

**Chief Executive's Report to the SPCB  
February 2019**

## **Introduction**

This report looks at recent activities across the organisation and includes the SPCB financial report for Period 9 of the 2018-19 financial year along with the performance report at Annex A. Annex A will not be published.

Items worth highlighting include:

- The work of the SPPA Committee on Sexual Harrassment.
- The one year anniversary of the Lobbying Register and the work done so far.
- An update on the Events so far for the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Programme.
- The announcement on the new Wi-Fi networks for the Parliament
- Disability Confident Leader employer accreditation.

If you have any comments or questions on any aspect of this report, I would be happy to discuss them with you.

**Paul Grice**

Clerk/Chief Executive

## **OVERVIEW OF PARLIAMENTARY ACTIVITIES**

### **Parliamentary business**

#### **Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments (SPPA) Committee**

The SPPA Committee is currently considering the recommendations of the Joint Working Group on sexual harassment and sexist behaviour. It is also consulting Members on revisions to the confidentiality rules in the Code of Conduct with a view to a report to the Parliament being made in late February/early March.

#### **Non-Government Bills Unit (NGBU)**

There are two NGBU-drafted Members Bills in progress (on physical punishment of children, and on 20-mph speed limits). Both are being scrutinised at Stage 1 of the legislative process. The NGBU is currently preparing four other Bills for MSPs who have obtained the right to introduce a Bill – on tied pubs, sanitary products, protection of workers and the European Charter of Local Self-Government. The NGBU continues to support various MSPs who are at earlier stages in the process and has reminded those MSPs who have yet to lodge draft proposals that they need to make progress rapidly if they are to be in a position to introduce a Bill by the session cut-off (1 June 2020).

#### **Parliamentary Business Team**

Following discussion at the Bureau, the Parliament has agreed to establish a new committee of inquiry to investigate the Scottish Government's handling of sexual harassment complaints. The intention is for the committee to convene after February recess to choose its Convener and Deputy Convener and to look at its work programme. It is then expected that the committee will not meet again until the criminal proceedings against Alex Salmond have concluded.

#### **Chamber Desk**

The Commission on Parliamentary Reform recommended that the range of question times should be reviewed. In response to this, the SPPA Committee has recommended that an additional portfolio question time be added to Thursday's business programme. The Bureau has agreed to take this forward and it is expected that this will be rolled out from March.

#### **Lobbying register**

On 12 March, the Scottish Parliament's Lobbying Register will have been operational for a year. The number of registrants (companies, organisations and sole traders) now active on the Lobbying Register passed the 1,000 figure at the end of January.

The Lobbying Register Team continues to engage actively with stakeholders, including running a series of five workshops in March for registrants, with more being planned to reflect the healthy demand. The team will also be present throughout “The Gathering”, the largest free third sector event in the UK, on 20 & 21 February at the SEC Glasgow, to give advice on the Lobbying Register to voluntary sector organisations.

## **Committees**

The new budget scrutiny process, used by Committees for the first time this year, was considered to be a useful way to influence and contribute to the Government’s planned budget before it was introduced.

The Committee Engagement Unit is progressing well with its key objective of testing innovative and creative engagement approaches for committees.

- A successful digital consultation for the Public Petitions Committee on adolescent mental health has been completed, attracting a range of personal stories and suggestions for improvement from young people, who would be unlikely to have taken part in a traditional call for evidence.
- A further digital tool has been procured to give further possibilities for consulting online.
- Two committees have agreed in principle to run mini-publics before the summer, allowing us to test this form of in-depth participation with a diverse randomly selected public. Mini publics (as recommended for testing by the Commission on Parliamentary Reform) are randomly selected diverse groups of the general public who are given an opportunity to become informed about and deliberate together on topics of public significance. They’re also sometimes referred to as deliberative engagement or citizens’ juries/assemblies.
- The CEU has also been testing “pop-up” democracy – quick snapshot opinion gathering which can be taken into all sorts of public spaces eg on the 20MPH bill, public opinion was gathered at the Transport Museum and at a KwikFit in Dunfermline.
- The Equalities and Human Right Committee successfully used a ‘Meeting in a Box’, devised to help community groups that wouldn’t ordinarily engage with the Committee/Parliament discuss the Children (Equal Protections from Assault) (Scotland) Bill. The Meeting in a Box contained all the tools required to have a conversation about the Bill - background about the Bill; the key questions that the committee would like answered; a facilitation and discussion guide, including topic cards to prompt conversation; and feedback sheets to ensure all the views from the conversation are captured in a format that can be readily analysed and provided to the Committee.

Brexit continues to impact on the work of Committees with the Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Affairs (CTEEA) Committee continuing to take evidence on the Article 50 negotiations, including last week on developments regarding the ‘Irish backstop’. Other Committees continue to deal with a number of Brexit related legislation.

