



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Minute of the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body (SPCB) meeting held on Thursday 7 March 2024 at 9.00am

Present:

- Alison Johnstone MSP (chair)
- Claire Baker MSP
- Jackson Carlaw MSP
- Maggie Chapman MSP
- Christine Grahame MSP

In attendance:

- David McGill
- Michelle Hegarty
- Janice Crerar
- Sara Glass, Mairi Pearson, Peter Walker
- Tracey White
- Alan Durward, Iain Rae
- Huw Williams
- Eric MacLeod
- Mark Brough
- Lisa Creamer
- Judith Proudfoot, Secretary

Previous minutes

1. The SPCB agreed the minute of the meeting held on 22 February 2024.

Matters arising

2. The SPCB received an update on the SPCB Investigation and endorsed the Investigating Officer's decision not to accept Mr Matheson's request for a meeting on the basis that it was clear from his request that any meeting in person would be to raise issues already put forward in his current submission.

Meeting with the Scottish Biometrics Commissioner

3. As the funder of officeholders, the SPCB had instigated a series of meetings to engage with individual officeholders on an annual basis. The SPCB welcomed Dr Brian Plastow, the Scottish Biometrics Commissioner, to the meeting.
4. Since his appointment in 2021, the Commissioner had been engaged in establishing the office, promoting the new function, and putting in place a national statutory Code of Practice on the acquisition, retention, use and destruction of biometric data for criminal justice and police purposes in Scotland, believed to be a first in the world.
5. The discussion with the Commissioner covered a range of areas including: the pace of changing technologies in the area of biometric data; his role in supporting and promoting the adoption of lawful, effective and ethical practices in relation to biometric data in a policing and criminal justice context; and his interaction with the Parliament and its committees.
6. The SPCB thanked the Commissioner for his attendance.

Meeting with members of the Scottish Human Rights Commission

7. The SPCB noted that a recruitment exercise was currently being undertaken to find a new part-time chair of the Scottish Human Rights Commission and welcomed the following members of the Commission: Jim Farish, Shelly Gray and Claire Methven-O'Brian.
8. Discussions with the members of the Commission covered a range of areas including: progress following a review of its governance arrangements in 2023; capacity and budgetary resources within the Commission to achieve the aims set out in its Strategic Plan and respond to any emerging challenges and potential additional responsibilities; and the expanding officeholder landscape.
9. The SPCB thanked the members for their attendance.

Annual uplift to the Reimbursement of Members' Expenses Scheme – SPCB (2024) Paper 17

10. The SPCB agreed the uprating of the Reimbursement of Members' Expenses Scheme provisions as detailed in the paper.

Cross Party Group support – SPCB (2024) Paper 18

11. The SPCB agreed that costs for MSPs associated with cross party group travel, limited staff support and refreshments would continue to be met from the Reimbursement of Members' Expenses Scheme.

Use of parliamentary resources: complaint – SPCB (2024) Paper 19

12. The SPCB considered a complaint received in respect of a Member's inaccurate references to the electoral area in the text of an annual report. The SPCB agreed that the Head of Allowance would write to the Member reminding them of the requirements under the Reimbursement of Members' Expenses Scheme.

Catering services – SPCB (2024) Paper 20

13. The SPCB agreed to have a further discussion on the catering services.

Switchboard operating hours – SPCB (2024) Paper 21

14. The SPCB noted that the current operating hours arrangements would remain in place until the end of the summer recess pending a review.

Date of next meeting

15. The next meeting of the SPCB was scheduled for 14 March 2024.

SPCB Secretariat
March 2024