

# Parliamentary Bureau – Committee request to meet at the same time as the Parliament

## Introduction

1. The Parliamentary Bureau is invited to consider a request from the Criminal Justice Committee to meet at the same time as plenary proceedings on Thursday 11 January, between 1.00 pm and 2.30 pm. The purpose of this meeting is to take oral evidence, in person, from Angela Constance MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Justice and Home Affairs and Teresa Medhurst, Chief Executive of the Scottish Prison Service, and to consider whether it agrees with two negative SSIs.

## Background to Request

2. The Committee will consider the Scottish Prison Service's recently published policy on 'The Management of Transgender People in custody', as well as the following two related negative SSIs:
  - [SSI 2023/366: The Prisons and Young Offenders Institutions \(Scotland\) Amendment Rules 2023](#)
  - [SSI 2023/364: The Gender Recognition \(Disclosure of Information\) \(Scotland\) Order 2023](#)
3. The statutory instruments are both negative. It is the view of the Committee that, due to the public interest in this issue, it is necessary to take oral evidence from the Scottish Government and the Scottish Prison Service on these SSIs and the wider policy. The Committee must conclude its consideration of these instruments by Monday, 22 January 2024.
4. The Committee is currently taking Stage 1 evidence on the Victims, Witnesses, and Justice Reform (Scotland) Bill. Unfortunately, there is no time available within the currently planned weekly meetings of the Committee to schedule an additional evidence session on the SSIs and the Scottish Prison Service's transgender prisoners' policy into the normal meeting schedule in January.
5. The Committee has one meeting scheduled to take Stage 1 evidence on the Bill on Wednesday 10 January, an informal evidence session on Tuesday 16 January, and a formal evidence session on Wednesday 17 January. These meetings include evidence sessions with the survivors of sexual offences and separately with senior members of the judiciary. These could not easily be rescheduled. Therefore, the Committee is seeking to schedule an additional committee meeting in the first week following recess, on Thursday 11 January, to meet the timetable for the SSIs.

## *Timings proposed for meeting*

6. In terms of Chamber business, the timings above would mean that the Committee is seeking approval to meet during Member's Business and Portfolio

Questions (currently expected to be Education and Skills). The Committee's meeting would begin at 1.00 pm and finish by 2.30 pm.

### **Decision**

7. The Bureau is invited to consider the Criminal Justice Committee's request and to recommend to the Parliament that the Committee be given permission to meet at the same time as the Chamber between 1.00 pm and 2.30 pm on Thursday 11 January 2024.

Parliamentary Business Team  
December 2023