

**Commission on
Parliamentary
Reform**

Your Parliament
Your Voice

Coimisean air
Ath-leasachadh
Pàrlamaideach

Do Phàrlamaid
Do Ghuth

A renewed vision for the Scottish Parliament

Recommendations to deliver a more effective Scottish Parliament have been published today (20 June) by the Commission on Parliamentary Reform.

The publication of the report concludes the work of the Commission which was tasked in October 2016 by the Presiding Officer, Rt Hon Ken Macintosh MSP, with exploring how the Parliament should evolve to ensure it best meets the needs of the Scottish people.

With over 70 recommendations, the report presents a substantial package of reforms which will see the biggest change to the Scottish Parliament since its establishment in 1999. The recommendations cover almost all aspects of the Parliament's work from committees through to public engagement.

The recommendations include the introduction of Parliamentary elected committee conveners, measures to strengthen committees and the scrutiny of legislation, as well as other changes aimed at increasing ministerial accountability.

Commission Chair, John McCormick said:

“The Scottish Parliament is now firmly established in Scottish life. There is no doubt, however, that there are challenges ahead. The political landscape of today is very different from when the Parliament was established 18 years ago. What we have delivered with our report is a package of reforms which will enable the Parliament to meet these challenges head on. The recommendations in our report are substantial and taken together represent very real change in how the Parliament operates.”

“The Scottish people have been at the heart of the Parliament but more could be done to involve them in its work. That's why we have made a series of recommendations to allow people throughout the country to engage with the Parliament how they want and where they want.”

“When this Commission was launched the Presiding Officer referred to the Parliament's founding principles and the need for the Parliament to get back to its roots. Our recommendations keep faith with those founding principles while delivering significant reform.”

Recommendations within the report include:

- Smaller, stronger committees with Conveners elected by Parliament.
- Creating more Parliamentary time by allowing committees to meet at the same time as the debating chamber.
- Parliament working with political parties and others to agree benchmarks in terms of diversity in candidates for Scottish Parliamentary elections
- Scrapping the requirement for party leaders' and MSP selected questions to be published in advance of FMQs.
- Expanding the legislative process to allow more time for pre and post-legislative scrutiny.
- The establishment of a national Legislative Standards Body to improve the quality of legislation brought to Parliament.
- A stronger role for the Presiding Officer in ruling on conduct in the chamber.
- Changing the way the business of the debating chamber is decided.
- Establishing a Committee Engagement Unit to support committees to become more innovative and risk taking in their engagement activities

More information about all of these recommendations as well as a copy of the Commission's report can be found:

www.parliamentreform.scot

Background

The Commission on Parliamentary Reform was set up in October 2016 with the remit of considering ways in which the Parliament can:

- be assured it has the right checks and balances in place for the effective conduct of parliamentary business;
- increase its engagement with wider society and the public; and
- clarify its identity as distinct from the Scottish Government.

During its consideration, Commission members attended 50 events across Scotland, hearing from over 1,200 people. It received 105 responses to its call for views with 256 people responding to the on line survey.

During formal meetings the Commission heard from 55 witnesses including former First Ministers and journalists from print and broadcast sectors.

Further information on the Commission and its membership can be found on its website at:

<https://parliamentaryreform.scot/>

You can also follow the Commission on twitter @ParlyReform

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