

**Chief Executive's Report to the SPCB
December 2011**

Introduction

This report covers activity during November and the early part of December and includes the Period 7 Finance Report.

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

P E GRICE

Clerk/Chief Executive

SECTION 1 – OVERVIEW OF PARLIAMENTARY ACTIVITIES

Parliamentary Business

- After rigorous testing, including on-site testing under the auspices of senior officials from the contractor, new software has been installed in the chamber and is functioning fully. On-going testing suggests that it remains robust but clerks and broadcasting staff are maintaining a challenging testing regime in the meantime.
- All scheduled meetings of committees and the Parliament on the industrial action day of 30 November were supported to allow business to proceed as planned.
- The organisation also responded to the severe weather and consequent travel disruption on 8 December by ensuring the planned parliamentary business was supported to its conclusion and by taking measures to ensure the safety of building users in view of the travel advice from the police.
- Performance indicators for June to November this year have shown that more and longer committee meetings have been supported compared to the same period at the beginning of session 3.
- Government Bills on Land Registration and Criminal Cases have been introduced in the last two weeks. The Offensive Behaviour at Football and Threatening Communications (Scotland) Bill was passed on 14 December.
- NEBU has developed two proposals for Members' Bills to the point that the proposals are ready for publication in the Business Bulletin.
- Following feedback from Members, a new Members' service will commence in P1.02 (the press conference room) on plenary days, commencing January 2012. A member of staff will be available throughout plenary sessions to assist Members using P1.02. We will review how the service is being used after 6 months, taking on board Members' feedback about its usefulness.

UK and International Relations Office (UKIRO)

- Margaret McDougall attended the 22nd CPA Commonwealth Parliamentary Seminar in New Delhi, India from 24-29 November, the theme of which was "Strengthening Parliamentary Democracy". Twenty seven delegates from across the Commonwealth attended this Seminar which was aimed at new parliamentarians. Margaret has produced a report on the seminar which, once signed-off by the CPA Scotland Branch, will be published on the Parliament's website in the new year.

- Sarah Boyack MSP and Margaret Mitchell MSP attended the CPA UK Branch Conference on the Millennium Development Goals from 28 November to 1 December 2011. Annie Lennox OBE, Special Envoy for CPA Scotland Branch also attended the Conference on 1 December 2011 and took part as a key speaker in a session about HIV/AIDS, chaired by Speaker John Bercow MP. Again, Sarah and Margaret have produced a report which will be signed-off by the CPA Scotland Branch and then published on the Parliament's website.
- The Presiding Officer and Deputy Presiding Officer, Elaine Smith MSP, hosted a one day visit by the three Vice Presidents and Party Whips from the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia on 1 December. This visit focussed on the mechanisms and procedures in the Scottish Parliament, in particular financial and legislative scrutiny, the committee process and the functioning of the Public Audit Committee.
- The Parliament's new UK and International Strategy for Session 4 was published on 8 December, following approval from the Corporate Body. A copy was circulated to Group Heads and is now available at <http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/abouttheparliament/45053.aspx>. UKIRO and SPICe will hold a number of information sessions with staff across the Parliament, about the Strategy, in the New Year.
- The Presiding Officer also hosted a high level 3 day visit by the President of the Australian Senate, the Hon John Hogg, from 11-13 December.

Events and Exhibitions

- The **St Andrew's Family Weekend** of events took place from Friday 25 to Monday 28 November. Families and children had the opportunity to take part in a range of science based events inspired by the Design & Democracy Exhibition. On Monday 28 November the Presiding Officer chaired the final of the St Andrew's Day Championships Debate in the Chamber. The finalists debated the motion *This House would make voting compulsory*. The winning team were David Norris from the University of Edinburgh and Ruairidh Ferguson from Douglas Academy. Over 1,000 people attended the weekend's events.
- The Presiding Officer formally opened the **Design & Democracy Exhibition** at a launch reception on Wednesday 7 December. The exhibition is a partnership project between Parliament and the four art schools: Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art, Edinburgh College of Art, Gray's School of Art and The Glasgow School of Art.
- The annual Parliament **Carol Service** will take place on Wednesday 21 December in the Garden Lobby, bringing together Members, their staff and SPCB staff and the wider Holyrood community including schoolchildren from the Royal Mile Primary School.

