down. This would be even more difficult if MSP's are restricted in the number of posts they can assume. The likelihood would be high that all alternative MSP's would already be committed and the post unable to be filled.

Operation of CPGs

Q6. CPGs are required to provide the Standards Clerks with notification of meetings at least 10 calendar days in advance. However, there is no requirement to notify cancellation of meetings. Do you think the Code should be changed to required notification of cancellation to be provided on or before the date of a meeting?

Yes: It just makes sense

Q7. CPGs are required to provide minutes of meetings but the Code does not currently set out a deadline for minutes to be provided. The Code does not currently set out what the minutes of meetings should contain other than in relation to attendance. The Committee is proposing to introduce a requirement for minutes to be submitted within 30 calendar days of the meeting taking place and to stipulate that minutes should include details of those present at the meeting and a brief summary of the issues discussed and actions agreed. Minutes that are substantially verbatim transcripts of a meeting or which are not in the required template would not be accepted. Do you agree with this proposal?

No: This could result in extra work for CPG's who might have to provide a "light" version of minutes for Standards and a more detailed one for it's own members use. Surely the purpose of this is to ensure that proper minutes of the meeting are being

taken and, providing the content is sufficient, the version produced by the CPG should be adequate for Standards without resorting to duplication.

Compliance

Q8. To assist compliance, the Committee is proposing that there should be a maximum of three contacts for each Group – the Convener, the Secretary (where secretariat support is provided by an external organisation this must be a named individual within that organisation) and one other contact. Any changes to the contact point would require to be notified by the Convener. The Committee is also proposing that any documentation required under the terms of the Code (registration form, minutes and annual returns) must be submitted by the Convener from their own parliamentary email address. Do you agree with this proposal?

No: bureaucratic nonsense. what is the purpose of this? Providing the CPG is already tasked with keeping its records up to date this just creates another pointless paper trail.

Q9. In light of the rates of non-compliance with the rules, the Committee is also proposing that the rules set out that recognition will automatically be withdrawn from CPGs that fail to fully meet the requirements of the Code for more than one year in a row. Do you support this proposal?

Yes: CPG's should be compliant.

Q10. It has been suggested that there may be circumstances in which a Group may wish to request permission from the SPPA Committee to suspend its activities for a period of time, potentially up to a year, during a Session without recognition being withdrawn. Do you support this suggestion?

Yes: Although I can't imagine those circumstances.

Response 6

Re-establishment of CPGs

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Yes

CPG membership and office bearers

Q2. At present there is no limit on the number of CPGs of which an MSP can be a member. The Committee is of the view that there should be a limit of 10 CPGs of which an MSP can be a member. Do you agree with this proposal?

Yes: 10 seems a lot and I would be supportive of 8.

Q3. Similarly, there is no limit on the number of CPGs of which an MSP can be an office-bearer. The Committee considers that there should be a maximum limit of 5 CPGs on which a member can be an office-bearer. Do you agree with this proposal?

Yes

Q4. The Code requires that a CPG must have at least 5 MSP members, with at least one member from each party or group represented on the Parliamentary Bureau (a waiver can be applied to the cross-party element of this requirement). It is natural in the lifecycle of a Session that a CPGs members may resign from CPGs. The Code does not currently provide any information about the deadline for any membership issues to be rectified, if necessary, following a resignation. The Committee proposes that a requirement be added to the Code that CPGs have 90 days from the date of a resignation to rectify any non-compliance in membership that may arise from that resignation. Do you support this change?

Yes

Q5. The Code sets out that election of office-bearers should take place at a CPG's initial meeting and at each annual general meeting. The guidance on the Code also makes clear that election of office-bearers can be carried out electronically outwith a CPG meeting. However, the Code does not provide a deadline for a CPG to rectify any compliance issues should any MSP officer-bearer resign from their position. The Committee proposes that a requirement is added to the Code that CPGs have 90 days from the date of a resignation to rectify any non-compliance in office-bearers that may arise from that resignation. Do you agree with this suggestion?

Yes

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Yes

Compliance

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Yes

Q9. In light of the rates of non-compliance with the rules, the Committee is also proposing that the rules set out that recognition will automatically be withdrawn from CPGs that fail to fully meet the requirements of the Code for more than one year in a row. Do you support this proposal?

Yes

Q10. It has been suggested that there may be circumstances in which a Group may wish to request permission from the SPPA Committee to suspend its activities for a period of time, potentially up to a year, during a Session without recognition being withdrawn. Do you support this suggestion?

Yes

Response 8

Re-establishment of CPGs

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October. The Committee considers that allowing a longer period for re-registration to take place would assist MSPs in being able to build a fuller picture of their commitments. The Committee proposes extending the deadline for re-registration to 120 calendar days. Do you support this proposal?

No: There are too many CPGs covering the same topic and this will continue unless each one has to go through committee.

CPG membership and office bearers

Q2. At present there is no limit on the number of CPGs of which an MSP can be a member. The Committee is of the view that there should be a limit of 10 CPGs of which an MSP can be a member. Do you agree with this proposal?

Yes: It is difficult to give a CPG your full attention and even 10 is excessive.

Q3. Similarly, there is no limit on the number of CPGs of which an MSP can be an office-bearer. The Committee considers that there should be a maximum limit of 5 CPGs on which a member can be an office-bearer. Do you agree with this proposal?

No: I think it should be lower, so that the msp is giving it their full attention.

Q4. The Code requires that a CPG must have at least 5 MSP members, with at least one member from each party or group represented on the Parliamentary Bureau (a waiver can be applied to the cross-party element of this requirement). It is natural in the lifecycle of a Session that a CPGs members may resign from CPGs. The Code does not currently provide any information about the deadline for any membership issues to be rectified, if necessary, following a resignation. The Committee proposes that a requirement be added to the Code that CPGs have 90 days from the date of a resignation to rectify any non-compliance in membership that may arise from that resignation. Do you support this change?

Yes

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Yes

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Yes

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Don't know: Not sure why this is needed.

Q9. In light of the rates of non-compliance with the rules, the Committee is also proposing that the rules set out that recognition will automatically be withdrawn from CPGs that fail to fully meet the requirements of the Code for more than one year in a row. Do you support this proposal?

Yes

Q10. It has been suggested that there may be circumstances in which a Group may wish to request permission from the SPPA Committee to suspend its activities for a period of time, potentially up to a year, during a Session without recognition being withdrawn. Do you support this suggestion?

Yes

Response 10

Re-establishment of CPGs

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Yes

CPG membership and office bearers

Q2. At present there is no limit on the number of CPGs of which an MSP can be a member. The Committee is of the view that there should be a limit of 10 CPGs of which an MSP can be a member. Do you agree with this proposal?

No: I believe we should reduce CPGs so I would suggest 6 as a limit.

Q3. Similarly, there is no limit on the number of CPGs of which an MSP can be an office-bearer. The Committee considers that there should be a maximum limit of 5 CPGs on which a member can be an office-bearer. Do you agree with this proposal?

No: I believe 6 as a limit

Q4. The Code requires that a CPG must have at least 5 MSP members, with at least one member from each party or group represented on the Parliamentary Bureau (a waiver can be applied to the cross-party element of this requirement). It is natural in the lifecycle of a Session that a CPGs members may resign from CPGs. The Code does not currently provide any information about the deadline for any membership issues to be rectified, if necessary, following a resignation. The Committee proposes that a requirement be added to the Code that CPGs have 90 days from the date of a resignation to rectify any non-compliance in membership that may arise from that resignation. Do you support this change?

Don't know: I think CPGs should be about issues not considered greatly by other parts of the parliament and so I believe small numbers of members might be interested so the make up does not worry me so much.

Q5. The Code sets out that election of office-bearers should take place at a CPG's initial meeting and at each annual general meeting. The guidance on the Code also makes clear that election of office-bearers can be carried out electronically outwith a CPG meeting. However, the Code does not provide a

deadline for a CPG to rectify any compliance issues should any MSP officer-bearer resign from their position. The Committee proposes that a requirement is added to the Code that CPGs have 90 days from the date of a resignation to rectify any non-compliance in office-bearers that may arise from that resignation. Do you agree with this suggestion?

Don't know: As above

Operation of CPGs

Q6. CPGs are required to provide the Standards Clerks with notification of meetings at least 10 calendar days in advance. However, there is no requirement to notify cancellation of meetings. Do you think the Code should be changed to required notification of cancellation to be provided on or before the date of a meeting?

No

Q7. CPGs are required to provide minutes of meetings but the Code does not currently set out a deadline for minutes to be provided. The Code does not currently set out what the minutes of meetings should contain other than in relation to attendance. The Committee is proposing to introduce a requirement for minutes to be submitted within 30 calendar days of the meeting taking place and to stipulate that minutes should include details of those present at the meeting and a brief summary of the issues discussed and actions agreed. Minutes that are substantially verbatim transcripts of a meeting or which are not in the required template would not be accepted. Do you agree with this proposal?

No: I like the template system

Compliance

Q8. To assist compliance, the Committee is proposing that there should be a maximum of three contacts for each Group – the Convener, the Secretary (where secretariat support is provided by an external organisation this must be a named individual within that organisation) and one other contact. Any changes to the contact point would require to be notified by the Convener. The Committee is also proposing that any documentation required under the terms of the Code (registration form, minutes and annual returns) must be submitted by the Convener from their own parliamentary email address. Do you agree with this proposal?

Yes

Q9. In light of the rates of non-compliance with the rules, the Committee is also proposing that the rules set out that recognition will automatically be withdrawn from CPGs that fail to fully meet the requirements of the Code for more than one year in a row. Do you support this proposal?

No: I think if we streamline the CPG structure people will automatically find it easier to comply

Q10. It has been suggested that there may be circumstances in which a Group may wish to request permission from the SPPA Committee to suspend its activities for a period of time, potentially up to a year, during a Session without recognition being withdrawn. Do you support this suggestion?

Yes

Response 11

Re-establishment of CPGs

Q1. Following an election, the Code allows CPGs that were recognised at the end of the previous session to re-register without, subject to certain criteria, requiring the approval of the SPPA Committee. Such re-registration currently requires to be completed within 90 days (not including any period of recess longer than 4 days) of the first meeting of the Parliament in the Session. This would mean that re-registrations could take place until around the end of October. The Committee considers that allowing a longer period for re-registration to take place would assist MSPs in being able to build a fuller picture of their commitments. The Committee proposes extending the deadline for re-registration to 120 calendar days. Do you support this proposal?

No: I am aware the committee has already been lenient with some groups, where compliance has not been ideal but action would have been seen as too harsh. Given the hard work of the committee this session, I feel the opportunity a new session would bring to really get a grip on the number of and compliance of CPGs requires a clean slate.

CPG membership and office bearers

Q2. At present there is no limit on the number of CPGs of which an MSP can be a member. The Committee is of the view that there should be a limit of 10 CPGs of which an MSP can be a member. Do you agree with this proposal?

Yes: Even 10 is unreasonable

Q3. Similarly, there is no limit on the number of CPGs of which an MSP can be an office-bearer. The Committee considers that there should be a maximum limit of 5 CPGs on which a member can be an office-bearer. Do you agree with this proposal?

