

STRATEGIC PLAN

Executive summary

1. This paper invites the SPCB to discuss and agree a new approach to strategic planning. If agreed, the new strategic plan would be adopted immediately. While not tied to a defined period, the new plan would apply for the rest of this session, span the transition to the session of Parliament beginning in 2016 and continue well into the new Parliament's term. The plan would be complemented by an annual high-level operational plan setting out both how our priorities for change would be implemented and how the Scottish Parliamentary Service (SPS) would continue to aim for excellence in delivering business as usual. A draft of the initial strategic plan is attached as an Annex to this paper.

Issues and Options

2. In anticipation that, whatever the outcome of the referendum, the Parliament would be moving into a period of significant constitutional change, Leadership Group (LG) has reviewed its approach to strategic planning. The primary purpose of the review was to ensure that the Parliament was best placed to respond quickly to the outcome of the referendum. Given its central role within Scotland's constitutional structure, a strong and effective Parliament should be ready to take the lead in debating, scrutinising and shaping the future of Scotland in light of the people's decision. Reflecting the Parliament's leadership role, LG proposes a significant change in approach.

The Parliament's purpose, vision and strategic goals

3. We propose that the plan should, for the first time, set out the high level purpose, vision and strategic goals for the Parliament itself rather than, as before, for the SPS in its support of the Parliament's work. The plan then reverts to the more established model of defining the aims of the SPS in supporting and delivering the Parliament's vision and strategic goals and our strategic priorities for change to improve that support.

4. This change in structure also recognises the primary role of Members in achieving the strategic goals: good quality legislation, rigorous scrutiny and informing, involving and being accountable to the people of Scotland. An effective partnership between the Parliament and the SPS that responds to Members' needs is essential. A common understanding of the overarching vision and strategic direction will provide a sound foundation for this moving forward.

5. The proposed strategic goals are the principal means of fulfilling the Parliament's purpose. The purpose of the Parliament is a short statement of the essential functions the Parliament performs in representing the people of

Scotland, broken down into debating issues of national importance, passing legislation and holding the Scottish Government to account. The vision represents what the Parliament expects it will achieve for the people of Scotland in fulfilling its purpose. We consider that this should be ambitious while remaining pragmatic and expressed in language which the public will find credible. We suggest that this could be captured best as “making a positive difference to the lives of the people of Scotland”.

- **The SPCB is invited to agree the proposed new approach and structure and, if so, to agree the proposed purpose, vision and strategic goals for *the Parliament*.**

SPS Aims and Priorities

6. The aims of the SPS set out the principal ways in which the SPS will support the Parliament to achieve its strategic goals. In large part, these aims will be met through the SPS continuing to deliver and improve our current services. The final level of the plan identifies where change is required that will impact at a strategic level. These priorities for change will set the SPS focus for action over the coming 18 months and, collectively, are intended to enable the Parliament to respond positively to the challenges and to maximise the opportunities presented by current circumstances of constitutional change, public involvement in politics and public spending constraints.

7. Many projects and activities contribute to the delivery of more than one parliamentary goal or SPS aim. For example the digital parliament programme will support members in their roles by increasing choice and flexibility in how they access parliamentary products and services; enable SPS efficiencies in how we access and use information; and will open up more of our information to the public and improve the range of ways to participate through multiple online channels. Most other strategic priorities are similarly crosscutting in nature. They are also largely delivered through offices working collaboratively with each other and not by individual office effort. In recognition of the crosscutting nature of these strategic issues, and to encourage a collaborative culture, we have not categorised the strategic priorities by reference to stakeholder group or the strategic aim or goals to which they contribute.

- **The SPCB is invited to agree the SPS aims and priorities for change which support the achievement of the Parliament’s vision and strategic goals.**

High-level operational plan

8. Achieving this crosscutting approach to the delivery of the priorities for change and normal business will be facilitated by adopting an annual high-level operational plan. This will identify each of the activities that contribute to delivery of the strategic priorities for change. Successfully achieving the strategic goals is also dependent on the SPS continuing to ensure excellence in its delivery of the Parliament’s regular support services. This remains at

the heart of LG planning and high level “normal business” activities and targets will also be set out in the high level operational plan, for example:

- Chamber and Committee Business takes place as planned, supported by timely, accurate and appropriate briefing.
- Sound financial management and achieving value for money.
- Robust business continuity planning and testing.
- Ensuring the Parliament estate meets the highest standards of efficiency and effectiveness, including implementation of the 25 year maintenance plan.

