



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Reimbursement of Members' Expenses Scheme - Travel Application

20 April 2023

Reference: SPCB (2023) Paper 26

Executive summary

1. The SPCB is invited to consider an application submitted by Liam McArthur MSP to have the travel and overnight costs associated with a proposed visit to Guernsey to attend the International Islands Games being held from 8th - 14th July 2023 met under the provisions made at paragraphs 2.2.3 and 6.1.5 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, Members are required to make an application to the SPCB to have such costs met.
3. The criteria previously applied when determining such applications included where the reason for the journey was:
 - a. Directly related to a specific constituency matter, where the visit is necessary in order to address the issue;
 - b. Directly related to Parliamentary business;
 - c. Something the SPCB considers the Parliament should be paying for;
 - d. Provides value for money.

4. Mr McArthur's application relates to his ongoing involvement in the work of the Orkney Islands Games Association and in particular the Organising Committee. This includes liaising with local sports associations, Orkney Island Council, Scottish Government and its agencies, Sports Scotland and Events Scotland. Mr McArthur has previously attended the games in Jersey and Gotland, following SPCB approval, and was chair of the Bid Committee which successfully secured approval for Orkney to host the Games in 2025.
5. The Orkney Islands Games Association and Organising Committee have invited Mr McArthur to form part of the delegation to Guernsey given that there will be activity related to the handover of hosting responsibilities from Guernsey to Orkney during the week and given Mr McArthur's role as Chair in securing the multisport Games for Orkney.
6. The Games run from 8th to 14th July 2023 and Mr McArthur and the rest of the delegation would propose to travel to Guernsey on 7th July and return on 15th July 2023. The estimated cost of flights from Aberdeen to Guernsey is £700. In addition, My McArthur will have travel costs from Orkney to Aberdeen, at present return flights are between £236 and £421 and a ferry return from Kirkwall to Aberdeen is £328. This would mean total travel costs of between £936 and £1,121.
7. Overnight accommodation would be required for 8 nights. The Organising Committee have advised Mr McArthur that whilst they are still sourcing accommodation at present prices are approximately £200 per night per person. This would equate to a total of £1,600 for the 8 nights. This would be within the £250 overnight limit set by the SPCB and would leave Mr McArthur able to claim any evening meal costs during his stay within the overnight limit.
8. Total costs for travel and accommodation based on the higher indicative costs above would be £2,721. Should meals be claimed by Mr McArthur up to the maximum of the overnight limit this would mean maximum overall costs of £3,121.
9. The SPCB will wish to note that they have previously approved travel, accommodation and meal costs for Mr McArthur to attend previous Games and therefore we would recommend approval for the costs of this visit to also be met.

Governance

10. There are no governance issues as the Scheme provides for Members travelling abroad and applying to the SPCB for the costs to be met from the Scheme prior to travelling.

Resource implications

11. Should the SPCB determine that the costs should be met it is confirmed that there are sufficient funds available within the overall Members budget for 2023-24.

Publication Scheme

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

Next steps

13. Advise the Member of the SPCB's decision and if the SPCB agree the travel and overnight costs can be met from the Scheme then the Member will be advised to move forward with the proposed visit.

Decision

14. The SPCB is invited to consider an application from Mr McArthur for the cost of travel and overnight accommodation to be met from the Members' Expenses Scheme for a proposed visit to Guernsey as detailed above.

Allowances Office

11 April 2023