



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

International Relations: Parliamentary travel

10 March 2022

Reference: SPCB (2022) Paper 17

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

2. The annual conference of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) British Islands and Mediterranean Region (BIMR) will take place in Douglas, Isle of Man, on Thursday 24 and Friday 25 March. This will be the first in person conference which the three members of the CPA Scotland Branch Executive Committee (Jeremy Balfour MSP; Sarah Boyack MSP; Stuart McMillan MSP) will have participated in since 2019.
3. The overarching theme of the conference is ‘improving scrutiny’ which will cover discussions on the continued response of parliaments to COVID. There will be a series of breakout sessions around budget scrutiny; climate change actions; diversity in legislatures; population and demographics; legislative scrutiny; and engagement and outreach.
4. In addition, meetings of the regional CPA Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians Steering Committee (involving Sarah Boyack MSP), the Commonwealth Parliamentarians with Disabilities (involving Jeremy Balfour MSP), and the wider work of the CPA (involving Stuart McMillan MSP as a member of the CPA Executive Committee) will take place.

Governance

5. The SPCB will recall that, within the International Strategy which it agreed in September 2021, there is a new requirement for the International Relations Office (IRO) to outline to the SPCB why the visit is in person (as opposed to virtual) and the travel options and environmental impact considered by the delegation.
6. It is suggested that this visit is appropriate for in person (the first occasion for the BEC to meet face to face with their counterparts from the other regional parliaments). Until now, all discussions have been virtual. Further, it is not expected that all proceedings from the regional conference will be available in virtual format (in which case the BEC would be unable to participate in some discussions). It is also considered a better format for the BEC members to engage more productively and spontaneously in all discussions both in and outwith the core programme.
7. In relation to travel options, travel between Edinburgh/Glasgow and Douglas is either by air or by train and ferry. The CO2e footprint (each way) for flying is 104.5 compared with 23.2 for train and ferry. The actual travel times (each way) are 4 hours for flying and 13½ hours for train and ferry. A further consideration is journey times (travel back is on a Saturday) and the parliamentary, constituency and personal commitments which the BEC members have. These options were put to the BEC members and the three Members will fly from Edinburgh to the Isle of Man. For the return journey, Jeremy Balfour MSP and Stuart McMillan MSP will fly and Sarah Boyack MSP will take the ferry and train.

Resource implications

8. The estimated cost for this visit is £1,000 which covers travel and appropriate incidental expense for the three BEC members and one accompanying IRO official (the Tynwald will cover accommodation and meals).
9. Section 2, paragraph 62 of the Code of Conduct for Members of the Scottish Parliament states that certain overseas visits are excluded from the requirement to register where the travel and other costs are wholly met by the SPCB (in this case, from the IRO budget).

Publication Scheme

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

Decision

11. The SPCB is invited to consider the above travel and, in accordance with the Code of Conduct, approve the details of the travel and the associated costs above.
12. The IRO will then notify the Members concerned they do not need to register this travel.

International Relations Office
March 2022