Forward Look

- The Presiding Officer will host the Parliament's annual **Consular Corps Burns Supper** on Wednesday 25 January bringing together Members and Consuls from across Scotland.
- The **Moving Stories Travelling Exhibition** opens at The Mitchell Library, Glasgow on Tuesday 10 January, remaining on display until Saturday 25 February.

Media

Local and specialist media coverage

- The Finance Committee's outreach meeting to Largs in November achieved strong local print coverage; six local news features focused on the Outreach and Education Team's two days activity programme with local secondary school pupils and MSPs on the Budget process.
- The launch of the Design and Democracy exhibition secured arts coverage in Culture 24, The List, The Skinny, Artmag (Edinburgh) and Artstread (London); it also secured local coverage in the Courier, Aberdeen Evening Express and STV Local. More coverage is likely to following over the coming month.

Human Resources

Equalities

- The Human Resources office recently conducted an access audit of the Parliament building involving a group of blind and visually impaired volunteers from the Royal Blind School, Guide Dogs Scotland and the Audio Description Association. They followed a journey sequence through the building starting from the main entrance through to the Garden Lobby using many of the services available such as the main desk, public cafe and shop. Positive feedback was received on many of the steps taken to make the Parliament visit a positive experience for blind and visually impaired people. The audit also highlighted some areas where we could further improve and offered solutions as to how these may be overcome. Further work will now be carried out with the relevant business areas to look at the issues identified.
- In November 2011, the SPCB Maternity Mentoring Scheme which offers one to one support to women who are on or returning from maternity leave received an award from the Scottish Mentoring Network commending the scheme. This scheme has brought together more than 30 mentoring partnerships since it was established in 2008.

Business Information Technology

IT Service Availability

- There were 3 interruptions to service during October and December. Steps were taken to address the issues and to avoid a recurrence. An update will be provided at the meeting.

New Telecommunications Contract Switchover

- Staff from the BIT Office have been working with suppliers to plan the transition of all data and telephone circuits to Virgin Media Business. The change, resulting from a recent procurement exercise, will see the physical switchover to the new circuits happening during the Christmas Recess.
- At approximately 7am on 30 December all telephone circuits at Holyrood will be switched over to the new supplier. This will then be followed on 3 January when the data circuits will start to move. There is expected to be minimal disruption for the switchover of the telephone circuits. The switchover of data circuits will involve planned downtime and BIT is working with suppliers to minimise the disruption to services. It is hoped that the majority of the work will be completed on 3 January which, being a public holiday, may help minimise the impact.

Local Office Refresh

- The Local Office Refresh Project is still on hold and planning has begun to restart the project in the New Year. During October/November three local offices were refreshed as a pilot of the new approach being proposed. The new approach involves significantly more consultation, breaks down the refresh into several stages and provides improved training. Early results of the pilot are encouraging.

Facilities Management

Storm on 8 December

- As a result of last Thursday's storms, additional inspections of the building on Friday 9 December revealed that two granite panels had become partially detached from the south elevation of Tower 1. The situation was dealt with quickly, the panels were removed and the areas nearby were cordoned off as a precaution. Inspections were quickly made to surrounding panels and a further four were removed as a precaution. All six panels were successfully re-fixed on Saturday 10 December. Similarly exposed facades have been inspected on Tower 1 and the south elevation of the MSP building and no similar issues have been found. Inspections of Towers 2 and 3 are on-going and planned for completion by 17 December. A detailed survey of the remaining facades will follow with completion

planned by the end of January. There may be a small amount of follow on inspections required to less accessible areas.

Porter service

- A new Portering Services contract has been awarded to Romec. The new contract will start on 1 March 2012, with mobilisation from January 2012. TUPE regulations apply and the current porters, if they wish, will be able to transfer to the new contractor.

