



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Minute of the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body (SPCB) meeting held on Thursday 2 December 2021 at 09.00hrs (hybrid)

Present:

- Alison Johnstone MSP (chair)
- Claire Baker MSP
- Jackson Carlaw MSP
- Maggie Chapman MSP
- Christine Grahame MSP

In attendance:

- David McGill
- Michelle Hegarty
- Roy Devon
- Susan Duffy
- Lynsey Hamill
- Tommy Lynch
- Cristine Livingstone
- Becky Thomson
- Sara Glass
- Mairi Pearson
- Huw Williams
- Mark Brough
- Eric MacLeod
- Lisa Creamer
- Judith Proudfoot, Secretary

Previous minutes

1. The SPCB agreed the minutes of the meetings held on 15 and 18 November 2021 subject to some changes.

Matters arising

2. The SPCB noted that Christine Grahame had been briefed on the Ethical Standards Commissioner update and the budget discussion that she missed at the previous meetings.

Major event planning

3. The SPCB received a routine briefing update on planning for major events.

Covid-19 update – SPCB (2021) Paper 74

4. The SPCB noted that recent updates from the Scottish Government to Parliament had not changed the provisions on protections affecting the workplace. Officials would continue to monitor but the situation was not expected to change significantly before Spring '22.
5. All face-to-face/onsite Members' support services had now been restarted at Holyrood on business days (Tuesday to Thursday). Most of these services were operating at pre-Covid hours and some had gone beyond those levels. The remaining services were planned to return to pre-covid operating hours from January 2022. The provision of all services would continue to be monitored in light of public health advice.
6. The SPCB also discussed access arrangements for the public, particularly access to the chamber gallery, and agreed that officials should work up draft arrangements for facilitating access following the February recess provided public health advice allowed.
7. The SPCB agreed:
 - To seek a further extension up to the February recess of temporary Standing Orders in relation to public access to the chamber gallery.
 - To prioritise pre-planned public engagement activities to support Members and parliamentary business from January 2022.
 - Cross Party Groups to continue to meet off-site or online pending a review of public access arrangements in spring 2022.

Security – SPCB (2021) Paper 75

8. The SPCB had a further discussion on progress with a number of security options being considered for MSPs and their staff following the death of Sir David Amess MP. Some initial steps around the provision of training and briefing were agreed as well as a decision to reduce the level of personal detail published as part of travel arrangements. The SPCB also noted that officials continued to liaise with other UK legislatures and HMRC on tax implications for work carried out to Members' homes or Edinburgh accommodation.
9. The SPCB agreed to issue a survey of Members to better gauge security requirements.

Resource allocation for 2022-23 and future years – SPCB (2021) Paper 76

10. The SPCB approved the budget bid for 2022-23 and indicative forecast for 2023-24. The SPCB was due to present its budget to the Finance and Community Committee on 21 December 2021.

Office cost provision – SPCB (2021) Paper 77

11. Following the changes to the Members' Expenses Scheme in Session 5 the SPCB had agreed that a light touch review should be undertaken prior to the 2022-23 financial year to see if the increase to the staff cost provision and the provision for Members to now employ up to the equivalent of 4 full time staff was having any consequential impact on the office cost provision. The SPCB agreed that this should be revisited in 18 months when staffing levels should be more established.
12. A number of queries around the office cost provision and Members' ability to source suitable local offices had also been raised by MSPs in recent months and these were discussed by the SPCB. The SPCB agreed that a change to the basis for the calculation of office cost provision for regional Members was required. This would require a motion to Parliament to be agreed and officials would bring a draft to the SPCB for approval. Officials were also asked to bring back additional information on other aspects of the provision for further discussion at the next meeting.

Date of next meeting

13. The next meeting was scheduled for Thursday 16 December 2021.

SPCB Secretariat
December 2021