



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Minute of the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body (SPCB) meeting held on Tuesday 14 November 2023 at 12.30pm

Present:

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

Apologies:

- Christine Grahame MSP

In attendance:

- David McGill
- Michelle Hegarty
- Alan Balharrie
- Judith Morrison
- Huw Williams
- Mark Brough
- Eric MacLeod
- Lisa Creamer
- Judith Proudfoot, Secretary

Discussion

1. The SPCB met to discuss ongoing correspondence relating to the roaming data charges incurred by an MSP.
2. The SPCB noted that the Reimbursement of Members' Expenses Scheme operated on trust, transparency and assurances from Members. The Member had acknowledged that he failed to update his sim card. The Member has also acknowledged that he had failed to notify IT officials in advance of his travel abroad as per policy so that a cost effective roaming

bundle could be applied to his device. This had resulted in significant charges being incurred. He had since agreed to meet these costs in full. The SPCB was satisfied that, on receipt of the bill, appropriate technical checks were carried out on Mr Matheson's iPad to ensure it was functioning properly and that written assurances were sought and received that all use of the device had been for parliamentary purposes. The SPCB noted the checks carried out by officials on Mr Matheson's parliamentary work iPad were in line with what officials would be expected to do given the Member's assurances.

3. The SPCB took the issues arising from this incident very seriously and instructed officials to carry out an urgent review of the Parliament's policies and procedures around mobile device use and data roaming charges and how these are handled. The SPCB agreed it was important in light of this incident to review all policies to put in place robust mitigations to ensure the present situation could not recur. It was vital that confidence in the expenses scheme and its integrity was maintained. The policy review would also set out the circumstances for 'out of the ordinary' bills to be escalated to the SPCB for explicit sign off. This would ensure full transparency and accountability. The SPCB noted that the current policy on going abroad was well signposted and advertised and asked that version control on the intranet was reinforced to ensure that it was clear that any previous policies and/or guidance were superseded.
4. The SPCB agreed the general terms of responses to correspondence received by the Presiding Officer and an FOI request.

SPCB Secretariat
November 2023