

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 24 February, most likely between 13:00 and 14:30. The purpose of this meeting is to take oral evidence, in person, from the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, The Rt. Hon. Michael Gove MP.

Background to Request

2. The Committee has an ongoing interest in the UK Government's approach to the replacement of EU structural funds now that the UK has left the EU. This builds on the work undertaken by the Session 5 Finance and Constitution Committee.
3. 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 proposals, as set out in the recently published Levelling Up White Paper¹, as well as in relation to the Community Renewal Fund and the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, such funding is now bid for by Local Authorities and in some cases other organisations. This has implications for the Scottish Budget and the Committee is therefore keen to explore this replacement funding with the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.
4. In October 2021, the Committee invited the Secretary of State to give evidence in November. He accepted the invitation and committed to appearing in person. Since then, dialogue has continued at an official level exploring a number of dates. The Secretary of State's officials have now confirmed that he would be available to give evidence on 24 February. He will also speak at the COSLA and Improvement Service Annual Conference on the same day.
5. An official letter from the Secretary of State's office confirming his attendance is expected. However, given that the proposed Committee meeting is in the first week after February recess, the Committee is required to seek the Bureau's approval now. The Committee clerks will ensure that the Parliamentary Business Team is made aware of any developments in respect of this request.

¹ [Levelling Up the United Kingdom - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/levelling-up-the-united-kingdom)

Timings proposed for meeting

6. The Secretary of State's officials have provisionally confirmed that he would be available to appear before the Committee between 13:00 and 14:30 on Thursday 24 February. However, at the time of writing, these timings remain unconfirmed. It is hoped that they will be confirmed as soon as possible.
7. In terms of Chamber business, the timings above would mean that the Committee is seeking approval to meet during members' business, which starts at 12:45. The meeting would finish at the same time as the start of afternoon Chamber business at 14:30.

Decision

8. Business Managers are 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 during Members's business on Thursday 24 February.

**Parliamentary Business Team
February 2022**