

20 January 2010

**REIMBURSEMENT OF MEMBERS' EXPENSES SCHEME –
EXCEPTIONAL EXPENSES APPLICATION**

Executive Summary

1. This paper invites the SPCB to consider an application for additional funds under 7.2.1 of the Members' Expenses Scheme. Contact: Jackie Giulianotti, ext 86609.

2. The cost involved totals £9536.45 in the current financial year and £7673.20 in the financial year 2010/2011 subject to a reduction equivalent to the increase, if any, in the Office Cost Provision for 2010/11. These additional funds are required to enable the SNP Glasgow Regional Member to meet their contractual rent and utilities commitments and provide a 10% flexibility to meet office contingencies.

Issues and Options

3. Under 7.2.1 of the Expenses Scheme a Member may apply to the SPCB for the reimbursement of exceptional expenses that the Member may incur in connection with the performance of parliamentary duties. We have received an application from the SNP Glasgow Regional Members for additional funds to enable them to meet the rental and running cost of their regional office. Annex A Refers. The office in question is rented from the Glasgow Regional Association of the Scottish National Party and was established as a regional office in September 2007 with the lease due to expire in September 2011. We are in receipt of an independent valuation that confirms the level of rent being raised is a fair market rent. There is no earlier termination clause contained in the lease.

4. Under the previous expenses scheme the Members were able to meet their rental commitments but due to the separate provision now made for office costs the Members have advised that they have insufficient funds to meet their contractual obligations. They are therefore making an application to have additional funds to meet the shortfall in their Office Cost Provision.

5. The annual rental charge for their office, which includes utility, service charges, business and water rates, insurance, dilapidation and fire extinguisher costs, is £7453 per annum per Member. The Members' current individual OCP provision is £6280 per annum.

6. The shortfall is £1173 per Member and they have made an application for funds to meet this shortfall together with an additional 10% of the rental charge (£745.30 per Member) to meet office contingency costs. The additional cost per member being applied for is £1918.30.

7. Anne McLaughlin is also making a separate and an additional application for further funds of £1863.25, for the current financial year only. Annex B Refers. Due to the timing of Ms McLaughlin becoming an MSP and the Office Cost provision available to her at that time she was not in a position to meet her contractual obligation in relation to her office rent for the period March to May 2009. The invoice for these costs was submitted for payment to be made from the Office Cost Provision for the current financial year which has resulted in Ms McLaughlin requiring to meet 5 quarterly rent payments in the current year. As a result Ms McLaughlin has a shortfall in her OCP in the financial year 2009/10 of £3036.25.

8. Additional funds of £9536.45 are therefore being sought in the current financial year with a sum of £7,673.20 being applied for in the financial year 2010/11 subject to a reduction equivalent to the increase, if any, in the Office Cost Provision for 2010/11.

Resource Implications

9. There are sufficient funds in the overall expenses budget to meet the costs indicated.

Publication Scheme

10. This paper can be published.

Decision

11. The SPCB is invited to consider:-

- whether to agree the application;
- if appropriate the level of additional funds to be made available.

Allowances Office

20 January 2010

ANNEX A

The Convenor
SPCB
Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh EH99 1SP

25th November 2009

Dear

Re: Office Accommodation Costs per SNP Glasgow List MSPs

The 4 SNP Glasgow list MSPs, Bob Doris MSP, Bill Kidd MSP, Anne McLaughlin MSP and Sandra White MSP entered into a contractual agreement for the rental of an office suite at:

**Rooms 329, 330, 331, 332
50 Wellington Street
Glasgow
G2 6HJ**

The above contract to run from September 2007 till September 2011 and to include rental of the Office Suite, rates, heating, lighting, insurance, service charge, fire extinguishers, dilapidation costs and management cost all to a total of £7,453.00 per MSP which was in keeping with the Office Cost Provision levels at the time of signing.

Due to the new Office Cost Provision levels the contracted sum for rent and services for the above accommodation will not be met without special provision being allowed by the Scottish Parliament Corporate Body to ensure that the contractual agreement entered into will not fail to be met. Consequently, we MSPs signed below appeal for the excess cost of rent to be met until the expiry of the contractual period noted above; further we would ask that a 10% flexibility top-up for office contingencies be allowed for.

Yours sincerely,

Bob Doris MSP

Bill Kidd MSP

Anne McLaughlin MSP

Sandra White MSP

ANNEX B.



Anne McLaughlin MSP
City of Glasgow
Suite 332, Baltic Chambers
50 Wellington Street
Glasgow, G2 6HJ

Scottish Parliament Corporate Body
Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

7 January 2010

To whom it may concern

I am writing to ask if the SPCB will sanction additional office expenditure for the year 2009/2010.

I was elected on 12 February 2009 and inherited the lease on my Glasgow office from the Late Bashir Ahmad MSP.

Because of the timing of my entry into parliament I had, immediately, to pay the quarterly rent for the Glasgow office.

The result is that in this financial year I will be paying 5 lots of quarterly rent. This does not represent an additional cost for the parliament but it does represent a higher spend from my allowances.

I would very much appreciate it if the SPCB could agree to sanction this.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Anne McLaughlin". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid and legible.

Anne McLaughlin MSP

Email: anne.mclaughlin.msp@scottish.parliament.uk
Tel: 0141 202 0681 (Glasgow) 0131 348 6542 (Edinburgh)
Fax: 0141 202 0682

Note: Anne McLaughlin MSP adds all constituents who contact her to a newsletter mailing list. If you do not wish your details to be added to the list please advise us using the contact details provided. Please be assured that your information will be held in accordance with the terms of relevant Data Protection legislation. Thank you.