Yes

Q4. The Code requires that a CPG must have at least 5 MSP members, with at least one member from each party or group represented on the Parliamentary Bureau (a waiver can be applied to the cross-party element of this requirement). It is natural in the lifecycle of a Session that a CPGs members may resign from CPGs. The Code does not currently provide any information

about the deadline for any membership issues to be rectified, if necessary, following a resignation. The Committee proposes that a requirement be added to the Code that CPGs have 90 days from the date of a resignation to rectify any non-compliance in membership that may arise from that resignation. Do you support this change?

Prefer to self-describe (please specify): Disagree with the principle. I do not support the requirement of a member from *every* bureau party. We are expecting smaller parties - it is a lot to ask of a group of five that they must cover every CPG.

Q5. The Code sets out that election of office-bearers should take place at a CPG's initial meeting and at each annual general meeting. The guidance on the Code also makes clear that election of office-bearers can be carried out electronically outwith a CPG meeting. However, the Code does not provide a deadline for a CPG to rectify any compliance issues should any MSP officer-bearer resign from their position. The Committee proposes that a requirement is added to the Code that CPGs have 90 days from the date of a resignation to rectify any non-compliance in office-bearers that may arise from that resignation. Do you agree with this suggestion?

Yes

Operation of CPGs

Q6. CPGs are required to provide the Standards Clerks with notification of meetings at least 10 calendar days in advance. However, there is no requirement to notify cancellation of meetings. Do you think the Code should be changed to required notification of cancellation to be provided on or before the date of a meeting?

Yes

Q7. CPGs are required to provide minutes of meetings but the Code does not currently set out a deadline for minutes to be provided. The Code does not currently set out what the minutes of meetings should contain other than in relation to attendance. The Committee is proposing to introduce a requirement for minutes to be submitted within 30 calendar days of the meeting taking place and to stipulate that minutes should include details of those present at the meeting and a brief summary of the issues discussed and actions agreed. Minutes that are substantially verbatim transcripts of a meeting or which are not in the required template would not be accepted. Do you agree with this proposal?

Yes: My only concern would be that members get the opportunity to approve minutes, if CPGs are not held monthly, as usually this takes place at the following meeting.

Compliance

Q8. To assist compliance, the Committee is proposing that there should be a maximum of three contacts for each Group – the Convener, the Secretary (where secretariat support is provided by an external organisation this must be a named individual within that organisation) and one other contact. Any changes to the contact point would require to be notified by the Convener. The Committee is also proposing that any documentation required under the terms of the Code (registration form, minutes and annual returns) must be submitted by the Convener from their own parliamentary email address. Do you agree with this proposal?

Yes

Q9. In light of the rates of non-compliance with the rules, the Committee is also proposing that the rules set out that recognition will automatically be withdrawn from CPGs that fail to fully meet the requirements of the Code for more than one year in a row. Do you support this proposal?

Yes

Q10. It has been suggested that there may be circumstances in which a Group may wish to request permission from the SPPA Committee to suspend its activities for a period of time, potentially up to a year, during a Session without recognition being withdrawn. Do you support this suggestion?

Yes

Response 14

Re-establishment of CPGs

Q1. Following an election, the Code allows CPGs that were recognised at the end of the previous session to re-register without, subject to certain criteria, requiring the approval of the SPPA Committee. Such re-registration currently requires to be completed within 90 days (not including any period of recess longer than 4 days) of the first meeting of the Parliament in the Session. This would mean that re-registrations could take place until around the end of October. The Committee considers that allowing a longer period for re-registration to take place would assist MSPs in being able to build a fuller picture of their commitments. The Committee proposes extending the deadline for re-registration to 120 calendar days. Do you support this proposal?

Yes

CPG membership and office bearers

Q2. At present there is no limit on the number of CPGs of which an MSP can be a member. The Committee is of the view that there should be a limit of 10 CPGs of which an MSP can be a member. Do you agree with this proposal?

Yes

Q3. Similarly, there is no limit on the number of CPGs of which an MSP can be an office-bearer. The Committee considers that there should be a maximum limit of 5 CPGs on which a member can be an office-bearer. Do you agree with this proposal?

Yes: 5 seems high. 3 would be more reasonable.

Q4. The Code requires that a CPG must have at least 5 MSP members, with at least one member from each party or group represented on the Parliamentary Bureau (a waiver can be applied to the cross-party element of this requirement). It is natural in the lifecycle of a Session that a CPGs members may resign from CPGs. The Code does not currently provide any information about the deadline for any membership issues to be rectified, if necessary, following a resignation. The Committee proposes that a requirement be added to the Code that CPGs have 90 days from the date of a resignation to rectify any non-compliance in membership that may arise from that resignation. Do you support this change?

Yes

Q5. The Code sets out that election of office-bearers should take place at a CPG's initial meeting and at each annual general meeting. The guidance on the Code also makes clear that election of office-bearers can be carried out electronically outwith a CPG meeting. However, the Code does not provide a deadline for a CPG to rectify any compliance issues should any MSP officer-bearer resign from their position. The Committee proposes that a requirement is added to the Code that CPGs have 90 days from the date of a resignation to rectify any non-compliance in office-bearers that may arise from that resignation. Do you agree with this suggestion?

Yes

Operation of CPGs

Q6. CPGs are required to provide the Standards Clerks with notification of meetings at least 10 calendar days in advance. However, there is no requirement to notify cancellation of meetings. Do you think the Code should be changed to required notification of cancellation to be provided on or before the date of a meeting?

Yes

Q7. CPGs are required to provide minutes of meetings but the Code does not currently set out a deadline for minutes to be provided. The Code does not currently set out what the minutes of meetings should contain other than in relation to attendance. The Committee is proposing to introduce a requirement for minutes to be submitted within 30 calendar days of the meeting taking place and to stipulate that minutes should include details of those present at the meeting and a brief summary of the issues discussed and actions agreed. Minutes that are substantially verbatim transcripts of a meeting or which are

not in the required template would not be accepted. Do you agree with this proposal?

Yes

Compliance

Q8. To assist compliance, the Committee is proposing that there should be a maximum of three contacts for each Group – the Convener, the Secretary (where secretariat support is provided by an external organisation this must be a named individual within that organisation) and one other contact. Any changes to the contact point would require to be notified by the Convener. The Committee is also proposing that any documentation required under the terms of the Code (registration form, minutes and annual returns) must be submitted by the Convener from their own parliamentary email address. Do you agree with this proposal?

Yes

Q9. In light of the rates of non-compliance with the rules, the Committee is also proposing that the rules set out that recognition will automatically be withdrawn from CPGs that fail to fully meet the requirements of the Code for more than one year in a row. Do you support this proposal?

Yes

Q10. It has been suggested that there may be circumstances in which a Group may wish to request permission from the SPPA Committee to suspend its activities for a period of time, potentially up to a year, during a Session without recognition being withdrawn. Do you support this suggestion?

Yes

Response 15

Re-establishment of CPGs

Q1. Following an election, the Code allows CPGs that were recognised at the end of the previous session to re-register without, subject to certain criteria, requiring the approval of the SPPA Committee. Such re-registration currently requires to be completed within 90 days (not including any period of recess longer than 4 days) of the first meeting of the Parliament in the Session. This would mean that re-registrations could take place until around the end of October. The Committee considers that allowing a longer period for re-registration to take place would assist MSPs in being able to build a fuller picture of their commitments. The Committee proposes extending the deadline for re-registration to 120 calendar days. Do you support this proposal?

Yes

CPG membership and office bearers

Q2. At present there is no limit on the number of CPGs of which an MSP can be a member. The Committee is of the view that there should be a limit of 10 CPGs of which an MSP can be a member. Do you agree with this proposal?

Yes: It's a good idea if only to prevent members from going a bit crazy on CPG membership. There is nothing of course to stop them attending any number of CPGs.

Q3. Similarly, there is no limit on the number of CPGs of which an MSP can be an office-bearer. The Committee considers that there should be a maximum limit of 5 CPGs on which a member can be an office-bearer. Do you agree with this proposal?

Yes

Q4. The Code requires that a CPG must have at least 5 MSP members, with at least one member from each party or group represented on the Parliamentary Bureau (a waiver can be applied to the cross-party element of this requirement). It is natural in the lifecycle of a Session that a CPGs members may resign from CPGs. The Code does not currently provide any information about the deadline for any membership issues to be rectified, if necessary, following a resignation. The Committee proposes that a requirement be added to the Code that CPGs have 90 days from the date of a resignation to rectify any non-compliance in membership that may arise from that resignation. Do you support this change?

Yes: I agree but I would also say that the requirement to have 5 members is too onerous. All members should be treated equally too so the requirement for bureau representation should be dropped.

Q5. The Code sets out that election of office-bearers should take place at a CPG's initial meeting and at each annual general meeting. The guidance on the Code also makes clear that election of office-bearers can be carried out electronically outwith a CPG meeting. However, the Code does not provide a deadline for a CPG to rectify any compliance issues should any MSP officer-bearer resign from their position. The Committee proposes that a requirement is added to the Code that CPGs have 90 days from the date of a resignation to rectify any non-compliance in office-bearers that may arise from that resignation. Do you agree with this suggestion?

Operation of CPGs

Q6. CPGs are required to provide the Standards Clerks with notification of meetings at least 10 calendar days in advance. However, there is no requirement to notify cancellation of meetings. Do you think the Code should be changed to required notification of cancellation to be provided on or before the date of a meeting?

No: There should be fewer rules like this, not more

Q7. CPGs are required to provide minutes of meetings but the Code does not currently set out a deadline for minutes to be provided. The Code does not currently set out what the minutes of meetings should contain other than in relation to attendance. The Committee is proposing to introduce a requirement for minutes to be submitted within 30 calendar days of the meeting taking place and to stipulate that minutes should include details of those present at the meeting and a brief summary of the issues discussed and actions agreed. Minutes that are substantially verbatim transcripts of a meeting or which are not in the required template would not be accepted. Do you agree with this proposal?

Yes

Compliance

Q8. To assist compliance, the Committee is proposing that there should be a maximum of three contacts for each Group – the Convener, the Secretary (where secretariat support is provided by an external organisation this must be a named individual within that organisation) and one other contact. Any changes to the contact point would require to be notified by the Convener. The Committee is also proposing that any documentation required under the terms of the Code (registration form, minutes and annual returns) must be submitted by the Convener from their own parliamentary email address. Do you agree with this proposal?

No: Two points of contact is enough

Q9. In light of the rates of non-compliance with the rules, the Committee is also proposing that the rules set out that recognition will automatically be withdrawn from CPGs that fail to fully meet the requirements of the Code for more than one year in a row. Do you support this proposal?

Yes: The problem is that there are far too many CPGs. Everyone knows this so perhaps there should be a limit.

Q10. It has been suggested that there may be circumstances in which a Group may wish to request permission from the SPPA Committee to suspend its activities for a period of time, potentially up to a year, during a Session without recognition being withdrawn. Do you support this suggestion?

Yes

Response 16

Re-establishment of CPGs

Q1. Following an election, the Code allows CPGs that were recognised at the end of the previous session to re-register without, subject to certain criteria, requiring the approval of the SPPA Committee. Such re-registration currently

requires to be completed within 90 days (not including any period of recess longer than 4 days) of the first meeting of the Parliament in the Session. This would mean that re-registrations could take place until around the end of October. The Committee considers that allowing a longer period for re-registration to take place would assist MSPs in being able to build a fuller picture of their commitments. The Committee proposes extending the deadline for re-registration to 120 calendar days. Do you support this proposal?

