

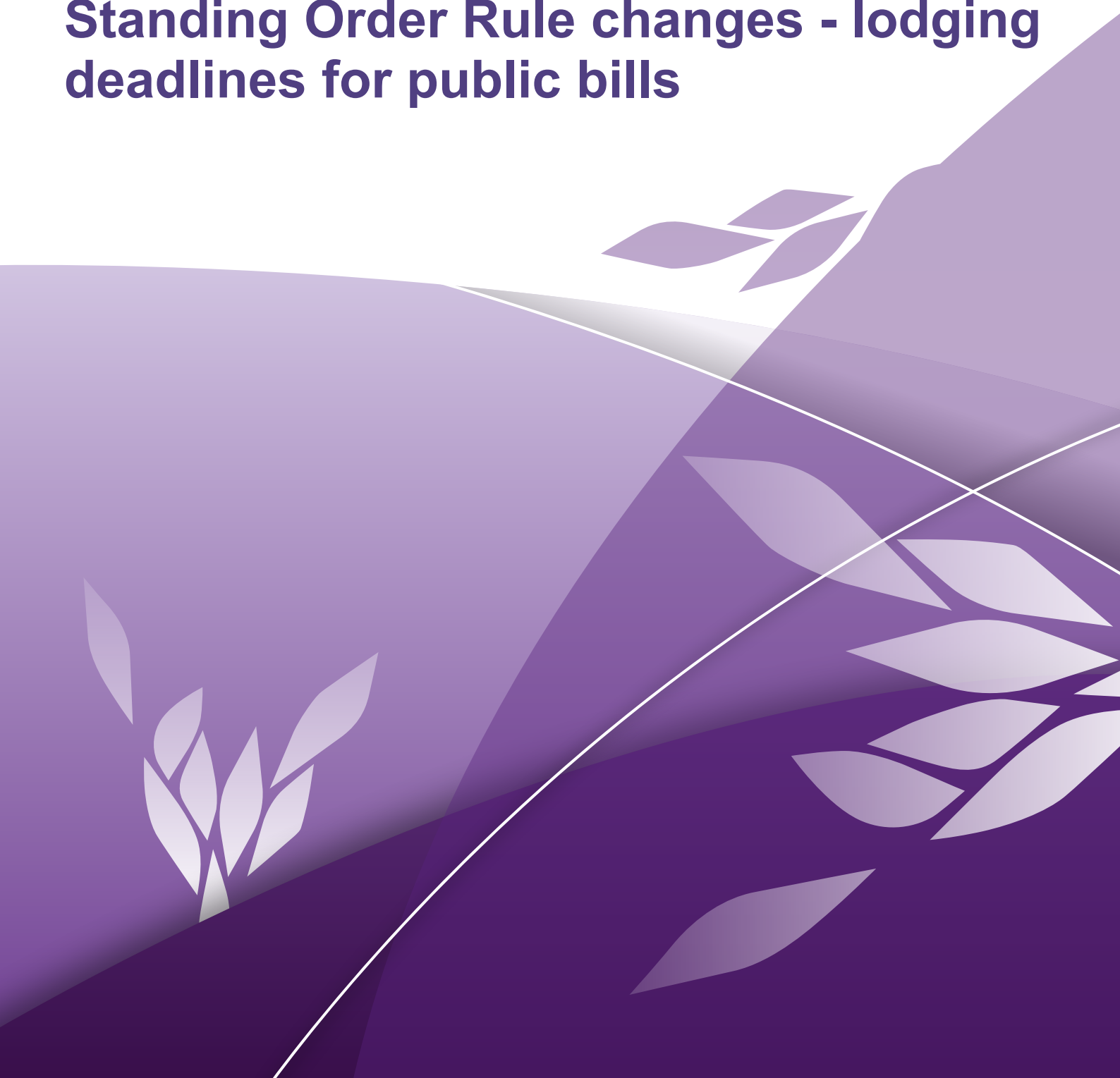


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Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee

Standing Order Rule changes - lodging deadlines for public bills



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Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee

To consider and report on the following (and any additional matter added under Rule 6.1.5A)—

- (a) the practice and procedures of the Parliament in relation to its business;
- (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;
- (d) matters relating to public appointments in Scotland;
- (e) matters relating to the regulation of lobbying; and
- (f) matters falling within the responsibility of the Minister for Parliamentary Business.

2. Where the Committee considers it appropriate, it may by motion recommend that a member's rights and privileges be withdrawn to such extent and for such period as are specified in the motion."



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Introduction

1. The Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee received a letter on 17 December 2025 from the Presiding Officer on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau [Annexe A] regarding proposing a temporary amendment from early 2026 to the end of 2026 of Standing Orders concerning lodging deadlines for public bills.
2. The letter requests the Committee consider an earlier deadline on the days before the final lodging day to enable the Legislation clerks to prepare the Daily List at an earlier point in the day and consequently this should lead to the Daily List being circulated to Members earlier too.
3. The letter states that the Bureau is proposing a pilot take place for earlier lodging deadlines. In the letter the Bureau invite the Committee to propose a temporary rule to be in place until the end of 2026 to alter the time by which amendments may be lodged on any day leading up to (but excluding) the final day, from 4.30pm to 2.30pm. The Bureau proposes that this change should apply to the daily deadline in relation to Stage 2, Stage 3, Reconsideration Stage and the Budget Bill. The deadline on the final lodging day (where relevant) would remain at 12 noon and the overall time available to Members to lodge amendments would therefore not change.
4. The Bureau proposes that if the rule change was made it should be subject to an interim review at the end of the current session and then a further review at the end of 2026.

