



MINUTE OF THE SCOTTISH PARLIAMENTARY CORPORATE BODY (SPCB) MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 26 NOVEMBER 2020 AT 9.00AM, Q1.03 and VIA VIDEO CONFERENCE (vc)

Present: Ken Macintosh MSP (Chair) David Stewart MSP (vc)
Jackson Carlaw MSP (vc) Sandra White MSP (vc)
Liam McArthur MSP Andy Wightman MSP

In attendance: David McGill (vc)
Michelle Hegarty
Sara Glass (vc)
Lis Craig (vc)
Mairi Pearson (vc)
Janice Crerar (vc)
Tracey White (vc)
Alan Balharrie (vc)
Andrew MacGregor (vc)
Eric MacLeod (vc)
Joanne McNaughton (vc)
Huw Williams (vc)
Lisa Creamer (vc)
Judith Proudfoot, Secretary

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

1. The SPCB agreed the minute of the previous meeting held on 12 November 2020.

MATTERS ARISING

Issues by correspondence

2. The following item had been dealt with by correspondence since the previous meeting:

2.1 The SPCB noted an update on the implications of the latest review of the covid tier levels by the Scottish Government and agreed the advice to be communicated to MSPs and staff.

MEMBERS' STAFFING – SPCB(2020)Paper 62

3. The SPCB considered analysis which identified significant pressure on casework for Members which was likely to continue for the remainder of the Session. The SPCB discussed options for addressing the issue and agreed that the most equitable process was to make funds available to MSPs, on

application, under the Incidental & Ancillary Employment Costs provision. This was to be achieved from within existing resources by repurposing underspends accrued across the expenses scheme this year from reduced travel and accommodation budgets. This would be affordable, consistent with the current Scheme rules and preserve transparency and accountability. A limit of up to £5k application per Member was agreed. Sandra White MSP welcomed the assistance being provided but wished it noted that she did not feel the level of funding was sufficient.

4. The SPCB agreed the arrangements to be put in place and communication to MSPs.

OFFICEHOLDERS: CONTINGENCY BIDS 2021-22 – SPCB(2020)Paper 68

5. The SPCB approved contingency funding requests from the Scottish Information Commissioner; the Standards Commission; the Ethical Standards Commissioner; and the Scottish Human Rights Commission.

RESOURCE ALLOCATION FOR 2021-22 AND FUTURE YEARS

6. The SPCB had a further discussion of the budget bid for 2021-22 in light of recent UK Government announcements. A final paper was due to be agreed for submission to the Finance and Constitution Committee in December.

ELECTION GUIDANCE – SPCB(2020)Paper 65

7. The guidance for Members and their staff, previously agreed by the SPCB in September, had been revised in light of the changes proposed by the Scottish General Election (Coronavirus) Bill. There were a number of parliamentary procedural questions which would require to be addressed by the Bureau and guidance on these areas would be incorporated into subsequent iterations of the document along with any other updates.

8. The guidance for Members not standing at the next election had also been updated to reflect a programme of tailored support being developed. This was welcomed by the SPCB.

9. While the Bill, if passed, would see MSPs retaining their status up to the day before the election on this occasion, the SPCB was keen to see arrangements in the run up to the election reflect the normal pattern as far as possible in relation to use of parliamentary resources in order to preserve an equal playing field for all candidates.

10. The SPCB agreed the Guidance.

REMOTE VOTING UPDATE – SPCB(2020)Paper 66

11. A remote voting system was introduced in August 2020 in response to the need to support business under the Covid-19 restrictions. In September the SPCB commissioned a review of the system by external experts. That review concluded that the system aligned with expected behaviours for web based systems. Recommendations were also provided for developments to enhance the system.

12. The SPCB welcomed the report, noting the progress to date and agreeing the next steps.

TRAVEL & EXPENSES SYSTEM – SPCB(2020)Paper 67

13. The SPCB noted an update on progress with implementation of a new travel and expenses system following completion in November of a procurement exercise.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

14. It was agreed a meeting would be arranged for the following week.

SPCB secretariat
November 2020