

REIMBURSEMENT OF MEMBERS' EXPENSES SCHEME – EXCEPTIONAL EXPENSES APPLICATION

Executive summary

1. The SPCB is invited to consider an application for exceptional expenses under paragraph 7.2.1 of the Reimbursement of Members' Expenses Scheme to meet office relocation costs.

Issues and Options

2. Under the Members' Expenses Scheme, provision is made for a Member to apply for the reimbursement of any exceptional expenses incurred by the Member in connection with the performance of parliamentary duties. An application has been received from Humza Yousaf MSP to meet the additional costs associated with relocating to a new local office.

3. Mr Yousaf has advised that as a result of being returned as a constituency Member instead of a regional Member following the election he has had to terminate the lease of the former regional office and relocate to a new constituency office.

4. Mr Yousaf has incurred unexpected costs of £3,650 in relation to this office relocation. This breaks down as £2,500 in relation to the discharge of lease obligations for the former regional office and legal costs of £1,150 in relation to negotiating his new lease and a reduction in the lease obligations for his previous office.

5. Mr Yousaf's application is based on the fact that he has had these additional costs which were not used to support his constituents but were to simply wind up an office he could no longer advertise or use properly under the Scheme as he was no longer the regional Member.

6. The SPCB will wish to note that these unexpected costs cannot currently be met from within the Office Cost Provision available to Mr Yousaf for the remainder of the current financial year due to his current commitments for rent etc. The budget available to Mr Yousaf is £17,213.60 and his commitments including these additional costs are currently £18,519.46 leaving a shortfall of £1,305.86. Please note that this does include estimated costs for utilities, water and trade waste but does not take account of any hall hires between now and end of March 2017, adding signage to the new office or any other bills which are as yet unknown.

7. The SPCB may also wish to note that had Mr Yousaf not been returned at the election he would have been entitled to funds under the Winding Up

provision to the sum of £2,757 to meet the costs of winding up the former regional office.

Resource Implications

8. Should the SPCB decide the circumstances are exceptional and the costs of £3,670 should be met in full or part it is confirmed that there are funds available within the overall expenses budget.

Governance issues

9. There are no governance issues.

Publication Scheme

10. This paper can be published in accordance with the SPCB's publication scheme.

Next steps

11. To inform the Member of the decision and, if agreed, take the necessary administrative steps to allocate the appropriate funds to the provision.

Decision

12. The SPCB is invited to consider the application for exceptional expenses to cover the costs associated with moving from a shared regional office to a new constituency office.

Allowances Office
December 2016