

Chief Executive's Report to the SPCB

March 2024

Introduction

This Report looks at activities across the organisation from January to March. It also incorporates the Quarter 3 Finance, Performance and Workforce Data reports.

Items highlighted include:

- Induction of a new Member
- An overview of Chamber and Committee Office work
- Recent engagements undertaken by the International Relations Office

David McGill

Clerk/Chief Executive

Overview of Parliamentary Activities

We welcomed our new Member, Tim Eagle, Member for Highlands and Islands Region on Tuesday 20 February. My office arranged a series of meetings for the Member's first day so colleagues from key offices across the organisation could share essential information such as use of the security pass, IT kit, general housekeeping, pay and pensions, and allowances. The Member had his official photograph taken and took the oath at the start of the afternoon's plenary session. Meetings with the Standards Clerks, SPICe, the Business Team, Security Office, People and Culture and the Lobbying Registrar took place during the rest of the week, as well as follow-up meetings with BIT, Pay and Pensions and Allowances.

Legislation and Parliamentary Business

Broadcasting Office

After a successful comprehensive test, the new Chamber consoles will be activated during the Easter recess and the existing consoles removed. We will be engaging with Members by email and drop-in sessions after the recess.

Chamber Office

Business Team

A snippet on Chamber business was held prior to the test of the new consoles in the Chamber. Over 100 colleagues attended, and the Business Team, Broadcasting and Official Report explained the reasons for running a hybrid Parliament and the way in which hybrid Chamber proceedings were delivered. The event was attended by a high number of staff outside clerking and provided an opportunity for them to be present in the Chamber, use the new consoles and learn about Chamber business.

Legislation Team

A higher number of amending stages for Bills than usual can be expected in the period post-Easter recess up to summer recess, due to delays in some Bills and other Bills requiring to be completed by end June. The Legislation Team is expecting to support 10 stage 2s and 9 stage 3s during this period. A lot of planning is taking place to seek to manage this number of Bills, including obtaining support across clerking.

Non-Government Bills Unit (NGBU)

Of the 25 members bills on the Parliament website, five have been introduced, one of which fell at Stage 1. Legislation on one other proposal is being initiated by the Scottish Government.

Most of the remaining active bills are now making progress through the drafting stage. A number of bills in the drafting stage are preparing for introduction prior to the Summer Recess.

Any new proposals that appear on the Parliament website from March 2024 onwards are either non-NGBU supported proposals or proposals where the member intends to consult on the proposal for a bill this session with NGBU support and then seek to introduce a bill in the next parliamentary session.

Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee

The SPPA Committee has taken oral evidence from the Scottish Information Commissioner (22 February) and the Ethical Standards Commissioner (14 March) on their annual reports and accounts for 2022-23.

The Committee is currently consulting Members and relevant parliamentary bodies on two aspects where future procedural change may be recommended: the election of committee conveners and arrangements for oral question times. The Committee anticipates taking oral evidence on these issues prior to summer recess. It is also undertaking work on committee effectiveness.

The Committee has taken evidence from two former Committee conveners, Johann Lamont and Adam Tomkins, and intends to take evidence from academics and practitioners at a future meeting.

The Committee is undertaking scrutiny of the Elections Bill, with oral evidence sessions due to start in March.

Scrutiny

Conveners Group

At its first meeting of 2024, the Group focused on continuous professional development (CPD) for members, and early consideration of a payment for participation policy.

On CPD, the Group discussed areas of priority, what had worked well in the past, areas where further support would be needed, and the format of training that should be used by committees and Members. This information was shared with the Parliamentary Bureau and the Group will continue to develop CPD as one of its strategic priorities for Session 6. It will also inform the development of an induction programme for new Members in session 7.

The payment for participation policy forms part of the Group's Participation, Diversity and Inclusion strategy. Valuable feedback was obtained, including

arrangements for ongoing monitoring. The revised paper was subsequently considered and approved by the SPCB.

Constitution, Europe, External Affairs and Culture Committee

In January, the committee met with Glasgow Strathclyde University to discuss *how is devolution changing post-EU?* report, and its recommendations with leading academics and lawyers from across the UK ahead of a Chamber debate.

A key finding of that report was how the regulatory environment within the UK is managed compared to how it was managed within the EU. The report's recommendations included: the establishment of a new Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the UK and devolved governments and the development of supplementary agreements on both Common Frameworks and the use of delegated powers by UK Ministers in devolved areas. A [podcast](#) was produced as part of the half day event.

The focus in January was on scrutiny of the culture spend in the Scottish Budget. The committee explored what progress had been made then with innovative funding solutions to the ongoing "perfect storm" of challenges facing the culture sector, including commitments on multi-year funding, cross-portfolio funding models, and approaches to additional public and private investment.

The Committee found very limited progress on these fronts when we reported last November. In the budget debate led by the Finance and Public Administration Committee at the end of January we called for much greater urgency and a clear pathway to make tangible progress on implementing these funding models.

The Committee also undertook work on the BBC (our annual evidence session with BBC Scotland on their annual report along with Ofcom's annual report on the BBC), the Scottish Government's National Outcomes as they relate to international policy (frontloading our work in preparation for the Scottish Government publishing its revised NOs for consultation this month – and taking evidence from the Chair of the House of Commons Scottish Affairs Committee in relation to their inquiry on Scotland's approach to external affairs), and the Trade and Co-operation Agreement (TCA) review (our focus being on the trade aspects of the TCA and drawing on the experience of Scottish businesses: challenges, solutions, and opportunities for further developing the UK-EU relationship). This work is expected to continue through to the end of June, the plan being to report post-summer.

Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee

Over the last two months, the Committee considered 37 petitions and heard evidence from five panels covering youth violence, whistleblowing and safeguarding, control of generalist predators and its role in conservation and our inquiry on dualling the A9.

Education, Children and Young People Committee

The Education, Children and Young People Committee began its year with two broad-ranging evidence sessions focused on the budget and education and skills reform.

The first was with the Minister for Further and Higher Education; and Minister for Veterans, which explored progress in implementing the findings of the Independent Review of the Skills Delivery Landscape (also known as the Withers Review).

The session touched on many areas, including skills and workforce planning, apprenticeships and community learning and development. The session also explored concerns around college sector staffing, including the potential for redundancies. The Committee also received a progress update on the Scottish Education Exchange Programme – Scotland’s replacement scheme for Erasmus.

The following week, the Committee heard from the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills, scrutinising both the 2024/25 Budget in detail, alongside exploring wider education reforms.

The Committee covered issues including the maintenance of teacher numbers, teacher contact time, the poverty-related attainment gap and followed up on the findings of the Independent Review of Qualifications and Assessment (also known as the Hayward Review).

On 22 January, the Committee launched an ambitious Call for Views on the Scottish Languages Bill. The Bill, which seeks to afford both Gaelic and Scots official status and makes provisions relating to both Gaelic and Scots education, required extensive cross-team planning to ensure that it could be published in 4 languages at the same time (English, Gaelic, Scots and BSL). This involved working closely with the Gaelic Officer, BSL Officer and colleagues in PCO, Clerking, Public Information and the Official Report.

In late January/early February, the Committee undertook Stage 2 consideration of the Children (Care and Justice) (Scotland) Bill. This had been postponed from late last year and involved disposing of 220 amendments over three meetings.

The Committee then commenced its inquiry into Additional Support for Learning (ASL).

Finance and Public Administration Committee

Much of the Committee's focus in January and February was on scrutiny of the Scottish Budget 2024-25, culminating in it publishing its Report on 31 January 2024 and taking evidence on the Scottish Government's response to it on 20 February.

The Committee's findings included that it remained to be convinced that the Scottish Government has carried out its spending prioritisation exercise in a strategic, coherent and co-ordinated way, with some individual decisions appearing to conflict with its three priority Missions. It highlighted evidence showing that the Scottish Government remains focused on plugging short-term funding gaps at the expense of medium and longer-term financial planning.

The Committee also saw little signs of progress with the Scottish Government's public service reform programme.

The Committee heard from The Rt Hon Michael Gove in January in relation to Replacing EU Funds and also took evidence and reported further findings on the National Care Service (Scotland) Bill FM, in light of proposed changes to the Bill.