## **Parliamentary Engagement**

### **International Relations Office**

The International Relations Office (IRO) facilitated visits by the following delegations:

- Following an invitation from the Ceann Comhairle (Speaker) of the Dáil Éireann, Seán Ó Fearghaíl TD, the Presiding Officer attended a special commemorative event held in Dublin to mark the 100th Anniversary of the First Sitting of the Dáil on 20 January 1919. When in Dublin, the Presiding Officer paid a courtesy call on the Ceann Comhairle as well as holding discussions with his counterparts from the UK and other EU27 states in attendance.
- The President of the State Parliament of Lower Saxony, Dr Gabriele Andretta, led a two day visit to Holyrood in early January. Discussions focussed on parliamentary reform (the Parliament of Lower Saxony is cited in the Consultative Steering Group's 'Checks and Balances' report (1999) which highlights the parliaments which influenced how this Parliament has worked since 1999).
- On 28 and 29 January a delegation of Lebanese women parliamentarians, under the auspices of the Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD) visited for a series of discussions focussing on gender sensitive legislation. The visit also aimed to create a social space for women MPs and to foster a sense of solidarity. The group aimed to establish a 'Women's Parliamentary Caucus' and to develop a Strategic Plan, and an accompanying Communications Plan, to support the longer-term work of the Caucus. A further Lebanese delegation (mainly Non-Governmental Organisations) visited the following week to discuss similar issues.
- The International Relation Office supported inward visits by the newly appointed Romanian and Spanish Consul Generals in Edinburgh. Meetings were also arranged between the Presiding Officer and the Chinese and Indian Consul Generals. Further visits were hosted for delegations from the Turks and Caicos Islands and Malaysia.

### **Visitor Services**

In February, the Parliament Shop introduced a range of books to mark LGBT+ History Month and new merchandise branded to support the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Scottish Parliament was developed.

### **Events and Exhibitions**

The *Higher Vision* exhibition, delivered in partnership with the Scottish Qualifications Authority and Scottish Society for the History of Photography, was on public display from Tuesday 20 November until Friday 8 February. The exhibition showcased high quality and innovative expressive work by Higher

photography students from across Scotland in support of the Year of Young People aim to provide opportunities for young people's creative work to be seen in public spaces.

The Presiding Officer hosted the Holocaust Educational Trust Ambassador Event on Tuesday 8 January in the Members' Room. This event brought together Members, student ambassadors and members of the Jewish Community to preserve the universal lessons of the Holocaust.

The annual Consular Corps' Burns Supper hosted by the Presiding Officer took place on Wednesday 23 January with musical contributions from the Ayrshire Fiddle Orchestra and 13-year old fiddler Kirsty Grant. The address to the haggis was given by Young Burnsonian Rose Byers.

As part of the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Programme, on Saturday 2 February the Scottish Parliament, in partnership with Young Scot, launched a national competition for young people from across Scotland to send a letter to the Scottish Parliament setting out their hopes and aspirations for the institution over the next 20 years. A selection of the letters will be included in a new book published by Luath Press which will also include a series of essays from well-known authors, academics and others which explore how well the Parliament is placed to tackle the big issues facing Scotland in the future.

### Forward Look

On Tuesday 26 February the Presiding Officer hosts the reception Celebrating 10 Years of Anne Frank Scotland.

As part of the Parliament's 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary programme, a new digital exhibit about the *Travelling the Distance* artwork by Shauna McMullan will be launched on Friday 8 March, International Women's Day, at a Presiding Officer-hosted event. The exhibit will allow visitors to select any sentence and explore who wrote the sentence and who it is about. The exhibit will also feature short films, photography, biographies, audio recordings of every sentence, Gaelic content and BSL interpretation of all the sentences.

The annual International Women's Day 2019 event hosted by Deputy Presiding Officer Linda Fabiani MSP will take place on Saturday 9 March.

### Parliamentary Services

#### **SPICe**

Officials from the Financial Scrutiny Unit in SPICe attended the 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of Parliamentary Budget Officials and Independent Fiscal Institutions in Lisbon, on 4-5 February 2019. (The Scottish Parliament Financial Scrutiny Unit hosted the 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting in April 2016). The meeting involved presentations, discussions and sharing of experience with senior officials from organisations like the US Congressional Budget Office, Australian Parliament Budget Office, Canadian Parliamentary Budget Office and the UK Office for

Budget Responsibility. Allan Campbell presented to the conference on the use of social media by SPICe and Scottish Parliament. Staff are already following up contacts made on a range of areas, including costing techniques and models and public engagement with the budget process.

