

Reimbursement of Members' Expenses Scheme – Exceptional Expenses request for office repair 10 October 2024 Reference: SPCB (2024) Paper 67

Executive summary

1. The SPCB is invited to consider the following retrospective application for exceptional expense for £4,712 from Joe FitzPatrick due to a repairs needed to his constituency office as set out in section 8.2.1 of the Reimbursement of Members' Expenses Scheme.

Issues and options

2. In September 2023 part of Joe FitzPatrick's local office ceiling collapsed. Repairs to make safe and to reinstate the ceiling and cornice have since taken place. The local office has a full repair clause in it, as is common with most local offices, so Mr FitzPatrick was liable for the repair costs which have been claimed against his Office Cost Provision as repair costs can be claimed against the Members Expenses Scheme.
3. Mr FitzPatrick contacted his insurance provider to see if they would cover the costs of the repairs, but the repair costs were not covered by the policy. As a result, the initial repair to make the office safe was undertaken at a cost of £576 and these costs were met from Mr FitzPatrick's 2023/24 Office Cost Provision. Quotes to fully repair the damage to the ceiling and cornice were sought but a number of firms declined to quote for the repair to the cornice as the office is listed and the repair needed was too intricate. One quote to fully repair the damage to the ceiling and cornice was provided but as it was £14k + VAT this was deemed too expensive.
4. The office did receive quotes to do parts of the work in the form of scaffold hire, plaster boarding and preparing the area for plastering, and for the

plastering and repair of the cornice. These costs totaled £4,712 and have been met from Mr FitzPatrick's 2024/25 OCP.

5. The result of the repair costs in addition to office rent for the remainder of the year is that Mr FitzPatrick has only £195.53 to meet any further office costs until provisions are refreshed in April 2025.
6. Reviewing Mr FitzPatrick's Engagement and Office Cost Provisions from last year, in order to meet all office costs for the year, £5,000 was transferred from Engagement to Office Cost Provision with 99% of the Office Cost Provision spent at the end of March 2024. The same level of utilization of the provisions is forecast for the current financial year ending March 2025 therefore it does not seem feasible for Mr FitzPatrick to meet these additional costs from his OCP / EP and as such an exceptional expense application is required.

Governance

7. The Reimbursement of Members' Expenses Scheme allows for a Member to apply to the SPCB for reimbursement of any exceptional expenses to be incurred by that member in connection with the performance of parliamentary duties and specifically lease obligations.
8. It should be noted that per the Members' Expenses Scheme guidance that a Member should not incur any costs until the agreement of the SPCB has been obtained so this is a retrospective application.

Resource implications

9. It is confirmed that there are sufficient funds in the overall expenses budget to meet the costs indicated.

Publication Scheme

10. This paper can be published in line with the publication policy.

Next steps

11. To advise Members of the SPCB decision.

Decision

12. The SPCB is invited to consider the application for exceptional expense to support Mr FitzPatrick's repair to his office ceiling and cornice.

Allowances Office

10 October 2024