



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Reimbursement of Members' Expenses Scheme – Travel Provision Application

By correspondence

Reference: SPCB (2023) Paper 8

Executive summary

1. The SPCB is invited to consider a retrospective application from the Labour Parliamentary Group to have travel costs incurred from attendance at a Group Awayday in Glasgow to be met from the Reimbursement of the Members' Expenses Scheme.
2. The Scheme Guidance in paragraph 1.10, provides for such costs to be met with approval from the SPCB in relation to Members attending a party group meeting outwith Edinburgh and in any other place in Scotland.

Issues and options

1. An application has been received from Neil Bibby MSP to retrospectively apply to the SPCB for the cost of his and other Labour Group members travel to be met from the Travel Provision relating to the Group Awayday in Glasgow on 24th October 2022.
2. The Labour Group held their Awayday in Glasgow as the majority of those attending represent Glasgow and the West and Central Regions in the Greater Glasgow area meaning that travel costs would be less than if it was held in Edinburgh.
3. The Awayday was held in a meeting room in a building on Bath Street, Glasgow, adjacent to the Labour Party Office and was free of charge.
4. Mr Bibby has confirmed that only Labour MSPs and one staff member were in attendance and the agenda was entirely focused on the work of the Scottish Parliament Labour Group. There were no overnight costs associated with the event.

5. This is the first time this session that an application has been made to the SPCB for this purpose, to date five travel claims relating to the Awayday have already been paid totalling £219.65 and 2 claims are on hold totalling £28.50 pending the outcome of the SPCB's decision. The Allowances Office is not aware of any further claims relating to this event.
6. The Allowances Office has already reimbursed some Members as the office had not been made aware that the travel costs were in relation to an Awayday prior to the claims being processed which require approval.
7. The SPCB is invited to consider this application based on the information provided. As the scheme makes provision for such costs, it is recommended that the SPCB agree to meet the costs of the travel.
8. The Allowances Office has already reimbursed some Members as the office had not been made aware that the travel costs were in relation to an Awayday prior to the claims being processed which require approval.
9. The SPCB is invited to consider this application based on the information provided. As the scheme makes provision for such costs, it is recommended that the SPCB agree to meet the costs of the travel.

Governance

10. There are no governance issues as the Scheme provides for Members travel and applying to the SPCB for the costs to be met from the Scheme.

Resource implications

11. Should the SPCB determine that the costs should be met it is confirmed that there are sufficient funds available within the overall Members budget for 2022-23.

Publication Scheme

12. This paper can be published in accordance with the SPCB's publication scheme.

Next steps

13. Advise the Member of the SPCB's decision and if the SPCB agree the travel costs can be met from the Scheme then the two claims on hold will be processed through MyExpenses.

Decision

14. The SPCB is invited to consider an application from Mr Bibby on behalf of the Labour Group for the cost of travel to be met from the Members' Expenses Scheme for the attendance at the Labour Parliamentary Group Awayday in Glasgow on 24 October 2022.

Allowances Office

January 2023