



The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

# **International Relations: Parliamentary travel**

## **By correspondence**

**Reference: SPCB (2022) Paper 25**

### **Executive summary**

1. The Corporate Body is invited to consider forthcoming overseas parliamentary travel and, in accordance with Section 2, paragraph 62 of the Code of Conduct for Members of the Scottish Parliament in relation to receipt by Members of travel, hospitality etc., approve the details of the travel and other costs associated with the outward visit below.

### **Issues and options**

2. The Presiding Officer will undertake her first international outward visit on 7 and 8 April when she visits the Dáil Éireann for a series of meetings.
3. The purpose of the visit is for the Presiding Officer to have discussion around the workings of parliament. In particular, discussions with the Ceann Comhairle on the Forum on a Family Friendly and Inclusive Parliament which was established and reported in November 2021. This will cover issues around managing order in the Chamber, respect in debates, timetabling of business, learnings from hybrid and virtual proceedings maternity cover of Members, caring responsibilities, harassment and bullying, tours and public access and engagement and strengthening relations between both parliaments.

### **Governance**

4. The SPCB will recall that, within the International Strategy which it agreed in September 2021, there is a new requirement for the International Relations Office (IRO) to outline to the SPCB why the visit is in person (as

opposed to virtual) and the travel options and environmental impact considered by the delegation.

5. As a way of developing the relationships which it is important the Presiding Officer has with other parliament speakers and discussing their particular roles, perhaps a unique aspect of the international work, then in person, face to face meetings is considered appropriate and necessary on this occasion.
6. Travel options between Edinburgh and Dublin are by air or by train and ferry. The CO<sub>2</sub>e footprint (each way) for flying is 51.05 kg compared with 20.33 kg for train and ferry. The travel times (each way) are 1 hour for flying and 10½ hours for train and ferry.
7. With the Presiding Officer's commitments and responsibilities on Wednesday 6 April, the only option to make this a viable visit is for travel out on Thursday 7 April. To accommodate a near full day of meetings then the train and ferry would not work. In addition, meetings will be held on the Friday morning which would need to be curtailed if travel back was by train and ferry. Accordingly, travel will be by air both ways.

## **Resource implications**

8. The estimated cost for this visit is £1,000 which covers travel, accommodation and appropriate incidental expense for the Presiding Officer and two accompanying officials (her Principal Private Secretary and the Head of International Relations).
9. Section 2, paragraph 62 of the Code of Conduct for Members of the Scottish Parliament states that certain overseas visits are excluded from the requirement to register where the travel and other costs are wholly met by the SPCB (in this case, from the IRO budget).

## **Publication Scheme**

10. This paper will be published in line with the SPCB's Publication Scheme.

## **Decision**

11. The SPCB is invited to consider the above travel and, in accordance with the Code of Conduct, approve the details of the travel and the associated costs above.

12. The IRO will then notify the Member concerned they do not need to register this travel.

**International Relations Office**

March 2022