



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Parliamentary travel

By correspondence

Reference: SPCB (2023) Paper 47

Executive summary

1. The Corporate Body is invited to consider forthcoming overseas parliamentary travel and, in accordance with Section 2, paragraphs 62 and 64, 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

2. Presiding Officer Alison Johnstone MSP has been invited to meet, in Ireland from 23 to 25 July, with Presiding Officers and Speakers from the other legislatures in the British Isles and Ireland.

3. The purpose of the event is to allow Presiding Officers and Speakers to discuss informally matters of common interest in relation to parliamentary procedure and management. The event will include a series of themed discussions and informal opportunities for sharing of experience.

4. The Clerk/Chief Executive and a private secretary from the Office of the Presiding Officer will also attend. In addition to meetings of the Presiding Officers/Speakers, the event will also provide an opportunity for the Clerk/Chief Executive and private secretary to hold discussions with counterparts from the other legislatures.

Resource implications

5. The estimated cost to be met by the Parliament for this visit is approximately £500 for return flights from Edinburgh to Dublin for the Presiding Officer and two accompanying officials. The other costs of the event (including accommodation and hospitality) are being met by the host, the Dáil Éireann.

Governance

6. Section 2 of the Code of Conduct for MSPs states that certain overseas visits are excluded from the requirement on Members to register the costs of the visit. These include visits:

- where travel and other costs are wholly met by the SPCB (section 2, paragraph 62); and
- the costs of which were approved in advance by the SPCB (section 2, paragraph 64).

7. For this event, travel costs will be met by the SPCB (through the International Relations Office budget). All other costs will be met by the Dáil Éireann.

8. For international engagement, consideration is always given to whether the visit should be virtual or in person and, where in person, the travel options and environmental impact.

9. This event allows the Presiding Officer the opportunity to share experience informally over a series of discussions with counterparts that would not be possible through video-conferencing. Face to face meetings with other Speakers are a regular and essential element of supporting the Presiding Officer in her role.

10. The only viable travel option between Edinburgh and Dublin in the time available for this event is by air. The CO₂e footprint per person (return) for flying (economy class) is 251.4kg.

Publication Scheme

11. This paper will be published in line with the SPCB's Publication Scheme.

Decision

12. The SPCB is invited to consider the above travel and, in accordance with the Code of Conduct for MSPs, approve the costs associated with the visit, noting that the travel costs will be met by the SPCB and other costs by the Dáil Éireann.