

MEMBER-SPONSORED EVENTS GUIDANCE - UPDATES

Executive summary

1. This Paper seeks the SPCB's views on a number of recommended changes to the current Guidance for Member-sponsored events to improve the process for Members and external organisations organising Member-sponsored events at the Scottish Parliament.
2. The current Guidance for Member-sponsored events (**Annex A**) has been in place for over 10 year and although has been updated during that time, it would benefit from being further reviewed and updated given changes over the way Member-sponsored events are organised and supported by the Events and Exhibitions Team.
3. The overarching aim of these changes is to ensure more effective engagement opportunities between Members and external organisations with minimum impact on other building users. We aim to improve on, and solidify, the message to external organisations that engagement with Members should be at the very core of their event should they wish to hold an event at Scottish Parliament. This will support the SPCB's wider Public Engagement Strategy which aims to increase effective public engagement on the work of the Parliament.

Issues and options

Parliamentary business

4. The current Guidance (paragraph 4) states 'Member sponsored events must respect the wide range of existing channels for influencing parliamentary business, by not lobbying on parliamentary business under current consideration.'
5. Within all practical steps this has been adhered to over the years. However, recently given the number of wide-reaching bills being considered by the Parliament there has been a significant increase on staff resources required not only within the Events and Exhibitions Team but also within the clerking teams to "police" this rule. In addition, as most events are booked months in advance, before parliamentary business is agreed, they may have to be cancelled or rescheduled when business is planned. This rule may restrict public engagement with Members stopping legitimate organisations from discussing issues with their elected Members.
6. The Events and Exhibitions Team in upholding this rule have faced challenging conversations with external organisations who are disappointed they are not able to engage and update Members on current issues that are

being debated in their Parliament. On these occasions there is a feeling that the current policy is placing a barrier between them and Members.

7. When this Guidance was drafted and agreed by the SPCB there was no Lobby Register. Since the establishment of the Register it could be argued that this rule is no longer required as all engagement with Members on any issues needs to be recorded and there is now far greater transparency between organisations and Members. To assist organisations and individuals registering on the Register, the Events and Exhibitions Team works closely with the Lobbying Register Team. If this change is approved, we will include a paragraph about the Lobby Register with a link to the Register within the Guidance.

8. Removing this from the Guidance will not necessarily significantly increase the number of Member-sponsored events relating to parliamentary business currently under consideration but will allow organisations access to elected Members on issues that are important and relevant to their parliamentary role. We will monitor this over the next year and come back to the SPCB accordingly.

The SPCB is asked to consider this and to agree that paragraph 4 of the Guidance be removed and a paragraph on the Lobby Register with link to the Register added.

9. The current Guidance (paragraph 5) states that Member-sponsored events cannot take place at the same time as plenary business. We are not proposing to change this rule but to clarify the agreed working arrangements for all Member-sponsored events when Parliament sits late.

10. We propose that the Guidance be updated to reflect the following:
- Guests attending events in the Members' Room or committee rooms can attend their events with refreshments being served as planned but no speeches can take place until parliamentary business has concluded.
 - Guests attending an event in the Garden Lobby will remain in the Main Hall until parliamentary business has concluded when they will be accompanied through to the Garden Lobby for the start of the event and speeches.

The SPCB is asked to consider this and to agree that paragraph 5 of the Guidance be updated to reflect these changes.

Photocalls

11. The current Guidance (paragraph 12) states that there are "two slots available for photocalls one on Wednesday lunchtime and one on Thursday lunchtime". However, since the Events and Exhibitions Team have taken on responsibility for supporting these photocalls, in practice only the Thursday

lunchtime slot - immediately after First Minister's Questions - is a viable option given other pressures on Members' time and the building outwith this slot.

12. The Events and Exhibitions Team would recommend that we remove reference to the Wednesday lunchtime slot and only offer one slot per week on a Thursday lunchtime.

The SPCB is asked to consider this and to agree that paragraph 12 of the Guidance be updated to reflect this change.

Lead in times for events

13. The current Guidance (paragraphs 23 and 24) states that there are currently two timeslots when the Events and Exhibitions Team approve and allocate events scheduled for a future date:

- Event requests for January to June will be assessed in September
- Event requests for September to December will be assessed in April

14. Whilst this timetable has broadly worked in practice there have been occasions when Member-sponsored event requests are submitted for dates outwith the current assessment period. This has resulted in the request being filed until it is considered at the next assessment date. This can be frustrating for event organisers when they are trying to secure keynote speakers and other guests for their event.

15. Therefore, we would like to propose that we no longer have two separate time slots for event requests to be considered but that Member-sponsored event requests are managed and approved on a rolling basis up to one year in advance to assist event organisers in organising their events.

The SPCB is asked to consider this and agree that paragraphs 23 and 24 of the Guidance be updated to reflect these changes.

Resource implications

16. There will be no resources implications with the proposed changes to the Guidance for Member-sponsored events.

Publication scheme

17. This Paper can be published once the [Guidance for Member-sponsored events has been updated](#).

Next Steps

18. If the SPCB agrees the changes to the Guidance, the Events and Exhibitions Team will update the Guidance accordingly; communicating the changes to all Members and organisations at the beginning of January 2020.