The Committee will begin to take evidence on the Aggregates Tax Bill at Stage 1 in early March 2024, and also hearing from the Minister on the Spring Budget Revision in the same timeframe.

Clerks and SPICe are preparing behind the scenes for parliamentary scrutiny of the proposed national outcomes in the National Performance Framework which are expected to be laid in late March.

Health, Social Care and Sport Committee

During the first quarter of 2024, a key focus for the Committee has been conclusion of its Stage 1 scrutiny of the National Care Service (Scotland) Bill. The Committee considered a draft report in private at multiple meetings. Ultimately, it proved impossible for the Committee to reach a consensus position on the general principles of the Bill at Stage 1.

A majority of the Committee supported a recommendation that the general principles of the Bill be approved, subject to a commitment from the Scottish Government to facilitate further scrutiny of the Bill, and specifically the

changes the Scottish Government intended to make to the Bill via Stage 2 amendments, as part of the Stage 2 process.

Shortly before the Stage 1 debate, Labour Members tabled a motion to refer the Bill back to the Committee for a further report on the general principles although this was defeated in the Chamber. The Convener participated in the debate and set out the majority position of the Committee.

Following the Stage 1 debate on 29 February, the Chamber voted to approve the general principles of the Bill at Stage 1, although opposition Members voted against.

On 27 February, the Committee began taking oral evidence as part of its Stage 1 scrutiny of the Abortion Services (Safe Access Zones) Bill. This was preceded by intensive preparation by the clerking team, in coordination with colleagues in other teams, to ensure a trauma-informed approach to scrutiny and in anticipation of potential disruption to proceedings, principally by those opposed to the Bill. So far, at time of writing, no disruption has occurred.

Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee

In January, the Committee took evidence on the 2024-25 Budget from several Cabinet Secretaries and Ministers, owing to the way the Committee's remit is now spread across a number of ministerial responsibilities. The Committee also took evidence on the Scottish Government's proposals for delivery of its new Biodiversity Strategy and then agreed a letter to the Scottish Government on this matter.

Matters considered in February included continued scrutiny of the Glen Rosa and Glen Sannox. Two Members visited Ferguson Marine Port Glasgow. Members also agreed a Stage 1 report on the Circular Economy Bill, which included commentary on the framework nature of the Bill, and Members' differing response to this.

Over two weekends in February and March, the 23 members of the People's Panel on Scottish Government public engagement on climate change met at the Parliament, hearing from and putting questions to a variety of experts and stakeholders, as well as Committee members and government officials. This is the Committee's first experience of this type of deliberative democracy, having successfully asked Conveners Group to commission the Panel.

The Panel's recommendations are now being written up, and the Committee looks forward to engaging with Panellists about their recommendations, and their experience as members of this body, formally and informally in the coming weeks.

Public Audit Committee

The Committee held its annual oral evidence session with the Permanent Secretary to the Scottish Government on the 2022/23 audit of the Scottish Government's Consolidated Accounts in January. During the meeting, the Committee explored a number of matters such as the approach to public service reform, including workforce and service redesign and managing financial interventions.

During the reporting period, the Committee also took evidence on a number of reports relating to a concern or other matter of public interest in a public body's annual accounts. This includes the 2022/23 audit of NHS Forth Valley, the 2022/23 audit of the Water Industry Commission for Scotland and the 2022/23 audit of the Scottish Prison Service.

It also took evidence from the Auditor General on his report, Decarbonising heat in homes, which concluded that the Scottish Government will not be able to phase out fossil-fuel home heating systems by 2045 unless it significantly increases the scale and pace of activity. The Committee will take further evidence on all of these reports in the coming weeks.

Following a series of evidence sessions held on the joint Auditor General for Scotland and Accounts Commission report, Adult mental health, the Committee published its own report setting out its findings in February 2024. This included the need for better data collection on adult mental health services, equal access to services for minorities, and sustainable funding for the third sector. A Scottish Government response to the Committee's conclusions and recommendation is expected in April.

During March, the Committee will further consider the Auditor General's briefing, "Investing in Scotland's Infrastructure" by taking evidence from the Director-General Scottish Exchequer. It will also hear from the Auditor General on his recent briefing, "National Strategy for Economic Transformation" which reports that the Scottish Government's 10-year economic strategy lacks collective political leadership and clear targets.

Rural Affairs and Islands Committee

The Rural Affairs and Islands Committee started the year taking evidence from the Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform and Islands on the Scottish Government's budget and its response to the Committee's pre-budget input.

The Committee's main focus between January and March was scrutiny of primary legislation. It took evidence at Stage 1 on the Agriculture and Rural

Communities (Scotland) Bill; considered and agreed a draft Stage 1 report on the Welfare of Dogs (Scotland) Bill; and considered the Wildlife Management and Muirburn (Scotland) Bill at Stage 2.

The Committee has also considered a number of SSIs.

On 19 February, the Committee held an engagement event with 40 land managers and community representatives from across Scotland to help inform its scrutiny of the Agriculture and Rural Communities (Scotland) Bill. The Committee was keen to hear more from those whose daily lives and livelihoods will be impacted most by the legislation – which represents the Scottish Government's 'vision for agriculture', to transform farming and food production in Scotland and to make it a global leader in sustainable and regenerative agriculture.

In particular, the Committee wanted to capture the experiences, concerns and expectations of a spread of stakeholders including crofters, farmers, tenant farmers, community development representatives and integrated land management specialists, through a day of reflection and discussion.

SPICe

SPICe ran breakfast seminars on the following topics:

- From Pit to Reuse: exploring the environmental impact of resource extraction and circular economy solutions
- Scottish Fiscal Commission: the latest economic and fiscal outlook for Scotland
- The declining disability employment gap: understanding the reasons behind the increasing number of disabled people in Scotland.

On 5 February, SPICe ran a workshop on navigating the science of Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) reports with Professor Tamsin Edwards, UK Parliament Climate and Environment Thematic Research Lead.

SPICe commissioned research to evaluate People's Panels and support the scrutiny of the Abortion Services (Safe Access Zones) Bill

SPICe hosted a European Crucible event on 23 February – the European Crucible is a leadership and development programme for academic 'research leaders of the future'.

Parliamentary Services

Engagement and Communications

Events and Exhibitions

The annual **International Women's Day 2024** took place on Saturday 2 March in partnership with the Scottish Women's Convention. Over 300 women joined the Presiding Officer, the Deputy First Minister and a cross-party panel of Members and other speakers to celebrate and discuss this year's conference theme, 'inspiring inclusion.' The event also recognised human rights are women's rights, and that everyone can inspire inclusion by understanding how these rights play a part in our everyday lives.

Languages

As part of International Gaelic Week 19 to 25 February – Seachdain na Gàidhlig - our Gaelic and BSL officers held a special online event looking at “The Secret Life of Gaelic and BSL”. 50 people attended and the recording has had more than 200 views.

Lobbying Register

Members may be aware that the Lobbying Register Team has been undertaking work to improve compliance in relation to Information Returns. This includes the issuing of a 'statement letter' to the Chief Executive (or equivalent) of each registered organisation. Further information about this audit exercise was in the [Lobbying Register Annual Report 2023 \(page 22\)](#).

To progress the publication of some 'older' returns from organisations (including some within the COVID pandemic period) the team has been prioritising letters to Chief Executives with the most unresolved actions. This has meant many older returns have already been published or are currently being progressed. As such, although the exercise is still ongoing, Members should expect to see the numbers of older returns published significantly diminishing over the next few months.

We continue to value and appreciate the input of Members and their staff, in checking published returns.

Self-Directed Support post-legislative scrutiny

The Participation and Communities Team (PACT), SPICe and Committee Office supported in-depth engagement sessions to inform the Health, Social Care and Sport Committee's post-legislative scrutiny of the Social Care (Self-Directed Support) (Scotland) Act 2013. Using a deliberative approach, staff from all three offices had two meetings each with five groups from individuals from key stakeholder groups including carers and people with experience of receiving care, providers and front-line staff.

Participants learnt about Parliament, committees, post-legislative scrutiny and the Act and were supported to develop recommendations for the Committee on what it should focus on during phase two of its scrutiny. Participants presented collective recommendations to the Committee at its meeting on 20 February.

