



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

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9th Report 2020 (Session 5)

Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee

**Comataidh Inbhean, Dòighean-obrach is Cur-an-dreuchd
Poblach**

The Representation of the People (Electoral Registers Publication Date) (Coronavirus) (Scotland) Regulations

2020 [draft]



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Contents

The Representation of the People (Electoral Registers Publication Date) (Coronavirus) (Scotland) Regulations 2020 [draft]	1
Delegated Powers and Law Reform Committee Consideration	2
SPPA Committee Consideration	3
Annex: Extract from minutes	4

Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee

The remit of the Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee is to consider and report on—

- (a) the practice and procedures of the Parliament in relation to its business;
- (ab) a proposal for a Bill relating to the arrangements for financial assistance to non-Government political parties represented in the Parliament;
- (b) whether a member's conduct is in accordance with these Rules and any Code of Conduct for members, matters relating to members interests, and any other matters relating to the conduct of members in carrying out their Parliamentary duties;
- (c) the adoption, amendment and application of any Code of Conduct for members; and
- (d) matters relating to public appointments in Scotland;
- (e) matters relating to the regulation of lobbying; and
- (f) matters relating to Scottish general elections falling within the responsibility of the Cabinet Secretary for Government Business and Constitutional Relations.



<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/CurrentCommittees/standards-committee.aspx>



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The Representation of the People (Electoral Registers Publication Date) (Coronavirus) (Scotland) Regulations 2020 [draft]

1. The Representation of the People (Electoral Registers Publication Date) (Coronavirus) (Scotland) Regulations 2020 [draft] was laid before the Scottish Parliament on 24 June 2020 and referred to the Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee (SPPA Committee).
2. The Representation of the People Act 1983 requires EROs to conduct an annual canvass of all residential properties in their area to identify everyone who should be on the electoral register.
3. The draft Regulations seek to provide more time for Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) to conduct canvass activity by prescribing a later date for publication of the revised electoral register in the context of the Coronavirus outbreak and the impact that it is having on the capacity of EROs and their staff. The Policy Note indicates that the "Coronavirus outbreak has placed Electoral Registration Officers and their staff under great pressure, with some staff being diverted from electoral administration to deliver frontline services to support their communities during this challenging time." It also states that "postponing the publication date of the revised register will ease the burden on EROs, giving them more time to process and complete their canvass with potentially reduced resources at their disposal".
4. The Regulations propose that the date by which revised versions of the local government registers of electors in Scotland must be published should be 1 February 2021 instead of 1 December 2020.

Delegated Powers and Law Reform Committee Consideration

5. The Delegated Powers and Law Reform Committee (DPLRC) considered the draft Regulations on 11 August 2020. The DPLRC's [report](#) indicates that it had no points to raise on the instrument.

SPPA Committee Consideration

6. Motion S5M-22491 was lodged by Graeme Dey, Minister for Parliamentary Business and Veterans, and supported by Michael Russell, Cabinet Secretary for Government Business and Constitutional Relations, and Jenny Gilruth, Minister for Europe and International Development.
7. At the SPPA Committee's thirteenth meeting on 27 August 2020, it took evidence on the Representation of the People (Electoral Registers Publication Date) (Coronavirus) (Scotland) Regulations 2020 [draft] from—

Graeme Dey, Minister for Parliamentary Business and Veterans;

Jamie Bowman, Scottish Government Legal Directorate, Al Gibson, Policy Adviser, Parliament and Legislation Unit, and Kenneth Pentland, Senior Policy Officer, Elections Team, Scottish Government.
8. Following the evidence session, Graeme Dey moved Motion S5M-22491 that the Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee recommends that the the Representation of the People (Electoral Registers Publication Date) (Coronavirus) (Scotland) Regulations 2020 [draft].
9. The motion was agreed to without division.
10. The evidence taken and the debate can be found in the [Official Report](#) for the SPPA Committee meeting of 27 August 2020.

The Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee recommends that the Representation of the People (Electoral Registers Publication Date) (Coronavirus) (Scotland) Regulations 2020 [draft] be approved.

Annex: Extract from minutes

13th Meeting 2020 (Session 5), Thursday 27 August 2020

Subordinate legislation: The Committee took evidence on the Scottish Parliament (Disqualification) Order 2020 [draft] and on the Representation of the People (Electoral Registers Publication Date) (Coronavirus) (Scotland) Regulations 2020 [draft] from—

Graeme Dey, Minister for Parliamentary Business and Veterans;

Jamie Bowman, Scottish Government Legal Directorate, Al Gibson, Policy Adviser, Parliament and Legislation Unit, and Kenneth Pentland, Senior Policy Officer, Elections Team, Scottish Government.

Subordinate legislation: Graeme Dey moved—S5M-22491—That the Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee recommends that the Representation of the People (Electoral Registers Publication Date) (Coronavirus) (Scotland) Regulations 2020 [draft] be approved.

The motion was agreed to.