SECTION 2 – SPCB FINANCE REPORT

PERIOD 7 – OCTOBER 2011

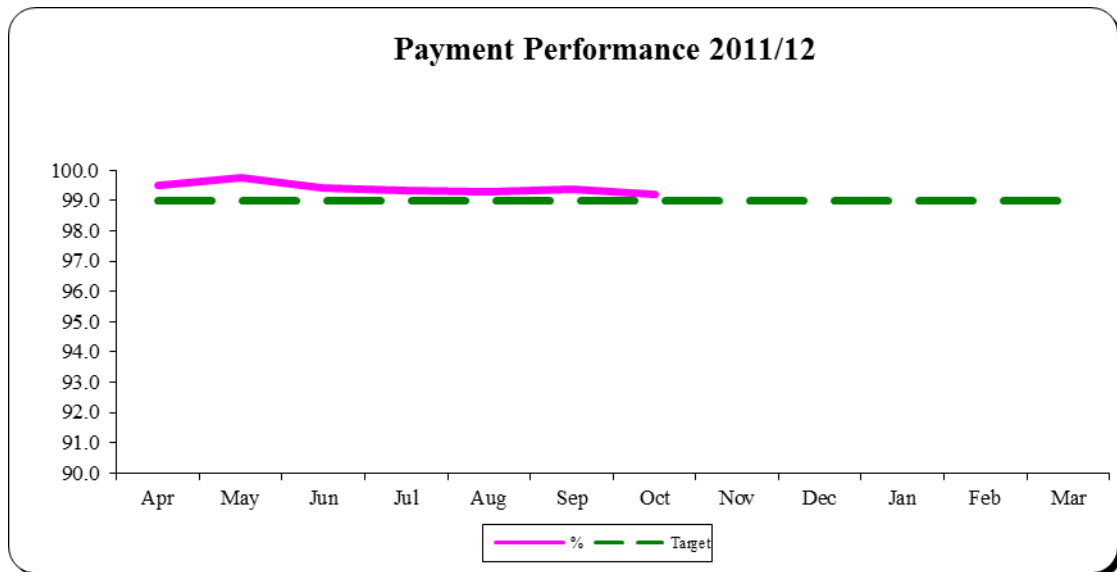
1. This report is to inform SPCB of general financial activity and expenditure trends in 2011-12.

Head of Financial Resources Commentary / Executive Summary

2. The Scottish Parliament's total revenue and capital expenditure for the first seven months in 2011-12 of £42.3m represents an under spend against budget of £1.5m (3.3%). This has reduced from last month (£1.5m, 4.0%) and is lower than the comparable position in 2010-11 at period 7 of £1.8m (4.1%).
3. In November, we are undertaking a further exercise to review the forecast outturn for Parliamentary Service costs, including all projects, and we will incorporate the results in the Period 8 Finance Report.

