

SCOTLAND BILL COMMITTEE – REQUEST FOR AN EXTENSION OF THE NUMBER OF DAYS FOR THE PANEL OF ADVISERS

Executive summary

1. The Scotland Bill Committee seeks SPCB approval to extend the number of days approved for the panel of advisers to assist the Scotland Bill Committee's consideration of the Scotland Bill and related matters.

Issues and Options

2. The approval of the Parliamentary Bureau to appoint a panel of advisers cumulatively providing 15 days support was granted on 30 August 2011.

3. The SPCB considers all proposals for committee advisers where they work more than 15 days or would be appointed at a level other than the standard rate of remuneration.

4. It was originally anticipated that the Committee would appoint a smaller number of experts to the panel of advisers. However, owing to a number of strong candidates putting themselves forward for selection, the broad range of subjects that need to be considered by the Committee and the desire for the panel of advisers to represent a range of viewpoints, the Committee decided to appoint eight advisers to the panel. Even with sparing use of the advisers, the panel has already cumulatively provided the maximum 15 days support over the period since September.

5. In order to complete its work programme, the Committee requests an extension of the current contract for a further tranche of up to 12 days. An estimated breakdown of these additional days by the advisers by task will be as follows:

Activity	Days
Preparation of material for informal briefings	4
Attendance at informal briefings in relation to the final report	4
Preparation of material in relation to the final report	4

Resource Implications

6. Approval to extend the current contract of the adviser for up to 12 days would cost £1,800.

Governance issues

7. As there are eight advisers covering specialist subject areas, it would not be efficient or effective to re-tender for a new panel of advisers to complete the remaining work although this may have offered the opportunity for other potential advisers. It is also unlikely that a new panel of advisers would be best placed to complete the work required by the Committee.

Publication Scheme

8. This paper will be published in line with the SPCB's Publication Scheme.

Next steps

9. If approved, the committee clerk will commission the panel of advisers to undertake further work as requested by the Committee. As the number of days was not specified in individual adviser contracts, no contractual changes need to be made.

Decision

10. The Committee asks that the SPCB approve the additional costs of extending the number of days for which the panel of advisers are contracted to assist the Scotland Bill Committee's consideration of the Scotland Bill and related matters.

Committee Office
November 2011

Background to the Scotland Bill Committee

The Scotland Bill was introduced by the UK Government in the House of Commons on 30 November 2010. It was accompanied by a White Paper (*Strengthening Scotland's Future*¹) setting out further detail on its views and policy proposals.

The Scotland Bill was considered by the previous Parliament also by recourse to an ad hoc committee similar to this new one. The Session 3 Scotland Bill Committee ("the Session 3 Committee") reported its findings in March 2011², with the Scottish Parliament as a whole discussing and voting by Resolution on 10 March as follows—

"That the Parliament agrees that, further to motion S3M-7550 passed on 9 December 2010 supporting the general principles of the Scotland Bill as introduced in the House of Commons on 30 November 2010, the Bill be considered by the UK Parliament; invites the UK Government and the UK Parliament to consider the amendments and proposals made in the report of the Scotland Bill Committee, and looks forward to considering any amendments made to the Bill with a view to debating them in a further legislative consent motion before the Bill is passed for Royal Assent³"

A new Scotland Bill Committee was established by the Parliament on 9 June, 2011, on a motion on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau (S4M-0256) . The Committee is an ad hoc committee and has been established to consider the Scotland Bill, proposed amendments to the Bill and responses by the UK Government to the report of the Session 3 Scotland Bill Committee. Its role is to produce a report by no later than the end of the calendar year on these matters and to decide whether to recommend that the Scottish Parliament gives its legislative consent to the Bill in its final form.

¹ HM Government. (2010) *Strengthening Scotland's Future* CM 7973. Available at: <http://www.official-documents.gov.uk/document/cm79/7973/7973.pdf>

² Scottish Parliament. (2011) *Scotland Bill Committee, 1st Report, 2011 (Session 3), Report on the Scotland Bill and relevant legislative consent memoranda*. Available at: <http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/s3/committees/scotBill/reports-11/sbr11-01.htm>

³ Scottish Parliament. (2011) *Meeting of the Parliament 10 March 2011*. Available at: <http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/apps2/business/orsearch/ReportView.aspx?r=6175&mode=html>