Committee consideration

5. At its meeting on Thursday 8 January 2026 the Committee considered the request for a temporary Standing Order Rule Change. The Committee agreed to recommend a change to Standing Order rules to support the Bureau's recommendation.
6. The Committee also agreed to write to the Bureau to indicate it would support the reviews of the operation of the temporary rule being undertaken at the points identified by the Bureau. The Committee considers the Bureau would be best placed to undertake the interim review at the end of this Session and to write to the Committee with the conclusions of that interim review.

Conclusion

7. The Committee recommends to the Parliament the temporary Standing Order rule changes at Annexe B of this report.

Annexe A - Letter from Parliamentary Bureau

17 December 2025

Dear Convener,

I am writing to you on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, given the responsibility of the Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments (SPPA) Committee for recommending the temporary amendment of Standing Orders under Rule 17.1A.

At its meeting on 16 December 2025, the Bureau considered the lodging deadlines for public bills and agreed to request that the SPPA Committee consider recommending by motion the temporary amendment of Standing Orders to vary these deadlines for a trial period from early 2026 to the end of 2026.

Standing Orders make provision in relation to the time by which amendments to a Bill may be lodged on any day up to the deadline day for amendments. Amendments may be lodged until 4.30 pm, except on a final lodging day when the deadline is 12 noon (Rules 9.10.2 and 9.10.2A in relation to standard Bills and Rule 9.16.6 and 9.16.6A in relation to Budget Bills,).

Any amendments lodged before the deadline on any day will appear in a Daily List of amendments. The Daily List is circulated to those Members who have lodged amendments and to relevant committee members (lead and any secondary committee) that evening and published in the Business Bulletin.

The Legislation clerks prepare the Daily List of amendments following the deadline of 4.30 pm and then check the amendments on the list for compliance with proper form requirements, admissibility and marshalled order as well as checking that everything lodged that day (including any consequential amendments) has been included on the list. Where a large volume of amendments has been lodged on any day, tabling amendments and preparing and checking the list may take a significant amount of time, leading to the Daily List being circulated and published into the evening (and resulting in late notification of the amendments that have been lodged to Members).

The Bureau considered the time at which Members had received notification of amendments for a number of recent Stage 2s and Stage 3s and recognised that this notification could occur late into the evening.

Notification of amendments lodged by other Members, including the Member in charge of the Bill, via the Daily List, forms an important part of the amendment process and may impact on a Member's decision about the amendments they themselves decide to lodge (or to withdraw) and those they seek to amend and to support. The Scottish Government, by convention, lodges its own amendments one or two days in advance of the final deadline (depending on whether it is Stage 2 or 3) and other Members may be waiting for Government amendments before lodging their own. As such, the Bureau recognised that late circulation of the Daily List, particularly close to the deadline day, is less than ideal.

The Bureau considered that an earlier deadline on the days before the final lodging day would enable the Legislation clerks to prepare the Daily List at an earlier point in the day

and consequently should lead to the Daily List being circulated to Members earlier too. Any amendments lodged after the deadline on that day would appear in the Daily List the following day (as is the case now).

The Bureau is of the view that a temporary change to Standing Orders would allow for a pilot to take place for earlier lodging deadlines. The Bureau invites the SPPA Committee to propose a temporary rule to be in place until the end of 2026 to alter the time by which amendments may be lodged on any day leading up to (but excluding) the final day, from 4.30 pm to 2.30 pm. The Bureau proposes that this change should apply to the daily deadline in relation to Stage 2, Stage 3, Reconsideration Stage and the Budget Bill. The deadline on the final lodging day (where relevant) would remain at 12 noon and the overall time available to Members to lodge amendments would therefore not change.

The Bureau considered that the impact of the proposed change should be subject to an interim review at the end of the current session and then a further review at the end of 2026. As part of this review, views would be sought from the Scottish Government, Business Managers and the Non-Government Bills Unit. Any comments or concerns expressed to clerks by individual Members during the period of the temporary change would also be taken into account. A key assessment will be whether this change has resulted in Daily Lists being circulated at an earlier point (in comparison to the time lists of equivalent volume of amendments had been circulated earlier in the session).

In conclusion, the Bureau requests that the SPPA Committee takes the necessary steps to propose the temporary amendment of Standing Orders under Rule 17.1A Temporary Amendment to Standing Orders for the period from early 2026 to the end of 2026.

Rt Hon Alison Johnston MSP

Presiding Officer

Annexe B- Temporary Rule 6 Lodging Deadlines for Public Bills at Stages 2 and 3

1. This rule applies to the lodging deadlines for Public Bills at Stages 2 and 3 in Rule 9.10 and Rule 9.16. It ceases to apply on 21 December 2026.
2. Where provisions contained in this temporary rule are in conflict with other standing order provisions, those in the temporary rule have precedence.
3. In Rules 9.10.2, 9.10.2A and 9.16.6A, replace “16:30” with “14:30”.
4. Replace Rule 9.16.6 with:

“Amendments to a Budget Bill may be moved, and notice of amendments to such a Bill may be given, only by a member of the Scottish Government or a junior Scottish Minister. Notice of any amendment at Stage 2 or 3 shall be given by lodging it with the Clerk no later than 14:30 on the Friday immediately preceding the week in which the Stage is due to start”

