



The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

## **Minute of the Leadership Group (LG) meeting held on Monday 22 February 2021 at 09.30, via Teams**

### **Present:**

- David McGill (Chair)
- Michelle Hegarty
- Alan Balharrie
- Susan Duffy
- Sara Glass
- Lynsey Hamill
- Judith Morrison
- Callum Thomson
- Tracey white

### **In attendance:**

- Joanne McNaughton (items 3 and 4)
- Fergus Cochrane (item 5)
- Roy Devon and Graeme Cook (item 6)
- Huw Williams
- Lisa Creamer
- Judith Proudfoot, Secretary

### **Item 1: Previous minutes**

1. LG agreed the minute of the meeting held on 8 February 2021.

### **Item 2: Matters arising**

2. David McGill provided a brief update on the discussion and decision reached by the SPCB in respect of publication of a submission to the SGHHC Committee.

### **Item 3: Covid-19: update – (oral)**

3. It was anticipated that parliamentary business would move to 3 hybrid meeting days reflecting the nature of the business proposed in the coming weeks. The recess dates had been agreed by the Bureau; some outstanding decisions on business arrangements were due to be taken at its meeting the following day.

4. There were no significant updates following the First Minister's latest statements. The next statement on Tuesday was expected to provide an outline of a routemap out of covid-19. It was anticipated a first step would involve a move back to the regional 'levels' arrangement of restrictions. Following an exercise with Group Heads, the majority of staff redeployment arrangements would continue with a stock-take in the summer. HR was reviewing any individual cases due to end before then and would be discussing those, in addition to any new requests, with the relevant Group Heads for their offices to take forward.

**Action: HR**

5. LG noted that an audit of the organisation's response to the covid-19 pandemic would be undertaken by our audit function, utilising expertise from Grant Thornton.

#### **Item 4: LG and SPCB forward look – LG(2021)Paper15 and LG(2021)Paper16**

6. LG noted the items scheduled for future LG and SPCB meetings up to the end of March 2021. Provisional dates for LG meetings in April and May had been issued however it was noted that the SPCB would only meet if required to do so.

#### **Item 5: International activity report – LG(2021)Paper17**

7. While all inward and outward international visits had been suspended since March 2020 due to covid-19, the International Relations Office (IRO) had continued to arrange virtual discussions and engagement activities for the Presiding Officers and other MSP with other legislatures and organisations.
8. It was envisaged that there would be fewer inward visits in the future with the focus instead being on building one-to-one relationships based on identified specific interests. Group Heads were reminded to share information with IRO about any work they were planning which might involve international engagement.

**Action: Group Heads**

#### **Item 7: Sustainability Strategy: update – oral**

9. In December 2020 the Scottish Government had published an update to its Climate Change Plan 2018-32. This was being reviewed. It was noted that many of the targets set out could only be addressed once the technologies were available and there were still a lot of unknowns around how the targets would be achieved. One target the organisation was aiming to achieve was for the building to be one of the 50% of public buildings operating net zero carbon emissions by 2030.
10. LG noted a summary of the work being done under each of the 'pillars' of the Strategy. It was agreed that it was essential for sustainability to be fully embedded in the organisation's Session 6 Strategy, recognising that many of the targets would fall in Session 7, and that all strategies had to be inter-connected. The focus would be on

actions that would have the greatest impact which would required the ability to measure changes.

11. The need for resource to project manage and progress this work was highlighted and should be available from the summer from within existing resources. Engaging with MSPs would also be key.

## **Item 6: COP26 – LG(2021)Paper18**

12. LG received an update on the current thinking and planning in regard to the Scottish Parliament's involvement in advance of, during and post the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.
13. LG acknowledged the considerable work already done by officials looking into how the Scottish Parliament might engage with and gain benefit from COP26. Focus had been on areas aligned with the Sustainable Development and Climate Change Strategy and discussions were taking place with potential partner organisations and legislatures.
14. LG agreed that the opportunities presented by COP26 being hosted in Scotland were immense and should be pursued but recognised that the hosting of any 'in-person' event at Holyrood needed to be considered carefully in light of current planning assumption that it was unlikely that significant public engagement activities could be held at Holyrood before the end of 2021 due to covid-19 restrictions and wider operational arrangements in place. While this was being kept under review, any proposal to host an event in relation to COP26 must be considered in light of that and ongoing public health requirements.
15. A detailed plan of activities, including resource implications, would be brought back to LG for approval.
16. LG agreed to take the key event proposal to the SPCB for consideration.

## **Item 8: AOB**

### **Excess flexi balance management**

17. Group heads were reminded that the deadline for submissions was that day.

### **2021-22 Budget**

18. The 2021-22 budget had been based on an assumption of a normal election year. Circumstances made it necessary for the Finance Office to undertake a re-forecasting exercise. This would have a narrow scope, focussing mainly on areas with ongoing covid-related operational impacts and also previous re-deployment assumptions. Finance staff would be speaking directly to individual Group Heads.

## **Date of next meeting**

19. The next meeting of the LG was scheduled for 8 March 2021.

**LG secretariat**  
February 2021