

Report to:	Senior Management Team (SMT)
Report by:	Erin Gray (Head of Policy and Information)
Meeting Date:	4 February 2021
Subject/ Title:	Key document review: Policy on Speaking Engagements (145462)
Attached Papers	Policy on Speaking Engagements v04 DRAFT (VC 143948)

Purpose of report

1. To seek Senior Management Team (SMT) approval following the review of the Scottish Information Commissioner's Policy on Speaking Engagements.

Recommendation and actions

2. I recommend that the SMT:
 - (i) approve the attached key document
 - (ii) agree the recommendations set out in the publication section of this report.

Executive summary

3. The Scottish Information Commissioner's Policy on Speaking Engagements sets out the specific detail of how decisions are made to prioritise involvement when invitations are received for the Commissioner or their staff to attend events.
4. This document is due for review, according to our key document procedures, by March 2021. A substantive review has been undertaken and changes made to:
 - (i) Clarify that we do not charge for speaking engagements for commercial organisations, but that we may ask for a contribution to travel expenses;
 - (ii) introduce a section on invitations from international organisations or bodies, which sets out that we seek to participate in opportunities which will contribute to Scotland being respected as a world-leader in openness and transparency, but that this will be balanced with other work areas and available capacity as necessary, and remote attendance may be explored as an alternative to attendance in person. The section also clarifies that we do not charge for these events, but may ask for a contribution to travel and accommodation expenses.

Risk impact

5. Up to date and effective policies are necessary to ensure the Commissioner demonstrates good practice and governance and mitigate strategic risk to the Commissioner's reputation and public confidence in the role.
6. The procedures also contribute to mitigation of operational risks, including by: supporting efforts to ensure the Commissioner demonstrates robust and defensible decisions; ensuring the organisation engages properly with stakeholders; and ensuring we have appropriate and effective policies in place for every aspect of our business.

Equalities impact

7. There are no direct equalities impacts arising as a result of the recommendations in this report.

Privacy impact

8. There is no new direct privacy impact arising from this committee report or from the document submitted for approval.

Resources impact

9. This review has been delivered within planned operational resources.
10. The procedures will assist the Commissioner when determining how to respond to invitations to speaking engagements.

Operational/ strategic plan impact

11. The policy supports operational activity relating to events and engagement with stakeholders as set out in the current operational plan. Review of the policy is required as part of our key document processes.
12. Approving this document will support the following strategic objectives as set out in the Strategic Plan 2020-2024:
 - (i) Increase knowledge and understanding of FOI rights (Strategic Aim 1)
 - (ii) Enable and support high standards of FOI policy and practice (Strategic Aim 2)
 - (iii) Contribute to Scotland being respected as a world-leader in openness and transparency (Strategic Aim 5)
 - (iv) Be recognised as an organisation of independent and trusted experts that is run efficiently, governed effectively and is open and transparent (Strategic Aim 6)

Records management impact (including any key documents actions)

13. The document submitted for approval is a reviewed version of an existing key document. Once approved, the revised version will be published on our website.
14. It will be subject to a formal review in three years, but may be updated before that in the light of any changes.
15. I am the responsible manager for the document.

Consultation and Communication

16. The document has been revised in consultation with the SMT.

17. If approved the new version will be communicated to all staff and published on the website.

Publication

18. I recommend that this committee report is published in full.
19. I recommend that the attached paper is withheld in full on the basis that it is exempt from disclosure under section 27(1) of FOISA (Information intended for future publication): the paper will be published once the necessary key document actions have taken place and the document is in final form (such as with finalised document control sheet).