



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Minute of the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body (SPCB) meeting held on Thursday 7 December 2023 at 9.00am

Present:

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

Apologies:

- Alison Johnstone MSP

In attendance:

- David McGill
- Michelle Hegarty
- Huw Williams, Janice Crerar
- Susan Duffy, Roy Devon
- Becky Thomson, Bob Mason
- Lynsey Hamill, Alan Durward
- Sara Glass
- Alan Balharrie
- Eric MacLeod
- Mark Brough
- Lisa Creamer
- Judith Proudfoot, Secretary

- Ian Bruce, Ethical Standards Commissioner

Previous minutes

1. The SPCB agreed the minutes of the meetings held on 23 and 30 November 2023.

Matters arising

2. The following items had been dealt with by correspondence since the previous meeting:
 - Noted clarification on a Member's claim for costs in relation to attendance at a conference
 - Noted an update on temporary changes to the switchboard operating hours
 - Noted an update on the installation of new consoles in the chamber
 - SPCB (2023) Paper 71: 2023 Festival of Politics Report – noted the Report.

Meeting with the Commissioner for Ethical Standards in Public Life in Scotland

3. As the funder of officeholders, the SPCB had instigated a series of meetings to engage with individual officeholders on an annual basis. The SPCB welcomed Ian Bruce, the Ethical Standards Commissioner, to the meeting.
4. The discussion with the Commissioner covered a range of areas including the number and nature of complaints being dealt with; any particular drivers behind them; and resourcing. The SPCB welcomed assurances that the staffing levels in place were adequate and that, despite the often-difficult nature of the work and the pressures involved, morale was good.
5. The SPCB looked forward to considering a copy of the Commissioner's strategic plan for 2024-25 and thanked him for his attendance.

2024 Festival of Politics – Paper 72

6. The SPCB noted an update on planning for the 2024 Festival of Politics. Members provided suggestions for possible events and asked officials to revisit options on the ticket pricing structure. The SPCB agreed the proposed timing for the Festival being slightly later in August. Further updates would be provided.

Members' security provisions: social media monitoring service – Paper 76

7. The SPCB previously agreed to support a trial of a social media monitoring service for Members. An information security analyst had been employed on a fixed term contract and a license had been procured for a software tool which could search social media and highlight content of concern. The service had been running since June 2023 and to date 34 Members had signed up for the service.

8. The SPCB noted that feedback so far had been positive with MSPs welcoming the service and finding it useful. A final evaluation would be provided in June 2024 at the end of the pilot.

Security – Paper 77

9. The SPCB discussed recent protests that involved individuals accessing the roof of the building. Given the high health and safety risks involved, further preventative measures were being investigated and would be brought back for discussion along with a review of the Protest Policy.

Creche service - update

10. The SPCB noted an update on the ongoing efforts to improve the childcare support available to Members and staff. The service provider continued to liaise with the Care Inspectorate on the current facilities and officials were commissioned by SPCB to consider a wider range of possible options to address childcare support requirements for Members.

Resource allocation for 2024-25 and future years – Paper 78

11. The SPCB discussed and agreed the budget bid to be submitted to the Finance and Public Administration Committee for consideration in January 2024.

AOB

Review of policies

12. In November, the SPCB had instructed officials to undertake an urgent review of the Parliament's policies and procedures around the use of mobile devices and data roaming charges and how these were handled. The SPCB noted an update on this review.

Date of next meeting

13. The next meeting of the SPCB was scheduled for 21 December 2023.

SPCB Secretariat
December 2023