Children's Parliament

Nine Members of the Children's Parliament (MCPs), supported by PACT staff, met the Presiding Officer in January, to sign a working in partnership agreement between the two organisations. The aim of the agreement is to help develop children's knowledge and understanding of the workings of the Scottish Parliament and support them to build the skills and confidence to inform and influence legislation.

The agreement will also see information provided to help Members and Scottish Parliament staff increase their understanding of children's human rights – in line with the UNCRC – and commit to ensuring Parliamentary processes create a safe and friendly environment for children to participate with dignity and respect. PACT is working with staff from the Children's Parliament to develop a delivery plan of activities to achieve the aims of the agreement.

Climate Change People's Panel

As recommended by the Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee in its report on public participation, PACT has just completed the first of two pilot people's panels. Over two weekends, 23 randomly selected participants met in the Parliament to undertake post-legislative scrutiny of the public engagement duty in the Climate Change (Scotland) Act. Their recommendations will be considered by the Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee in April. The panel is being internally and externally evaluated and this will inform the design and delivery of a second pilot in the autumn, allowing CPPPC to make recommendations to the whole Parliament next year on a participation blueprint for session 7.

International Relations

The International Relations Office supported the following during this period:

Rhineland-Palatinate

On 31 January, the President of the State Parliament of Rhineland-Palatinate and members of the Health Committee visited the Parliament and met with the Presiding Officer and Members of the Health, Social Care and Sport Committee. They discussed how parliamentary business is run, committee structures and compared current health issues.

New South Wales

On 16 January, Acting Deputy President Abigail Boyd MLC, Member of the Legislative Council in New South Wales, Australia visited the Scottish Parliament and met with Deputy Presiding Officer Annabelle Ewing MSP, Members and officials. Discussions included comparing parliamentary procedures and the work of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association.

British Irish Parliamentary Assembly (BIPA)

Deputy Presiding Officer Annabelle Ewing MSP attended a meeting of the British Irish Parliamentary Assembly (BIPA) Steering Committee in Staffordshire at which the future direction of BIPA was discussed. Also relating to BIPA, Holyrood hosted to a meeting of Committee D, Environment and Social, on 19 February. The committee, chaired by Lord Alf Dubs, took evidence as part of their inquiry into issues affecting rural housing. Tess White MSP is the Parliament's representative on Committee D.

Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) Scotland Branch Group Session ahead of International Women's Day

On 19 February, Sarah Boyack MSP and Michelle Thomson MSP, representatives of the Scotland Branch at the CPA CWP Network, hosted a group session bringing together a group of young women to discuss the issues which are seen as the main challenges faced by young women in Scotland today. Similar sessions have been held across the British Islands and Mediterranean Region (BIMR) and the findings will be collated into a report at the CWP BIMR Conference, taking place in Malta in March. The hope is that this report will create a blueprint of issues facing young women and for other Branches to consider replicating the process across the Commonwealth for the betterment of women and girls.

Lower Saxony

The President of the State Parliament of Lower Saxony Hanna Naber spent two days visiting Parliament on 21 and 22 February. She met a number of Members and officials and discussed chairing parliamentary business, new ways of working, the resilience of the Parliament, citizens participation and the code of conduct for Members.

Greenlandic Parliament

On 28 and 29 February, the Presidium of the Greenlandic Parliament visited the Scottish Parliament. They met with the Presiding Officer, Deputy Presiding Officer Liam McArthur MSP, Members and officials to discuss parliamentary proceedings, the Scottish Parliament building project and public engagement.

Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians Conference

From 6-8 March, Sarah Boyack MSP and Michelle Thomson MSP, representatives of the Scotland Branch at the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) Network, took part in the 10th British Islands and Mediterranean Region (BIMR) CWP Conference in Valletta, Malta. The theme of the conference was 'Resilient Women-Moulding Girls into Strong Women' and the conference focused on how women are impacted by an array of circumstances, which calls for greater resilience. Michelle was a panellist on the session 'Challenges of being a Woman Member of Parliament' and Sarah was a panellist on the session 'Women under pressure: the impact of the cost-of-living crisis and cultural and societal inequality and discrimination'. Furthermore, on International Women's Day, 8 March, parliaments across the region shared topical issues highlighted by young women in their country. This was collated into a report will create a blueprint of issues facing young women in the BIMR and for other Branches to consider replicating the process across the Commonwealth for the betterment of women and girls.

Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD) – Nepal

On 10 March, Martin Whitfield MSP spent a week in Nepal visiting the Federal Parliament and two provincial Parliaments sharing about the Scottish Parliaments experience with Post Legislative Scrutiny. This visit was supported by WFD and discussions are taking place with WFD about further Continued Professional Development opportunities for both Members and officials.

Q3 2023-24 Finance Report – SPCB

Executive Summary

Q3 outturn is £1,515k (1.8%) below the year-to-date (YTD) current annual budget. The YTD underspend has held at 1.8% during Q3 and is within the target underspend for the year of below 2.5%. 23-24 figures are continuing to show significantly reduced YTD underspends in SPS, Officeholders and Members compared to 22-23 (and prior years).

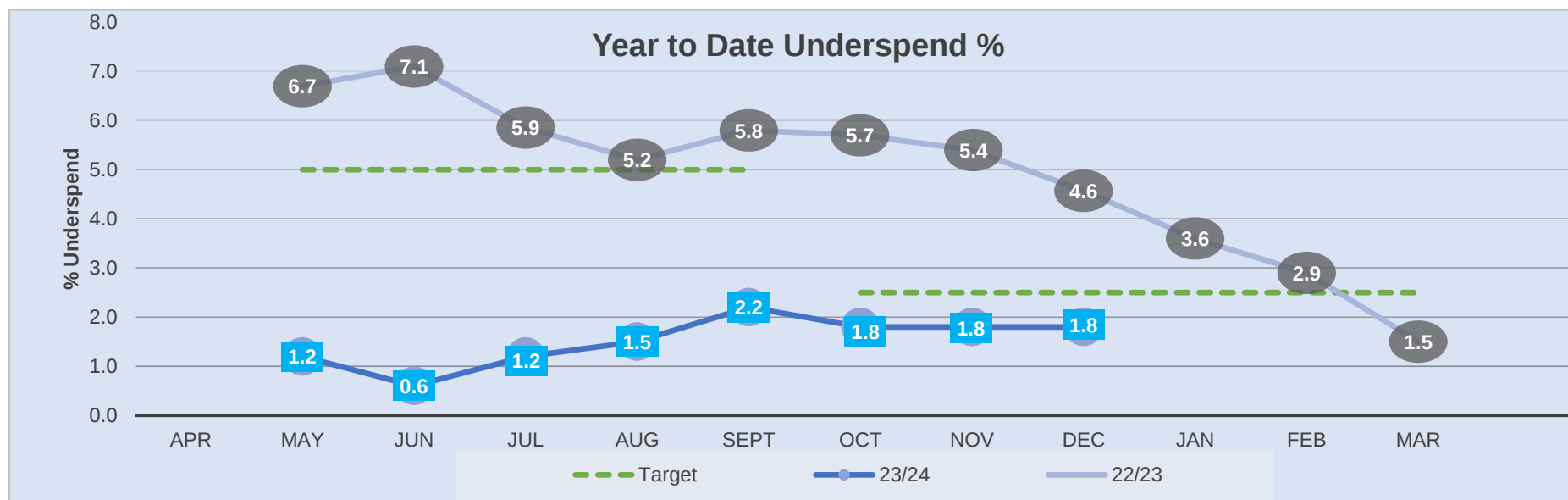
YTD 000's		
	Q3 23-24	Q3 22-23
SPS	566	1,708
Members	975	1,609
Officeholders	(26)	384
Total	1,515	3,701

SPCB is forecast to underspend by £704k at year-end.

