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Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

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## **Finance and Constitution Committee Comataidh Ionmhais is Bun-reachd**

# **Pre-release Access to Official Statistics (Scotland) Bill Financial Memorandum**



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# Finance and Constitution Committee

To consider and report on the following (and any additional matter added under Rule 6.1.5A)—

(a) any report or other document laid before the Parliament by members of the Scottish Government containing proposals for, or budgets of, public revenue or expenditure or proposals for the making of a Scottish rate resolution, taking into account any report or recommendations concerning such documents made to them by any other committee with power to consider such documents or any part of them;

(b) any report made by a committee setting out proposals concerning public revenue or expenditure;

(c) Budget Bills; and

(d) any other matter relating to or affecting the revenue or expenditure of the Scottish Administration or other monies payable into or expenditure payable out of the Scottish Consolidated Fund.

(e) Constitutional matters falling within the responsibility of the Cabinet Secretary for the Constitution, Europe and External Affairs.



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# Committee Membership



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Scottish National Party



**Deputy Convener**  
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**John Mason**  
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**Alex Rowley**  
Scottish Labour

# Introduction

1. The [Pre-release Access to Official Statistics \(Scotland\) Bill](#) was introduced by Gordon Lindhurst on behalf of the Economy, Energy and Fair Work Committee on 8 September 2020.
2. Currently, Scottish ministers and their advisers can see official statistics before they are published. This is called pre-release access (PRA). The current law says ministers can have PRA up to 5 days before publication, or 1 day for market-sensitive statistics. Market-sensitive statistics include information about GDP, retail sales, Quarterly National Accounts Scotland and Government Expenditure and Revenue Scotland (GERS). The Bill would change the law so that all economic statistics can only be shared with ministers 1 day before they are published. PRA for GDP and retail sales would be reduced to zero after 2 years. If the Bill becomes an Act, this would be reviewed after 3 years.

# Financial Memorandum

3. As set out in the [Financial Memorandum](#) accompanying the Bill, the Bill amends the existing statutory regime for PRA that is set out in the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and in the Pre-release Access to Official Statistics (Scotland) Order 2008 in the following respects—
    - after a year, reducing (from one working day to 4 hours) the PRA limit for two specific categories of economic statistics (Gross Domestic Product and Retail Sales Index for Scotland), and then, after a further year, prohibiting PRA for such statistics altogether;
    - requiring an independent review of the impact of that reduction and removal;
    - the reduction from five working days to one of the PRA limit for other economic statistics.
  4. The costs to which the provisions of the Bill is expected to give rise relate solely to the second strand, the independent review, and fall solely on the Scottish Administration. The costs are estimated between £6,000-£7,000, up to a maximum of £56,550.61 depending on which individual or organisation is appointed to undertake the review, and on the time and parameters required of that piece of work.
  5. The Finance and Constitution Committee issued a call for views on the [Financial Memorandum](#) which closed on 23 October 2020. The Committee received no responses to this call for views.
  6. At Stage 1, a Committee Bill is not referred to a lead committee for a report on its general principles. The Finance and Constitution Committee will consider and report on the Financial Memorandum and the DPLR Committee must report on any provisions conferring power to make subordinate legislation, or conferring power on the Scottish Ministers to issue any directions, guidance or code of practice.
7. The Committee has no comment to make on the Financial Memorandum.