## **Public Information**

BSL Plan Implementation:

- 70 staff from a range of offices have signed up for BSL awareness training; this is part of the Parliament's commitment to BSL.
- 5 FMQs have now been live interpreted and broadcast in BSL
- A welcome message in BSL will feature in the Main Hall digital signage

## **BIT**

As previously advised, the WiFi network will be changing between now and March. There will be 3 new networks: one for parliamentary devices; one for personal mobiles etc where one-off registration will be required; and a public network which will require registration every 24 hours.

The new network will be far more secure than at present. Notices and supplementary communications will be issued to all users.

## **Human Resources**

At the end of January, the Scottish Parliament was recognised as a Disability Confident Leader employer. The Disability Confident scheme is an accreditation from the Department for Work and Pensions. The scheme has 3 levels, with Leader being the top level. The purpose of the scheme is to communicate to people who are already employed with us, and any disabled people who might be interested in joining the Scottish Parliament, that we have a positive approach to employing disabled people.

In practical terms it means that we seek to remove barriers for disabled people throughout our recruitment process and that adjustments are made for people with disabilities to ensure they are given the opportunity to fulfil their potential, using their skills and talent.

Colleagues from the ParliAble Network and HR office worked collaboratively to achieve this result and they will now work on the action plan they developed in addition to providing support to Members in their role as employers.

## **Broadcasting**

On Friday 25 January, as part of the Parliament's 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Programme, the Presiding Officer attended the launch of the One Minute Film competition in the University of the West of Scotland in Ayr. The competition is open to Creative Industry students from across Scotland. In partnership with the Creative Media Network Scotland, the competition is to commission 20 one-

minute videos to be made by students to explore the impact the 20 years of the Scottish Parliament and devolved government has had on regions and communities across Scotland.

## SPCB FINANCE REPORT Period 9 – December 2018

1. This report is to inform SPCB of general financial activity and expenditure trends in 2018-19.

### Executive Summary

| <b>Performance against Budget (year to date variance)</b> |              |            |
|---|--------------|------------|
| a) Total SPCB revenue and capital expenditure             | <b>2.0%</b>  | Para 2 & 5 |
| b) Total SPS expenditure                                  | <b>2.1%</b>  | Para 7     |
| c) Total project expenditure                              | <b>0.9%</b>  | Para 8     |
| <b>Operation of Financial Controls</b>                    |              |            |
| d) Key reconciliations up to date                         | <b>100%</b>  | Para 4     |
| <b>Other Key Indicators</b>                               |              |            |
| e) Payment performance                                    | <b>99.0%</b> | Para 4     |

**Key:** RAG Status



Performance within target range



Performance outwith target range but acceptable



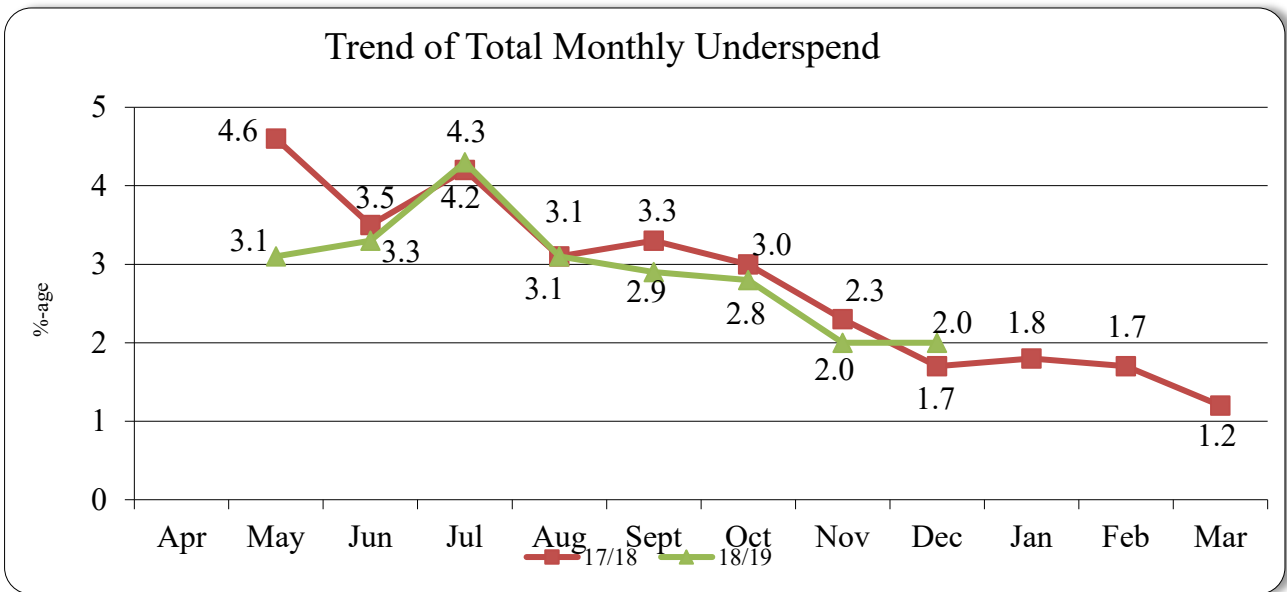
Performance outwith target range not acceptable