Summary Outturn position year to date including forecast:

SPCB Expenditure Summary Outturn – Q3:

	Q3 Out-turn					Full Year Results		
	Actual	Budget	Variance	Variance		Out-turn	Under/ (Over)	Current Annual Budget
	£'000	£'000	£'000	%		£'000	£'000	£'000
Parliamentary Service Costs	43,558	44,124	566	1.3		60,538	(814)	59,725
Members Costs	28,629	29,604	975	3.3		39,717	700	40,417
Commissioners & Ombudsman Costs	12,062	12,036	(26)	(0.2)		16,638	0	16,638
Sub Total	84,250	85,765	1,515	1.8		116,893	(113)	116,780
Reserves – SPCB contingency							817	817
Total SPCB Expenditure	84,250	85,765	1,515	1.8		116,893	704	117,597



Q3 SPS Expenditure Summary Outturn:

	Q3 Out-turn					Full Year Results		
	Actual	Budget	Variance	Variance		Out-turn	Under/ (Over)	CAB
	£'000	£'000	£'000	%		£'000	£'000	£'000
Staff	28,904	28,537	(367)	(1.3%)		38,335	(750)	37,586
Staff Related Costs	526	562	37	6.6%		699	70	770
Property Costs	6,751	6,627	(123)	(1.9%)		9,156	(176)	8,981
Running Costs	5,027	5,246	219	4.2%		7,053	20	7,073
Projects	2,351	3,152	800	25.4%		5,298	21	5,316
SPS Expenditure	43,558	44,124	566	1.3		60,538	(814)	59,725

SPS Summary

SPS forecast an overspend of (£814k) as at March 24 broken down as:

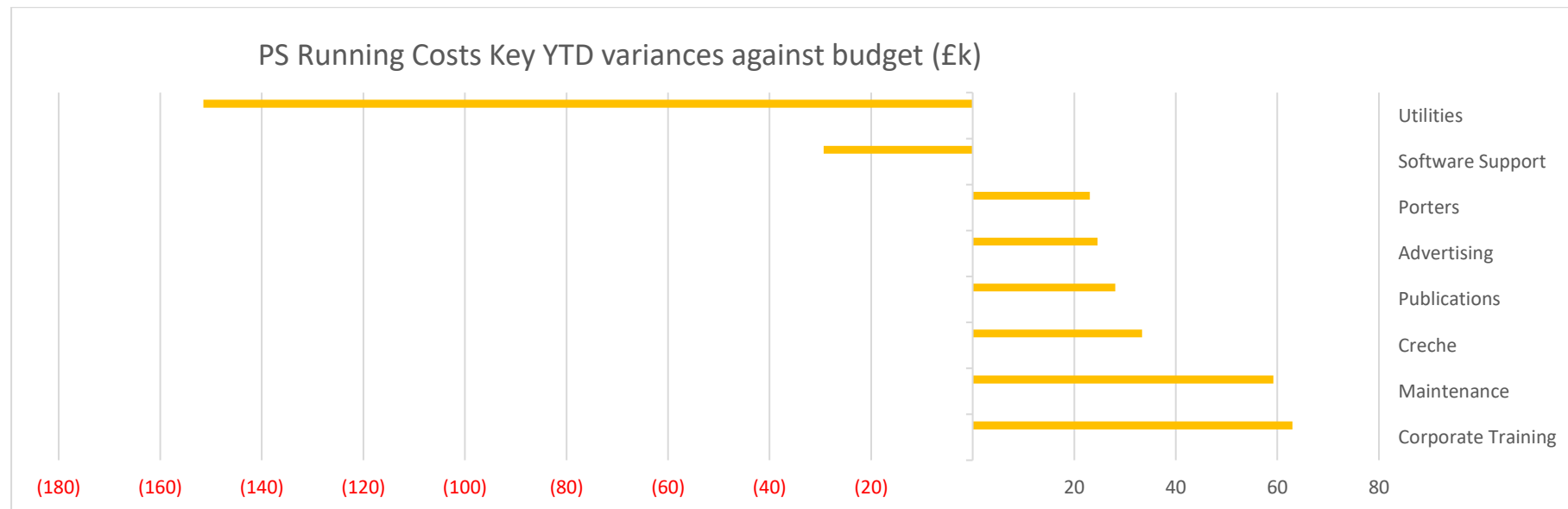
- (£750k) in staffing
- (£176k) in property costs. This forecast overspend is predominantly due to electricity price rises in April 23 exceeding the assumed budget increase despite consumption in 23-24 being lower than 22-23.

Staff Costs

The approved FTE 2023-24 is 583.

At Q3 most Offices remain fully staffed apart from continuing vacancies in Security, BIT, Official Report, and Events.

Running Costs



Commentary on significant variances to the annual budget:

Utilities (£179k) YTD overspend is due to the electricity kwh price increasing by 75% in April. Consumption to end Q3 is approximately 8.7% lower than 22-23 but costs are about 46% higher. Electricity is forecast to overspend by (£254k) and will be partially offset by the forecast underspend in gas of £30k-40k at year end (temperature dependant).

Software Support (£77k) YTD overspend as at Q3 and forecast to be (£91k) by year end. The total annual budget for software is £2.1 million across several offices. YTD overspends which decrease at Year end are due to the timing of renewals and other factors.

Advisors – £21k YTD underspend in Q3. Underspend in this area is within Digital Services, Business Assurance and Scrutiny groups. The budget is forecast to slightly underspent by year end.

Publications – £25k underspend as at Q3. This underspend occurs predominantly in the Chamber office, where the timing of NGBU bills is difficult to predict.

Equipment Maintenance - £29k underspend in BIT, where costs have reduced due to the increase in cloud storage.

Advertising - £31k YTD underspend in Q3. This is mainly in the Parliamentary Communications Office. This will absorb the installation costs of the digital screen at the public entrance.

Corporate Training - £32k underspend as at Q3. This is primarily in the People and Culture office where the procurement of a Managed learning service has been delayed. The budget is forecast to be fully used by year end.

Creche - £34k YTD underspend in Q3. This is due to the Creche manager not starting until P04 and opening being delayed at the start of the year. This underspend, and others within Facilities Management are due to offset forecast year end overspends in restaurant services, and utilities.

Design and Digital Production – £37k YTD underspend as at Q3. This is due to the successful pilot of an in-house employed graphic designer.

Property Maintenance – £64k underspend as at Q3.

Expenditure against Minor works and reactive maintenance budgets were delayed due to resource gaps within both Mitie and the Facilities Management property services teams. This underspend will offset utilities and other overspends.

Projects

Portfolio	Actual	Budget	Variance	Variance		Outturn	Under/ (Over)	Current Annual Budget
	£'000	£'000	£'000	%		£'000	£'000	£'000
BIT and Digital	455	566	111	19.7%		1,131	0	1,131
FM Building & Equipment	639	845	206	24.4%		1,512	(2)	1,510
BEMS	604	975	371	38.1%		1,531	0	1,531
Sound & Voting/Broadcasting	291	435	144	33.1%		420	15	435
Other	8363	330	(32)	-9.8%		517	9	526
Unallocated budget				0.0%		184	0	164
Total projects	2,351	3,152	800	25.4%		5,295	21	5,316

Categories:	Actual	Budget	Variance	Variance		Outturn	Under/(Over)	Current Annual Budget
Capital projects	874	1,247	373	29.9%		1,874	(93)	1,781
Revenue projects	1,478	1,904	427	22.4%		3,237	115	3,352
Unallocated budget						184	0	184
Total projects	2,351	3,152	800	25.4%		5,295	21	5,316

The unallocated project budget will be prioritised for work that can be brought forward from 2024-25 to release budgetary pressure on next year.

BIT & Digital

BIT and Digital YTD underspend of £111k is due to delays within the Corporate Systems Project (£138k) the overall programme spend remains on forecast. BIT have secure plans to allocate the 23/24 budget surpluses to other work in Q4.

FM

£206k YTD underspend.

This represents changes to the original schedule of planned work, some of which either changes in scope or is delayed after professional advice and input has been received. There are no concerns about the budget being fully utilised by year end.

BEMS

The £371k YTD underspend is due to timing. The expenditure was profiled 4 months before the procurement process concluded. 80%-90% of the budget is for parts on order and there are no concerns. This has not impacted the timeline of the installation planned for 23-24.

Sound and voting /Broadcasting

YTD underspend of £144k. The Chamber console replacement parts took longer to manufacture but are on track to be installed and tested in Q4.

