Gender Pay Gap

I refer to the recommendations of the Committee in response to the Gender Pay Gap Report specifically mentioning the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body.

The SPCB published its Gender Pay Gap Report based on staffing data at 31 March 2016 on 4 October 2017. The Parliament has an overall Gender Pay Gap (GPG) of 11.1% which is lower than Scotland as a whole (15.6%). Whilst we are satisfied that we have robust pay and reward policies that ensure equal pay for men and women, we recognise that there is still more to do and we have developed an Action Plan to address the pay gap. A copy of the Report and Action Plan are enclosed.

The Action Plan outlines a number of actions to be undertaken over the next 12 months and we have set ourselves an ambitious target to have our gender pay gap within a tolerance level of plus or minus 5% each year.

In addition, we have undertaken a comprehensive review of our approach to recruitment with a focus on improving the diversity of our workforce and this is highlighted in our Gender Pay Gap Action Plan. We will focus on producing job specifications and adverts which are written in an inclusive way and are free from unintended bias, whilst ensuring that the selection criteria we use is proportionate.
and relevant and encourages applicants from a wide range of backgrounds to apply for our jobs.

The SPCB's Diversity and Inclusion Board will oversee our progress on the Gender Pay Gap Action Plan within its responsibilities to influence wider policy and strategy development and to ensure that diversity and inclusion is embedded into the day to day work of the Parliament.

I would respond to the specific recommendations of the Committee as follows;

‘….. the Scottish Parliament to ensure that all roles are advertised as flexible, agile or part-time, unless there is a business reason not to do so.’

Currently, all of our advertised vacancies are open to flexible working unless specifically stated as otherwise. As part of the review of our recruitment approach we will be taking steps to ensure that the language and content of our job advertisements encourage applications from as wide a pool as possible and we will be explicit in our marketing materials that all roles are open to flexible working. The Scottish Parliament has a range of family friendly policies in place and with over 175 different working patterns across the organisation, this clearly demonstrates the effectiveness of those policies.

‘….. the Scottish Parliament ensure their job application forms contain a section allowing applicants to set out if they want to work flexibly and if so, in what way’

We intend to make it easier for job applicants to set out their requirements in relation to flexible working by including a section on our Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form. To ensure that there is not bias against applicants who wish to work a non-standard working pattern, the Monitoring Form is detached from the application form and not seen by the recruiting manager until they have concluded the recruitment process and selected an appropriate candidate.

‘The Committee asks the Scottish Government, its agencies, and the Scottish Parliament to share with the Committee their current practices on advertising flexible, agile, and part-time jobs, to ensure that they are following best practice principles.’

We recognise the benefits diversity and inclusion makes to how we perform as an organisation and we are committed to having a diverse workforce. To that end, we ensure that our jobs are open to as wide a field as possible and that our working practices enable and encourage applicants from all backgrounds.

All jobs advertised with the Scottish Parliament are open to applicants who wish to apply on a flexible working basis. As part of our Recruitment Review we are reviewing the information for applicants which is on our website to
ensure that we are promoting our flexible working arrangements, and the SPCB as an employer which embraces flexible working. We will ensure our recruiting managers are trained and supported to ensure they have a clear understanding of flexible working and to enable them to think more creatively about how work gets done.

P E GRICE
Clerk/Chief Executive