



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body
Thursday 12 March 2026 (Session 6)

Reimbursement of Members' Expenses Scheme – Travel Application

Executive summary

1. The SPCB is invited to consider an application submitted by Liz Smith MSP and Douglas Ross MSP to have their travel and overnight costs associated with a proposed visit to meet Members of the National Assembly in France to be met under the provisions made at paragraphs 2.2.3 and 6.1.5 of the Reimbursement of Members' Expenses Scheme.

Issues and options

2. The Reimbursement of the Members' Expenses Scheme makes provision to meet travel and overnight costs associated with a Member undertaking their parliamentary duties. However, in relation to travel out with the UK, Members are required to make an application to the SPCB to have such costs met from the Scheme.
3. The criteria previously applied when determining such applications included where the reason for the journey was:
 - Directly related to a specific constituency matter, where the visit is necessary in order to address the issue;
 - Directly related to Parliamentary business;
 - Something the SPCB considered the Parliament should be paying for;
 - Provides value for money.
4. The purpose of Ms Smith and Mr Ross's trip, in their respective capacities as the Member introducing the Schools Residential Outdoor Education (Scotland) Bill and Mr Ross's role as Convener of the Education, Children and Young People Committee in the Scottish Parliament, is to accept an invitation from three Members of the National Assembly in France to visit the Assembly following two similar meetings which have been held online. The visit will enable them to meet additional Members involved in a new Bill, similar to Ms Smith's Schools Bill, currently under consideration, and to engage with civil servants.

REFERENCE: SPCB (2026) - Paper 20

5. Ms Smith and Mr Ross will be travelling on 31 March 2026 and will return on the 1 April 2026. The estimated cost of return flights from Edinburgh to France for both Members is £440.
6. Ms Smith and Mr Ross would require overnight accommodation in Paris, France for one night, which is estimated at £440 in total (£220 per person), excluding meals. This estimate is based on the information provided to us. This cost is within the overnight rate outside the UK which is £271 per night.
7. Other costs associated with the trip are return rail link ticket from Charles de Gaulle Airport to Gare du Nord will incur a cost of approximately £28 per person. Ms Smith will travel to Edinburgh Airport via tram at a cost of £7.90 and Mr Ross will claim for mileage and parking at a cost of £152 and £45 respectively. No additional expenses are anticipated as the National Assembly will provide all meals.
8. The total cost for travel and accommodation based on the maximum costs detailed above would be approximately £1,140.90 in total for the visit to and from Paris, France.

Governance

9. There are no governance issues as the Scheme provides for Members travelling abroad and applying to the SPCB for the costs to be met from the Scheme prior to travelling.

Resource implications

10. 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 2025-26.

Publication Scheme

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

Next steps

12. Advise the Members of the SPCB's decision and if the SPCB agrees the travel and overnight costs can be met from the Scheme, then the Members will be advised to move forward with the proposed visit.

Decision

13. The SPCB is invited to consider an application from Ms Smith and Mr Ross for the costs of travel and overnight accommodation to be met from the Members' Expenses Scheme for a proposed visit to Paris, France as detailed above

Allowances Office

March 2026