

PARLIAMENTARY REFORM

Executive Summary

1. This paper updates the Corporate Body with details of the recommendations of the Commission on Parliamentary Reform formally referred to it by the Presiding Officer's Advisory Group (POAG). POAG was established to oversee the consideration and implementation of Commission recommendations.
2. It is the expectation of POAG that most recommendations, with the exception of those that require consideration in the longer term, will be considered and agreed to be implemented by the end of June 2018.

Recommendations

3. The Corporate Body will find a list of all the recommendations the Advisory Group has referred to it at Annex A.
4. The Corporate Body will note from the Annex that some of the recommendations are to be taken forward in conjunction with other parliamentary bodies, for example, the election of committee conveners and committee resourcing. Some of the recommendations are on a longer term timeline, such as the recommendations regarding funding, allowances and remuneration for Members and parties. These can only be considered properly once all the other recommendations are in place.
5. The recommendations for the Corporate Body cover two main strands, namely diversity and inclusion; and engagement. Issues relating to Continuous Professional Development for Members, Scotland's Futures Forum and media relations are also covered.
6. This paper seeks to address in the first instance the recommendations that are the primary responsibility of the SPCB and are due to be considered within the June 2018 timeframe.

Diversity and Inclusion

7. The recommendations on diversity and inclusion are being considered by the Diversity and Inclusion Board (D&I Board) and include:
 - R26: Parliament should report on key aspects of parliamentary business and MSPs by protected characteristic. Subsequently the Parliament, political parties and others should work together to agree benchmarks for what is desirable in terms of diversity in candidates for Scottish Parliamentary elections and set a realistic timetable for achieving this (and PO/ Bureau).

- R27: Parliament should also be proactive in promoting a range of measures to bring diversity into the Parliament (and PO/Bureau).
 - R29: The Parliament should report on the diversity of all those who have special access to the Parliament through the provision of parliamentary passes.
 - R56: The current CPD programme for MSPs should be extended to support MSPs in fulfilling their role as parliamentarians as distinct from that of representing their party and community. It should include training in:
 - (a) diversity and equalities;
 - (b) financial and analytical skills; and
 - (c) human rights (the Equalities and Human Rights Committee is already considering this issue).
8. Work on some of these recommendations, especially around the CPD programme with plans for a disability awareness training session is already underway with the intention to extend to all aspects of diversity (by May 2018). Sessions have previously been run on budget scrutiny and more of these will take place around April 2018.
 9. The D&I Board is also preparing a work programme to take forward all the relevant recommendations. The Corporate Body will receive further updates on this.

Engagement

10. The Commission on Parliamentary Reform recommends (R62) that the Parliament should establish a dedicated team to support and challenge committees to undertake more innovative and meaningful engagement – a committee engagement unit. The Public Engagement Board considers that this unit would give momentum to committee engagement work.
11. There is a growing demand for dynamic, participative engagement work envisaged by the Commission – a recent example was the issue of homelessness where engagement by the Local Government and Communities committee produced real results in respect of engagement. Other techniques include trialling random samples, mini-publics, online forums and other technologies (R64), the feedback loop, and joint working with the Scottish Youth Parliament. All of these are in addition to existing, more recognisable, engagement work it undertakes as standard such as surveys / questionnaires / focus groups / visits.
12. The goal is to have public engagement as a core part of how a modern democracy operates; moving away from being a ‘nice to have’ activity to become a driver for more robust scrutiny by committees and a key tool at the disposal of MSPs, as parliamentarians in holding government to account.

13. The establishment of a Unit also links in with a number of other recommendations from the Commission, including:
- Deliberative Democracy/Mini-Publics (R62) – Deliberative engagement takes longer than other forms of engagement and needs to be expertly designed and facilitated.
 - Evaluation (R63) - Evaluation questions need to be well-defined, easy to use and adapt and the outputs turned into credible/useful conclusions for those collecting the information.
 - Feedback (R67) - the Commission recommends personalised feedback to contributors during and after an inquiry and beyond.
14. Should the Corporate Body be content with the recommendations on engagement being progressed by the PEB, these can be taken forward quickly in the new financial year subject to the SPCB budget being agreed by the Parliament.

Working with Scotland's Futures Forum

15. The Commission recommends (R41) that the Parliament should fund a specific number of proposals to be agreed by cross-party MSPs for taking forward by the Forum. The Futures Forum board, which is chaired by the Presiding Officer and includes cross-party MSP representation, will consider proposals to pursue this recommendation at its next board meeting on 16 January. The intention is to suggest an approach for agreement by the Corporate Body by the end of March 2018.
16. The Commission also recommended (R42) that the SPCB and Scotland's Futures Forum should provide transparency about the nominations and appointments process for its board members. This will also be considered at the Futures Forum board meeting in January, with an approach suggested to the Corporate Body for agreement by the end of March 2018.