Members Costs

Members YTD Q3 underspend is £975k (3.3%). This compares to a YTD P09 underspend of £1,609k (5.6%) in 22-23. The YTD underspend is mainly within the Engagement Provision (£602k), Edinburgh Accommodation Provision (£137k) and Staff Cost Provision (£227k) offset by overspend in Members pay of (£164k) which arose due to an increased pension contribution rate and Ministerial severance costs earlier in the year.

Officeholders:

Officeholders have overspent by (£26k) (0.2%) against the YTD budget. Officeholders underspend in Q3 22-23 was £384k (3.5%). The YTD overspend is due to Public Services Ombudsman (£280k) offset by underspends in Ethical Standards Commission (£116k) and Human Rights Commissioner (£71k).

Officeholders' contingency now sits at £650k with approved calls of £429k against this. Further funding of £111k has been requested for the SPSO in connection with additional responsibilities through the Spring Budget Revision process. Transfers will take place next quarter.



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Performance Report

2022-24 Q3: October to December 2023



Performance Overview

Our Services	KPI overall status	Trend	Strategic Change Objectives	Overall status	Trend
 Members support and resources		↓	 A modern, dynamic parliamentary democracy		↓
 Scrutiny and debate		→	 Adapting for a sustainable future		↓
 Public involvement		↓	 A values-driven culture		↑
 Corporate services and governance		→	 Operational excellence		→ 3 rd Qtr
 Working environment		↓			

Delivering excellence in our parliamentary services

Key Performance Indicators



Members support and resources

Core Members' services operating within targets



Exceptions: Overall, core Members' services operating within targets is reported as **Amber** due to the KPI for 'total number of major incidents (IT) declared that impacted service' having an amber result for the 3rd consecutive quarter, meaning the KPI is now reported as **Red**. During Q3, 2 incidents were declared (target 0) with the major incident process followed and no further action is required. In November 2023, a telephone system issue with the suppliers' infrastructure lasted a short time out-with business hours, only impacting the security night shift team; and in December 2023, following planned weekend maintenance Outlook emails could not be sent from shared mailboxes, impacting a few users - this issue did not show in post change testing, a workaround was quickly identified to allow service continuity whilst the fix was implemented.

To date during 2023-24, 6 major incidents have been declared relating to different issues - none adversely impacting parliamentary business and some not impacting any Members. LT discussed and were assured there was no underlying issue or performance concern, however, agreed the definition of the performance measure should be reviewed and implemented for Q1, 2024-25.



Scrutiny and debate

Parliamentary Business takes place as scheduled



Parliamentary business services operating within targets



Public involvement

Public feedback surveys



Digital engagement

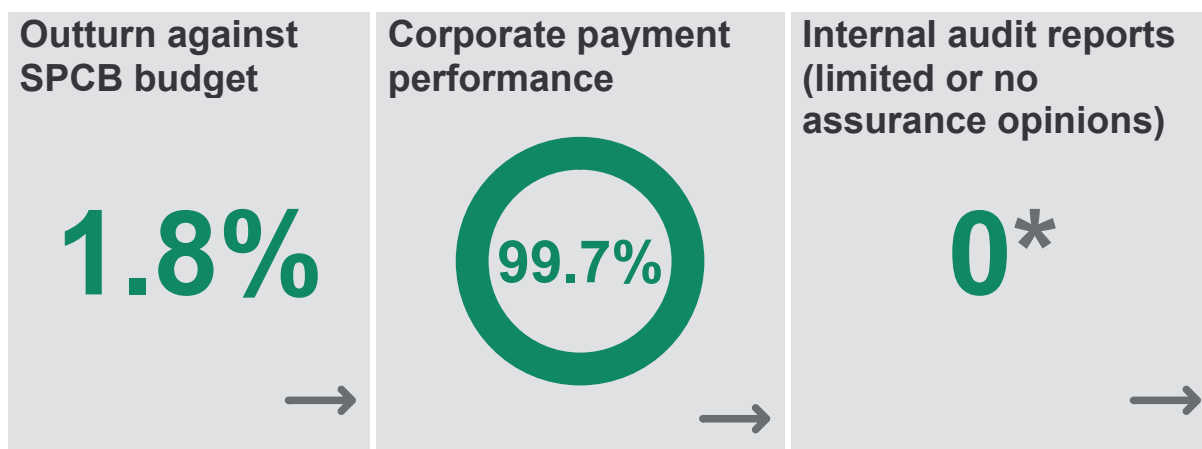


Exceptions: Digital engagement is reported as **Red** due to overall result being amber for the 3rd consecutive quarter:

- Social media channels meet bespoke engagement rates – **red** – achieved 60% (target 75%) – changes to X (Twitter) algorithms are likely to have had a further impact during Q3 but this cannot be quantified. Although below target, performance remains high with figures consistently exceeding industry indicators. Targets were set based on what proved to be unusually high performance in Q4, 2022-23, which have not been sustained. LT discussed and were assured there was no underlying issue or performance concern, however, agreed the performance measure should be reviewed in line with industry benchmarks and take into consideration seasonal variations in the parliamentary calendar and implemented for Q1, 2024-25.



Corporate services and governance



* No internal audit reports were reviewed as AAB did not meet - next AAB meeting is scheduled for 20 March 2024.

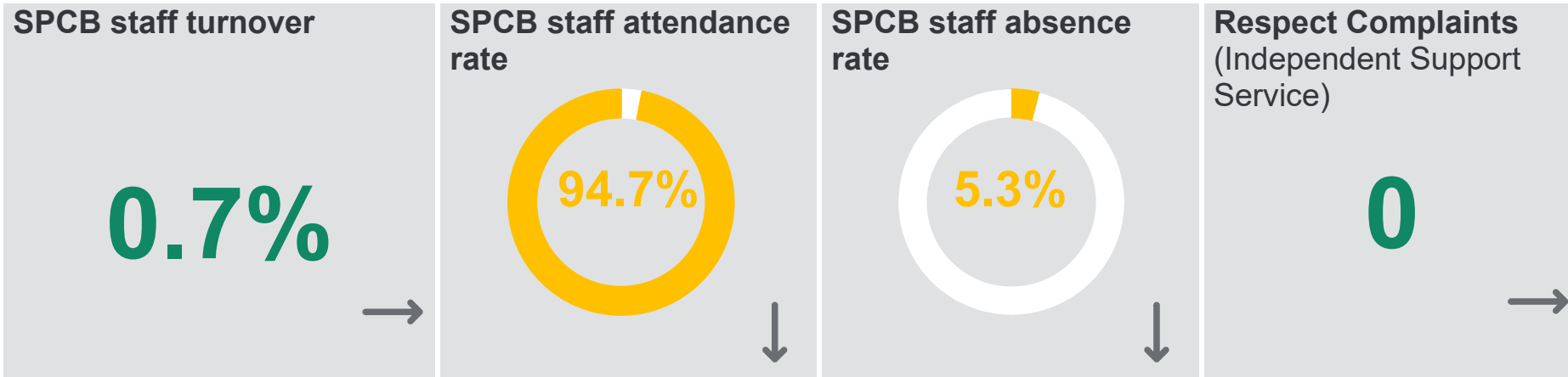
Fulfilment of compliance obligations  	Resilience & Sustainability		Business Assurance	
	People and Culture		Engagement & Communications	
	Scrutiny		Digital Services	
	Legislation & Parliamentary Busniess		Financial Governance	

Exceptions: Fulfilment of compliance obligations is reported as **Amber** due to one amber Group return:

- Resilience & Sustainability: An ISO 14001 (environmental management systems) audit during Q3 identified one outstanding measure which has now been resolved, resulting in a clean audit. In addition, a review of submitted business continuity plans identified areas for improvement in business continuity planning. Office Heads/Team Leaders will be briefed on improvements needed and support available during the next business continuity cycle – April to October 2024.



Working environment



Exceptions: SPCB staff attendance and absence rate is reported as **Amber** due to:

- An increase in unplanned absence in October and November 2023 due to an increase in sickness absence – where the majority is longer term in nature and relates to specific business areas, not organisation wide. These known cases are being monitored and managed accordingly.

