



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Session 7 planning approach

14 November 2024

Reference: SPCB (2024) Paper 71

Executive summary

1. In 2021, the SPCB approved the strategy for Session 6, and an associated medium term financial plan, which informs the approach to annual budgeting. Officials are now beginning planning for Session 7. This paper sets out the approach, specifically how we propose to gather views from SPCB, Members and staff as part of our planning approach.
2. The SPCB's input and views will be sought, taking account of reflections on Session 6. The proposed end point is for the new strategy and delivery plan to be discussed with and agreed by the SPCB at the planning day, post-election, in 2026. This aligns with the planning and budgeting timeline for 2027-28 FY.
3. Given this is the 25th anniversary of Parliament, there is a range of feedback from the most recent Festival of Politics and the Presiding Officer's regional visits, as well as other analysis we will consider.

Issues and options

4. Strategic planning is a set of activities officials undertake to make sure we can deliver the business of Parliament effectively and efficiently. As part of this, we must identify and decide how we are going to navigate changes that we might need to make, usually to take advantage of opportunities, manage new requirements and to address risks or other challenges.
5. Strategic planning is one of the responsibilities of the Senior Executive Team [SET] led by the Clerk/Chief Executive, and its role is to advise SPCB on planning, financial resourcing, and any other implications. SET has discussed and signed off on an approach and timescale, which includes considering existing information and gathering current

information. For example, the work of the Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee on embedding public participation, the gender sensitive audit, outputs from Convenors Group and any relevant legacy plans/issues, amongst other information, will be considered. There are also several issues being considered in the current session that may influence Session 7 – for example net zero, sessional review of Members' expenses, review of commissioner and officeholder landscape.

6. Strategic planning for Session 6 coincided with the global COVID pandemic, and that shaped our strategy for Session 6 quite significantly. It also meant that unfortunately some of the ways we gathered input were curtailed.
7. SET has agreed ways we will engage our managers and staff in the planning exercise. We are aiming to launch our approach to planning at a staff event in early December. Work has commenced also to review the public engagement strategy, and this will feed into future planning too.
8. We also propose gathering MSPs' and their staff views to inform Session 7 plans. The following approach is proposed for SPCB discussion and agreement:
 - [a] Seeking MSP feedback as part of the annual Members' feedback survey which will take place in early 2025. As usual SPS managers will meet with Members to gather feedback, and it will be themed around future planning for how we deliver parliamentary services. We will share the proposed questions and approach with SPCB in advance, and the results.
 - [b] We propose a survey of Members' staff to inform planning too – this will be developed in consultation with the Members' Staff Forum. Again, we will share the approach and survey with SPCB in advance and the results.
 - [c] A planning session with SPCB using the summer planning day in August 2025.

Governance

9. SET is responsible for developing the Session 7 strategy, advising, and seeking approval from SPCB in 2026.

Resource implications

10. Planning will be carried out within existing resources as it is a repeatable organisational effort.
11. Planning and budgeting for 2026-27 will be based on the Session 6 strategy and delivery plan, including the transition from Session 6 to 7. The current plan comfortably sets out activities that stretch into 2026-27, including for example the 2026 election project, and work to achieve net zero compliance.

Publication Scheme

12. This paper can be published.

Decision

13. The SPCB is invited to note that strategic planning for Session 7 has commenced and to agree the proposals for engaging SPCB, Members' and their staff for input.

Office of the Deputy Chief Executive
November 2024