



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Minute of the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body (SPCB) meeting held on Thursday 18 March 2021 at 09.00, via Teams

Present:

- Ken Macintosh MSP (Chair)
- Jackson Carlaw MSP
- Liam McArthur MSP
- David Stewart MSP
- Sandra White MSP

Apologies:

- Andy Wightman MSP

In attendance:

- David McGill
- Michelle Hegarty
- Lynsey Hamill
- Tracey White
- Tommy Lynch
- Callum Thomson
- John McArthur
- Becky Thomson
- John Paterson
- Brian Mitchell
- David Hershaw
- Janice Crerar
- Huw Williams
- Eric MacLeod
- Joanne McNaughton
- Lisa Creamer
- Judith Proudfoot, Secretary

Previous minutes

1. The SPCB agreed the minutes of the meetings held on 4 March 2021.

Matters arising

2. The SPCB had agreed the following in correspondence since the previous meeting:

2.1 Access to Holyrood to facilitate MSPs and their staff packing up offices would be extended to 1 April 2021 in light of recent additional restrictions.

2.2 Arrangements for media access to Holyrood over the recess and in the event of Parliament being recalled.

Covid-19 update – (oral)

3. The SPCB had received notification and updates on a small number of positive covid-19 test results that had occurred at Holyrood in the past week. Officials had notified NHS Lothian's Health Protection Team immediately and had been liaising with them since. A much wider and more cautious approach than the standard test and protect arrangements had been taken to identifying possible contacts. As such a number of colleagues who could potentially have been in contact with those individuals while at work had been advised to remain off campus and to take a test. The NHS, through Test & Protect, would determine who amongst this group needed to self-isolate. A deep clean of a number of areas of the building had also been undertaken. The focus of all steps taken was to prevent transmission and on the basis of the actions taken and the speed of response, advice from the Health Protection Team was that the risk of any further transmission was very low for Members and staff.
4. The SPCB was pleased to note that none of those who had tested positive were currently reported as being seriously ill.
5. The SPCB also noted an update on work looking at the implications for the Parliament of the FM's latest statement relating to the routemap for relaxing the current restrictions over the coming months.

Election Planning programme update – (oral)

6. The SPCB noted an outline of the current plans covering the 'first days' programme following the election. The focus was now on developing and undertaking detailed risk assessments for all the activities including registration of new MSPs, taking the oath/affirmation and election of the Presiding Officers.
7. The SPCB welcomed the efforts being made to undertake all the necessary activities safely and in line with the health restrictions that may be in place. A final programme would be circulated for agreement.

Chief Executive's Report

8. The Chief Executive highlighted the following:

8.1 Work had been completed on updating the Parliament's Complaints Handling Procedures in line with revised guidance issued by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman.

8.2 The expenditure outturn for 2020-21 was expected to be very close to budget and within the agreed set tolerance margin of 2.5%.

8.3 While morale remained good, staff involved in supporting business over recent months were feeling the strain and appreciated the decisions supported by the SPCB to restrict business during the campaign period.

9. The SPCB reiterated its appreciation of the efforts of all staff in supporting the Parliament during these unprecedented times.

10. The SPCB noted the Report and in particular the updated complaints handling procedures.

Security – SPCB(2021)Paper 19

11. The SPCB discussed the scope of pre-employment checks for staff based in Holyrood and local offices. A range of questions were raised which officials agreed to consider further. The SPCB agreed not to introduce the measures outlined as a specific requirement at this time.

Catering tariffs – SPCB(2021)Paper 20

12. The SPCB agreed arrangements for revising the catering tariffs in each of the catering outlets for 2021-22.

13. The SPCB also agreed arrangements for changes to the catering staffing structure.

Officeholders: contingency funding application – SPCB(2021)Paper 21

14. The SPCB agreed a request from the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman for contingency funding to cover the purchase of video conferencing equipment which would be shared with other officeholders in Bridgeside House.

AOB

Parliamentary privilege

15. The SPCB noted this topic had been raised in recent weeks but that it was not a matter for the SPCB to take forward.

Date of next meeting

16. There were no further meetings scheduled for the SPCB prior to the parliamentary election. Any issues would be dealt with by correspondence or, if appropriate, by arranging a special meeting. The next planned meeting would be arranged following election of new Corporate Body members in May.

SPCB secretariat

March 2021