Yes: It would be useful if, in the re-registration process, there was some mechanism to get an indication of MSPs' willingness to actually make the CPG work. This would be to ensure CPGs weren't just re-registered if there was not really the desire from a cross-party group of MSPs to keep them functioning.

CPG membership and office bearers

Q2. At present there is no limit on the number of CPGs of which an MSP can be a member. The Committee is of the view that there should be a limit of 10 CPGs of which an MSP can be a member. Do you agree with this proposal?

Yes: Having some kind of limit would mean MSPs were more selective in their memberships. It would also mean MSPs from smaller party groups would not feel compelled to join a CPG even if they had no intention of attending.

Q3. Similarly, there is no limit on the number of CPGs of which an MSP can be an office-bearer. The Committee considers that there should be a maximum limit of 5 CPGs on which a member can be an office-bearer. Do you agree with this proposal?

Prefer to self-describe (please specify): No - it should be lower. I think the limit should be lower - 3 CPGs, not 5

Q4. The Code requires that a CPG must have at least 5 MSP members, with at least one member from each party or group represented on the Parliamentary Bureau (a waiver can be applied to the cross-party element of this requirement). It is natural in the lifecycle of a Session that a CPGs members may resign from CPGs. The Code does not currently provide any information about the deadline for any membership issues to be rectified, if necessary, following a resignation. The Committee proposes that a requirement be added to the Code that CPGs have 90 days from the date of a resignation to rectify any non-compliance in membership that may arise from that resignation. Do you support this change?

No: I don't think it is reasonable to expect that all Bureau parties are represented on all CPGs. I'd support a requirement that the number of parties represented by n-1, where n is the number of parties on the Bureau. This would limit the number of waivers requested, and also is probably fairer on smaller groups whose members can feel obliged to join a CPG just to allow it to exist. As for the timing, it does not seem fair that a CPG that has done good work could lose registration simply because a member resigns or changes party.

Q5. The Code sets out that election of office-bearers should take place at a CPG's initial meeting and at each annual general meeting. The guidance on the Code also makes clear that election of office-bearers can be carried out electronically outwith a CPG meeting. However, the Code does not provide a deadline for a CPG to rectify any compliance issues should any MSP officer-bearer resign from their position. The Committee proposes that a requirement is added to the Code that CPGs have 90 days from the date of a resignation to rectify any non-compliance in office-bearers that may arise from that resignation. Do you agree with this suggestion?

Yes

Operation of CPGs

Q6. CPGs are required to provide the Standards Clerks with notification of meetings at least 10 calendar days in advance. However, there is no requirement to notify cancellation of meetings. Do you think the Code should be changed to required notification of cancellation to be provided on or before the date of a meeting?

No: Meetings can be cancelled for all sorts of reasons - late parliamentary sittings, speaker illness, etc. The administrative burden should be kept as light as possible.

Q7. CPGs are required to provide minutes of meetings but the Code does not currently set out a deadline for minutes to be provided. The Code does not currently set out what the minutes of meetings should contain other than in relation to attendance. The Committee is proposing to introduce a requirement for minutes to be submitted within 30 calendar days of the meeting taking place and to stipulate that minutes should include details of those present at the meeting and a brief summary of the issues discussed and actions agreed. Minutes that are substantially verbatim transcripts of a meeting or which are not in the required template would not be accepted. Do you agree with this proposal?

Yes

Compliance

Q8. To assist compliance, the Committee is proposing that there should be a maximum of three contacts for each Group – the Convener, the Secretary (where secretariat support is provided by an external organisation this must be a named individual within that organisation) and one other contact. Any changes to the contact point would require to be notified by the Convener. The Committee is also proposing that any documentation required under the terms of the Code (registration form, minutes and annual returns) must be submitted by the Convener from their own parliamentary email address. Do you agree with this proposal?

No: I don't see why secretariat support cannot submit annual returns or other documents - this proposal seems needlessly burdensome on MSPs

Q9. In light of the rates of non-compliance with the rules, the Committee is also proposing that the rules set out that recognition will automatically be withdrawn from CPGs that fail to fully meet the requirements of the Code for more than one year in a row. Do you support this proposal?

Yes

Q10. It has been suggested that there may be circumstances in which a Group may wish to request permission from the SPPA Committee to suspend its activities for a period of time, potentially up to a year, during a Session without recognition being withdrawn. Do you support this suggestion?

Yes

Response 17

Re-establishment of CPGs

Q1. Following an election, the Code allows CPGs that were recognised at the end of the previous session to re-register without, subject to certain criteria, requiring the approval of the SPPA Committee. Such re-registration currently requires to be completed within 90 days (not including any period of recess longer than 4 days) of the first meeting of the Parliament in the Session. This would mean that re-registrations could take place until around the end of October. The Committee considers that allowing a longer period for re-registration to take place would assist MSPs in being able to build a fuller picture of their commitments. The Committee proposes extending the deadline for re-registration to 120 calendar days. Do you support this proposal?

No: October is 5 months after the election. That is plenty of time. And we are trying to reduce the number of CPGs so do not want to make it easier.

CPG membership and office bearers

Q2. At present there is no limit on the number of CPGs of which an MSP can be a member. The Committee is of the view that there should be a limit of 10 CPGs of which an MSP can be a member. Do you agree with this proposal?

Yes

Q3. Similarly, there is no limit on the number of CPGs of which an MSP can be an office-bearer. The Committee considers that there should be a maximum limit of 5 CPGs on which a member can be an office-bearer. Do you agree with this proposal?

Yes

Q4. The Code requires that a CPG must have at least 5 MSP members, with at least one member from each party or group represented on the Parliamentary Bureau (a waiver can be applied to the cross-party element of this

requirement). It is natural in the lifecycle of a Session that a CPGs members may resign from CPGs. The Code does not currently provide any information about the deadline for any membership issues to be rectified, if necessary, following a resignation. The Committee proposes that a requirement be added to the Code that CPGs have 90 days from the date of a resignation to rectify any non-compliance in membership that may arise from that resignation. Do you support this change?

No: One party should not be able to veto a CPG existing. 3 parties should be enough (if there are 5).

Q5. The Code sets out that election of office-bearers should take place at a CPG's initial meeting and at each annual general meeting. The guidance on the Code also makes clear that election of office-bearers can be carried out electronically outwith a CPG meeting. However, the Code does not provide a deadline for a CPG to rectify any compliance issues should any MSP officer-bearer resign from their position. The Committee proposes that a requirement is added to the Code that CPGs have 90 days from the date of a resignation to rectify any non-compliance in office-bearers that may arise from that resignation. Do you agree with this suggestion?

Yes

Operation of CPGs

Q6. CPGs are required to provide the Standards Clerks with notification of meetings at least 10 calendar days in advance. However, there is no requirement to notify cancellation of meetings. Do you think the Code should be changed to required notification of cancellation to be provided on or before the date of a meeting?

Yes

Q7. CPGs are required to provide minutes of meetings but the Code does not currently set out a deadline for minutes to be provided. The Code does not currently set out what the minutes of meetings should contain other than in relation to attendance. The Committee is proposing to introduce a requirement for minutes to be submitted within 30 calendar days of the meeting taking place and to stipulate that minutes should include details of those present at the meeting and a brief summary of the issues discussed and actions agreed. Minutes that are substantially verbatim transcripts of a meeting or which are not in the required template would not be accepted. Do you agree with this proposal?

Yes

Compliance

Q8. To assist compliance, the Committee is proposing that there should be a maximum of three contacts for each Group – the Convener, the Secretary

(where secretariat support is provided by an external organisation this must be a named individual within that organisation) and one other contact. Any changes to the contact point would require to be notified by the Convener. The Committee is also proposing that any documentation required under the terms of the Code (registration form, minutes and annual returns) must be submitted by the Convener from their own parliamentary email address. Do you agree with this proposal?

Yes

Q9. In light of the rates of non-compliance with the rules, the Committee is also proposing that the rules set out that recognition will automatically be withdrawn from CPGs that fail to fully meet the requirements of the Code for more than one year in a row. Do you support this proposal?

Yes

Q10. It has been suggested that there may be circumstances in which a Group may wish to request permission from the SPPA Committee to suspend its activities for a period of time, potentially up to a year, during a Session without recognition being withdrawn. Do you support this suggestion?

No

Response 18

Re-establishment of CPGs

Q1. Following an election, the Code allows CPGs that were recognised at the end of the previous session to re-register without, subject to certain criteria, requiring the approval of the SPPA Committee. Such re-registration currently requires to be completed within 90 days (not including any period of recess longer than 4 days) of the first meeting of the Parliament in the Session. This would mean that re-registrations could take place until around the end of October. The Committee considers that allowing a longer period for re-registration to take place would assist MSPs in being able to build a fuller picture of their commitments. The Committee proposes extending the deadline for re-registration to 120 calendar days. Do you support this proposal?

Don't know: I am torn on this proposal. In principle I agree but with the huge number of cross-party groups currently in the Parliament the proposal will allow more of them to continue when clearly some should fold and should be encouraged to fold.

CPG membership and office bearers

Q2. At present there is no limit on the number of CPGs of which an MSP can be a member. The Committee is of the view that there should be a limit of 10 CPGs of which an MSP can be a member. Do you agree with this proposal?

No: Again I think this too many. My preference would be to limit this to Six.

Q3. Similarly, there is no limit on the number of CPGs of which an MSP can be an office-bearer. The Committee considers that there should be a maximum limit of 5 CPGs on which a member can be an office-bearer. Do you agree with this proposal?

No: Again this is far too many and I would limit this to three. Trying to do more than that is taking on too much which new MSPs maybe tempted to do.

Q4. The Code requires that a CPG must have at least 5 MSP members, with at least one member from each party or group represented on the Parliamentary Bureau (a waiver can be applied to the cross-party element of this requirement). It is natural in the lifecycle of a Session that a CPGs members may resign from CPGs. The Code does not currently provide any information about the deadline for any membership issues to be rectified, if necessary, following a resignation. The Committee proposes that a requirement be added to the Code that CPGs have 90 days from the date of a resignation to rectify any non-compliance in membership that may arise from that resignation. Do you support this change?

Yes

Q5. The Code sets out that election of office-bearers should take place at a CPG's initial meeting and at each annual general meeting. The guidance on the Code also makes clear that election of office-bearers can be carried out electronically outwith a CPG meeting. However, the Code does not provide a deadline for a CPG to rectify any compliance issues should any MSP officer-bearer resign from their position. The Committee proposes that a requirement is added to the Code that CPGs have 90 days from the date of a resignation to rectify any non-compliance in office-bearers that may arise from that resignation. Do you agree with this suggestion?

Yes

Operation of CPGs

Q6. CPGs are required to provide the Standards Clerks with notification of meetings at least 10 calendar days in advance. However, there is no requirement to notify cancellation of meetings. Do you think the Code should be changed to required notification of cancellation to be provided on or before the date of a meeting?

Yes: Yes but I would allow 7 days post the meeting date for notification

Q7. CPGs are required to provide minutes of meetings but the Code does not currently set out a deadline for minutes to be provided. The Code does not currently set out what the minutes of meetings should contain other than in relation to attendance. The Committee is proposing to introduce a requirement for minutes to be submitted within 30 calendar days of the meeting taking place and to stipulate that minutes should include details of those present at the meeting and a brief summary of the issues discussed and actions agreed.

Minutes that are substantially verbatim transcripts of a meeting or which are not in the required template would not be accepted. Do you agree with this proposal?

