



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Reimbursement of Members' Expenses Scheme – Exceptional Expenses

8 December 2022

Reference: SPCB (2022) Paper 76

Executive summary

1. The SPCB is invited to consider an application by a Member for additional monies to meet the shared cost of replacing the roof at their local office under the Exceptional Expenses Provision of the Reimbursement of Members' Expenses Scheme.

Issues and options

2. The Reimbursement of Members' Expenses Scheme makes provision in paragraph 8.2.1 for a Member to apply to the SPCB for reimbursement of any one off exceptional expense incurred by that Member in connection with carrying out their parliamentary duties.
3. Clare Haughey MSP has received notice of a significant common repair required to her local office in that the roof requires to be replaced. The Parliament's Legal Services Office have reviewed the lease and confirmed that the Member is legally liable for a proportion of the repairs to the roof as it is included as one of the common parts together with the proprietors of two other premises that share the same roof. Mrs Haughey is therefore expected to meet her share of the cost. Meeting obligations associated with a local office lease would be included in the definition of supporting a Member in carrying out their parliamentary duties.
4. The total cost of the roof replacement including VAT is £40,100, this includes a contingency figure. The cost is split between 3 tenants this includes Mrs Haughey. Mrs Haughey's estimated share of the overall cost is £13,664.

5. Three quotes were sought by the Landlord, the quote chosen ensured value for money compared to the other two and the company were also familiar with the building and the roof design, it was also felt that their quote was the most accurate and realistic. The quote issued to the Landlord following a site visit and assessment of the roof included:
 - All elements included in removing the existing roof and the supply/fit of the new roof totalling: £38,592 / 3 = £12,864
 - Contingency figure for any unexpected work in particular replacing rafters is required totalling: £2,400 / 3 = £800
6. To date Mrs Haughey has spent 74% of her Office Cost Provision and projects that she will have approximately £4,000 remaining in her Provision by the end of the financial year taking account of proposed required spend on other office related costs such as rent and utilities. She also has sufficient uncommitted funds in her Engagement Provision to transfer £5,000 to her Office Cost Provision as per the current flexibility built into the Scheme and has committed to transferring this amount and using this new combined amount of £9,000 in her OCP against the overall cost of the roof repair. However, this would leave a balance of £4,664 still requiring to be met. Mrs Haughey is therefore applying to the SPCB for exceptional expenses in relation to this outstanding balance of £4,664 to enable her to meet her obligations in relation to her lease and the roof replacement.
7. It is also recommended that the SPCB consider agreeing that in the event that office energy bills are higher than the current projection of spend, and the Member exceeds the remaining balance of her OCP any overspend up to a maximum of £1000 can go against the Exceptional Expenses Provision and delegate authority within that limit to the Head of Allowances to approve any such further claim based on the criteria detailed above.

Governance

8. The Reimbursement of Members' Expenses Scheme allows application for additional costs to meet one-off exceptional expenses under the exceptional expenses provision and the Allowances Office believe this application falls within the parameters of a one-off exceptional expense given the information provided in the paper.

Resource implications

9. The additional costs can be met within the overall Members' Expenses budget for 2022-23 if agreed. The Member has projected that she will have approximately £4,000 remaining in her OCP by the end of the financial year and has committed to using her OCP as well as transferring

£5,000 from her Engagement Provision and is only applying for the outstanding balance rather than the full amount due for the roof repair from the Exceptional Expenses Provision if agreed by the SPCB.

Publication Scheme

10. This paper can be published in line with the publication scheme.

Next steps

11. To advise the Member of the outcome and if the SPCB agrees to meet the additional costs from the Scheme to adjust the Member's budget accordingly.

Decision

12. The SPCB is invited to:

- Consider the application for additional monies under the exceptional expenses provision as detailed above.

Allowances Office
December 2022