

Parliamentary Reform called for

Parliamentary Business Secretary Bruce Crawford has called for reform to ensure the Scottish Parliament is open, responsive and in tune with public interests.

Mr Crawford said that while structural and procedural changes were needed, any reform needed to go further. He has highlighted potential areas for reform, including:-

- Ensuring quicker responses to public concerns
- Greater pre and post legislative scrutiny
- More focussed Committee inquiries
- Encouraging Committees to bring forward their own Bills
- Changing the chamber sitting times
- More flexible rules on contributions from backbenchers

He said: "Scotland's legislature is founded on a distinctive and progressive vision – one in which the Government, the Parliament and the people work in partnership to shape our nation's destiny and deliver the policies Scotland needs. "Holding the government to account may seem more relevant now that there is a majority government but this is not the first time such a majority has held sway across Parliament – the first eight years were dominated by a coalition which also held a majority of Committee Conveners and members.

I have already taken steps to ensure the smaller parties have committee places and that the Liberal Democrats are represented on the Parliamentary Bureau. But we need to go further. I am particularly interested in asking the Public Petitions Committee how they could help the Parliament respond quicker to public concerns. I believe that there are options on how to take these and other ideas forward.

The Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee

could conduct a review or it may be useful to take the review outwith Parliament but I am clear that any review should seek the views and contributions of people across Scotland. However the review is conducted, it must be done with cross party agreement. We have learned a lot about consensus politics during the last Parliamentary session of minority government – we should be able to carry that attitude into looking at how to reform and renew the Parliament during this session.”