### Financial Commentary

2. The Scottish Parliament's total revenue and capital expenditure for the first nine months of 2018-19 of £63.5m represents an underspend against budget of £1.3m (2.0%) which is within the SPCB's target range of 0% to 2.5% (as shown in green in the Executive Summary chart). The comparable 2017-18 position was expenditure of £59.9m which represented an underspend against budget of £1.1m (1.7%).
3. There was a net decrease of £211k in the SPCB's central contingency from £717k to £506k in December and this is reflected in the period 9 figures.
4. All key reconciliations are up to date. Payment performance within contract terms for the year to date meets the 99% target. The equivalent figure for payment within 10 days is 97.8% for the year to date.

## Financial Results

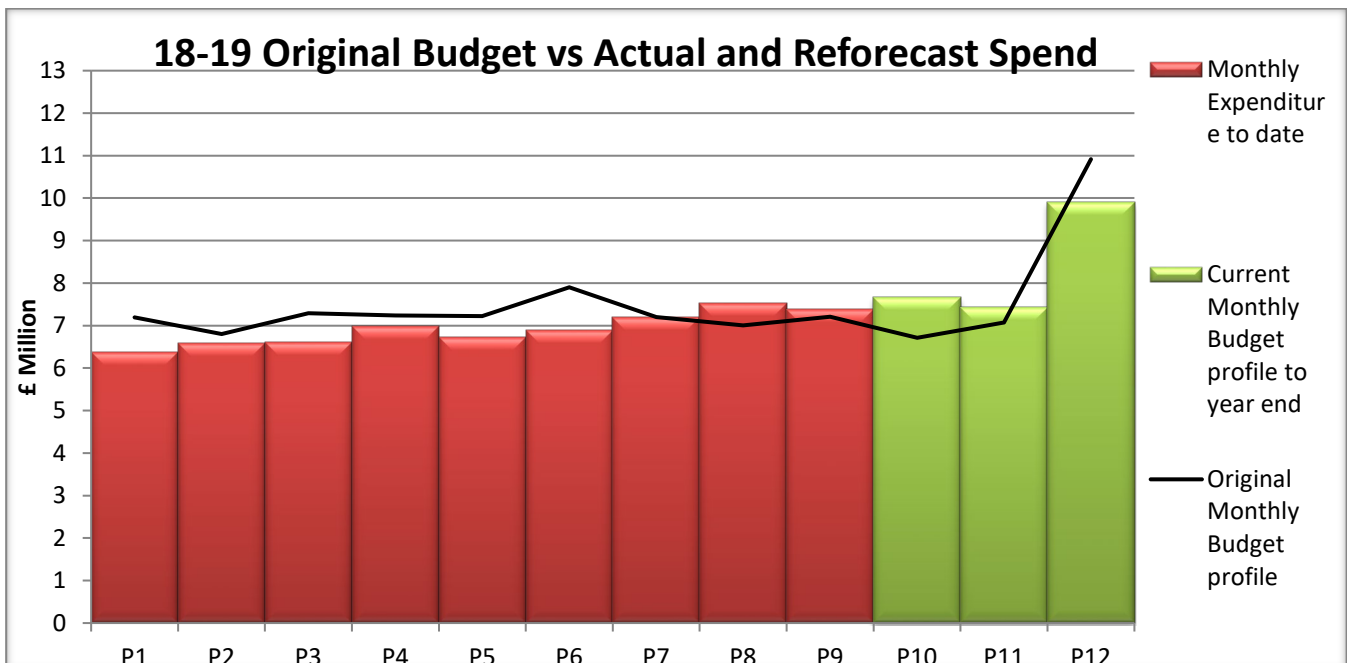
5. The SPCB's total revenue and capital expenditure per Schedule 1 for December 2018 is £63.5m, which is £1.3m (2.0%) under the approved year to date budget of £64.8m.



6. The table below shows actual monthly expenditure (red) up to the end of December and the current reforecast monthly expenditure (green) for the remaining 3 months of the year. The original monthly budget profile is shown by the black line.

