

PARLIAMENTARY BUREAU

FINANCE AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE: REQUEST TO APPOINT ADVISER

Background

1. At its meeting on 1 November 2022, the Finance and Public Administration Committee agreed its approach to an inquiry into the Scottish Government decision-making process and agreed to seek approval to appoint an adviser to support this inquiry.

2. This inquiry represents the first substantive inquiry in relation to Public Administration that the Committee has undertaken. It focusses on decision-making within Government, which is not an area of specialist knowledge covered by dedicated SPICe researchers. Key to public understanding of the Scottish Government's decision-making process is greater transparency over the Scottish Government's current approach to decision making and what best practice is in this area.

3. The Committee therefore agreed to seek approval to appoint an adviser. A substantive part of that adviser's role would be to undertake a review of relevant research from within the UK and internationally on decision-making including that by government.

4. In addition, members consider that having access to impartial evidence-based specialist knowledge from an adviser would be beneficial when considering report recommendations relating to robust processes and systems of decision-making as well as any recommendations relating to necessary skills. Using an independent adviser may also support greater participation from Scottish Government officials.

Appointment of Adviser

8. It is proposed that the adviser be appointed at a standard day rate for up to 15 days between November 2022 and May 2023. At its meeting on 1 November the Committee agreed the specification set out below.

Adviser Specification

Adviser's Duties

9. The role of the adviser will be to provide advice and assistance to the Finance and Public Administration Committee as part of its inquiry into how the Scottish Government makes decisions.

Specifically, the adviser will assist the Committee by:

- Undertaking a desk-based review of relevant research on effective decision-making including that by Governments and provide a briefing paper to the Committee

- Attending relevant Committee meetings and engagement events and providing advice including potentially giving evidence on the outcome of the desk based research.
- Supporting the Clerks and SPICe with development of questions for the written call for views (should time permit) and any engagement events to support the inquiry (such as with Scottish Government officials)
- Reviewing written responses to the call for views and then supporting SPICe analysis of written responses and identification of key themes and witnesses for oral evidence
- Peer reviewing and supporting drafting of the draft report.

Skills/Abilities

10. The adviser will have good written and oral communication skills. Specifically they will be able to communicate complex concepts in a clear and succinct manner. The adviser will also have the ability to work to tight deadlines.

Experience

11. The adviser will preferably have had experience of undertaking research with Government and civil service officials in the areas of public administration and ideally with a Scottish focus. Experience of working in a political environment would be a distinct advantage.

Knowledge

12. The adviser will have expertise in public administration and more specifically in decision-making preferably by Government or in allied public sectors having undertaken work in this field. Ideally they will also have knowledge of the Scottish Parliament and Government.

Time Commitment

13. It is estimated that up to 15 days work will be required during the period from approximately November 2022 to May 2022. This is the maximum time commitment.
14. The significant portion of this time (up to 5 days) will be spent undertaking the review of relevant research to provide a briefing paper summarising the relevant research relating to effective decision-making including by Governments.
15. Another portion of this work will be attending relevant parts of meetings of the Finance and Public Administration Committee along with any engagement events. (approximately 5 days) either to brief committee members or to view oral evidence taking sessions. The Finance and Public Administration Committee normally meets on Tuesday mornings, apart from during parliamentary recesses.

16. In addition, there will be a requirement to spend time (up to 5 days) preparing written briefings related to the evidence received and support the clerk in developing the engagement events, to provide support with the SPICe summary of evidence and to support drafting the final Committee report.

Decision

17. The Bureau is invited to approve the appointment of an adviser to the Finance and Public Administration Committee to support its inquiry into Scottish Government decision making process.

**Finance and Public Administration Committee Clerks
November 2022**