Yes

Compliance

Q8. To assist compliance, the Committee is proposing that there should be a maximum of three contacts for each Group – the Convener, the Secretary (where secretariat support is provided by an external organisation this must be a named individual within that organisation) and one other contact. Any changes to the contact point would require to be notified by the Convener. The Committee is also proposing that any documentation required under the terms of the Code (registration form, minutes and annual returns) must be submitted by the Convener from their own parliamentary email address. Do you agree with this proposal?

Yes

Q9. In light of the rates of non-compliance with the rules, the Committee is also proposing that the rules set out that recognition will automatically be withdrawn from CPGs that fail to fully meet the requirements of the Code for more than one year in a row. Do you support this proposal?

Yes

Q10. It has been suggested that there may be circumstances in which a Group may wish to request permission from the SPPA Committee to suspend its activities for a period of time, potentially up to a year, during a Session without recognition being withdrawn. Do you support this suggestion?

Don't know: Not unless valid reasons are given and it should be for the SPPA to have the discretions to approve or refuse the permission.

Response 19

Re-establishment of CPGs

Q1. Following an election, the Code allows CPGs that were recognised at the end of the previous session to re-register without, subject to certain criteria, requiring the approval of the SPPA Committee. Such re-registration currently requires to be completed within 90 days (not including any period of recess longer than 4 days) of the first meeting of the Parliament in the Session. This would mean that re-registrations could take place until around the end of October. The Committee considers that allowing a longer period for re-registration to take place would assist MSPs in being able to build a fuller picture of their commitments. The Committee proposes extending the deadline for re-registration to 120 calendar days. Do you support this proposal?

No: leave at 90 days

CPG membership and office bearers

Q2. At present there is no limit on the number of CPGs of which an MSP can be a member. The Committee is of the view that there should be a limit of 10 CPGs of which an MSP can be a member. Do you agree with this proposal?

Yes: Yes but limit too high should be no more than 8. In my experience of fourteen years there are too many CPG's at over 100 and not enough commitment by MSP's to regularly attend. I was therefore disappointed that there was no question relating to attendance e.g. each MSP, who is a member of a CPG, would have listed in the annual return the number of actual CPG meetings attended against total number of meetings in a year.

Q3. Similarly, there is no limit on the number of CPGs of which an MSP can be an office-bearer. The Committee considers that there should be a maximum limit of 5 CPGs on which a member can be an office-bearer. Do you agree with this proposal?

Yes: Yes but limit too high should be no more than 3

Q4. The Code requires that a CPG must have at least 5 MSP members, with at least one member from each party or group represented on the Parliamentary Bureau (a waiver can be applied to the cross-party element of this requirement). It is natural in the lifecycle of a Session that a CPGs members may resign from CPGs. The Code does not currently provide any information about the deadline for any membership issues to be rectified, if necessary, following a resignation. The Committee proposes that a requirement be added to the Code that CPGs have 90 days from the date of a resignation to rectify any non-compliance in membership that may arise from that resignation. Do you support this change?

No: No it should be represented by a majority of parties represented on the Bureau otherwise smaller parties i.e. Greens and Lib-Dems would effectively act as gatekeepers to establishing a CPG.

Q5. The Code sets out that election of office-bearers should take place at a CPG's initial meeting and at each annual general meeting. The guidance on the Code also makes clear that election of office-bearers can be carried out electronically outwith a CPG meeting. However, the Code does not provide a deadline for a CPG to rectify any compliance issues should any MSP officer-bearer resign from their position. The Committee proposes that a requirement is added to the Code that CPGs have 90 days from the date of a resignation to rectify any non-compliance in office-bearers that may arise from that resignation. Do you agree with this suggestion?

Yes

Operation of CPGs

Q6. CPGs are required to provide the Standards Clerks with notification of meetings at least 10 calendar days in advance. However, there is no requirement to notify cancellation of meetings. Do you think the Code should be changed to required notification of cancellation to be provided on or before the date of a meeting?

Yes

Q7. CPGs are required to provide minutes of meetings but the Code does not currently set out a deadline for minutes to be provided. The Code does not currently set out what the minutes of meetings should contain other than in relation to attendance. The Committee is proposing to introduce a requirement for minutes to be submitted within 30 calendar days of the meeting taking place and to stipulate that minutes should include details of those present at the meeting and a brief summary of the issues discussed and actions agreed. Minutes that are substantially verbatim transcripts of a meeting or which are not in the required template would not be accepted. Do you agree with this proposal?

No: No – Secretariat is provided by external groups who are carrying out the work on a voluntary basis therefore placing onerous restrictions will make it more difficult to find a CPG secretary.

Compliance

Q8. To assist compliance, the Committee is proposing that there should be a maximum of three contacts for each Group – the Convener, the Secretary (where secretariat support is provided by an external organisation this must be a named individual within that organisation) and one other contact. Any changes to the contact point would require to be notified by the Convener. The Committee is also proposing that any documentation required under the terms of the Code (registration form, minutes and annual returns) must be submitted by the Convener from their own parliamentary email address. Do you agree with this proposal?

No: No – Surely the important issue is that there is a main individual (Convenor) who is responsible for running the CPG.

Q9. In light of the rates of non-compliance with the rules, the Committee is also proposing that the rules set out that recognition will automatically be withdrawn from CPGs that fail to fully meet the requirements of the Code for more than one year in a row. Do you support this proposal?

Yes

Q10. It has been suggested that there may be circumstances in which a Group may wish to request permission from the SPPA Committee to suspend its activities for a period of time, potentially up to a year, during a Session without recognition being withdrawn. Do you support this suggestion?

Yes

Response 20

Re-establishment of CPGs

Q1. Following an election, the Code allows CPGs that were recognised at the end of the previous session to re-register without, subject to certain criteria, requiring the approval of the SPPA Committee. Such re-registration currently requires to be completed within 90 days (not including any period of recess longer than 4 days) of the first meeting of the Parliament in the Session. This would mean that re-registrations could take place until around the end of October. The Committee considers that allowing a longer period for re-registration to take place would assist MSPs in being able to build a fuller picture of their commitments. The Committee proposes extending the deadline for re-registration to 120 calendar days. Do you support this proposal?

Don't know: I am unsure if it makes a big difference in practice, but may save the SPPA committee work to extend the period. There will be a big turnover of MSPs at the next election just due to the numbers standing down and it would allow new MSPs to get to know their role a bit better if the time was extended

CPG membership and office bearers

Q2. At present there is no limit on the number of CPGs of which an MSP can be a member. The Committee is of the view that there should be a limit of 10 CPGs of which an MSP can be a member. Do you agree with this proposal?

Yes

Q3. Similarly, there is no limit on the number of CPGs of which an MSP can be an office-bearer. The Committee considers that there should be a maximum limit of 5 CPGs on which a member can be an office-bearer. Do you agree with this proposal?

Yes

Q4. The Code requires that a CPG must have at least 5 MSP members, with at least one member from each party or group represented on the Parliamentary Bureau (a waiver can be applied to the cross-party element of this requirement). It is natural in the lifecycle of a Session that a CPGs members may resign from CPGs. The Code does not currently provide any information about the deadline for any membership issues to be rectified, if necessary, following a resignation. The Committee proposes that a requirement be added to the Code that CPGs have 90 days from the date of a resignation to rectify any non-compliance in membership that may arise from that resignation. Do you support this change?

Yes: However, it would have to be clear that an MSP cannot resign without the Convenor, Depute and Secretariat being officially informed. Likewise if a member

changes party or resigns the whip, there would be required to be an official notification in order to allow the CPG to act on it.

Q5. The Code sets out that election of office-bearers should take place at a CPG's initial meeting and at each annual general meeting. The guidance on the Code also makes clear that election of office-bearers can be carried out electronically outwith a CPG meeting. However, the Code does not provide a deadline for a CPG to rectify any compliance issues should any MSP officer-bearer resign from their position. The Committee proposes that a requirement is added to the Code that CPGs have 90 days from the date of a resignation to rectify any non-compliance in office-bearers that may arise from that resignation. Do you agree with this suggestion?

Yes: Yes, with the caveat that MSP members and the secretariat should be informed. The 90 days should not include recess days.

Operation of CPGs

Q6. CPGs are required to provide the Standards Clerks with notification of meetings at least 10 calendar days in advance. However, there is no requirement to notify cancellation of meetings. Do you think the Code should be changed to required notification of cancellation to be provided on or before the date of a meeting?

No: Meetings are cancelled at short notice due to late sittings which causes enough disruption in itself without adding an additional layer of bureaucracy. We need to allow derogations regarding meetings and AGMs to CPGs that are cancelled due to late sittings.

Q7. CPGs are required to provide minutes of meetings but the Code does not currently set out a deadline for minutes to be provided. The Code does not currently set out what the minutes of meetings should contain other than in relation to attendance. The Committee is proposing to introduce a requirement for minutes to be submitted within 30 calendar days of the meeting taking place and to stipulate that minutes should include details of those present at the meeting and a brief summary of the issues discussed and actions agreed. Minutes that are substantially verbatim transcripts of a meeting or which are not in the required template would not be accepted. Do you agree with this proposal?

Don't know: I don't believe it is feasible to submit Minutes in that time frame if they need to be ratified by the CPG (that is normally done at the following meeting). Happy with a format for Minutes, although fuller minutes are helpful to those who were unable to attend.

Compliance

Q8. To assist compliance, the Committee is proposing that there should be a maximum of three contacts for each Group – the Convener, the Secretary (where secretariat support is provided by an external organisation this must

be a named individual within that organisation) and one other contact. Any changes to the contact point would require to be notified by the Convener. The Committee is also proposing that any documentation required under the terms of the Code (registration form, minutes and annual returns) must be submitted by the Convener from their own parliamentary email address. Do you agree with this proposal?

No: It creates an additional burden from the MSP, those delegated to send from an MSP's account should be allowed to submit that documentation.

Q9. In light of the rates of non-compliance with the rules, the Committee is also proposing that the rules set out that recognition will automatically be withdrawn from CPGs that fail to fully meet the requirements of the Code for more than one year in a row. Do you support this proposal?

No: MSPs are busy people and it is unfair to penalise a CPG if the convener or secretariat have not realised they have missed a deadline. This is more important with CPGs who use the secretariat as a training opportunity. The change of secretariat normally brings teething issues as well.

Q10. It has been suggested that there may be circumstances in which a Group may wish to request permission from the SPPA Committee to suspend its activities for a period of time, potentially up to a year, during a Session without recognition being withdrawn. Do you support this suggestion?

Yes

Response 22

Re-establishment of CPGs

Q1. Following an election, the Code allows CPGs that were recognised at the end of the previous session to re-register without, subject to certain criteria, requiring the approval of the SPPA Committee. Such re-registration currently requires to be completed within 90 days (not including any period of recess longer than 4 days) of the first meeting of the Parliament in the Session. This would mean that re-registrations could take place until around the end of October. The Committee considers that allowing a longer period for re-registration to take place would assist MSPs in being able to build a fuller picture of their commitments. The Committee proposes extending the deadline for re-registration to 120 calendar days. Do you support this proposal?

Yes

CPG membership and office bearers

Q2. At present there is no limit on the number of CPGs of which an MSP can be a member. The Committee is of the view that there should be a limit of 10 CPGs of which an MSP can be a member. Do you agree with this proposal?