Strategic change objectives: key activities

Status

A red, amber, green status (RAG) sets out the overall performance against the project, programme or activities time, cost, people and change resources, and outcomes and benefits:

Indicator	RED	AMBER	GREEN
Time	Milestone(s) and/or activity completion date delayed by more than one month	Milestone(s) and/or activity completion date delayed by up to one month	Milestones and activity completion date remains on schedule
Cost/Budget	Costs exceed approved budget for current financial year and/or overall agreed activity cost by more than 5% or over £50,000	Costs exceed approved budget for current financial year and/or overall agreed activity cost up to 5% or a maximum of £50,000	Current approved budget and overall agreed activity cost is on target
People and Change Resources	Lack of resources to deliver activity impacting ability to meet activity plan.	Risk to resources as not yet committed and is being managed	Resources committed and plans in place.
Outcomes and benefits	Significant change in outcomes and/or benefits are not or highly unlikely to be delivered.	Risk of / or minor changes in outcomes and/or delivering benefits	Outcomes and benefits will be delivered in line with business case and benefits plan
Overall	RED if one or more indicators are red OR If one or more indicators are reported as Amber for the 3 rd consecutive quarter	AMBER if one or more indicators are amber and none are red	GREEN if all indicators are green.

If there are any issues and/or risks either addressed during the reporting quarter or are currently being addressed and remedial action taken, the activity must be reported as Amber or Red.



A modern, dynamic parliamentary democracy

Activity	Overall status & trend	On track Time	Total cost/ current fy budget	People/ Change Resources	Outcomes/ Benefits	Delivery Plan milestones Q3 completed milestones
Conveners Group Session 6 Priorities Callum Thomson	⚠️ ↓	⚠️	-	✅	✅	• N/a
Scrutiny Improvement Programme* Callum Thomson	✅ →	✅	-	✅	✅	• Commenced communication and implementation phase from October 2023. Programme recommendations communicated to staff, main Scrutiny Improvement Programme and all individual workstreams snippet sessions well attended.
Constitutional Issues Board Judith Morrison	❌ ↓	❌	-	❌	✅	• N/a
Engagement Strategy Delivery Plan Susan Duffy	✅ ↑	✅	✅	✅	✅	• In October 2023, Public Engagement Group agreed not to progress focus groups to seek feedback on current services and activities. Instead, existing relationships from groups such as the Disability Summit and Peek into Parliament will be used to test activities and services. A small sub-group will produce an action plan to take forward. • Installed new digital screen and piloted different types of content in October 2023. • Engagement and collaboration: Developed and tested guidance for partnership working by December 2023. • Refreshed and updated digital tours by December 2023 - will go live as part of launch of 25th anniversary in January 2024.

Activity	Overall status & trend	On track Time	Total cost/ current fy budget	People/ Change Resources	Outcomes/ Benefits	Delivery Plan milestones Q3 completed milestones
Implement recommendations of the Parliaments' Gender Sensitive Audit Susan Duffy			-			25th Anniversary programme budget bid approved by SRB. In October 2023, SPCB approved programme outline for major event on 29 June 2024. - Completed system of data collection to determine baseline and track improvements by December 2023. Note, collected data on gender balance on committee membership, party spokespeople and CPGs and system in place to publish annually; drafted diversity monitoring form and a survey with a plan for issuing, analysing and publishing.

Exceptions:

- Conveners Group Session 6 Priorities – **Amber** – timescales are not on track. The Conveners Group were due to consider priorities and how provision of continuous professional development (CPD) can be aligned with the other CG's strategic priorities in December 2023, this was postponed to January 2024. As CPD for Members continues to be delivered there is minimal impact of the delay.
- Constitutional Issues Board – **Red** – timescales and people and change resources are not on track. The CIB agreed the implications of the Supreme Court judgement for Scottish Parliament processes and procedures will now be considered in March 2024, changed from December 2023 - given there is no immediate business impact. This was due to capacity and resourcing challenges and prioritising other work.
- Implement recommendations of the Parliaments' Gender Sensitive Audit – **Red** – timescales are not on track. The CPD programme to address issues raised in the audit was due to be implemented by March 2024. Following the relaunch of the MSP Women's Caucus it is intended to seek their views to help develop a CPD programme. As a result, the milestone has been amended to 'Draft proposals for a continuous professional development programme to address issues raised in the audit by August 2024.



Adapting for a Sustainable Future

New ways of working

Activity	Overall status & trend	On track Time	Total cost/ current budget	People/ Change Resources	Outcomes/ Benefits	Delivery Plan milestones Q3 completed milestones
New ways of Working Toolkit and Working Practices* Lorna Foreman		-	-	-	-	- The Flexible Working policy was reviewed and assessed in line with NWOW approach and remains relevant. - NWOW section included in all staff survey completed in October 2023 and results shared. Note, based on the overall excellent results of the all-staff survey Group level surveys are no longer required.
Hybrid Parliamentary Business Systems and Support Tracey White						N/a

*Activities to be completed within 2023-24

Exceptions:

- Hybrid Parliamentary Business Systems and Support – **Red** – timescales are not on track as a result of delays/late delivery of parts from the supplier and to ensure sufficient testing, training and Member engagement is undertaken to transition to the new systems. For the Debating Chamber hybrid systems - consoles will now be installed in January; testing completed by February and the system to go live in April 2024, subject to successful testing. For the Committee room broadcast automation system: the test system will now be installed in CR5 by February 2024. As a result, the overall project will complete in September instead of April 2024.

Sustainability and Climate Change

Activity	Overall status & trend	On track Time	Total cost/ current budget	People/ Change Resources	Outcomes/ Benefits	Delivery Plan milestones Q3 completed milestones
Net Zero Infrastructure Programme Lynsey Hamill	 ↓					Business case for strategic building infrastructure investments was submitted to SRB for review in October 2023 – see exceptions for further details.
Embed Sustainable Development thinking across the organisation Lynsey Hamill	 ↑					- Training modules made available on Learningpool on Biodiversity and Sustainable Travel and Circular economy in October 2023. - Business Travel Policy reviewed by SPCB in November 2023 – SPCB requested more data analysis to identify impact of reducing flights to London.

Exceptions:

- Net Zero Infrastructure Programme - **Red** - timescales are not on track with the update to LT rescheduled from October 2023 to February 2024. The business case for strategic building infrastructure investments was submitted to the SRB in October 2023 with further work to be undertaken on energy costs, building occupancy and potential impacts on assumptions. The revised business case will be submitted by April 2024 and will now seek SPCB agreement by June 2024.



A values-driven culture

Activity	Overall status & trend	On track Time	Total cost/ current budget	People/ Change Resources	Outcomes/ Benefits	Delivery Plan milestones Q3 completed milestones
Power Imbalances Lorna Foreman	✓ ↑	✓	-	✓	✓	Completed review of operating arrangements and support for Diversity Networks and proposals presented to Group Head of People and Culture in October 2023.
Positive Action Lorna Foreman	✗ ↓	✗	✗	✓	!	N/a
Organisational Training Needs Analysis (TNA) and Review of our Approach to Setting Training Budgets* Lorna Foreman / Lynsey Hamill	✓ ↑	✓	-	✓	✓	Published new approach to mandatory training for both new and existing colleagues in November 2023.
Performance Management* Lorna Foreman	✓ →	✓	-	✓	✓	Completed roll out and embedded performance management by December 2023.

*Activities to be completed within 2023-24

Exceptions:

- Positive Action - **Red** – timescales and budget are not on track. The implementation of the Minority Ethnic Development Programme for MSP staff was delayed from October 2023 to May 2024 to allow more time to generate further interest and re-visit the comms approach. The partnerships and accreditations policy that supports our diversity and inclusion aims was not implemented by December 2023, an SPCB paper inviting views on a proposal to develop the policy will be discussed in February 2024, thereafter the timeline will be updated. An application for Scottish Government funding (which supported the SPS staff Emerging Leaders programme) was not approved - SAMEE and Edinburgh College are seeking alternative funding. In addition, the outcomes & benefits are reported as amber due to potential scope change in respect of the development of a policy on partnerships and accreditations subject to SPCB's view.