Working with the media

17. The Commission recommends (R34) that the SPCB reviews its policy on where the media can interview people within the Parliament building. It also recommends (R35) that as part of its media protocol, the Parliament should agree with the Government and the media a clear understanding of the terminology to be used when referring to Parliament and Government. The views of the Corporate Body will be sought in due course.

Resource Implications

18. The Corporate Body might recall that in the recent paper on the budget considerations for 2018-19 we advised that the Commission on Parliamentary Reform recognised that some fairly modest increases in

resources would be necessary to implement its recommendations. While a majority of recommendations can be implemented without any resource implications, there are some potential impacts that will require extra work in order to develop recommendations into workable proposals. This work will be temporary in nature and has been assessed as requiring £250k. It is proposed that those costs would sit in the contingency budget.

19. There are three key recommendations, or series of recommendations that, if agreed, would be implemented in 2018/19 and would have a permanent impact on how the parliament operates and carry resource implications. This includes the establishment of a Committee Engagement Unit. A bid for £250,000 has been included in the SPCB's budget submission to cover these costs.
20. There are also recommendations that relate to the resource needs of Members that are partly subject to the implementation or otherwise of other Commission recommendations. It is not anticipated that those recommendations will have a financial impact in this session of Parliament.

Governance

21. As mentioned in the opening paragraph to this paper, the Presiding Officer has established an Advisory Group comprising representatives of all parties whose purpose is to oversee the implementation of the recommendations.

Publication Scheme

22. This paper can be published.

Next Steps

23. We will update the Corporate Body at regular intervals on progress made on the recommendations that have been referred to it.

Decision

24. This Corporate Body is invited to note the recommendations that have been referred to it and that Members will receive regular updates on progress.

Ken Hughes

Assistant Chief Executive

Annex A

Recommendations		Allocated to	Lead Official	Deadline	Progress
<i>Conveners – elections and remuneration</i>					
R.2	Whether conveners are then remunerated and/or receive additional resources for this role should be based on an objective assessment of their workloads and the expectations of their roles. This assessment should be part of a wider exercise considering additional remuneration for other parliamentary positions (such as party leaders) as referred to later in this report.	SPPA/SPCB	K Hughes	2020	Initial paper to SPPA June 2018 (incl: R1)
<i>Committee resources and expertise</i>					
R.8	The Parliament should review the dedicated resources available to committees to determine whether they are able to meet the future needs of parliamentary business and support more effective scrutiny.	CG/SPCB	S Duffy		Paper to CG in May 2018
R.9	It should also review the range of mechanisms available to committees to benefit from expertise and experience other than through the formal appointment of an adviser.	CG/SPCB	S Duffy		To be taken in conjunction with R8.

<i>Diversity – representatives, rules and procedures.</i>					
R.26	Parliament should report on key aspects of parliamentary business and MSPs by protected characteristic. Subsequently the Parliament, political parties and others should work together to agree benchmarks for what is desirable in terms of diversity in candidates for Scottish Parliamentary elections and set a realistic timetable for achieving this.	PO/PB/SPCB	D McGill/S Duffy		Initial consideration by Diversity and Inclusion Board at their November 2017 meeting (include consideration of R27 and R59)
R.27	Parliament should also be proactive in promoting a range of measures to bring diversity into the Parliament.	PO/PB/SPCB	D McGill/S Duffy		As above, but also relates to engagement recommendations and also to be considered by CG in January 2018 once an academic report commissioned by the Parliament has been completed.
<i>Diversity in committee scrutiny and access</i>					
R.29	The Parliament should report on the diversity of all those who have special access to the Parliament through the provision of parliamentary passes.	SPCB	D McGill/S Duffy		Initial scoping work being undertaken to be considered at D&I board November meeting.

Promoting Parliament's distinct Identity					
R.31	Building on the success of the Parliament's outreach work, the Parliament should empower those people already engaged with it and active in their local communities to act as advocates for the Parliament.	SPCB/CG	S Coyne		
R.32	Parliament should also provide greater and easier access to information about the Parliament in a variety of formats. Such information should be able to be displayed locally and updated with the contact details of newly elected regional and constituency MSPs. (This was a regular request made to us by organisations with whom we met).	SPCB	L Orton		
R.33	In addition, Parliament should work with the education sector and others to explore how education about the role and purpose of Parliament can be enhanced in primary and secondary schools, including the 14+ age group who do not opt for a Modern Studies course, so that all young people have adequate information before voting for the first time.	SPCB	S. Coyne		

