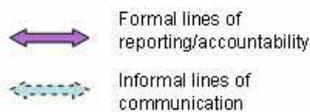
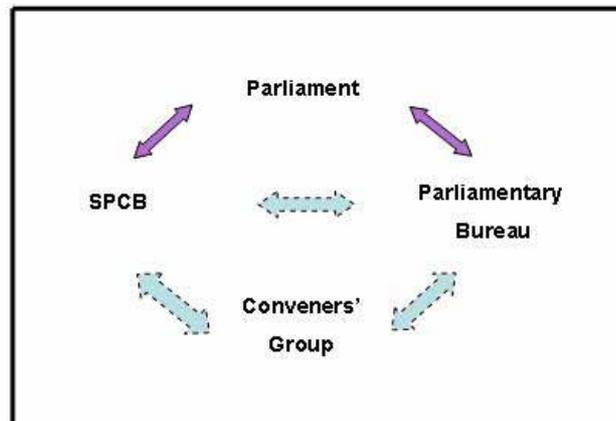


PARLIAMENTARY BODIES – RELATIONSHIPS



The Scottish Parliament

The Scottish Parliament is made up of 129 Members of the Scottish Parliament (MSPs). One of the 129 MSPs is elected by the others to serve as the Presiding Officer; another two MSPs are elected as Deputy Presiding Officers. One of the Presiding Officers will always chair meetings in the Chamber.

The Scottish Parliament also elects the members of the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body (see below) who are then accountable to the Scottish Parliament for providing the staff, accommodation and services required by the Parliament to carry out its work.

The Parliamentary Bureau

A group of MSPs representing political parties and groupings with five members or more in the Parliament (usually the parties' Business Managers) form the Parliamentary Bureau. They meet regularly in private to arrange the programme of meetings and the business to be discussed. Meetings are chaired by the Presiding Officer and the minutes, agendas and papers of these meetings can be found on the Scottish Parliament website.

The Parliamentary Bureau draws up a proposed agenda or business programme for the Parliament. This programme includes deadlines for the stages of bills or other legislation. It also includes Ministerial Statements and debates. The proposed agenda is considered and decided by the Parliament. The agreed timetable of future business is published in the Business Bulletin.

The Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body

The Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body (SPCB) is a statutory body provided for by the Scotland Act 1998 and consists of at least 5 members – the Presiding Officer, who chairs the Body, and at least 4 Members elected by the Parliament. Members are elected as individuals to represent the interests of all the MSPs and not as party representatives. The SPCB provides the staff, accommodation and services needed by the Parliament to carry out its work. It meets fortnightly in private and the agendas, minutes of its meetings and, where appropriate, the papers considered, are published on the Scottish Parliament website.

As mentioned above, the SPCB is accountable to the Scottish Parliament and it is held to account through a number of means:

- SPCB Annual Accounts and Report
- Written parliamentary questions
- Oral SPCB question time (held in the Chamber approx 3 times each year)
- Publication of minutes and papers

There is no formal relationship between the SPCB and the Parliamentary Bureau. However, a degree of continuity is provided through both groups being chaired by the Presiding Officer. This also provides a route for communication between the groups and it is not unusual for each group to seek advice/assistance/input from the other on particular issues.

The Conveners' Group

The Conveners' Group is a group consisting of all the conveners of the mandatory and subject committees. The allocation of convenerships has regard to the balance between the political parties in the Parliament. The Group is chaired by the Presiding Officer who delegates this function to one of the Deputy Presiding Officers. The Group normally meets monthly. Notes of decisions taken by the Group are published on the Scottish Parliament website.

The Conveners' Group provides a forum where committee conveners can meet to discuss matters of mutual interest and facilitates liaison between the committees, the Parliamentary Bureau and the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body. It also has a number of functions relating to the approval of travel by committees and must be consulted on issues of committee competence and joint committee meetings.