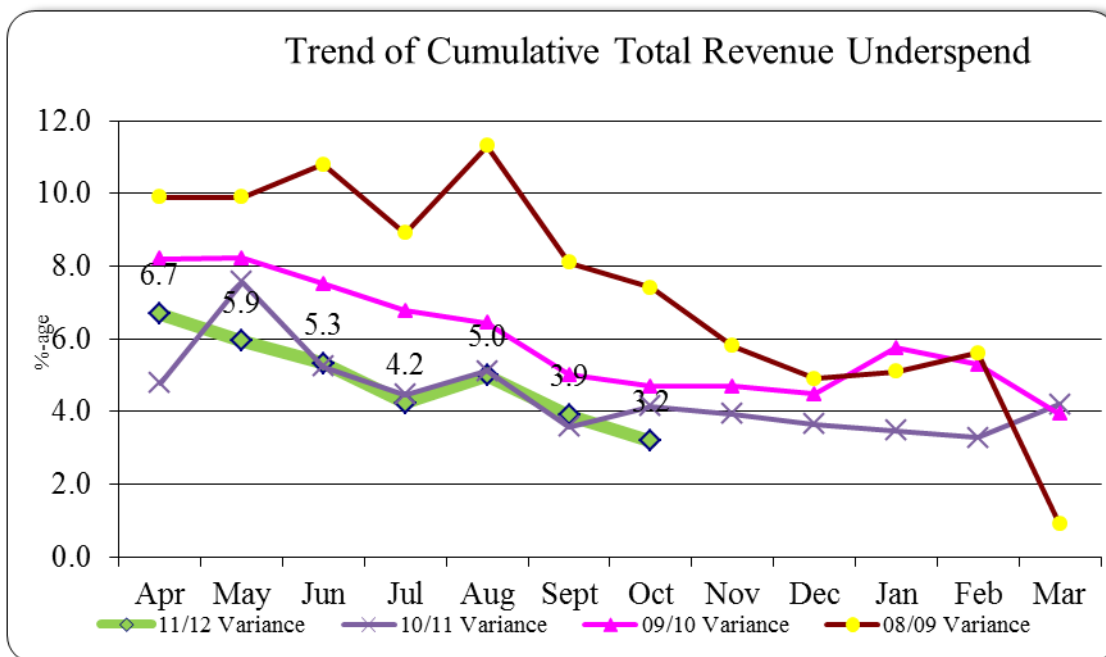
General Financial Activity

4. Bank reconciliations and main control account reconciliations for the current financial year have been completed and reviewed up to period 7 and work is underway on CASE SEAS expenditure and CASE control reconciliations.
5. The Scottish Government (SG) has commenced a project to upgrade the current version of SEAS, the financial accounting system which we use. This will entail a switchover from the current system for the start of the next financial year. We continue to liaise closely with the SG on the project and the Finance Office is co-ordinating the Parliament's implementation of the system.
6. Our performance for payment of invoices within contract terms was 99.2% for the year to date, which exceeds our target of 99.0%. Performance for the month of October was slightly under target at 98.4%. Performance for payment within 10 days was 95.1% for the year to date.



Financial Results

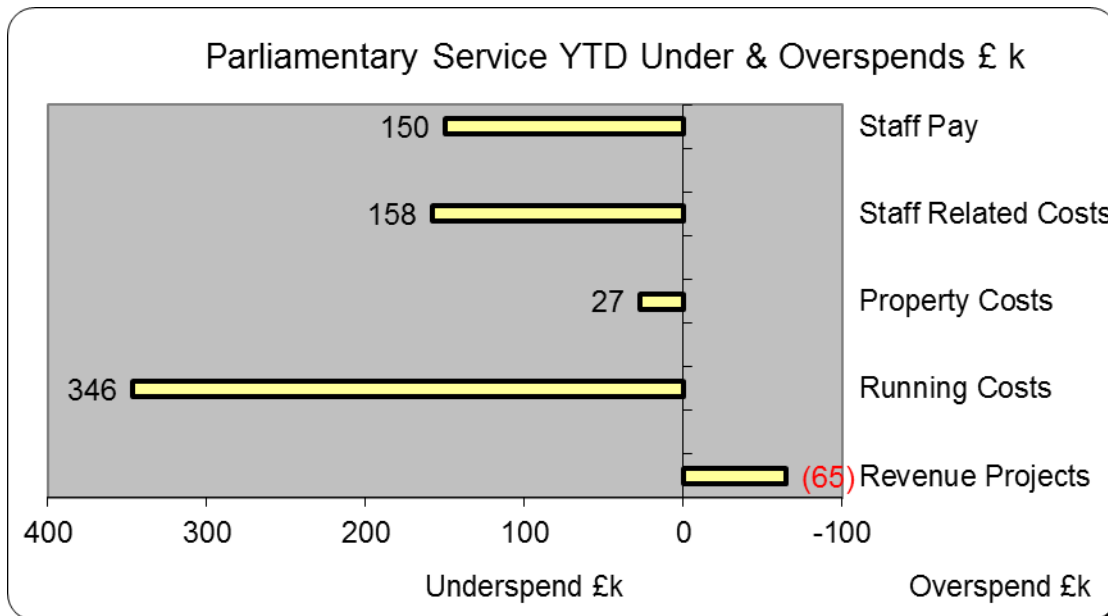
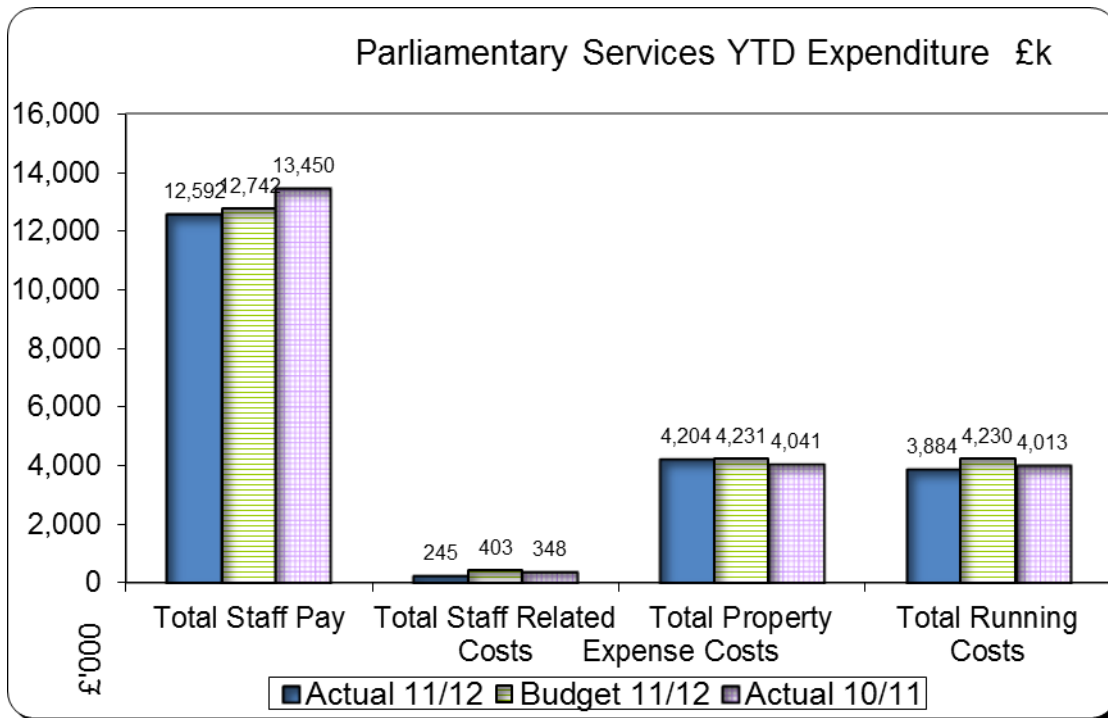
7. The SPCB's net revenue expenditure per Schedule 1 for the seven months ended October 2011 is £41.9m, which is £1.4m (3.2%) under the approved revenue budget of £43.2m. The comparable net revenue underspend at October 2010 was £1.7m (4.1%).



