

## **MEDIA FACILITIES AND PUBLIC ACCESS DURING REFERENDUM**

### Executive summary

1. This paper updates the SPCB on proposed media access arrangements during the referendum period of Monday 15 September to Tuesday 23 September 2014. It also seeks the SPCB's agreement that officials decline all major political programme-making requests until after 23 September when normal business resumes.
2. In addition, this paper seeks the SPCB's steer on opening hours for the building and public access arrangements including public tours.

### Broadcast village - landscaped grounds

3. Plans are now well advanced for the landscape grounds to be used as a broadcast village for the period 15 to 23 September. An external project manager has been appointed to handle the infrastructure in the landscape grounds. All other media arrangements will be handled by the Parliament's Broadcast Office and Media Relations Office. Media accreditation will be put in place by our staff and a team of volunteers from across the parliamentary service will assist with media facilitation.
4. All major Scottish and UK news broadcasters will be accommodated within the broadcast village. Internationally, we have had discussions with Associated Press, European Broadcast Union (EBU) and CNN to name but three major players. The Broadcast Office will work closely with EBU in order to manage international demand. EBU is an alliance of public service media, comprising 72 active members in 56 countries, and 37 associate members from a further 22 countries, giving it a substantial international reach. EBU was key in facilitating international coverage for the royal wedding in London, three years ago. We expect up to 500 media personnel to be based in the broadcast village over the referendum week.

### SPCB media access policy

5. We propose that the SPCB's existing media access policy remains in place as normal across the referendum period. In short this will mean only MSPs and accredited media can be interviewed inside the parliamentary building.
6. The existing policy, which applies to both domestic and international broadcasters, will see media broadcast primarily from the landscape grounds where 'political' and 'campaign' related individuals can be interviewed freely. The policy also allows for more restricted arrangements inside the building, where we can facilitate pieces to camera and interviews with MSPs from the Garden Lobby, Committee Rooms and the

Members' Garden. **Is the SPCB content for the existing policy to be maintained?**

#### Media hot desk facilities in CR1 and 3

7. Our plans for media access also include the use of Committee Rooms 1 and 3 as hot desk facilities for print and other media. We plan to put in place wi-fi access, printer facilities and desks for up to 100 media approximately for the period stated in paragraph 1. These desks are not intended as permanent locations for journalists for the week, but hot desk facilities to file copy and catch up on emails etc. **Is the SPCB content?**

#### SPCB Media Policy - programme making request

8. Separate from the SPCB's *media access policy*, which covers general news reporting arrangements, is the SPCB's *Media Policy*, which sets out criteria for dealing with requests to use the parliamentary campus for wider programme-making.
9. Given the political sensitivities of the whole referendum period and the restrictions placed on the SPCB under the Referendum Act, we propose that all requests to host programmes be declined. This would go beyond the referendum period to Tuesday 23 September, when normal policy arrangements should resume (ie requests are gauged on their merits against the policy criteria)? **Is the SPCB content?**

#### Public Tours at Holyrood

10. Given our intention to use the Garden Lobby for limited broadcasting purposes, this will impact on the route followed by public tours. Rather than run shortened tours and to better manage demand in the Main Hall, we recommend that public tours are suspended from Wednesday 17 to Tuesday 23 September. **Is the SPCB content?**

#### Public access to Holyrood

11. On balance, we consider it is important at this time to be accessible to the general public and recommend the building should remain open to the public as normal during this time, rather than close it on account of significant media use. Normal recess opening hours for the public are 10am to 5pm. Any visiting public will have access to the Main Hall exhibition space and the public café, and also to meet with Members on a pre-arranged basis. **Is the SPCB content?**

#### Media access hours

12. We expect the media to be broadcasting significantly greater coverage to cover all available news slots domestically and to some extent internationally. We therefore recommend that media have wider hours of

access to the building over this period for broadcast purposes and to access the hot desk facilities in CR1 and 3. **Is the SPCB content?**

### Publication Scheme

13. This paper can be published.

### Decision

The SPCB is asked to note the progress to date on the broadcast village arrangements, and is asked to:

- agree the existing SPCB media access policy that only MSPs and accredited media be interviewed in the building apply as normal (para 6);
- agree use of CR1 and 3 as media hot desk facilities (para 7);
- agree all programme-making requests for programmes be declined (para 9)
- agree Public Tours be suspended until Tuesday 23 September (para 10)
- agree Public Access remains as normal for recess over the period (para 11)
- agree media have wider hours of access to the building (para 12)

**Referendum Planning Group  
19 June 2014**