Decision

19. The SPCB is asked to consider this Paper and agree the changes to the Guidance for Member-sponsored events to improve the process for Members and external organisations organising Member-sponsored events at the Scottish Parliament

EVENTS AND EXHIBITIONS TEAM
December 2019

GUIDANCE FOR MEMBER-SPONSORED EVENTS

General

1. The following is a guide to Members, their staff and external organisations involved in the organisation of a Member-sponsored event or photo call at the Scottish Parliament.
2. An event is a meeting or gathering of people that is not a meeting of the full parliament, a committee meeting or an ordinary internal or private meeting, but that uses the committee rooms, meeting rooms, any of the public spaces, the Garden Lobby, Members' Lobby, the Members' Restaurant, the Chamber Conference Room or the landscaped gardens and requires the services of the Events and Exhibitions Team to facilitate it for example visitor registration, booking audio visual equipment, hospitality etc. All Members will be invited to attend a Member-sponsored event.
3. Member-sponsored events must be related to parliamentary business e.g. launch of a Committee report or support Members in their parliamentary role by, for example helping inform/brief Members on a specific issue. They may provide a specific perspective e.g. promoting a particular energy source, reflecting a sponsoring Member's interest or policy position, but must not be party political e.g. a constituency Branch meeting of a political party could not be held in the Scottish Parliament.
4. Member sponsored events must respect the wide range of existing channels for influencing parliamentary business, by not lobbying on parliamentary business under current consideration.
5. No Member-sponsored events can take place at the same time as plenary or during parliamentary recesses.
6. This guidance should be read alongside the general policy for booking meeting accommodation on SPEIR.

Members' responsibilities as the event sponsor

7. An Event and Exhibition Request Form must be agreed and checked by Members or a nominated member of their staff on their behalf before it is submitted to the Events and Exhibitions Team thus ensuring that all parties are signed up to the event request before parliamentary resources are committed to the planning process.
8. By signing the Event and Exhibition Request Form, Members are confirming that they consider that the event fits the agreed criteria and conditions for events in the parliament, and that they will be in attendance for the duration of the event. It will continue to be possible for an event to be

sponsored by more than one Member. Such events will require only one of those Members to be present.

9. Members or a nominated member of their staff authorised by them will be responsible for issuing invitations to other Members to attend the event.

10. Members or a nominated member of their staff authorised by them will be responsible for signing off the completed Event Plan and agreeing the guest list for the event in consultation with the external organisations to ensure that they are happy with the content and proposed balance of those invited to the event they are sponsoring in the Parliament.

Book launches

11. Accommodation may be booked to launch any book written by a Member. Members may also book accommodation to launch books written by other authors, provided they fall within the following categories:

- anthologies of Members' speeches and extracts from their diaries authorised by the Member or their family
- biographies of former Members of the Parliament authorised by the Member or their family
- books commissioned by or on behalf of the SPCB

and that the sale of books at any of the above launches is permitted.

Photocalls

12. There are two slots available for photocalls one on Wednesday lunchtime and one on Thursday lunchtime. Photocalls can take place either on the right-hand side of the Garden Lobby stairs (as you descend) or in the Members' Garden.

13. Information about the photocalls will appear in the weekly Events and Exhibitions Bulletin so all Members would be aware of what is happening when.

14. All organisations wishing to hold a Member-sponsored photocall should complete the current Event and Exhibition Request Form, securing Member sponsorship and making sure that the photocall meets criteria for Member-sponsored events and exhibitions in that they seek to raise awareness of a particular organisation or its work and engage with Members. Members would be invited to attend the photocall by the sponsoring Member as they are for Member-sponsored events. The Events and Exhibitions Team will then liaise with the organisation on your behalf and take forward the arrangements.

Events and Exhibitions Team

15. The completed Event and Exhibition Request Form should be submitted to the Events and Exhibitions Team for approval. Once approved the Events and Exhibitions Team will inform the Member(s) directly and will allocate a

dedicated Events Officer to manage all aspects of the organisation directly with the external organisations keeping Members updated as necessary. The Events Officer will act as a single point of contact for Members and the external organisations.

16. The Events Officer will make the necessary room bookings, send an Events Pack to the external organisations which contains an organiser's guide, hospitality options, Information for Guests and information on each of the venues and invite them to attend a site visit. All the documents can be found on the Events and Exhibitions pages on the Scottish Parliament's website.

17. Once the site visit is agreed the Events Officer will inform the Member, so they can attend the meeting if they wish. Following the site visit and receipt of the booking forms the Events Officer will draft an Event Plan which will be sent to both the Member and the external organisation to be agreed.

External organisations' responsibilities

18. For general queries and guidance on events, the Events and Exhibitions Team will be the main contact for external organisations. However, before the Team can discuss the event in detail the external organisation must secure a Member to sponsor their event.

19. No external organisation apart from the Scottish Government may be sponsored by Members for more than two events in any 12-month period.

20. External organisations will meet the costs in full for all services contracted from the Scottish Parliament and its suppliers within 30 days of the date of the invoice. The Events Officer will notify external organisations of these costs prior to the event and agree them. If the external organisations dispute part of an invoice, they must still pay the undisputed part within the 30 days.

21. External organisations will also be responsible for liaising with the sponsoring Member on the guest list and agreeing it with their sponsor. All external invitations that are issued must clearly state that the event is being hosted/sponsored by a named Member in the opening paragraph. External organisations should not invite other Members directly, these invitations should be issued by the sponsoring Member or a nominated member of their staff authorised by them.

22. External organisations should be aware that by nature of the fact that the event is being held in Scottish Parliament it will be open for all Members to attend if they so wish.

Lead in times for events

23. The Events and Exhibitions Team will where possible always endeavour to deliver events on the first choice of date however owing to the high level of demand we recommend that Members and external organisations should be planning between 4 and 6 months ahead.

24. We plan and allocate events as follows:

Event Requests between January and June	Assessed and allocated beginning of September
Event Requests between September and December	Assessed and allocated beginning of April