

PARLIAMENTARY TRAVEL

Executive summary

1. The Corporate Body is invited to note parliamentary travel overseas and, in accordance with Volume 2, Section 2.4 of the Code of Conduct for Members of the Scottish Parliament, in relation to receipt by Members of travel, hospitality etc, to approve the details of the travel and other costs associated with it.
2. This paper outlines a range of parliamentary travel relating to Scotland Week; attendance at a Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD) regional conference in Serbia; the attendance by a Scottish Parliament delegation at a British Irish Parliamentary Assembly (BIPA) Plenary session in Dublin; and a Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) delegation that is visiting the Parliament of Guyana. The Corporate Body is asked to approve the parliamentary travel detailed in this paper.

Issues and Options

3. The purpose of each of the delegations is outlined below and the attached table at Annex A provides further detail on the travel involved.
4. Advance approval by the Corporate Body for any visit programme means that travel on parliamentary business is not regarded as a registrable interest under the terms of the Code of Conduct for Members of the Scottish Parliament.

Scotland Week

5. The Scottish Parliament delegation to Scotland Week in April 2014 will comprise the Presiding Officer, Rt Hon Tricia Marwick MSP, Linda Fabiani MSP and Rhoda Grant MSP. The delegation will travel to New York, Ottawa and Toronto between 3 April and 11 April (travel inclusive). The programme for the delegation is currently being developed but will consist of a range of policy meetings and activities designed to promote Scotland in New York. In Ottawa and Toronto the delegation will undertake visit programmes at the Canadian Federal Parliament and the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. Two officials will accompany the delegation.

WFD regional conference in Serbia

6. The SPCB previously agreed that the Convener of the Economy, Energy and Tourism Committee, Murdo Fraser MSP, be approached to attend a regional conference of the Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD) sponsored Network of Parliamentary Committees for Economy and Finance of the Western Balkan Countries. The conference will take place

in Belgrade, Serbia, on 3-4 March 2014. Two officials will also attend the conference.

BIPA Plenary Session, Dublin

7. The next plenary meeting of the British Irish Parliamentary Assembly (BIPA) will take place in Dublin from 30 March to 1 April 2014. The Scottish Parliament delegation to the BIPA Plenary session is expected to consist of five Members led by the Deputy Presiding Officer, John Scott MSP. The other Members are expected to be Willie Coffey MSP, Alison McInnes MSP, Michael McMahon MSP and Mary Scanlon MSP. One official will accompany the delegation to Dublin.

CPA delegation to Guyana

8. The CPA UK Branch has been in discussions with the Parliament of Guyana regarding sending a delegation to Guyana to discuss the topic of minority government. Guyana currently has a minority government. The dates currently proposed for this visit are Monday 31 March to Friday 4 April. The Speaker of the Guyanese Parliament specifically asked for MSPs to form part of the delegation given the recent experience in Scotland of minority government during the last parliamentary session. The CPA Scotland Branch has proposed that Bruce Crawford MSP and Tavish Scott MSP should represent the Scottish Parliament. Our current understanding is that no other UK politicians will travel to Guyana, with the only other member of the delegation being Professor Robert Hazell of University College London. There remains some on-going negotiation to take place regarding this delegation but the visit is expected to take place on the dates outlined above.

Resource Implications

9. The cost of Scotland Week will, again, not exceed £30,000. This is in line with the cost of previous delegations to Scotland Week since 2009. Despite the cost of undertaking activity in Canada being expensive the cost provision for the delegation remains the same due to early planning and discounts on travel being sought wherever possible.
10. The majority of the cost of attendance at the regional conference in Serbia is being borne by WFD. The only cost to the SPCB relates to expenses, not including flights, arising from travel to and from Serbia. These costs are estimated to be in the region of £300.
11. The cost of attendance by the Scottish Parliament delegation at the BIPA Plenary session is estimated to be £2,500.
12. The cost of two MSPs visiting Guyana is being largely met through a combination of monies from the CPA UK Branch, the British High Commission in Guyana and the Parliament of Guyana. The only costs which will be borne by the SPCB will be the cost of return air travel from

Scotland to London and any miscellaneous expenses which Members may incur while travelling within the UK. The total cost to the SPCB is estimated to be £500.

Publication Scheme

13. This paper will be published as part of the SPCB's Publication Scheme. It is suggested that this paper is not published until all the activities detailed have taken place.

Decision

14. The Corporate Body is invited:

- To agree the parliamentary travel relating to Scotland Week 2014; the WFD sponsored regional conference in Belgrade, Serbia; attendance at a BIPA Plenary session in Dublin; and the visit by two MSPs as part of a wider delegation visiting the Parliament of Guyana.
- In accordance with the Code of Conduct for Members of the Scottish Parliament, in relation to receipt by Members of travel, hospitality etc, to approve the details of the travel and the associated costs as set out in the paper.
- To agree that this paper is not published until the activities detailed have taken place.

**UK and International Relations Office
February 2014**

Annex A

VISIT DATE	DESCRIPTION & OBJECTIVES	TIME	DESTINATION	PARTICIPANTS	APPROX. COSTS TO SPCB
3 – 11 April	Delegation to Scotland Week 2014. The delegation will undertake a range of activities to promote Scotland and the Scottish Parliament, policy meetings and exchanges of experience with parliamentarians from other legislatures.	9 days (including travel)	New York, Ottawa and Toronto.	Presiding Officer, Rt Hon Tricia Marwick MSP, Linda Fabiani MSP and Rhoda Grant MSP.	Cost will not exceed £30,000
2– 4 March	Murdo Fraser MSP attending a WFD sponsored regional conference in Belgrade, Serbia. The conference will deal with the issues of foreign direct investment and State Aid. Murdo will speak as part of a panel of politicians whilst at the conference.	3 days (including travel)	Belgrade, Serbia.	Murdo Fraser MSP.	£300
30 March to 1 April	Scottish Parliament delegation to a plenary session of BIPA as part of the Parliament's membership of BIPA.	3 days (including travel)	Dublin, Republic of Ireland.	Deputy Presiding Officer John Scott MSP, Willie Coffey MSP, Alison McInnes MSP, Michael McMahon MSP, Mary Scanlon MSP.	£2,500
31 March to 4 April	Two MSPs attending a study visit dealing with the topic of minority Government at the Parliament of Guyana.	5 days (including travel)	Georgetown, Guyana	Bruce Crawford MSP and Tavish Scott MSP.	Costs borne by SPCB are limited to those incurred through travel within the UK which are estimated to be £500.