



**Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body**

**By correspondence – Thursday 11 September 2025 (Session 6)**

## **International Relations: Parliamentary travel – Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference**

### **Executive summary**

1. The International Relations Office's budget is approved, as part of the overall budget proposal, by the SPCB on an annual basis. This budget is then allocated to individual visits and development opportunities by the International Relations Office, in line with the Scottish Parliament's International Strategy.
2. The Code of Conduct for MSPs requires Members to register and "provide details of visits outside the United Kingdom in certain circumstances." Some overseas visits are excluded from this requirement to register – that is when the travel and other costs of a visit are wholly met by the SPCB, or are approved by the SPCB prior to the visit, as the visit is deemed to be "parliamentary in nature".
3. This paper provides a brief summary of the upcoming visit, to the 68<sup>th</sup> Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference (CPC), and invites the SPCB to confirm that it is parliamentary in nature, therefore exempting it from registration on Members' register of interests.

### **Issues and options**

#### **The Code of Conduct**

4. Members are required under the Code of Conduct for MSPs to register certain overseas visits – including certain visits for political purposes and a visit which meets the 'prejudice test' ("an interest meets the prejudice test if, after taking into account all of the circumstances, that interest is reasonably considered to prejudice, or give the appearance of prejudicing the ability of the member to participate in a disinterested manner in any proceedings of the Parliament").

## **Reference: SPCB (2025) - Paper 41**

5. In accordance with paragraphs 62 and 64 of Section 2 of the Code of Conduct, the travel and other costs of a visit which are wholly met by the SPCB, or are approved by the SPCB prior to the visit, is exempt from registration as an overseas visit in the Register of Interests of Members of the Scottish Parliament.
6. The purpose of this paper is therefore to establish whether the SPCB considers that the visit outlined below is “parliamentary in nature” and will therefore approve it so that it is exempt from needing to be registered by the Members taking part.

## **68th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference (CPC)**

7. The annual conference of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association will take place in Bridgetown, Barbados, 6-11 October 2025. The event will bring together over 600 Parliamentarians, parliamentary staff and decision makers from across the Commonwealth for this unique knowledge sharing and networking opportunity.
8. The theme of this year’s CPC is “The Commonwealth – A Global Partner”. The conference will include seven workshops, a youth roundtable, a CPA General Assembly debate and the annual Emilia Lifaka Memorial Lecture.
9. In addition to the CPC, the 9<sup>th</sup> Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) Conference will take place on 7-8 October 2025. The theme of this conference is “Parliaments since Beijing +30: Progress, challenges and the road ahead for gender equality”; and will include a further four workshops.
10. There will also be meetings of the Commonwealth Parliamentarians with Disabilities Network (CPwD) and meetings of the CPA International Executive Committee (ExCo).
11. The Scottish Parliament is allowed to send one MSP delegate to attend the conference. Following an application process, Roz McCall MSP was selected by the Scotland Branch Executive Committee as the delegate. Outwith this allocation, regional representatives are also allowed to attend the conference. As such, Stuart McMillan MSP, Regional Representative on the ExCo, and Jeremy Balfour MSP, Regional Champion on the CPwD will also attend the conference.
12. Steven Bell, International Relations Officer, will support the delegation and a personal carer will also travel with the delegation to support Jeremy

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Balfour MSP. David McGill will attend the associated Society of the Clerks at the Table (SOCATT) Conference.

13. The CPC offers an opportunity for delegates to engage with counterparts from more than 180 legislatures across the world and to promote the work of the Scottish Parliament. The conference is not offered virtually and as such Members need to be there in person in order to take part.
14. The only viable travel option between Scotland and Barbados is by air. Due to the length of the flights premium economy class was offered to the delegates. Business class travel was not considered for budget reasons. The individual CO2e footprint for flying premium economy class (return) to Bridgetown from Edinburgh is 3,458CO2e KG.

## **Publication Scheme**

15. This paper will be published in line with the SPCB's Publication Scheme.

## **Decision**

16. The SPCB is invited to agree that the travel outlined in this paper is parliamentary in nature, therefore exempting it from registration.

**International Relations Office**

September 2025