Yes

Q3. Similarly, there is no limit on the number of CPGs of which an MSP can be an office-bearer. The Committee considers that there should be a maximum limit of 5 CPGs on which a member can be an office-bearer. Do you agree with this proposal?

Yes

Q4. The Code requires that a CPG must have at least 5 MSP members, with at least one member from each party or group represented on the Parliamentary Bureau (a waiver can be applied to the cross-party element of this requirement). It is natural in the lifecycle of a Session that a CPGs members may resign from CPGs. The Code does not currently provide any information about the deadline for any membership issues to be rectified, if necessary, following a resignation. The Committee proposes that a requirement be added to the Code that CPGs have 90 days from the date of a resignation to rectify any non-compliance in membership that may arise from that resignation. Do you support this change?

Yes

Q5. The Code sets out that election of office-bearers should take place at a CPG's initial meeting and at each annual general meeting. The guidance on the Code also makes clear that election of office-bearers can be carried out electronically outwith a CPG meeting. However, the Code does not provide a deadline for a CPG to rectify any compliance issues should any MSP officer-bearer resign from their position. The Committee proposes that a requirement is added to the Code that CPGs have 90 days from the date of a resignation to rectify any non-compliance in office-bearers that may arise from that resignation. Do you agree with this suggestion?

Yes

Operation of CPGs

Q6. CPGs are required to provide the Standards Clerks with notification of meetings at least 10 calendar days in advance. However, there is no requirement to notify cancellation of meetings. Do you think the Code should be changed to required notification of cancellation to be provided on or before the date of a meeting?

No

Q7. CPGs are required to provide minutes of meetings but the Code does not currently set out a deadline for minutes to be provided. The Code does not currently set out what the minutes of meetings should contain other than in relation to attendance. The Committee is proposing to introduce a requirement for minutes to be submitted within 30 calendar days of the meeting taking place and to stipulate that minutes should include details of those present at the meeting and a brief summary of the issues discussed and actions agreed.

Minutes that are substantially verbatim transcripts of a meeting or which are not in the required template would not be accepted. Do you agree with this proposal?

No: 30 days may be a bit short for CPGs with secretary's who are not eg trade bodies or other well financed organisations.

Compliance

Q8. To assist compliance, the Committee is proposing that there should be a maximum of three contacts for each Group – the Convener, the Secretary (where secretariat support is provided by an external organisation this must be a named individual within that organisation) and one other contact. Any changes to the contact point would require to be notified by the Convener. The Committee is also proposing that any documentation required under the terms of the Code (registration form, minutes and annual returns) must be submitted by the Convener from their own parliamentary email address. Do you agree with this proposal?

Yes

Q9. In light of the rates of non-compliance with the rules, the Committee is also proposing that the rules set out that recognition will automatically be withdrawn from CPGs that fail to fully meet the requirements of the Code for more than one year in a row. Do you support this proposal?

No: Flexibility is needed. For example, the rule about having one MSP from each party on bureau means that one party can "sabotage" the group by withdrawal.
FLEXIBLIITY KEY

Q10. It has been suggested that there may be circumstances in which a Group may wish to request permission from the SPPA Committee to suspend its activities for a period of time, potentially up to a year, during a Session without recognition being withdrawn. Do you support this suggestion?

Yes

Response 23

Re-establishment of CPGs

Q1. Following an election, the Code allows CPGs that were recognised at the end of the previous session to re-register without, subject to certain criteria, requiring the approval of the SPPA Committee. Such re-registration currently requires to be completed within 90 days (not including any period of recess longer than 4 days) of the first meeting of the Parliament in the Session. This would mean that re-registrations could take place until around the end of October. The Committee considers that allowing a longer period for re-registration to take place would assist MSPs in being able to build a fuller picture of their commitments. The Committee proposes extending the deadline for re-registration to 120 calendar days. Do you support this proposal?

Yes

CPG membership and office bearers

Q2. At present there is no limit on the number of CPGs of which an MSP can be a member. The Committee is of the view that there should be a limit of 10 CPGs of which an MSP can be a member. Do you agree with this proposal?

Yes: Would question even if this number might be too high to allow a meaningful contribution to be made in each instance

Q3. Similarly, there is no limit on the number of CPGs of which an MSP can be an office-bearer. The Committee considers that there should be a maximum limit of 5 CPGs on which a member can be an office-bearer. Do you agree with this proposal?

Yes: Again, I would suggest this figure may even be too high

Q4. The Code requires that a CPG must have at least 5 MSP members, with at least one member from each party or group represented on the Parliamentary Bureau (a waiver can be applied to the cross-party element of this requirement). It is natural in the lifecycle of a Session that a CPGs members may resign from CPGs. The Code does not currently provide any information about the deadline for any membership issues to be rectified, if necessary, following a resignation. The Committee proposes that a requirement be added to the Code that CPGs have 90 days from the date of a resignation to rectify any non-compliance in membership that may arise from that resignation. Do you support this change?

Yes

Q5. The Code sets out that election of office-bearers should take place at a CPG's initial meeting and at each annual general meeting. The guidance on the Code also makes clear that election of office-bearers can be carried out electronically outwith a CPG meeting. However, the Code does not provide a deadline for a CPG to rectify any compliance issues should any MSP officer-bearer resign from their position. The Committee proposes that a requirement is added to the Code that CPGs have 90 days from the date of a resignation to rectify any non-compliance in office-bearers that may arise from that resignation. Do you agree with this suggestion?

Yes

Operation of CPGs

Q6. CPGs are required to provide the Standards Clerks with notification of meetings at least 10 calendar days in advance. However, there is no requirement to notify cancellation of meetings. Do you think the Code should

be changed to required notification of cancellation to be provided on or before the date of a meeting?

Yes

Q7. CPGs are required to provide minutes of meetings but the Code does not currently set out a deadline for minutes to be provided. The Code does not currently set out what the minutes of meetings should contain other than in relation to attendance. The Committee is proposing to introduce a requirement for minutes to be submitted within 30 calendar days of the meeting taking place and to stipulate that minutes should include details of those present at the meeting and a brief summary of the issues discussed and actions agreed. Minutes that are substantially verbatim transcripts of a meeting or which are not in the required template would not be accepted. Do you agree with this proposal?

Yes

Compliance

Q8. To assist compliance, the Committee is proposing that there should be a maximum of three contacts for each Group – the Convener, the Secretary (where secretariat support is provided by an external organisation this must be a named individual within that organisation) and one other contact. Any changes to the contact point would require to be notified by the Convener. The Committee is also proposing that any documentation required under the terms of the Code (registration form, minutes and annual returns) must be submitted by the Convener from their own parliamentary email address. Do you agree with this proposal?

Yes

Q9. In light of the rates of non-compliance with the rules, the Committee is also proposing that the rules set out that recognition will automatically be withdrawn from CPGs that fail to fully meet the requirements of the Code for more than one year in a row. Do you support this proposal?

Yes

Q10. It has been suggested that there may be circumstances in which a Group may wish to request permission from the SPPA Committee to suspend its activities for a period of time, potentially up to a year, during a Session without recognition being withdrawn. Do you support this suggestion?

Yes

Response 25

Re-establishment of CPGs

Q1. Following an election, the Code allows CPGs that were recognised at the end of the previous session to re-register without, subject to certain criteria, requiring the approval of the SPPA Committee. Such re-registration currently requires to be completed within 90 days (not including any period of recess longer than 4 days) of the first meeting of the Parliament in the Session. This would mean that re-registrations could take place until around the end of October. The Committee considers that allowing a longer period for re-registration to take place would assist MSPs in being able to build a fuller picture of their commitments. The Committee proposes extending the deadline for re-registration to 120 calendar days. Do you support this proposal?

Yes: Helpful to remove any rush. New members in particular are vulnerable to being pressured onto CPGs to "Make up numbers" and ensure it can continue

CPG membership and office bearers

Q2. At present there is no limit on the number of CPGs of which an MSP can be a member. The Committee is of the view that there should be a limit of 10 CPGs of which an MSP can be a member. Do you agree with this proposal?

Yes: 10 is still quite a lot!

Q3. Similarly, there is no limit on the number of CPGs of which an MSP can be an office-bearer. The Committee considers that there should be a maximum limit of 5 CPGs on which a member can be an office-bearer. Do you agree with this proposal?

Yes

Q4. The Code requires that a CPG must have at least 5 MSP members, with at least one member from each party or group represented on the Parliamentary Bureau (a waiver can be applied to the cross-party element of this requirement). It is natural in the lifecycle of a Session that a CPGs members may resign from CPGs. The Code does not currently provide any information about the deadline for any membership issues to be rectified, if necessary, following a resignation. The Committee proposes that a requirement be added to the Code that CPGs have 90 days from the date of a resignation to rectify any non-compliance in membership that may arise from that resignation. Do you support this change?

Yes

Q5. The Code sets out that election of office-bearers should take place at a CPG's initial meeting and at each annual general meeting. The guidance on the Code also makes clear that election of office-bearers can be carried out electronically outwith a CPG meeting. However, the Code does not provide a deadline for a CPG to rectify any compliance issues should any MSP officer-bearer resign from their position. The Committee proposes that a requirement is added to the Code that CPGs have 90 days from the date of a resignation to

rectify any non-compliance in office-bearers that may arise from that resignation. Do you agree with this suggestion?

Yes

Operation of CPGs

Q6. CPGs are required to provide the Standards Clerks with notification of meetings at least 10 calendar days in advance. However, there is no requirement to notify cancellation of meetings. Do you think the Code should be changed to required notification of cancellation to be provided on or before the date of a meeting?

No

Q7. CPGs are required to provide minutes of meetings but the Code does not currently set out a deadline for minutes to be provided. The Code does not currently set out what the minutes of meetings should contain other than in relation to attendance. The Committee is proposing to introduce a requirement for minutes to be submitted within 30 calendar days of the meeting taking place and to stipulate that minutes should include details of those present at the meeting and a brief summary of the issues discussed and actions agreed. Minutes that are substantially verbatim transcripts of a meeting or which are not in the required template would not be accepted. Do you agree with this proposal?

Don't know: Not sure what the difference would be in accepting fuller minutes?

Compliance

Q8. To assist compliance, the Committee is proposing that there should be a maximum of three contacts for each Group – the Convener, the Secretary (where secretariat support is provided by an external organisation this must be a named individual within that organisation) and one other contact. Any changes to the contact point would require to be notified by the Convener. The Committee is also proposing that any documentation required under the terms of the Code (registration form, minutes and annual returns) must be submitted by the Convener from their own parliamentary email address. Do you agree with this proposal?

Yes: Keeps it simple and emphasises the MSP convener is responsible

Q9. In light of the rates of non-compliance with the rules, the Committee is also proposing that the rules set out that recognition will automatically be withdrawn from CPGs that fail to fully meet the requirements of the Code for more than one year in a row. Do you support this proposal?

No: This is too harsh. Administrative errors can happen and there should be some flexibility.

Q10. It has been suggested that there may be circumstances in which a Group may wish to request permission from the SPPA Committee to suspend its activities for a period of time, potentially up to a year, during a Session without recognition being withdrawn. Do you support this suggestion?

