

## **LEADERSHIP GROUP**

### **INNOVATION FUND**

#### **Executive Summary**

1. This report invites the Leadership Group (LG) to note the progress of the Innovation Fund to date and, if considered appropriate, to discuss how to encourage greater use of the fund.

#### **Issues and Options**

2. At its meeting on 31 March 2014, LG endorsed a proposal to adopt a more streamlined approval process for the funding of project expenditure for 'innovation and continuous improvement'. LG agreed to set aside £250k from the SPCB's general contingency to a ring-fenced innovation and continuous improvement project budget.

#### **Process**

3. The fund has operated under the streamlined procedures endorsed by LG since its inception.
4. We have recently revised the guidance slightly in respect of projects which have a potential Digital Parliament Programme (DPP) impact to remove any ambiguity from the documented approval process. This has been agreed with the DPP board and places the responsibility for project approval clearly with the relevant Group Head.
5. The Innovation Fund SharePoint site is designed to encourage draft project proposals to be made widely available to staff in the Parliamentary Service for open on-line comment and discussion, prior to finalisation of the proposal for approval. However, this aspect of the process has not been widely used to date.
6. The use of on-line discussion forums, which the deployment of SPShare now enables, represents a significant change to the existing methods of working and is not yet in widespread use by Parliamentary service staff. It is therefore too early to judge how effective this facility might be.

#### **Results to Date**

7. Nine projects have been approved to date with a total budgetary commitment of £44k and a further two projects are currently under active consideration with an estimated budgetary requirement of £22k.

8. A summary of the projects approved and the current draft proposals is attached at Annex A. Fuller details of the individual project proposals are contained on the Innovation Fund Sharepoint site at:-  
<http://2013portal/reporting/opf/Project%20Proposal%20Forms/Forms/AllItems.aspx>
9. The total budget for the approved and the draft project proposals currently stands at £66k, which leaves £184k of the £250k originally set aside for the Innovation Fund uncommitted.
10. It is important to recognise that the Innovation Fund is not the only route for innovation and continuous improvement to take place.
11. At the individual office level, continuous improvement activity routinely takes place as part of normal business and often has no need of additional budgetary resources.
12. Some offices already have approved project expenditure budgets, which give them sufficient flexibility to accommodate new innovations, without requiring additional approval. An example of this is the work which Facilities Management (FM) are planning to undertake to fit out the DPP office, which had originally been considered as an innovation fund proposal, but which has been taken forward under FM's existing building change budget.
13. Finally, major innovation is taking place under the Parliament's strategic priorities for change, with the Digital Parliament Programme an obvious example.

### **Resource Implications**

14. The project expenditure budget for the Innovation Fund is part of the SPCB's total approved budget. The amount to be set aside for this purpose is open to LG to vary during the course of the year depending on emerging priorities and cost pressures.

### **Governance issues**

15. The process for prioritising project expenditure is part of the SPCB's corporate governance arrangements.

### **Publication Scheme**

16. This paper may be published.

**Recommendation**

17.LG is invited to note the progress of the Innovation Fund to date and, if considered appropriate, to discuss how to encourage greater use of the fund.

Financial Resources Group  
December 2014

**ANNEX A****Innovation Fund**

<u>Approved Projects</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Approved Budget</u> £
Developing interactive visual 'tools' for SPICe	With the help of a student placement from Napier University Institute for informatics and Digital Design, SPICe developed an online tool and visuals to allow users to explore and better understand the Scottish Government's draft budget. Using the data provided by the Scottish Government users can use the interactive tool to look through portfolios and see how they have changed on the previous year and how they have changed over time. The Budget Tool is available on the Scottish Parliament website.	5,385
Staff Cost Provision Database Improvement Project	To simplify and improve monthly reporting of the Staff Cost Provision (SCP) to Members, the HR office engaged the services of an external business analyst to review the current SCP processes, make and implement recommendations and produce a training manual and desk instructions for the new process.	10,000
Chamber Online Survey	To use the survey site, Smart Survey to improve the usability and efficiency of the procedure for responding to consultations and make the process of producing summaries of consultations less onerous for Member's Offices and NGBU.	600
Keeping Pace with Fiscal Powers and Policy	To purchase and trial economic modelling software from the National Institute of Economic and Social Research (NIESR) to help SPICe continuously improve the processes to support the Parliament's scrutiny of public policy and hold the Scottish Government to account. The model will help improve: service delivery on the scrutiny of policies & legislation; understanding of dynamic impacts of tax policies; committee scrutiny (including finance, economy and environment); members' understanding of potential effects of different taxes; allow quicker and more efficient responses to requests from parliament; allow members to use simplified interactive modelling online.	11,000

On-line Recruitment Management System	To carry out a 6 month trial of an online candidate management system which will manage the recruitment workflow process from application – shortlisting – assessment – interview – pre-employment. It will give applicants a better experience and will allow staff in HR and across the organisations to work smarter.	7,245
Use of online testing in the recruitment process	To access online pre-interview screening ability tests to identify applicants with the required numeracy and literacy skills. Online verbal and numerical reasoning tests can be completed unsupervised (i.e. remote) by selected candidates. Scoring of tests is automated, further reducing resource input for the HR Office and enabling efficient and accurate sifts to be carried out. Thereafter candidates can then be invited to participate in the next stage of the recruitment process.	5,000
Invoice Scanning with Optical Character Recognition	To trial Optical Character Recognition (OCR) software to scan and load invoices to SharePoint to allow Finance to create a searchable library of invoices, cross referenced with useful information from other finance systems and a system of workflow management and Purchase-to-Pay expedition. The budget requested was £5,000 however the free trial proved that the software package was not fit for purpose.	0
CEO Internal Communications Improvement	To meet with a range of external organisations who offer different approaches to internal communications and see what lessons learned can be applied to our own approach, with the aim of identifying new and innovative ideas for communicating to the SPS, Members and Members Staff. The knowledge gained will used to form the internal communications strategy and revise current forms of communication (where necessary/required).	1,000
Welcome Desk / Pop-up Shop	To purchase a portable desk to be used as either a Welcome Desk or a Pop-up Shop. As a Welcome Desk, this will be located opposite the public entrance where Visitor Services Officers can explain our services and facilities to visitors and to ensure parliamentary business visitors reach their destinations quickly and efficiently rather than using the Visitor Information Desk which is primarily used for ticket issuing and visitor registration. As a Pop-up Shop counter, this will be located in the Garden Lobby during the FoP and appropriately located during major temporary exhibitions to display and sell merchandise to encourage further income generation.	3,475

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£43,705

<u>Draft Projects Proposals</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Requested Budget</u> £
Utilising SharePoint features and functionality to improve and streamline Finance Processes	To simplify and streamline Finance processes through automation of work flows, custom forms and dashboards which will improve efficiency, service delivery and cost savings and will contribute towards supporting the business more effectively. This project will involve training 4 members of the Finance Team in the use of SharePoint Designer and Visio Professional 2013.	11,500
Plotting Parliamentary Information on Constituency Maps	Use data-mapping functionality to develop a visually appealing and interactive way to display parliamentary information by constituency.	10,440
		<u>£21,940</u>