Operational excellence

Activity	Overall status & trend	On track Time	Total cost/ current budget	People/ Change Resources	Outcomes/ Benefits	Delivery Plan milestones Q3 completed milestones
Workforce Planning Sara Glass / Lorna Foreman	✓ →	✓	-	✓	✓	• N/a
Corporate Systems Programme Sara Glass	✗ ↓	✗	✓	✓	✓	• N/a
Official Report Digital Transformation Programme Tracey White	! ↓	!	-	✓	✓	• Submitted outline business case for the editOR replacement (Phase 1) to the SRB in October 2023. Following revisions was approved in December 2023.

Activity	Overall status & trend	On track Time	Total cost/ current budget	People/ Change Resources	Outcomes/ Benefits	Delivery Plan milestones Q3 completed milestones
Business Bulletin Improvements Tracey White	⚠️ ↑	⚠️	-	⚠️	✅	N/a
Self Service Meeting Room Booking Alan Balharrie	❌ ↓	❌	-	⚠️	✅	Completed discovery and design phase in December 2023.
Skills and Capability to Support Operational Excellence Sara Glass / Alan Balharrie	✅ ↑	✅	-	✅	✅	- Investment decision-making blueprint: Proposal for approach agreed by SRB in November 2023. SRB to be kept updated on progress. - Digital literacy and leadership: - Delivered the artificial intelligence session as part of the Executive briefing programme (quarterly series of briefings and discussions) to Leadership Team in December 2023. - Investigation comparing M365 Learning Pathways and other Microsoft learning resources was completed during Q3. It was proposed Learning Pathways is no longer deployed as this type of functionality will be delivered within the procurement of the Managed Learning Service (MLS) project.

*Activities to be completed within 2023-24

Exceptions:

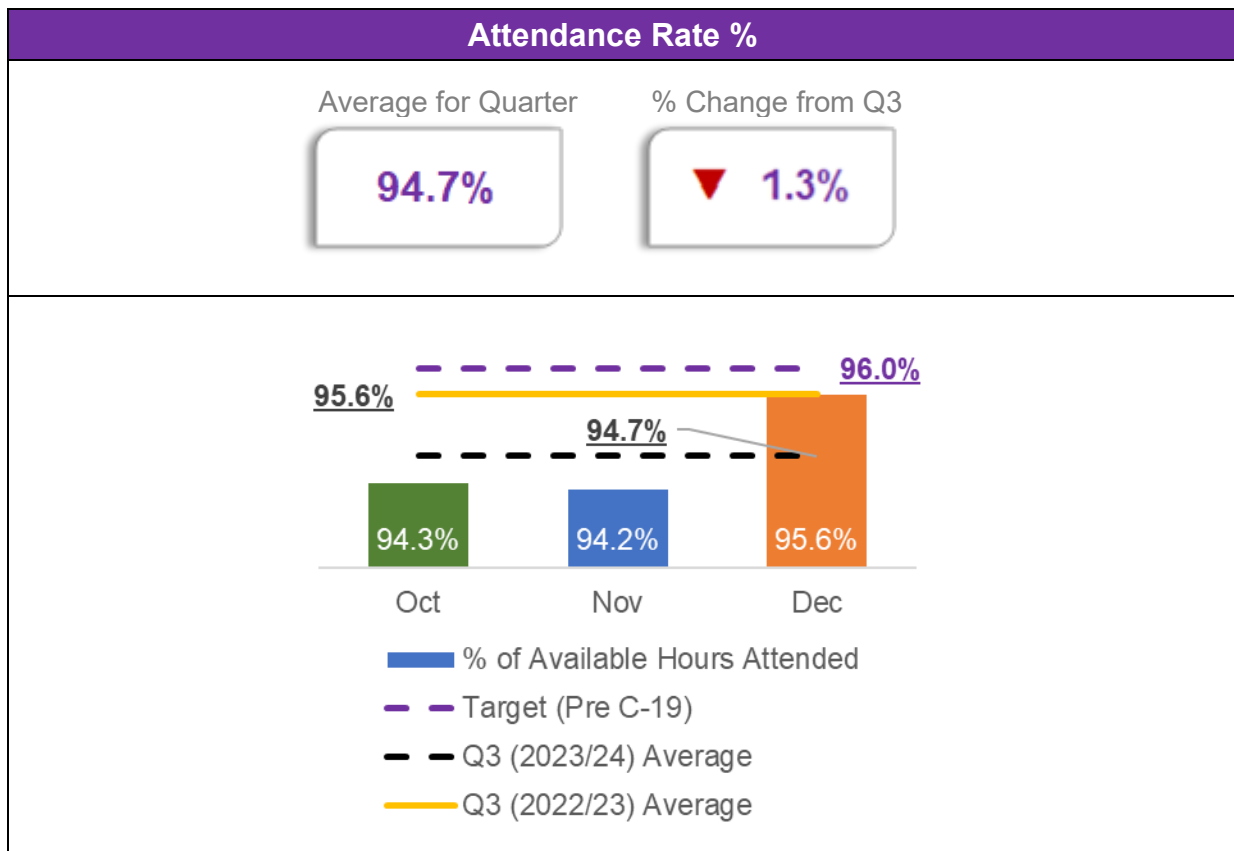
- Corporate Systems Programme – **Red** – timescales are not on track. Setting delivery plan milestones was delayed to February (HR/payroll system) and March 2024 (finance system). The HR/payroll system provider contract signing was delayed due to a change in the SG

framework to be used, this was signed in December 2023. The finance system implementation has been delayed by the Scottish Government from April 2024, a revised date is to be confirmed.

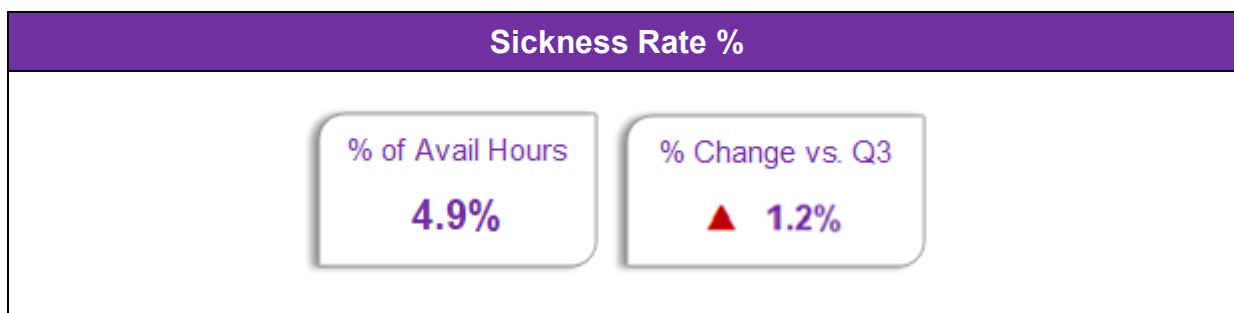
- Official Report Digital Transformation Programme - **Amber** – timescales are not on track. The outline business case was revised after its initial submission in October and was approved in December 2023. Phase 1 will now start in January 2024.
- Business Bulletin Improvements - **Amber** – timescales and people and change resources are not on track. The business case was not submitted to the Digital Strategy Board as planned in December 2023 due to resource availability and will now be submitted in February 2024, followed by SRB in March 2024.
- Self Service Meeting Room Booking – **Red** – timescales (red) and people and change resources (amber) are not on track. The business case development was delayed due to resource availability and technical issues during test integration to confirm the feasibility of integration of a new FM system with the technical environment. The business case is now scheduled to be submitted to the Digital Strategy Board in February 2024. The investment decision may permit an initial, small scale roll out of the new service from June 2024.