Don't know

Response 26

Re-establishment of CPGs

Q1. Following an election, the Code allows CPGs that were recognised at the end of the previous session to re-register without, subject to certain criteria, requiring the approval of the SPPA Committee. Such re-registration currently requires to be completed within 90 days (not including any period of recess longer than 4 days) of the first meeting of the Parliament in the Session. This would mean that re-registrations could take place until around the end of October. The Committee considers that allowing a longer period for re-registration to take place would assist MSPs in being able to build a fuller picture of their commitments. The Committee proposes extending the deadline for re-registration to 120 calendar days. Do you support this proposal?

Don't know

CPG membership and office bearers

Q2. At present there is no limit on the number of CPGs of which an MSP can be a member. The Committee is of the view that there should be a limit of 10 CPGs of which an MSP can be a member. Do you agree with this proposal?

Don't know

Q3. Similarly, there is no limit on the number of CPGs of which an MSP can be an office-bearer. The Committee considers that there should be a maximum limit of 5 CPGs on which a member can be an office-bearer. Do you agree with this proposal?

Yes

Q4. The Code requires that a CPG must have at least 5 MSP members, with at least one member from each party or group represented on the Parliamentary Bureau (a waiver can be applied to the cross-party element of this requirement). It is natural in the lifecycle of a Session that a CPGs members may resign from CPGs. The Code does not currently provide any information about the deadline for any membership issues to be rectified, if necessary, following a resignation. The Committee proposes that a requirement be added to the Code that CPGs have 90 days from the date of a resignation to rectify any non-compliance in membership that may arise from that resignation. Do you support this change?

Prefer to self-describe (please specify): I was under the impression it was 3 MSP's.

Operation of CPGs

Q6. CPGs are required to provide the Standards Clerks with notification of meetings at least 10 calendar days in advance. However, there is no requirement to notify cancellation of meetings. Do you think the Code should be changed to required notification of cancellation to be provided on or before the date of a meeting?

Yes

Q7. CPGs are required to provide minutes of meetings but the Code does not currently set out a deadline for minutes to be provided. The Code does not currently set out what the minutes of meetings should contain other than in relation to attendance. The Committee is proposing to introduce a requirement for minutes to be submitted within 30 calendar days of the meeting taking place and to stipulate that minutes should include details of those present at the meeting and a brief summary of the issues discussed and actions agreed. Minutes that are substantially verbatim transcripts of a meeting or which are not in the required template would not be accepted. Do you agree with this proposal?

No

Compliance

Q8. To assist compliance, the Committee is proposing that there should be a maximum of three contacts for each Group – the Convener, the Secretary (where secretariat support is provided by an external organisation this must be a named individual within that organisation) and one other contact. Any changes to the contact point would require to be notified by the Convener. The Committee is also proposing that any documentation required under the terms of the Code (registration form, minutes and annual returns) must be submitted by the Convener from their own parliamentary email address. Do you agree with this proposal?

Don't know

Q9. In light of the rates of non-compliance with the rules, the Committee is also proposing that the rules set out that recognition will automatically be withdrawn from CPGs that fail to fully meet the requirements of the Code for more than one year in a row. Do you support this proposal?

Yes

Response 27

Re-establishment of CPGs

Q1. Following an election, the Code allows CPGs that were recognised at the end of the previous session to re-register without, subject to certain criteria, requiring the approval of the SPPA Committee. Such re-registration currently requires to be completed within 90 days (not including any period of recess longer than 4 days) of the first meeting of the Parliament in the Session. This would mean that re-registrations could take place until around the end of October. The Committee considers that allowing a longer period for re-registration to take place would assist MSPs in being able to build a fuller picture of their commitments. The Committee proposes extending the deadline for re-registration to 120 calendar days. Do you support this proposal?

No

CPG membership and office bearers

Q2. At present there is no limit on the number of CPGs of which an MSP can be a member. The Committee is of the view that there should be a limit of 10 CPGs of which an MSP can be a member. Do you agree with this proposal?

No: 10 CPGs is far too many for an individual MSP. The limit should be far less

Q3. Similarly, there is no limit on the number of CPGs of which an MSP can be an office-bearer. The Committee considers that there should be a maximum limit of 5 CPGs on which a member can be an office-bearer. Do you agree with this proposal?

No: 2 or 3 maximum

Q4. The Code requires that a CPG must have at least 5 MSP members, with at least one member from each party or group represented on the Parliamentary Bureau (a waiver can be applied to the cross-party element of this requirement). It is natural in the lifecycle of a Session that a CPGs members may resign from CPGs. The Code does not currently provide any information about the deadline for any membership issues to be rectified, if necessary, following a resignation. The Committee proposes that a requirement be added to the Code that CPGs have 90 days from the date of a resignation to rectify any non-compliance in membership that may arise from that resignation. Do you support this change?

Yes

Q5. The Code sets out that election of office-bearers should take place at a CPG's initial meeting and at each annual general meeting. The guidance on the Code also makes clear that election of office-bearers can be carried out electronically outwith a CPG meeting. However, the Code does not provide a deadline for a CPG to rectify any compliance issues should any MSP officer-bearer resign from their position. The Committee proposes that a requirement is added to the Code that CPGs have 90 days from the date of a resignation to rectify any non-compliance in office-bearers that may arise from that resignation. Do you agree with this suggestion?

Yes

Operation of CPGs

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Yes

Q7. CPGs are required to provide minutes of meetings but the Code does not currently set out a deadline for minutes to be provided. The Code does not currently set out what the minutes of meetings should contain other than in relation to attendance. The Committee is proposing to introduce a requirement for minutes to be submitted within 30 calendar days of the meeting taking place and to stipulate that minutes should include details of those present at the meeting and a brief summary of the issues discussed and actions agreed. Minutes that are substantially verbatim transcripts of a meeting or which are not in the required template would not be accepted. Do you agree with this proposal?

Yes

Compliance

Q8. To assist compliance, the Committee is proposing that there should be a maximum of three contacts for each Group – the Convener, the Secretary (where secretariat support is provided by an external organisation this must be a named individual within that organisation) and one other contact. Any changes to the contact point would require to be notified by the Convener. The Committee is also proposing that any documentation required under the terms of the Code (registration form, minutes and annual returns) must be submitted by the Convener from their own parliamentary email address. Do you agree with this proposal?

Yes

Q9. In light of the rates of non-compliance with the rules, the Committee is also proposing that the rules set out that recognition will automatically be withdrawn from CPGs that fail to fully meet the requirements of the Code for more than one year in a row. Do you support this proposal?

Yes

Q10. It has been suggested that there may be circumstances in which a Group may wish to request permission from the SPPA Committee to suspend its

activities for a period of time, potentially up to a year, during a Session without recognition being withdrawn. Do you support this suggestion?

Yes

Response 28

Re-establishment of CPGs

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Yes

CPG membership and office bearers

Q2. At present there is no limit on the number of CPGs of which an MSP can be a member. The Committee is of the view that there should be a limit of 10 CPGs of which an MSP can be a member. Do you agree with this proposal?

Yes

Q3. Similarly, there is no limit on the number of CPGs of which an MSP can be an office-bearer. The Committee considers that there should be a maximum limit of 5 CPGs on which a member can be an office-bearer. Do you agree with this proposal?

Yes

Q4. The Code requires that a CPG must have at least 5 MSP members, with at least one member from each party or group represented on the Parliamentary Bureau (a waiver can be applied to the cross-party element of this requirement). It is natural in the lifecycle of a Session that a CPGs members may resign from CPGs. The Code does not currently provide any information about the deadline for any membership issues to be rectified, if necessary, following a resignation. The Committee proposes that a requirement be added to the Code that CPGs have 90 days from the date of a resignation to rectify any non-compliance in membership that may arise from that resignation. Do you support this change?

Prefer to self-describe (please specify): Remove requirement for a member from every party represented by the Bureau Parties with 5 or more members may be

represented on Bureau, but there are over 100 CPGs. It simply isn't possible for this condition to be met. It needs to be changed to 'at least 3 different parties' or similar.

Q5. The Code sets out that election of office-bearers should take place at a CPG's initial meeting and at each annual general meeting. The guidance on the Code also makes clear that election of office-bearers can be carried out electronically outwith a CPG meeting. However, the Code does not provide a deadline for a CPG to rectify any compliance issues should any MSP officer-bearer resign from their position. The Committee proposes that a requirement is added to the Code that CPGs have 90 days from the date of a resignation to rectify any non-compliance in office-bearers that may arise from that resignation. Do you agree with this suggestion?

Yes

Operation of CPGs

Q6. CPGs are required to provide the Standards Clerks with notification of meetings at least 10 calendar days in advance. However, there is no requirement to notify cancellation of meetings. Do you think the Code should be changed to required notification of cancellation to be provided on or before the date of a meeting?

No

Q7. CPGs are required to provide minutes of meetings but the Code does not currently set out a deadline for minutes to be provided. The Code does not currently set out what the minutes of meetings should contain other than in relation to attendance. The Committee is proposing to introduce a requirement for minutes to be submitted within 30 calendar days of the meeting taking place and to stipulate that minutes should include details of those present at the meeting and a brief summary of the issues discussed and actions agreed. Minutes that are substantially verbatim transcripts of a meeting or which are not in the required template would not be accepted. Do you agree with this proposal?

Yes

Compliance

Q8. To assist compliance, the Committee is proposing that there should be a maximum of three contacts for each Group – the Convener, the Secretary (where secretariat support is provided by an external organisation this must be a named individual within that organisation) and one other contact. Any changes to the contact point would require to be notified by the Convener. The Committee is also proposing that any documentation required under the terms of the Code (registration form, minutes and annual returns) must be submitted by the Convener from their own parliamentary email address. Do you agree with this proposal?

Yes

Q9. In light of the rates of non-compliance with the rules, the Committee is also proposing that the rules set out that recognition will automatically be withdrawn from CPGs that fail to fully meet the requirements of the Code for more than one year in a row. Do you support this proposal?

Prefer to self-describe (please specify): Small parties and CPGs. Especially in light of the proposed limits on member participation in CPGs it simply isn't possible to be compliant and have a member of smaller parties on every CPG. This requirement must be waived or changed to something like 'at least 3 parties'

Q10. It has been suggested that there may be circumstances in which a Group may wish to request permission from the SPPA Committee to suspend its activities for a period of time, potentially up to a year, during a Session without recognition being withdrawn. Do you support this suggestion?

Yes

Response 30

Re-establishment of CPGs

Q1. Following an election, the Code allows CPGs that were recognised at the end of the previous session to re-register without, subject to certain criteria, requiring the approval of the SPPA Committee. Such re-registration currently requires to be completed within 90 days (not including any period of recess longer than 4 days) of the first meeting of the Parliament in the Session. This would mean that re-registrations could take place until around the end of October. The Committee considers that allowing a longer period for re-registration to take place would assist MSPs in being able to build a fuller picture of their commitments. The Committee proposes extending the deadline for re-registration to 120 calendar days. Do you support this proposal?

Yes

CPG membership and office bearers

Q2. At present there is no limit on the number of CPGs of which an MSP can be a member. The Committee is of the view that there should be a limit of 10 CPGs of which an MSP can be a member. Do you agree with this proposal?

No

Q3. Similarly, there is no limit on the number of CPGs of which an MSP can be an office-bearer. The Committee considers that there should be a maximum limit of 5 CPGs on which a member can be an office-bearer. Do you agree with this proposal?