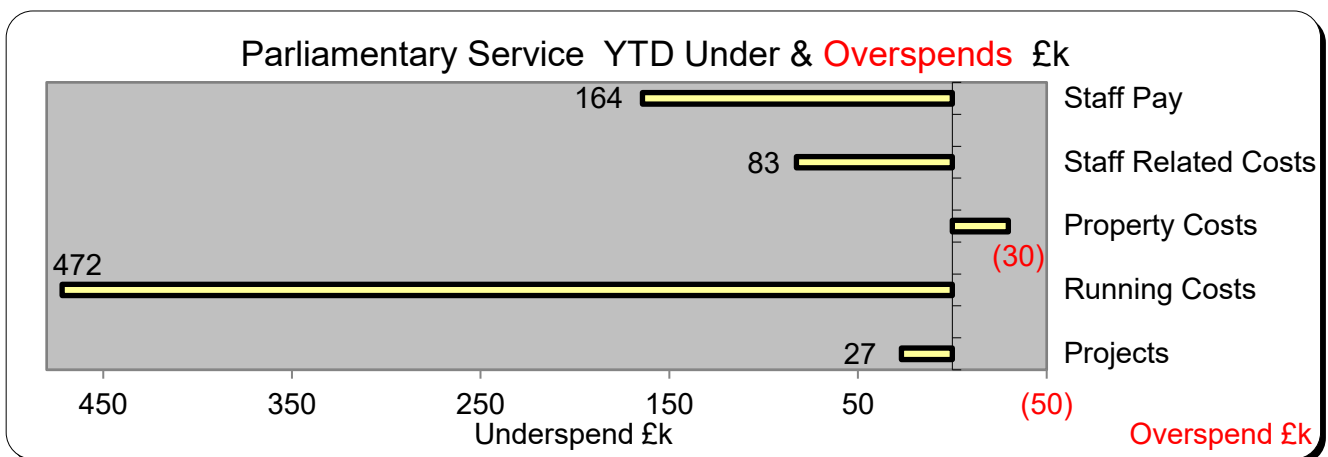
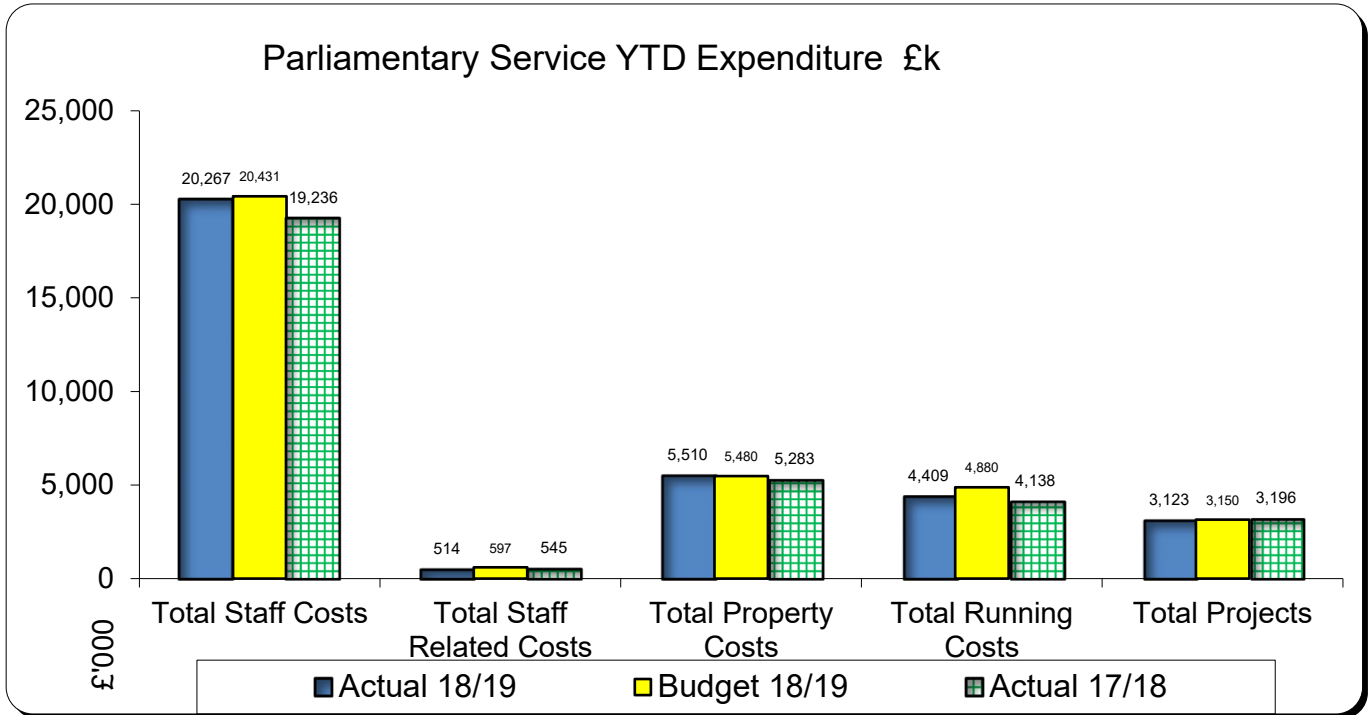
There are some higher expenditure items scheduled to occur in the remaining 3 months of the financial year:

