

PARLIAMENTARY BUREAU

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 12 MAY 2020 AT 12 noon.

Attending: Ken Macintosh (chair), Linda Fabiani, Christine Grahame*, Lewis Macdonald, Graeme Dey, Liz Smith, Rhoda Grant, Patrick Harvie*, Willie Rennie.

Apologies: Elaine Smith.

Observing: George Adam.

Officials present: David McGill, Tracey White, Irene Fleming, Catherine Fergusson, Neil Stewart, Lewis McNaughton*, Susan Duffy*, Joanne McNaughton*, Steven Bell*, Gail Grant, Jason Lloyd.

* indicates attendance by videoconference

1. Item 1a: Minutes of last meeting — The minutes of 5 May 2020 were agreed.
2. Future business programme — Prior to discussing the future business programme, the Bureau considered arrangements for future meetings of the Parliament. The Bureau noted that, on Monday 11 May, a successful test had taken place of the remote voting system. The Bureau also noted that, following that test, further testing would take place with Members. The Bureau noted the following in relation to remote voting procedures—
 - Members are unable to change their vote during a division;
 - each vote will last for 2-3 minutes for the first few weeks of use;
 - all members will have to use the remote voting system during hybrid proceedings, regardless of whether they are present in the Chamber or following and participating in proceedings remotely.

The Bureau agreed to consider a paper on the security of remote voting at a future meeting. The Bureau further agreed that the first test of the remote voting system should be undertaken immediately following Decision Time on Tuesday 12 May by Bureau and SPCB members.

The Bureau also considered the format of FMQs and the possible reintroduction of portfolio questions. The Bureau noted concerns from some committee conveners about the impact on committee business of FMQs routinely beginning at 12.20 pm. The Bureau agreed that FMQs should be limited to around 1 hour.

The Bureau noted that, subject to agreement to the Business Motion, portfolio questions would re-start on Thursday 28 May, with questions on Education and Skills, Health and Sport and Communities and Local Government.

The Bureau then discussed a revised programme of business for the week commencing 11 May 2020 and a programme of business for the weeks beginning 18 May 2020 and 25 May 2020.

Rhoda Grant requested the opportunity to question the Scottish Government on older people and care homes and on local government. Graeme Dey indicated that he would consider including these in the business programme for the following week. Graeme Dey further indicated that he would be willing to consider further approaches for statements in future weeks.

Following discussion, the Bureau agreed to recommend to the Parliament a revised programme of business for the week commencing 11 May 2020 and a programme of business for the weeks commencing 18 May 2020 and 25 May 2020.

Rhoda Grant reserved her party's position in relation to the business programme.

3. Hybrid meetings — The Bureau considered draft guidance for MSPs on hybrid meetings. The Bureau agreed to consider the minimum number of Members required to be present in the Chamber for hybrid meetings at a future meeting.

The Bureau noted that Business Managers would be required to give advance notification of which Members will participate in hybrid meetings remotely and which Members will be physically present in the Chamber and further noted that it would be preferable to alternate between physical and remote participants and that this will be taken into account in determining the speaking order.

The Bureau agreed that priority for remote participation should be given to those Members who are currently unable to travel to the Parliament and noted that all Members participating remotely would require to be logged in to the video conferencing system no later than 45 minutes before the start of the meeting.

The Bureau further noted that, while work is ongoing on a remote voting system, only those Members present in the Chamber will be able to vote.

4. Proposed Coronavirus (No. 2) (Scotland) Bill: timetable and parliamentary procedure — The Bureau agreed to a timetable for the Coronavirus (No. 2) (Scotland) Bill, which was introduced on 11 May 2020. The Bureau noted that the Scottish Government intends to propose to the Parliament that the Bill be treated as an Emergency Bill, but that the Covid-19 Committee was expecting to consider and report on the Bill at Stage 1 and to consider the Bill at Stage 2.

The Bureau therefore agreed to vary Standing Orders to remove the default timings for Emergency Bills, and to suspend the rules in relation to the production of revised or supplementary accompanying documents. The Bureau also agreed the following timetables for the Bill—

- Stage 1 consideration by the Covid-19 Committee to take place on Tuesday 12 May;
- the Stage 1 debate to take place on Wednesday 13 May;
- Stage 2 to take place in the Covid-19 Committee on Tuesday 19 May (with the committee being given the flexibility to sit at the same time as the Parliament if necessary);
- Stage 3 to take place on Wednesday 20 May.

The Bureau agreed to lodge a motion giving effect to the above.

The Bureau also agreed the following deadlines for lodging amendments to the Bill and noted that these will be announced in the Business Bulletin—

- the deadline for lodging amendments at Stage 2 would be noon on Friday 15 May;
- the deadline for lodging amendments at Stage 3 would be 6.00 pm on Tuesday 19 May.

5. Approval of SSIs — The Bureau agreed to recommend to the Parliament that the following SSIs be approved—

- the Deposit and Return Scheme for Scotland Regulations 2020;
- the Environmental Regulations (Enforcement Measures) (Scotland) Amendment Order 2020.

Liz Smith advised that the Conservatives would speak against the motion to approve the Regulations.

6. Referral of a Legislative Consent Memorandum — The Bureau agreed to recommend to the Parliament that the Legislative Consent Memorandum on the Agriculture Bill be referred to the Rural Economy and Connectivity Committee.

7. Suspension and variation of standing orders: committee voting procedures – The Bureau agreed that a motion be lodged to vary Rule 11.8.3 of Standing Orders for the duration of the public response to the Novel Coronavirus COVID-10 to allow voting in committees to take place by roll call or electronic means in addition to show of hands.

8. Publication scheme — It was agreed that all papers considered at the meeting should be published.

9. Date of next meeting — The next meeting of the Bureau would be at 12 noon on Tuesday 19 May 2020.

Irene Fleming
Clerk to the Parliamentary Bureau
12 May 2020