No

Q4. The Code requires that a CPG must have at least 5 MSP members, with at least one member from each party or group represented on the Parliamentary Bureau (a waiver can be applied to the cross-party element of this requirement). It is natural in the lifecycle of a Session that a CPGs members may resign from CPGs. The Code does not currently provide any information about the deadline for any membership issues to be rectified, if necessary, following a resignation. The Committee proposes that a requirement be added to the Code that CPGs have 90 days from the date of a resignation to rectify any non-compliance in membership that may arise from that resignation. Do you support this change?

Prefer to self-describe (please specify): The rule requiring a member from every party is not a good rule. There are some areas of interest that will not command that level of cross-party support. The rule should be changed to at least two or three parties. Forget the bureau. It's an artificial barrier to allowing all members of parliament to be counted equally as participants.

Q5. The Code sets out that election of office-bearers should take place at a CPG's initial meeting and at each annual general meeting. The guidance on the Code also makes clear that election of office-bearers can be carried out electronically outwith a CPG meeting. However, the Code does not provide a deadline for a CPG to rectify any compliance issues should any MSP officer-bearer resign from their position. The Committee proposes that a requirement is added to the Code that CPGs have 90 days from the date of a resignation to rectify any non-compliance in office-bearers that may arise from that resignation. Do you agree with this suggestion?

Yes

Operation of CPGs

Q6. CPGs are required to provide the Standards Clerks with notification of meetings at least 10 calendar days in advance. However, there is no requirement to notify cancellation of meetings. Do you think the Code should be changed to required notification of cancellation to be provided on or before the date of a meeting?

No: 10 days notice to the clerks is too much in the first place. It should be three working days.

Q7. CPGs are required to provide minutes of meetings but the Code does not currently set out a deadline for minutes to be provided. The Code does not currently set out what the minutes of meetings should contain other than in relation to attendance. The Committee is proposing to introduce a requirement for minutes to be submitted within 30 calendar days of the meeting taking place and to stipulate that minutes should include details of those present at the meeting and a brief summary of the issues discussed and actions agreed. Minutes that are substantially verbatim transcripts of a meeting or which are not in the required template would not be accepted. Do you agree with this proposal?

No: Again, very public sector-ish. Don't create new rules that are not helpful. The tendency of this parliament towards more and more embellish of rules and regulations is itself an indication as to why it is losing its dynamism and relevance.

Compliance

Q8. To assist compliance, the Committee is proposing that there should be a maximum of three contacts for each Group – the Convener, the Secretary (where secretariat support is provided by an external organisation this must be a named individual within that organisation) and one other contact. Any changes to the contact point would require to be notified by the Convener. The Committee is also proposing that any documentation required under the terms of the Code (registration form, minutes and annual returns) must be submitted by the Convener from their own parliamentary email address. Do you agree with this proposal?

No: More bureaucracy. Not needed. Stop inventing new rules.

Q9. In light of the rates of non-compliance with the rules, the Committee is also proposing that the rules set out that recognition will automatically be withdrawn from CPGs that fail to fully meet the requirements of the Code for more than one year in a row. Do you support this proposal?

No: There should be a tolerance to the point where the CPG has clearly ceased to exist or function.

Q10. It has been suggested that there may be circumstances in which a Group may wish to request permission from the SPPA Committee to suspend its activities for a period of time, potentially up to a year, during a Session without recognition being withdrawn. Do you support this suggestion?

Yes

Response 33

Re-establishment of CPGs

Q1. Following an election, the Code allows CPGs that were recognised at the end of the previous session to re-register without, subject to certain criteria, requiring the approval of the SPPA Committee. Such re-registration currently requires to be completed within 90 days (not including any period of recess longer than 4 days) of the first meeting of the Parliament in the Session. This would mean that re-registrations could take place until around the end of October. The Committee considers that allowing a longer period for re-registration to take place would assist MSPs in being able to build a fuller picture of their commitments. The Committee proposes extending the deadline for re-registration to 120 calendar days. Do you support this proposal?

No: I think that by stretching it out MSPs will just delay making a decision

CPG membership and office bearers

Q2. At present there is no limit on the number of CPGs of which an MSP can be a member. The Committee is of the view that there should be a limit of 10 CPGs of which an MSP can be a member. Do you agree with this proposal?

No: 8 is plenty with the limit of being an office bearer in no more than 3

Q3. Similarly, there is no limit on the number of CPGs of which an MSP can be an office-bearer. The Committee considers that there should be a maximum limit of 5 CPGs on which a member can be an office-bearer. Do you agree with this proposal?

No: see above 3 is plenty

Q4. The Code requires that a CPG must have at least 5 MSP members, with at least one member from each party or group represented on the Parliamentary Bureau (a waiver can be applied to the cross-party element of this requirement). It is natural in the lifecycle of a Session that a CPGs members may resign from CPGs. The Code does not currently provide any information about the deadline for any membership issues to be rectified, if necessary, following a resignation. The Committee proposes that a requirement be added to the Code that CPGs have 90 days from the date of a resignation to rectify any non-compliance in membership that may arise from that resignation. Do you support this change?

Yes

Q5. The Code sets out that election of office-bearers should take place at a CPG's initial meeting and at each annual general meeting. The guidance on the Code also makes clear that election of office-bearers can be carried out electronically outwith a CPG meeting. However, the Code does not provide a deadline for a CPG to rectify any compliance issues should any MSP officer-bearer resign from their position. The Committee proposes that a requirement is added to the Code that CPGs have 90 days from the date of a resignation to rectify any non-compliance in office-bearers that may arise from that resignation. Do you agree with this suggestion?

Yes

Operation of CPGs

Q6. CPGs are required to provide the Standards Clerks with notification of meetings at least 10 calendar days in advance. However, there is no requirement to notify cancellation of meetings. Do you think the Code should be changed to required notification of cancellation to be provided on or before the date of a meeting?

Yes

Q7. CPGs are required to provide minutes of meetings but the Code does not currently set out a deadline for minutes to be provided. The Code does not currently set out what the minutes of meetings should contain other than in relation to attendance. The Committee is proposing to introduce a requirement for minutes to be submitted within 30 calendar days of the meeting taking place and to stipulate that minutes should include details of those present at the meeting and a brief summary of the issues discussed and actions agreed. Minutes that are substantially verbatim transcripts of a meeting or which are not in the required template would not be accepted. Do you agree with this proposal?

Yes

Compliance

Q8. To assist compliance, the Committee is proposing that there should be a maximum of three contacts for each Group – the Convener, the Secretary (where secretariat support is provided by an external organisation this must be a named individual within that organisation) and one other contact. Any changes to the contact point would require to be notified by the Convener. The Committee is also proposing that any documentation required under the terms of the Code (registration form, minutes and annual returns) must be submitted by the Convener from their own parliamentary email address. Do you agree with this proposal?

Yes: where there are joint convenors they should all be notified as well as the secretary

Q9. In light of the rates of non-compliance with the rules, the Committee is also proposing that the rules set out that recognition will automatically be withdrawn from CPGs that fail to fully meet the requirements of the Code for more than one year in a row. Do you support this proposal?

Yes

Q10. It has been suggested that there may be circumstances in which a Group may wish to request permission from the SPPA Committee to suspend its activities for a period of time, potentially up to a year, during a Session without recognition being withdrawn. Do you support this suggestion?

No: if they are suspending they are not viable and should withdraw

Response 34

Re-establishment of CPGs

Q1. Following an election, the Code allows CPGs that were recognised at the end of the previous session to re-register without, subject to certain criteria, requiring the approval of the SPPA Committee. Such re-registration currently requires to be completed within 90 days (not including any period of recess

longer than 4 days) of the first meeting of the Parliament in the Session. This would mean that re-registrations could take place until around the end of October. The Committee considers that allowing a longer period for re-registration to take place would assist MSPs in being able to build a fuller picture of their commitments. The Committee proposes extending the deadline for re-registration to 120 calendar days. Do you support this proposal?

Yes: All secretariats also supportive, "if CPGs are required to find new convenors and new MSP members. It also allows time for a proper review of the CPG to ascertain if it is still required and does not overlap with the remit of other CPGs."

CPG membership and office bearers

Q2. At present there is no limit on the number of CPGs of which an MSP can be a member. The Committee is of the view that there should be a limit of 10 CPGs of which an MSP can be a member. Do you agree with this proposal?

Yes: I feel MSPs can only manage meaningful membership in a maximum number of 6 CPGs. Too many MSPs participate in name only. CPG Secretariats feel this will facilitate more active engagement, but are mindful this number should also reflect the total number of CPGs that exist.

Q3. Similarly, there is no limit on the number of CPGs of which an MSP can be an office-bearer. The Committee considers that there should be a maximum limit of 5 CPGs on which a member can be an office-bearer. Do you agree with this proposal?

Yes: I feel co-convenor roles should be considered as half. Secretariats are also supportive saying it would allow MSPs to devote sufficient time and attention to the groups they convene and also make the secretariats job less challenging as an MSP has more capacity to support.

Q4. The Code requires that a CPG must have at least 5 MSP members, with at least one member from each party or group represented on the Parliamentary Bureau (a waiver can be applied to the cross-party element of this requirement). It is natural in the lifecycle of a Session that a CPGs members may resign from CPGs. The Code does not currently provide any information about the deadline for any membership issues to be rectified, if necessary, following a resignation. The Committee proposes that a requirement be added to the Code that CPGs have 90 days from the date of a resignation to rectify any non-compliance in membership that may arise from that resignation. Do you support this change?

Prefer to self-describe (please specify): 30 days. I agree, but think the timeline is too long. Clerks should be notified of changes by the convenor. Secretariat response is mixed with some thinking this is sensible and others thinking the timeframe is too tight with challenges beyond their control, especially because this is also an issue with MSPs resigning from their party as well.

Q5. The Code sets out that election of office-bearers should take place at a CPG's initial meeting and at each annual general meeting. The guidance on the Code also makes clear that election of office-bearers can be carried out electronically outwith a CPG meeting. However, the Code does not provide a deadline for a CPG to rectify any compliance issues should any MSP officer-bearer resign from their position. The Committee proposes that a requirement is added to the Code that CPGs have 90 days from the date of a resignation to rectify any non-compliance in office-bearers that may arise from that resignation. Do you agree with this suggestion?

Yes: Secretariate response is mixed. Some feel this is sensible while others caution this proposal would add pressure with the strict time frame.

Operation of CPGs

Q6. CPGs are required to provide the Standards Clerks with notification of meetings at least 10 calendar days in advance. However, there is no requirement to notify cancellation of meetings. Do you think the Code should be changed to required notification of cancellation to be provided on or before the date of a meeting?

Yes: Secretariat feedback highlights that sometimes CPGs are cancelled due to late chamber business or not being quorate at the last minute, which would be challenging to notify under time pressures. Certainly, they feel 10 days' notice of cancellation isn't practical.

Q7. CPGs are required to provide minutes of meetings but the Code does not currently set out a deadline for minutes to be provided. The Code does not currently set out what the minutes of meetings should contain other than in relation to attendance. The Committee is proposing to introduce a requirement for minutes to be submitted within 30 calendar days of the meeting taking place and to stipulate that minutes should include details of those present at the meeting and a brief summary of the issues discussed and actions agreed. Minutes that are substantially verbatim transcripts of a meeting or which are not in the required template would not be accepted. Do you agree with this proposal?

Yes: Secretariats are against this proposal as CPG minutes are not finalised until voting at the next meeting. This proposal could be updated so that Draft minutes could be provided within 30 days, with a condition applied that finalised minutes should be submitted within 30 days of the next CPG meeting.