- £1.75m in Officeholders Accommodation relocation project over April – January, with a peak expected in December & January
- Members' expenses are phased to reflect higher monthly expenditure with a peak expected in the later part of the year



## Parliamentary Service Costs (Schedule 2)

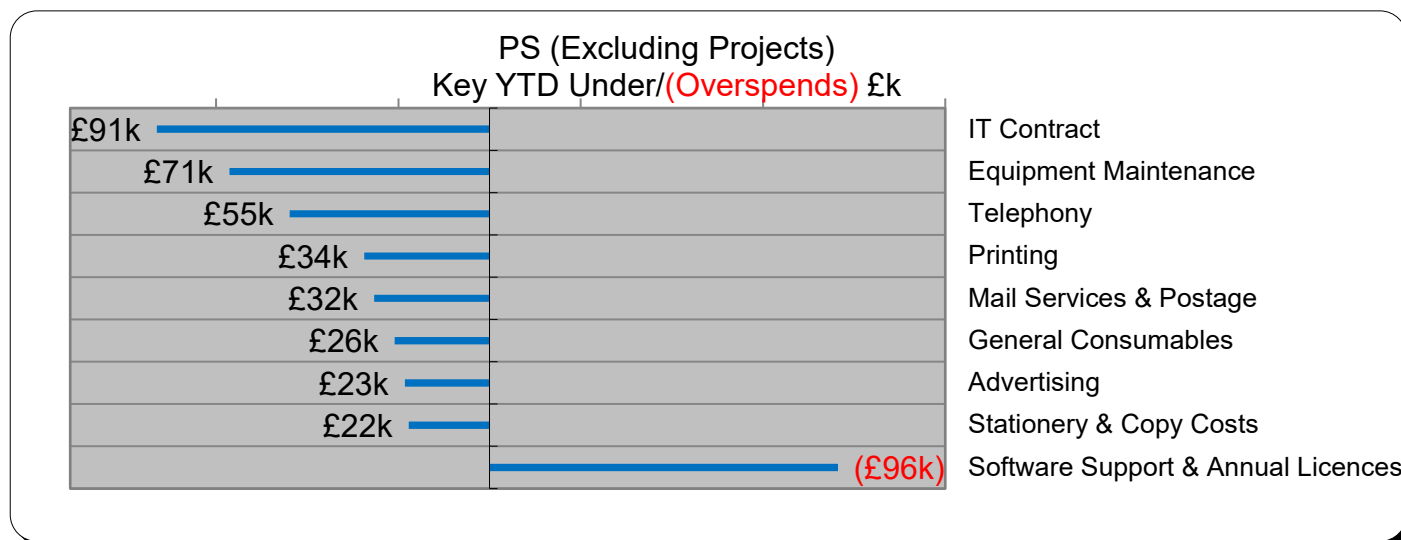
7. The year to date expenditure for the Parliamentary Service (SPS) of £33.8m is £716k (2.1%) under budget. Parliamentary Service Costs incorporate both capital and revenue projects. The previous year's expenditure of £32.4m at period 9 was £0.4m (1.3%) below budget. An analysis of the current financial year by main category of expenditure is shown in the two charts below.



- Staff Pay is reported as £164k (0.8%) under budget including Agency staff and contractors. Staff turnover and the associated vacancies have exceeded the budgeted vacancy assumption in the first nine months of the year. Accordingly, a further £33k of staff pay budget was transferred to contingency in period 9 and this is reflected in the above figure.
- The expenditure on staff pay to date of £20.3m is £1.03m (5.1%) higher than the equivalent 17-18 costs.
- Expenditure on Staff Related Costs is £514k. This is £83k (13.9%) below the budget to date of £597k. Actual spend on staff related costs is £31k (6.1%) less

than for the equivalent period in 2017-18. Travel and Expenses (£34k), Training (£22k) and Childcare Vouchers (£20k) make up the biggest elements of the underspend.

