

Parliamentary travel

By correspondence

Reference: SPCB(2020)Paper 6

Executive Summary

1. The Corporate Body is invited to consider forthcoming overseas parliamentary travel and, in accordance Section 2, paragraph 62 of the Code of Conduct for Members of the Scottish Parliament in relation to receipt by Members of travel, hospitality etc., approve the details of the travel and other costs associated with the outward visit below.

Issues and Options

North America

2. The annual Scottish Parliament visit to North America goes back to 2000. Across the years, parliamentary delegations have met with key policymakers, legislatures and parliamentarians in Canada and the US. As well as discussions around key policy, parliamentary and procedural issues, the visits have supported the 'partnership' and 'supporting Scotland' outcomes in the International Strategy.
3. This year the delegation will undertake a slightly shorter visit to New York and Boston. The New York element will be centred around the Tartan Day Parade on Saturday 4 April (the delegation will arrive on the Friday afternoon before transferring by train to Boston on the Sunday morning) while the Boston element will be centred around discussions on the issues set out below. The International Strategy sets out how key issues of importance to the Parliament informs why, when, and who it works with internationally. The key issues to be discussed are:

Presiding Officer:

- Parliamentary reform issues, mainly around civic engagement, diversity
- Scotland's Futures Forum
- Speaking engagements with political science students

Gillian Martin MSP - Convener, Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform Committee:

- Climate change emergency - mitigation, adaptation
- Circular economy - deposit return schemes, recycling initiatives, waste management, behaviour change
- Marine protection, flood management, aquaculture
- Biodiversity - potential impacts on health, linkages between greenspaces and health, city planning and biodiversity and climate considerations

- Agriculture - governance and funding frameworks; holistic approaches to farming and land management

Daniel Johnson MSP - Deputy Convener, Education and Skills Committee:

- teacher education – qualifications, teacher training, fees, support services for trainee teachers
 - Structures of education - school boards, powers available in running schools, lines of accountability e.g. around budget/funding
 - Teaching of ‘civic education (‘modern studies’)
 - Special educational needs provision
 - Gender gap in STEM uptake
 - Re-skilling and involvement of the college and university sector
4. Meetings to discuss the above issues will be sought with key policy makers e.g. Mayor, Massachusetts Legislature, Office of the Governor, universities, NGOs. The Presiding Officer will also promote the Parliament at a number of speaking engagements.
5. The travel, accommodation and incidental costs for this visit will be met from the International Relations Office budget.

Resource Implications

6. The estimated costs for this visit are set out below:

Date	Description	Destinations	Participants	Approx. costs
3-9 April	Delegation to North America	New York and Boston	Presiding Officer Ken Macintosh MSP Gillian Martin MSP Daniel Johnson MSP (supported by the Principal Private Secretary to the PO and the Head of International Relations)	£19,000 (Costs for this outward have been capped at £30,000 since 2009)

Publication Scheme

7. This paper will be published as part of the SPCB’s Publication Scheme.

Decision

8. The Corporate Body is invited to consider the above travel and, in accordance with the Code of Conduct for Members of the Scottish Parliament, in relation to

receipt by Members of travel, hospitality etc., approve the details of the travel and the associated costs as set out.

International Relations Office