Compliance

Q8. To assist compliance, the Committee is proposing that there should be a maximum of three contacts for each Group – the Convener, the Secretary (where secretariat support is provided by an external organisation this must be a named individual within that organisation) and one other contact. Any changes to the contact point would require to be notified by the Convener. The Committee is also proposing that any documentation required under the terms

of the Code (registration form, minutes and annual returns) must be submitted by the Convener from their own parliamentary email address. Do you agree with this proposal?

Yes: Secretariats disagree. They feel this places undue burden on the convener and question unclear responsibilities when there are co-convenors and co-secretariats. Suggestion of a maximum of three in addition to the convener(s) would perhaps be preferable.

Q9. In light of the rates of non-compliance with the rules, the Committee is also proposing that the rules set out that recognition will automatically be withdrawn from CPGs that fail to fully meet the requirements of the Code for more than one year in a row. Do you support this proposal?

Yes: Secretariats mixed with some reporting this is a question for MSPs and others say this feels overly punitive and does not acknowledge those instances where non-compliance is out with the control of the secretariat or convenors and urges the parliament to investigate why the rates of non-compliance are so high and review the rules for CPGs instead.

Q10. It has been suggested that there may be circumstances in which a Group may wish to request permission from the SPPA Committee to suspend its activities for a period of time, potentially up to a year, during a Session without recognition being withdrawn. Do you support this suggestion?

Yes: Secretariats agree. This would be a useful option where the convener and/or secretariat have reduced capacity for whatever reason.

Response 35

Re-establishment of CPGs

Q1. Following an election, the Code allows CPGs that were recognised at the end of the previous session to re-register without, subject to certain criteria, requiring the approval of the SPPA Committee. Such re-registration currently requires to be completed within 90 days (not including any period of recess longer than 4 days) of the first meeting of the Parliament in the Session. This would mean that re-registrations could take place until around the end of October. The Committee considers that allowing a longer period for re-registration to take place would assist MSPs in being able to build a fuller picture of their commitments. The Committee proposes extending the deadline for re-registration to 120 calendar days. Do you support this proposal?

Yes: Gives MSPs more time to get their feet under the table and reflect on how they want to prioritise their time. We currently have too many CPGs given the pressures on MSPs time.

CPG membership and office bearers

Q2. At present there is no limit on the number of CPGs of which an MSP can be a member. The Committee is of the view that there should be a limit of 10 CPGs of which an MSP can be a member. Do you agree with this proposal?

Yes: MSPs are put under pressure to join CPGs and need to stand back and reflect on their priorities and the best use of their time. There are also alternatives which need to be considered such as roundtables, receptions and less frequent cross party engagement with stakeholders.

Q3. Similarly, there is no limit on the number of CPGs of which an MSP can be an office-bearer. The Committee considers that there should be a maximum limit of 5 CPGs on which a member can be an office-bearer. Do you agree with this proposal?

Yes: Both these options would require a focus for MSPs and their staff on the use of their time. We currently have too many CPGs and part of that is about competition about how stakeholders get regular engagement with MSPs.

Q4. The Code requires that a CPG must have at least 5 MSP members, with at least one member from each party or group represented on the Parliamentary Bureau (a waiver can be applied to the cross-party element of this requirement). It is natural in the lifecycle of a Session that a CPGs members may resign from CPGs. The Code does not currently provide any information about the deadline for any membership issues to be rectified, if necessary, following a resignation. The Committee proposes that a requirement be added to the Code that CPGs have 90 days from the date of a resignation to rectify any non-compliance in membership that may arise from that resignation. Do you support this change?

Yes

Q5. The Code sets out that election of office-bearers should take place at a CPG's initial meeting and at each annual general meeting. The guidance on the Code also makes clear that election of office-bearers can be carried out electronically outwith a CPG meeting. However, the Code does not provide a deadline for a CPG to rectify any compliance issues should any MSP officer-bearer resign from their position. The Committee proposes that a requirement is added to the Code that CPGs have 90 days from the date of a resignation to rectify any non-compliance in office-bearers that may arise from that resignation. Do you agree with this suggestion?

Yes

Operation of CPGs

Q6. CPGs are required to provide the Standards Clerks with notification of meetings at least 10 calendar days in advance. However, there is no requirement to notify cancellation of meetings. Do you think the Code should be changed to required notification of cancellation to be provided on or before the date of a meeting?

Don't know: I think this could be challenging. We are now in a new world with unpredictable timings for Decision Time which negatively impacts on CPG forward planning. In terms of cancellations this can be highly disruptive as members of the CPG who are not MSPs and those speaking at or organising presentations and catering all have to be cancelled or delayed. This is adding pressure to the management of CPGs.

Q7. CPGs are required to provide minutes of meetings but the Code does not currently set out a deadline for minutes to be provided. The Code does not currently set out what the minutes of meetings should contain other than in relation to attendance. The Committee is proposing to introduce a requirement for minutes to be submitted within 30 calendar days of the meeting taking place and to stipulate that minutes should include details of those present at the meeting and a brief summary of the issues discussed and actions agreed. Minutes that are substantially verbatim transcripts of a meeting or which are not in the required template would not be accepted. Do you agree with this proposal?

No

The minutes for the CPGs that I attend are drafted following the meeting and then approved at the subsequent meeting of the CPG. So a longer notice period is required. I would suggest 90 days. Minutes can be corrected at the CPG and feedback given on matters arising. 30 days would require additional meetings which would be counterproductive.

Compliance

Q8. To assist compliance, the Committee is proposing that there should be a maximum of three contacts for each Group – the Convener, the Secretary (where secretariat support is provided by an external organisation this must be a named individual within that organisation) and one other contact. Any changes to the contact point would require to be notified by the Convener. The Committee is also proposing that any documentation required under the terms of the Code (registration form, minutes and annual returns) must be submitted by the Convener from their own parliamentary email address. Do you agree with this proposal?

No: Most CPGs have a Convenor, Secretariat and Vice Convenors. The point of the Vice Convenors is to involve MSPs on a cross party basis. It means that the Convenor and Vice Convenors work together and gives us flexibility re chairing meetings which can be vital to the effective operation of the CPG.

The proposal for all documentation to come from the Convenor would add more bureaucracy and time commitment for Convenors. What is the issue that is being proposed to solve here?

Q9. In light of the rates of non-compliance with the rules, the Committee is also proposing that the rules set out that recognition will automatically be

withdrawn from CPGs that fail to fully meet the requirements of the Code for more than one year in a row. Do you support this proposal?

Yes: Guidance will need to be provided if this proposal is approved so that both existing and new MSPs and those providing the secretariat role are fully briefed on any new roles. Will the SPPA provide an in person briefing to run through the changes being proposed once they are agreed?

Q10. It has been suggested that there may be circumstances in which a Group may wish to request permission from the SPPA Committee to suspend its activities for a period of time, potentially up to a year, during a Session without recognition being withdrawn. Do you support this suggestion?

Don't know: What is the purpose of this suggestion? I go back to my earlier point that CPGs can provide excellent opportunities for engagement with MSPs and key stakeholders. They can enable discussions that give broader understanding of key issues and enable MSPs to work together out with committees. One issue which has not been raised is whether it would be acceptable for CPGs to meet less frequently? This could enable engagement to continue and inquiries to be carried out where this is seen to bring benefits to the work of the MSPs, but also enable priorities in terms of the work of CPGs and MSPs.

Response 36

Re-establishment of CPGs

Q1. Following an election, the Code allows CPGs that were recognised at the end of the previous session to re-register without, subject to certain criteria, requiring the approval of the SPPA Committee. Such re-registration currently requires to be completed within 90 days (not including any period of recess longer than 4 days) of the first meeting of the Parliament in the Session. This would mean that re-registrations could take place until around the end of October. The Committee considers that allowing a longer period for re-registration to take place would assist MSPs in being able to build a fuller picture of their commitments. The Committee proposes extending the deadline for re-registration to 120 calendar days. Do you support this proposal?

Yes

CPG membership and office bearers

Q2. At present there is no limit on the number of CPGs of which an MSP can be a member. The Committee is of the view that there should be a limit of 10 CPGs of which an MSP can be a member. Do you agree with this proposal?

Yes

Q3. Similarly, there is no limit on the number of CPGs of which an MSP can be an office-bearer. The Committee considers that there should be a maximum limit of 5 CPGs on which a member can be an office-bearer. Do you agree with this proposal?

Yes

Q4. The Code requires that a CPG must have at least 5 MSP members, with at least one member from each party or group represented on the Parliamentary Bureau (a waiver can be applied to the cross-party element of this requirement). It is natural in the lifecycle of a Session that a CPGs members may resign from CPGs. The Code does not currently provide any information about the deadline for any membership issues to be rectified, if necessary, following a resignation. The Committee proposes that a requirement be added to the Code that CPGs have 90 days from the date of a resignation to rectify any non-compliance in membership that may arise from that resignation. Do you support this change?

No: It would be very easy for a political group to not support any potential CPG which had a potential chair form a rival party. As such, the nature of CPG's and their non political view will broken at the outset. at least three parties on the Parliamentary Bureau (PB) would be better.

If however, the limit of 10 CPG's is introduce, this also makes it more challenging for smaller parties on the PB to help support CPG's.

Q5. The Code sets out that election of office-bearers should take place at a CPG's initial meeting and at each annual general meeting. The guidance on the Code also makes clear that election of office-bearers can be carried out electronically outwith a CPG meeting. However, the Code does not provide a deadline for a CPG to rectify any compliance issues should any MSP officer-bearer resign from their position. The Committee proposes that a requirement is added to the Code that CPGs have 90 days from the date of a resignation to rectify any non-compliance in office-bearers that may arise from that resignation. Do you agree with this suggestion?

Yes

Operation of CPGs

Q6. CPGs are required to provide the Standards Clerks with notification of meetings at least 10 calendar days in advance. However, there is no requirement to notify cancellation of meetings. Do you think the Code should be changed to required notification of cancellation to be provided on or before the date of a meeting?

Yes

Q7. CPGs are required to provide minutes of meetings but the Code does not currently set out a deadline for minutes to be provided. The Code does not currently set out what the minutes of meetings should contain other than in relation to attendance. The Committee is proposing to introduce a requirement for minutes to be submitted within 30 calendar days of the meeting taking place and to stipulate that minutes should include details of those present at the meeting and a brief summary of the issues discussed and actions agreed.

Minutes that are substantially verbatim transcripts of a meeting or which are not in the required template would not be accepted. Do you agree with this proposal?

Yes

Compliance

Q8. To assist compliance, the Committee is proposing that there should be a maximum of three contacts for each Group – the Convener, the Secretary (where secretariat support is provided by an external organisation this must be a named individual within that organisation) and one other contact. Any changes to the contact point would require to be notified by the Convener. The Committee is also proposing that any documentation required under the terms of the Code (registration form, minutes and annual returns) must be submitted by the Convener from their own parliamentary email address. Do you agree with this proposal?

Yes

Q9. In light of the rates of non-compliance with the rules, the Committee is also proposing that the rules set out that recognition will automatically be withdrawn from CPGs that fail to fully meet the requirements of the Code for more than one year in a row. Do you support this proposal?

Yes

Q10. It has been suggested that there may be circumstances in which a Group may wish to request permission from the SPPA Committee to suspend its activities for a period of time, potentially up to a year, during a Session without recognition being withdrawn. Do you support this suggestion?

Yes