9. The plan will also identify the key business areas responsible, milestones for action and how successful outcomes will be measured and should facilitate better integration of individual office plans. We are currently working on the first operational plan and will present it to SPCB before the end of the year.

Timescale

10. We do not envisage that the Parliament’s purpose, vision or strategic goals, or the SPS aims, will alter over the lifetime of the plan but, given present levels of uncertainty in the constitutional landscape, it is important that the strategic plan is flexible and able to respond to change. The plan would continue to be a living, working document to be revised in response to events and as milestones are realised, ensuring that the priorities for change remain relevant and appropriate. The plan will continue to be monitored and progress reported quarterly to LG and SPCB.

11. Rather than wait until the new financial year, we consider that it would be appropriate to adopt the new strategic plan now, to set the direction of travel for the Parliament through the currently foreseeable period of constitutional change to at least the point at which the Parliament has acquired any new powers that are proposed.

- **SPCB is invited to agree that the plan should be adopted immediately**

Resource Implications

12. Clearly the Plan, and the strategic priorities in particular, will (through the budget process) inform the allocation of resources at the highest level and broadly how those resources will be allocated. The plan is being presented to the SPCB alongside the budget bid for 2015-16 to ensure that the plan and bid are clearly aligned. More detailed resource allocation will be effected through the high-level operational plan, individual office plans and programme and project plans.

Governance issues

13. The strategic plan is itself an important element of the SPCB's governance process. Once it is adopted, we will review related processes such as risk management and business continuity arrangements to ensure that together they provide a coherent package. Any equalities, health and safety, environmental or legal issues arising in the course of implementing the strategic plan would be considered as required by the relevant business areas when taking forward activity or initiatives which deliver the plan.

Publication Scheme

14. Once agreed, the plan will be published on the Scottish Parliament website. This paper can be published in line with the SPCB's Publication Scheme after the adoption of the strategic plan has been formally announced.

Next steps

15. Subject to SPCB approval of the draft strategic plan it will be published on the Scottish Parliament website, replacing the current plan covering the period 2014-16. It will also be communicated to all SPS staff.

16. The SPCB may wish to discuss how the adoption of the new approach and the statement of the purpose, vision and the strategic goals of the Parliament would best be communicated to Members. A letter from the Presiding Officer to all Members announcing the SPCB's approval of the plan might be an appropriate way forward.

17. Work will continue on preparing the high level operational plan, on revising performance indicators and on individual office business plans.

Decision

18. The SPCB is invited to agree to the new approach to strategic planning and to agree the content of the attached draft strategic plan.

Stewart Gilfillan
Assistant Chief Executive
October 2014

The Strategic Plan for the Scottish Parliament

Purpose	representing the people of Scotland by debating issues of national importance, passing legislation and holding the Scottish Government to account			
Vision	making a positive difference to the lives of the people of Scotland			
Strategic Goals	passing good quality legislation	undertaking rigorous scrutiny of accountable bodies	informing, involving and being accountable to the people of Scotland	
Aims of the Scottish Parliamentary Service:	Continuously improving our legislative and parliamentary processes to ensure effective scrutiny of legislative proposals, the Scottish Government and other accountable bodies	Providing Members and Committees with the support, resources and information they need to excel in their roles	Promoting engagement and participation in the work of the Parliament, collaborating with others to improve our work and sharing our knowledge openly	Operating in a modern and efficient way, demonstrating good governance and excellent financial management and being open and accountable for our actions
our priorities for change:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agile response to constitutional change arising from the Smith Commission • Harnessing increased public involvement in politics to build improved engagement in the work of the Parliament • Exploiting digital ways of working to benefit Members, staff and the public • Broadening the involvement of Members in a continuous professional development programme which promotes excellence • Successfully manage the transition to the fifth session of the Parliament ensuring it is well placed to excel • Work with Members to ensure our legislative processes deliver robust scrutiny and best meet future demands • Strategic review of future resource requirements to prioritise activities and to ensure continued value for money • Design and implement a staff development framework focussing on change, leadership, individual responsibility and accountability 			