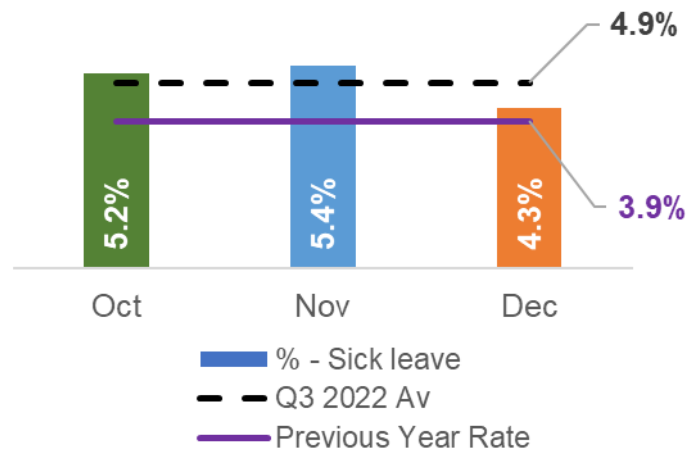
Quarter 3 2023/24 Workforce Report

Attendance

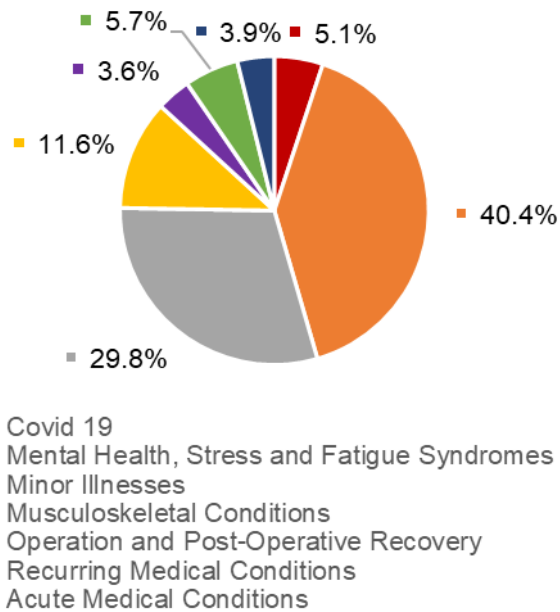


The Attendance Rate is 1.3% lower than it was in Quarter 2 and is below the organisational target of 96%.



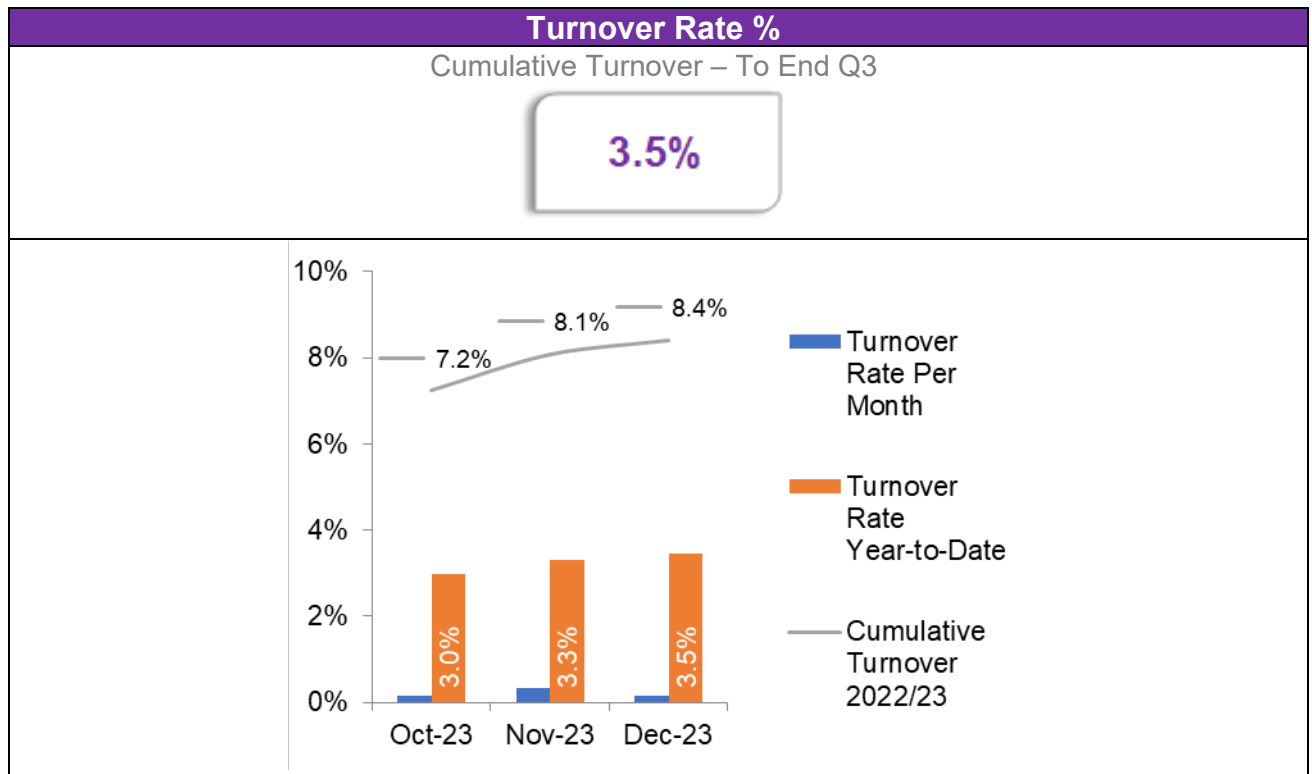


Sickness Categories



The rate of Sickness Absence is 4.9% which is an increase of 1.2% on the previous Quarter. Mental Health, Stress and Fatigue Syndromes accounted for the largest proportion of absence due to sickness followed by Minor Illnesses.

Turnover

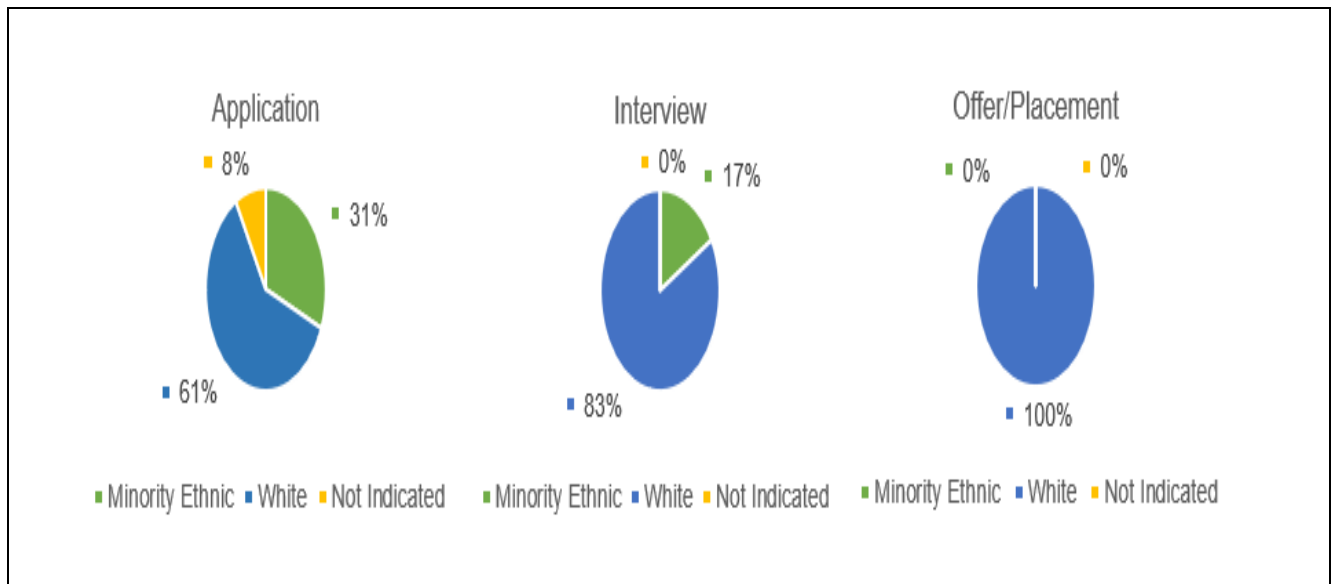


The cumulative turnover for the reporting year to the end of Quarter 3 was 3.5%. There were 4 leavers in Quarter 3. Total headcount at the end of Quarter 3 was 615 which was an increase of 5 over the period.

Recruitment

In accordance with our commitment to increase the diversity of our organisation and our focus on increasing applications from minority ethnic backgrounds, we monitor the progress of success rates at interview and appointment stage.

Recruitment



Six recruitment campaigns were carried out in Quarter 3. There were no job offers made to candidates from a minority ethnic background.