

14June 2011

## **REIMBURSEMENT OF MEMBERS' EXPENSES SCHEME – APPLICATIONS FOR ADDITIONAL REGIONAL OFFICES**

### **Executive summary**

1. This paper seeks a view on how the SPCB would wish to deal with applications that are likely to be received in the near future for additional regional offices within qualifying regions.

### **Issues and Options**

2. The Reimbursement of Members' Expenses Scheme provides at paragraph 4.2.6 of the scheme that where in the Highlands and Islands, North East Scotland, South of Scotland, or Mid Scotland and Fife Regions more than one MSP is returned from a registered political party's regional list, the SPCB may, on the written application of all of the MSPs concerned, determine that they are entitled to reimbursement of office costs in respect of an additional local parliamentary office within the region. Based on the May 2011 election results, this provision allows for up to 9 additional offices across the 4 regions.

3. Five additional regional offices have been established for some time and the appropriate approval for these offices was received at the time. We are therefore looking at potentially 4 new applications for an additional regional office or any changes to the location of regional offices from the last parliamentary session. It is likely, given the variance in timescales for establishing offices, that such applications will be received on a piecemeal basis between now and the end of the summer recess.

4. We are proposing two options to consider the applications within this timeframe:

4.1. Option 1 is for the SPCB to consider by correspondence all applications as they are received.

4.2. Option 2 would be for the SPCB to delegate to the Clerk/Chief Executive authority to agree the establishment of an additional regional office in accordance with the provisions of the scheme.

### **Resource Implications**

5. Provision is made within the expenses scheme for additional regional offices within qualifying regions and therefore the costs will be met from the budget provided for Members' expenses. The total costs will be dependent on the number of offices that are established.

### **Governance issues**

6. Provision is made within the expenses scheme for additional regional offices within qualifying regions.

### **Publication Scheme**

7. This paper can be published in line with the SPCB's Publication Scheme.

### **Decision**

8. The SPCB is invited to agree whether it wishes to deal with applications received for additional regional offices by correspondence or whether it is content for the Clerk/ Chief Executive to be given delegated authority to deal with applications received between now and the end of the summer recess.

Allowances Policy  
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