



The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

# **Reimbursement of Members' Expenses Scheme – Disability Provision 16 December 2021 Reference: SPCB (2021) Paper 78**

## **Executive summary**

1. The SPCB is invited to consider an application from a Member for the cost of an annual subscription to the Welcome App from the disability provision made at Section 6 paragraph 6.1.1. of the Reimbursement of Members' Expenses Scheme.

## **Issues and options**

2. The Welcome App is an app designed and provided by Neatebox to enable businesses to support disabled customers by use of the online tool to advertise their business and how it can meet the accessibility needs of its customers but also by enabling visitors to the business to connect with the business and plan their visit and inform the business of any support needs they may have in advance of a visit.
3. It enables businesses to manage, understand and assist their disabled and vulnerable customers as per their requirements and needs. Providing training and advise for staff on supporting disabled visitors, direct communication with the visitor improving the relationship between the business and the visitor and builds a foundation for a future visit whilst promoting inclusion at its core.
4. Mr Gibson MSP would like to make use of the app to enable him to better support his constituents and improve the accessibility of his services and local office as required under the Members Expenses Scheme. The annual subscription cost is £900.
5. The SPCB will wish to note that Parliament currently uses the Welcome app in the Parliament building to support disabled visitors but that our current contract with Neatebox who provide the app would not cover Members' offices because our contract is on a site specific basis and any change to the scope of requirement would require a new procurement exercise on the open market which could not currently be resourced. Therefore, any Members wishing to sign

up to the service would need to do so on an individual basis and to enter a contract for their own local office.

6. Members and their staff would be responsible for ensuring that their use of the Neatebox Welcome app is in accordance with data protection law, that the office is accessible and that they have sufficient staffing resources to accommodate any accessibility requirements of their visitors.
7. If the SPCB are content for the Member to sign up to the app and have the costs met from the disability provision within the Scheme, we would recommend that any future applications for the same app and costs be delegated to the Head of Allowances to approve.

## **Governance**

8. Provision is made in the Reimbursement of Members' Expenses Scheme to meet the cost of making offices and services accessible to constituents.

## **Resource implications**

9. It is confirmed that there are sufficient funds in the overall expenses budget to meet the £900 cost indicated.

## **Publication Scheme**

10. This paper can be published in line with the publication policy.

## **Next steps**

11. If the application is agreed to confirm to the decision to the Member.

## **Decision**

12. The SPCB is invited to:

- Consider and if content agree the application for the cost of the WelcoMe app to be met from the disability provision; and
- Agree to consideration of any further applications for the cost of this app to be delegated to the Head of Allowances.

## **Allowances Office**

December 2021