Working with the media					
R.34	The Parliament should improve facilities for the media to provide greater flexibility as to where they can interview people within the Parliament building and we welcome the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body (SPCB) review of this policy.	SPCB	J McEwan		
R.35	As part of its media protocol, the Parliament should agree with the Government and the media a clear understanding of the terminology to be used when referring to Parliament and Government.	SPCB	J McEwan		
Different meeting patterns for committees and chamber					
R.39	Once our recommendations in relation to fully utilising the existing capacity are in place, the Scottish Parliament should set a timetable to review whether the Parliament is working at peak effectiveness and, if so and if necessary, what the next steps to increasing capacity should be.	SPCB/PB/CG	T White		Initial paper to Bureau May 2018 (incl. R36, R37, R38)
Working with Scotland's Futures Forum					
R.41	As part of this approach, the Parliament should fund a specific number of proposals to be agreed by cross-party MSPs for taking forward by the Forum. The Parliament should identify the key elements and outcomes of any proposals to be made to the Forum before funding is agreed.	SPCB	R Littlejohn		
R.42	The SPCB and the Scottish Futures Forum should provide transparency about the nominations and appointments process for its board members.	SPCB	R Littlejohn		
Members' bills					
R.55	Once this change in approach is implemented, the Parliament should review, and if necessary increase, NGBU resources available to support the	SPCB	T White		Following outcome of consideration of R54 (initial paper to SPPA

	members' bills process.				Jan 2018)
	<i>Continuous professional development for MSPs</i>				
R.56	The current CPD programme for MSPs should be extended to support MSPs in fulfilling their role as parliamentarians as distinct from that of representing their party and community. It should include training in: a. diversity and equalities; b. financial and analytical skills; and c. human rights (we note that the Equalities and Human Rights Committee is already considering this issue).	SPCB	A Proudfoot		Plans for a Disability awareness training session already underway and intention is to extend to all aspects of diversity (by May 2018). Sessions have previously been run on budget scrutiny and more of these will take place around April 2018.
R.57	Early in each session MSPs should receive support (and practical resources) to enable them to proactively promote the role of the Parliament and the value of engaging with it.	SPCB	D McGill		

<i>Funding, allowances and remuneration for MSPs and parties</i>					
R.58	The Presiding Officer and SPCB should establish a working group to consider the case for increasing resources for MSPs as part of a strategic review of funding for the different roles MSPs can undertake (such as committee convener).	SPCB	K Hughes	2019/20	
R.59	The working group should also consider the extent to which any additional funding or resources would support more diverse range of MSPs.	SPCB	K Hughes	2019/20	
R.60	This should be undertaken after the Scottish Parliament has decided whether to accept and action our other recommendations, so that the case for additional resources can be considered with an accurate picture of members' workload.	SPCB	K Hughes	2019/20	
R.61	As part of any strategic review the working group should also consider whether the amount of funding, allowances and payments available to party leaders and parties should be increased.	SPCB	K Hughes	2019/20	
<i>Establishing a Committee Engagement Unit and evaluation</i>					
R.62	The Parliament should establish a dedicated team whose main purpose is to support (and challenge) committees to undertake more innovative and meaningful engagement – a Committee Engagement Unit.	SPCB	C Thomson		Assuming structure and resourcing agreed, this will be the vehicle by which other engagement recommendations will be taken forward. Intention should be for new unit to be up and running from April 2018.

R.63	A more systematic review of how Parliament evaluates all its engagement activities should be undertaken with a view to developing a more sophisticated system, drawing on external expertise and skills where necessary.	CG/SPCB	C Thomson		This will be taken forward by new unit, subject to comments in R62.
<i>Trialling emerging technologies</i>					
R.64	The proposed Committee Engagement Unit should develop and trial new emerging technologies and increase skills and knowledge in more tried and tested digital technologies.	SPCB	C Thomson		WSM will be lead delivery partner working closely with existing teams and new Unit.
<i>Reviewing digital communication</i>					
R.65	The Scottish Parliament should review its digital communication strategy and consider the findings of the report of the National Assembly for Wales as part of its review.	SPCB	C Thomson		WSM will be lead delivery partner. Social Media Policy recently reviewed and agreed. Also links to web and online project – roadmap being delivered by end March 2018.

Implementation Group and future review of the Parliament					
R.74	In relation to taking forward the recommendations in our report, the Parliament should ensure that diversity and inclusion are considered as part of any changes to Standing Orders and parliamentary practice. Monitoring and evaluation of any changes should also take place to ensure there are no unintended negative impacts on diversity.	SPPA/SPC B	D McGill		For initial consideration by D&I Board at November 2017 meeting (in conjunction with R24)