



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Minute of the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body (SPCB) meeting held on Thursday 14 May 2020 at 9.00am, via video conference

Present:

- Ken Macintosh MSP (Chair)
- David Stewart MSP
- Ruth Davidson MSP
- Sandra White MSP
- Andy Wightman MSP
- Liam McArthur MSP

In attendance:

- David McGill
- Michelle Hegarty
- Lynsey Hamill
- Tommy Lynch
- Lis Craig
- Mairi Pearson
- Callum Thomson
- Gillian Baxendine
- Emma Armstrong
- Joanne McNaughton
- Huw Williams
- Eric MacLeod
- Graeme Donoghue
- Judith Proudfoot, Secretary

Previous minutes

1. The SPCB agreed the minutes of the meeting held 30 April 2020.

Matters arising

Staff Cost Provision Review

2. At its previous meeting, the SPCB agreed the remit for a review of the staff cost provision (SCP), one of the recommendations of the recent routine review of the Members' Expenses Scheme. The SPCB discussed arrangements for engaging MSPs and agreed to circulate a copy of the Members' Expenses Scheme Review Report and the remit for the SCP review.

Covid-19 briefing

3. The SPCB received an update from the Presiding Officer on the proposed way the Chamber would conduct business for the coming weeks. He highlighted progress with testing of an interim remote voting system and confirmed the first hybrid plenary meeting having been held earlier that week. Given the additional resource required on site to support hybrid meetings and the additional technical support related to committee meetings, the SPCB agreed that committees should continue to be encouraged to meet virtually for the time being.
4. The SPCB also agreed in principle:
 - to endorse the use of a system for remote voting for parliamentary business once tests on such a system were complete and deemed to have been successful; and
 - to agree a policy that misuse of the agreed remote voting system is covered by the Code of Conduct for MSPs.

In both cases, officials will seek final agreement from the SPCB by correspondence as soon as possible.

5. The SPCB then noted an update from officials including:
 - Wider communication of information on the expansion of covid-19 testing; and
 - Uptake of online training courses/wellbeing webinars by MSP staff.

Equipment for temporary homeworking for Members and Members' staff – SPCB(2020)paper 022

6. The SPCB discussed arrangements for the provision of furniture and IT equipment to enable MSP staff to work from home under the current circumstances.
7. The SPCB agreed a process which provided a centrally managed and funded service but which also allowed a degree of flexibility for local arrangements. Where Members choose to purchase IT equipment and furniture locally the associated cost for Members would be met from their Office Cost Provision and for Members' staff from costs would be met from the central Incidental and Ancillary Employment Cost Provision.

Improving scrutiny through participative and digital engagement - presentation

8. The Commission on Parliamentary Reform recommended that the Scottish Parliament should trial the use of deliberative democracy to deliver more participative public engagement. The Committee Engagement Unit (CEU) has been testing how this approach might enhance scrutiny in the Scottish Parliament. Updates on methods already used by some committees have been provided in previous CE Reports; this presentation provided an update on what had been learned from the work so far.
9. The SPCB welcomed the work being done and members expressed enthusiasm based on their experiences through committees. It was noted that many committees had already mainstreamed the approach and the SPCB encouraged officials to focus on ensuring all MSPs were aware of the options available and how they could be used. Feedback from members of the public had been very positive and the CEU would continue to look at ways of evaluating the impact of the various methods being employed.

Date of next meeting

10. The next meeting of the SPCB was scheduled for Thursday 28 May 2020.