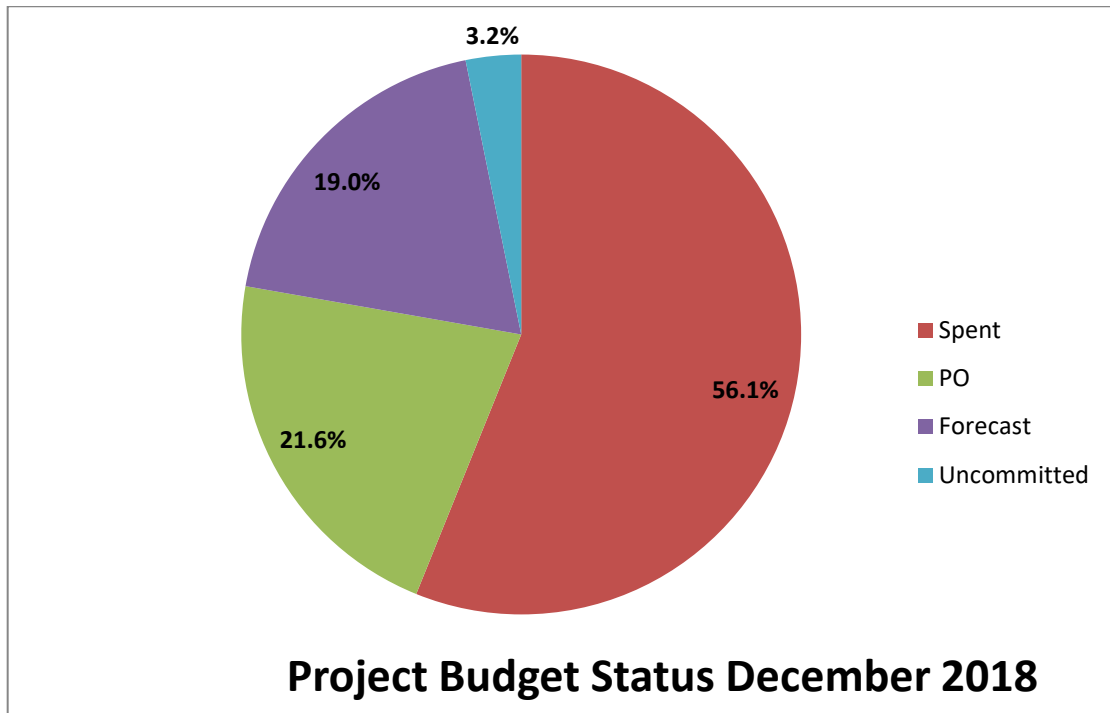
- Property Costs of £5.5m are £30k (0.5%) higher than the Year to Date budget.
- Running Costs of £4.4m are £472k (8.5%) under budget. Main running cost underspends are in IT Contract (£91k), Equipment Maintenance (£71k), Telephony (£55k), Printing (£34k), Mail Services and Postage (£32k), General Consumables (£26k), Advertising (£23k) and Stationery (£22k). These are partly offset by higher expenditure on Software Support and Annual Licences (£96k).



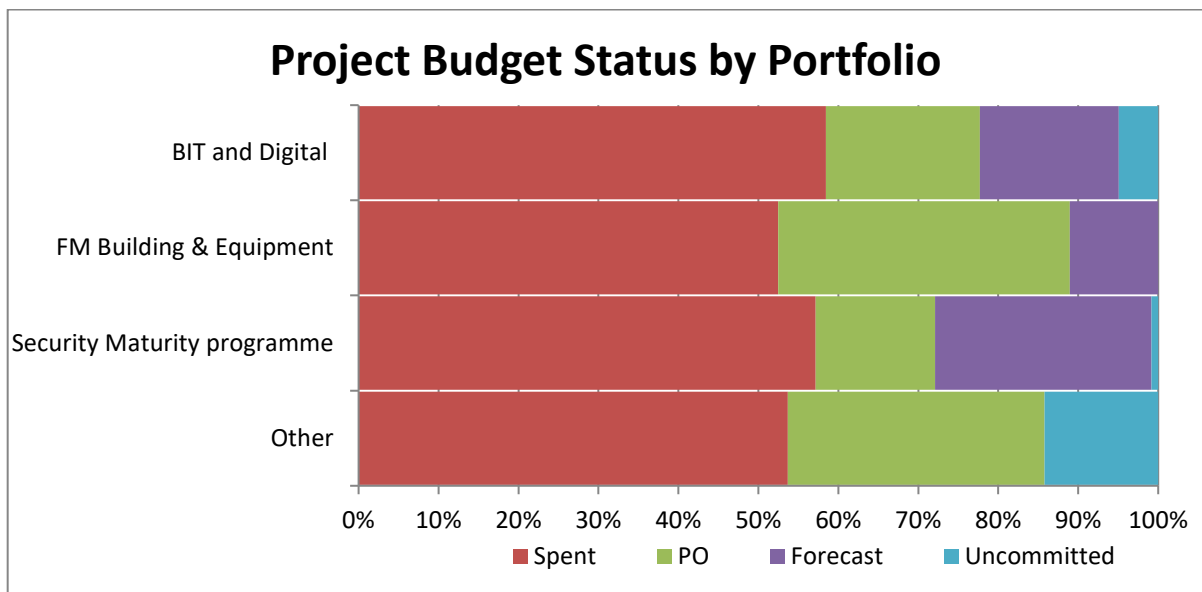
### Project Reporting (Schedule 3):

