

REIMBURSEMENT OF EXPENSES SCHEME – TRAVEL EXPENSES

Executive summary

1. The SPCB is invited to consider two applications to have travel costs associated with a conference in Poland and a fact finding trip to France met under the provision made at paragraph 5.1.5 of the Reimbursement of Members' Expenses Scheme.

Issues and Options

2. The Reimbursement of Members' Expenses Scheme makes provision to meet travel and overnight costs associated with a Member undertaking their parliamentary duties. However in relation to travel outwith the UK, with the exception of travel to Brussels and Strasbourg, Members are required to make an application to the SPCB to have such costs met.

3. As stated earlier provision is made at paragraph 5.1.5 of the Reimbursement of Members' Expenses Scheme to meet such cost from the uncapped travel provision. The criteria previously applied when determining such applications included where the reason for the journey was:

- Directly relate to a specific constituency matter, where the visit is necessary in order to address the issue;
- Directly related to Parliamentary business;
- Something the SPCB considers the Parliament should be paying for;
- Provides value for money.

4. Legal advice previously provided in relation to such applications has established that, where money is not available from elsewhere, eg from the uncapped provision, the costs could be met from the Member's capped Office Cost Provision.

5. Two applications have now been submitted as follows:-

Application 1

6. The first application is from Anne McTaggart MSP who, together with her member of staff, has received an invitation to attend the World Conference for Credit Union scheduled to take place 15th – 18th July 2012 in Gdansk. A copy of her application detailing the purpose of the visit is attached as Annex A. The invitation was issued as a follow up to Ms McTaggart's participation in the international conference in Glasgow in 2011 and as a direct result of her commitment to the Credit Union Movement.

7. Ms McTaggart is currently the vice chairperson for the Cross Party Group on Credit Unions and is an ex – officio member of the Glasgow

Strategy Group which is an umbrella organisation for 34 credit unions in Glasgow.

8. The costs of flights and bed and breakfast for Ms McTaggart and her member of staff will be between £1,078 and £1,198. There are no conference fees to be met - as can be seen from Ms McTaggart's application she and her member of staff will not attend the conference. They will attend the official opening and a dinner with Scottish delegates.

9. As mentioned in paragraph 4, the costs of the travel can be met from the uncapped travel provision or the office costs provision, although for the member of staff any costs would have to be met from the capped office costs provision if the application is approved. **The SPCB is invited to consider this application and whether it considers it relates directly to parliamentary business.**

Application 2

10. The second application is from Alison McInnes MSP who has received an invitation to travel to TOTAL's Research and Development centre in Pau and the CCS Project at Lacq. Ms McInnes has advised that she has a two-fold interest in participating in the visit. Firstly, as a member of the Oil and Gas Cross Party Group, (the invitation was extended as a result of being a member of that group) and secondly, as carbon capture proposals are being mooted for Peterhead, which is within the region Ms McInnes represents. Ms McInnes feels there would be great benefit to taking part in order to learn more about the process.

11. The cost of travel from London to France and return to Aberdeen will be met by TOTAL. Ms McInnes is applying for the costs associated with travelling from Edinburgh to London, as part of a trip to a destination outside the UK, the cost of which is currently quoted at £46.52 including taxes. This is unusual in that while the Reimbursement of Members' Expenses Scheme does not require a Member to seek SPCB approval to travel within the UK this application is submitted because the UK travel would not be undertaken unless there was a requirement to travel to France. **The SPCB is invited to consider this application.**

Resource Implications

12. Should the SPCB determine that the costs should be met it is confirmed that there are funds available within the overall expenses budget.

Governance issues

13. There are no governance issues.

Publication Scheme

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

Next steps

15. To inform the Members of the decision.

Decision

16. The SPCB is invited to consider these applications and to determine:-

- Whether the purpose of the travel meets any of the criteria listed at paragraph 8 above with the costs being met from the uncapped provision; or
- Whether the costs should be met from the Office Cost Provision.

Allowances Office
April 2012

From: Potter T (Theresa)
Sent: Wednesday, March 28, 2012 10:47 AM
To: Giulianotti J (Jackie)
Subject: RE: Gdansk Poland

Hi Jackie,

We are not attending full conference and are invited guests for the official opening ceremony; we will be travelling with credit union members and are attending a Scottish dinner with delegates on Saturday; we chose not to attend full conference as delegate fees are approx. £1k but to spend time with Scottish delegates prior to and at the opening.

Hope this meets with your requirements

Thanks

Theresa

From: Giulianotti J (Jackie)
Sent: 27 March 2012 11:09
To: Potter T (Theresa)
Subject: FW: Gdansk Poland

Theresa

My apologies for pestering you again but can you advise if there is a conference fee charge and if so how much this would be.

Many thanks

Jackie Giulianotti
Allowances Office
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh EH99 1SP

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From: Giulianotti J (Jackie)
Sent: Tuesday, March 20, 2012 9:39 AM
To: Potter T (Theresa)
Subject: RE: Gdansk Poland

Theresa

Many thanks

Jackie

From: Potter T (Theresa)
Sent: Tuesday, March 20, 2012 9:34 AM
To: Giulianotti J (Jackie)
Subject: RE: Gdansk Poland

Hi Jackie,
Please be advised that the costs are inclusive of flights, transfers and accommodation on a B&B basis.
Kind Regards
Theresa Potter

Theresa Potter
Team Manager to Anne McTaggart MSP
Tel: 0131 348 6211 Parliament Office
0141 218 4647 Constituent Office
Theresa.potter@scottish.parliament.uk

From: Potter T (Theresa)
Sent: Monday, March 19, 2012 1:02 PM
To: Giulianotti J (Jackie)
Subject: FW: Gdansk Poland

Hi Jackie,
Following on from our conversation last week please find attached the costs associated with Anne McTaggart MSP's and myself participating in an invitation from World Conference for Credit Union; scheduled to take place 15th – 18th July 2012 in Gdansk. There is limited direct flights and the dates detailed would enable Anne and myself to participate in the first day and in particular the official opening coupled with an informal meeting with the associated Scottish based credit unions on the Saturday preceding the event:

Hi Theresa,
I have looked at two hotels for you both with a good central position. Based on the direct flight from Friday 13th - Monday 16th.

Option 1)

4* Qubus Gdansk Hotel on a B&B basis.

With Direct Flights including private transfers to and from the hotel.

£539.00pp

Option 2)

5* Radisson Blu Gdansk on a B*B basis.

With Direct Flights including private transfers to and from the hotel.

£599.00pp

Flight Details:

13/07 PIK 21:15 / GDN 00:30+1

16/07 GDN19:25 / PIK 20:50

Both hotels get fantastic reviews and are within walking distance of the main areas.

I hope this is of help and please feel free to contact me.

Kind Regards

Debbie Ballantyne
Travel Consultant
Cruise Specialist

Thorne Travel
172 Main Street
Kilwinning
KA13 6EE
01294 559949

Please note that this invitation is a follow up to our participation at last year's international conference in Glasgow and Anne's commitments to the Credit Union Movement.

Anne is currently the vice chairperson for the Cross Party Group on Credit Unions and is an ex – officio member of the Glasgow Strategy Group; which is an umbrella organisation for 34 credit unions in Glasgow.

In advance may I thank you for your assistance in this matter and look forward to your advice as to how best to pursue this event appropriately.

Kind regards

Theresa potter

Theresa Potter

Team Manager to Anne McTaggart MSP

Tel: 0131 348 6211 Parliament Office