

# 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 Finance and Public Administration Committee to meet at the same time as plenary proceedings on Thursday 18 January between 10.30 am and 12 noon. The purpose of this meeting is to take oral evidence, virtually, from the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, The Rt. Hon. Michael Gove MP.
2. This evidence session had previously been arranged for Thursday 7 December between 10.45 and 12 noon but was postponed by the Secretary of State due to significant diary pressures

## Background to Request

3. The Committee has an ongoing interest in the UK Government's approach to the replacement of EU structural funds. This builds on the work undertaken by the Session 5 Finance and Constitution Committee.
4. At the time of the UK being a member of the EU, the Scottish Government played a key role in directing where funding in Scotland was spent. Under the UK Government's Levelling Up Fund, as well as in relation to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, such funding is provided to Local Authorities and in some cases other organisations either through direct allocation or through competitive bidding. The Levelling Up and Regeneration Act ("the Act") also requires the UK Government to have regard to any role of the Scottish Parliament. This is in relation to the Levelling Up missions and the progress towards their delivery.
5. This UK Government funding approach has direct implications for the Scottish Budget and the Scottish Government's policy and funding decisions. The Committee is therefore keen to explore with the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities the outcomes delivered by this replacement funding, the consultation requirements in the Act as well how the Secretary of State works with the Scottish Government in relation to levelling up priorities and bids.
6. On 24 February 2022 the Secretary of State gave evidence to the Committee setting out the UK Government's approach to Community Renewal Funding, Levelling Up Funds and at that time, the forthcoming UK Shared Prosperity Funds.
7. In November 2021 the Secretary of State confirmed that he would be open to appearing in 2023. As noted above the evidence session with the Secretary of State, agreed for 7 December 2023, was postponed and the Committee has now agreed to the Secretary of State's proposal to give evidence virtually on Thursday 18 January between 10.30 am and 12 noon.

*Timings proposed for meeting*

8. In terms of Chamber business, the timings above would mean that the Committee is seeking approval to meet during General Questions, which start at 11.40 am. The Committee's meeting would finish in time for First Minister's Questions at 12 noon.

Decision

9. The Bureau is invited to consider the Finance and Public Administration 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 11.40 am and 12 noon on Thursday 18 January.

Parliamentary Business Team

December 2023