8. Schedule 3 shows project spend by category of project.

- Total project expenditure to December 2018 is £3.1m, £27k (0.9%) under the year to date budget.
- Revenue Projects show a total spend of £1.9m, an underspend of £96k (4.8%) against the phased budget of £2.0m.
- Capital Projects have spent £1.21m for the year to date, representing an overspend of £69k (4.6%) against the phased budget of £1.14m. The expenditure is mainly in respect of the Security Systems Replacement project.
- Currently, a net potential underspend of £171k (3.1%) is being forecast in projects.



This compares with 54.4% spent, 30.4% on purchase orders, 14.7% forecast and 0.5% uncommitted at the same period in 2017-18.



### Members' Costs (Schedule 2)

9. Members' costs are analysed in Schedule 2, which shows £21.4m reported cost to December 2018, £354k (1.6%) lower than the phased year to date budget. (The corresponding figures for 2017-18 at period 9 were expenditure of £20.8m with an underspend of £578k, (2.7%)).

### Commissioners & Ombudsman Costs (Schedule 2)

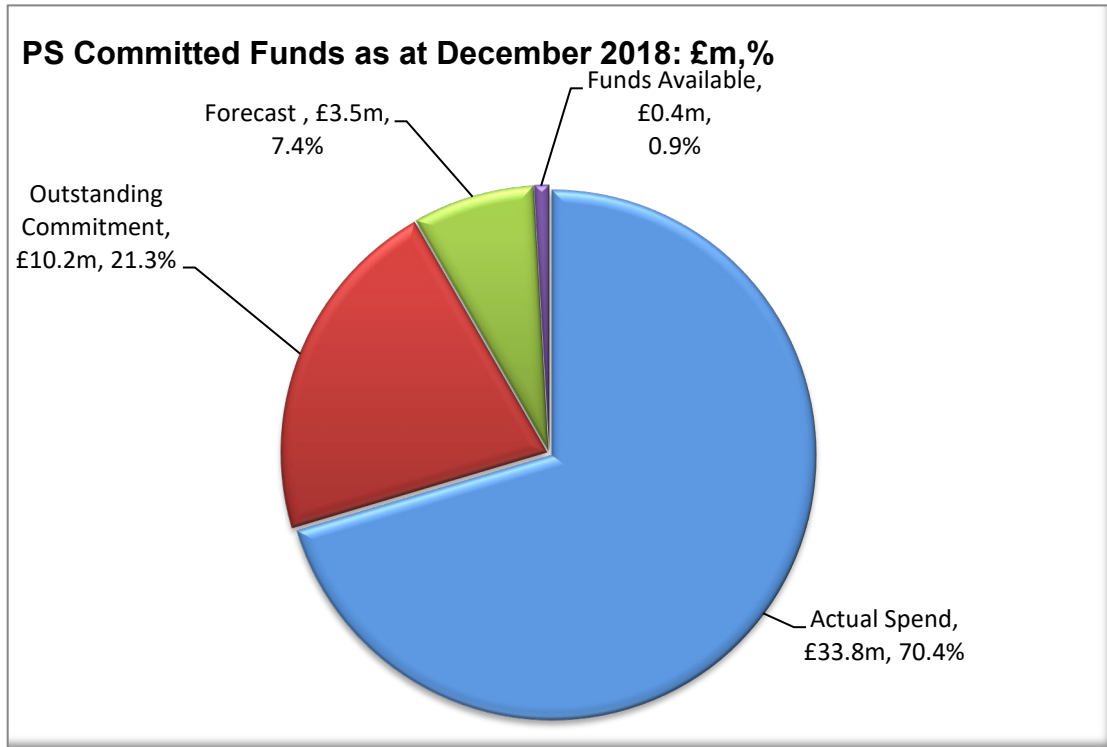
10. The SPCB's funding cost for Commissioners and Ombudsman (Officeholders) in the 9 months of 2018-19 amounts to £8.3m, which is £236k (2.8%) under the year to date budget. The underspend in the Officeholders Accommodation project is £423k and is

due to timing differences. The unutilised balance in the Officeholders contingency is £300k.

### Central Contingency

11. The central contingency has decreased by £211k in period 9 from £717k to £506k, principally due to the agreed allocation of current year budget funding to the Security Replacement Project (£225k) and the Culture of Respect project (£26k). This has been partly offset by money released to contingency from underspends in staffing (£33k) and underspends in non-staff costs (£7k).

### 12. Commitment



This compares with 70.1% spend, outstanding commitment 22%, forecast 7.2% and funds available of 0.6% as at December 2017-18.