

Europe, External Affairs and Culture Committee
Tuesday 23 June 2026
1st Meeting, 2026 (Session 7)

Initial work programming

Purpose of paper

1. This paper seeks to support early discussion of the Committee's work programme. It invites members to:
 - consider some options for initial meetings after the summer recess
 - provide an initial steer on areas of interest
 - identify their priorities for business planning, including whether they wish to take a structured approach (for example, through a dedicated session) and what elements would be most valuable to include.
2. Members will have further opportunities to consider these issues in more depth, including agreeing strategic objectives and priorities and shaping the Committee's approach to its work for the session.

Context and background information

3. To assist with consideration of the above, the documents/briefings below, contained in the papers pack, may be helpful:
 - **Overview paper** (Private Paper 5) – This paper introduces key themes under the different aspects of the agreed remit of the Session 7 Committee, signposting related documents and policies, and indicating areas of existing, ongoing and upcoming work that the Committee may wish to consider.
 - [Legacy Report](#) from Session 6 Constitution, Europe, External Affairs and Culture Committee. (Paper 6)
 - [SPICe Explainer: How Devolution Works](#) (Paper 7)
 - [SPICe External affairs: subject profile](#) (Paper 8)
 - **Committee Effectiveness** (Paper 9) – This paper summarises the findings of the Session 6 inquiry into Strengthening committees' effectiveness, by the Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments (SPPA) Committee

Action

4. To support forward planning of the Committee's work, members are invited to provide an initial steer on any areas they may wish to explore in the autumn. This will enable clerks to begin developing options for early activity and make any necessary practical arrangements over the summer period.

5. Members may wish to identify:
 - opportunities for early evidence sessions (for example, hearing from key stakeholders)
 - opportunities for informal or private briefings with experts to support early understanding of key or complex issues
 - potential roundtable discussions with academics, practitioners or other stakeholders to explore priorities, test assumptions, or hear a range of perspectives
 - any key policy issues of current interest that fall within the Committee's remit.

Business planning

6. Committees will take formal decisions on their work programmes as required. Business planning provides an opportunity to take a more strategic and longer-term view of the Committee's work. This includes considering not only what work the Committee will undertake, but also how it will operate and where it can have the greatest impact over the Session.
7. A business planning session (or series of discussions) can provide an opportunity for members to:
 - develop a shared understanding of the Committee's role and purpose
 - build cohesion and support effective working between members
 - agree the Committee's strategic objectives and priorities for the session
 - agree approaches to working practices and engagement
 - inform the development of the Committee's initial work programme
 - consider the ongoing development of members over the course of the session.
8. Business planning discussions can take place as part of a structured event, which could be held over the summer or later in the Session (for example, over October recess).
9. Business planning events can be structured in a flexible way and can include a mix of internal and external input, facilitated discussion, engagement activity, and training and development. These elements can help to:
 - provide context and evidence to inform discussion
 - introduce new perspectives or challenge assumptions
 - support structured and inclusive discussion

- ensure the session makes the best use of members' time.

10. In practice, this might include:

- **Context and evidence:** briefing from SPICe and clerks on key issues within the Committee's remit, policy landscape and likely workload
- **External perspectives:** contributions from stakeholders (including practitioners or academics), or Scottish Government officials from relevant departments, for example through roundtables or short sessions
- **Engagement and participation:** input from PACT on engagement approaches or public priorities, including early consideration of how the Committee may wish to involve the public in its work
- **External engagement:** visits or meetings with stakeholders or communities.

11. A wide range of development opportunities is available over the course of the session, and committees may wish to take a planned approach to engaging with this offer as part of their work programming. Further detail is set out in the Committee Member Development Programme.

12. If the Committee wishes to have a business planning event, members are invited to consider what elements would be most useful to support this discussion.

Action

13. The Committee is invited to consider how it wishes to approach business planning:

- Does the Committee wish to hold a business planning event?

14. If so:

- Would it prefer to do this over the summer or later in the session?
- Where would it prefer to hold the event (within the Parliament or at an external venue)? (Note: applications by committees to hold business planning events at external venues will need budgetary approval.)
- Which two or three elements would be most valuable in supporting that discussion (for example, background briefing, external perspectives, engagement input or visits)? Would the Committee wish to make use of external coaching as part of its business planning event, for example a facilitated session focused on effective scrutiny and questioning?
- Are there any particular elements the Committee does not wish to include?

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- Is the Committee content to delegate development of the detailed programme to the Convener, in consultation with clerks, and to approve remaining elements by correspondence?

**Clerks to the Committee
June 2026**