Parliamentary Service Costs (Schedule 2)

8. The cumulative gross revenue expenditure for the Parliamentary Service, at £21.5m, is £0.6m (2.8%) under budget. The previous year's expenditure of £22.7m at the equivalent stage was £0.9m (3.9%) below budget. An analysis of

the current financial year by main category of expenditure is shown in the two charts below.



- Staff pay and staff related costs, which represent over half of Parliamentary Service Costs, are £308k under budget. Within this figure, staff pay at £12.6m is £150k (1.2%) under budget and actual costs are £960k below the comparative position in October 2010. The annual staff pay is budgeted to reduce by £740k between 2010/11 and 2011/12, and we have already this target. Staff related costs of £245k are £158k (39.2%) below budget despite the recent forecasting exercise, with under spends against budget present

across most expenditure lines but most notably against Travel, Expenses, and Job Related Training.

- Property costs of £4.2m are £27k (0.6%) under budget.
- Running costs of £3.9m are £346k (8.2%) under budget. The main underspends are against Mail Services & Postage (£99k) and Printing (£77k). The IT Contract spend is currently showing an over run of £69k, due to an error, receipting period eight's purchase order. This will be corrected next month.
- Revenue Projects are analysed in Schedule 3 and currently show an actual spend of £623k against the phased budget of £559k, a reported over spend of £65k (11.6%). Revenue Projects purchase orders have been over receipted and some of this year to date variance will reverse next period.

Members' Costs (Schedule 2)

9. Members' costs are analysed in Schedule 2, which shows £15.9m reported costs for the year to date, £0.6m (3.6%) below budget. (The corresponding underspend figures for 2010/11 were £0.7m, 5.3%). Of this underspend, £441k is on Members' Expenses. Party Assistance at £136k is £89k (34.6%) below budget.

Commissioners & Ombudsman Costs (Schedule 2)

10. The SPCB's funding cost for Commissioners and Ombudsman (Officeholders) for the year to date amounts to £4.5m, which is £157k (3.4%) below the phased budget.

Central Contingency

11. The SPCB's central revenue contingency remains at £328k.

Capital Expenditure (Schedule 3)

12. The capital expenditure programme for 2011-12 of £1.3m currently includes £996k identified against specific projects and £304k of capital contingency. Total expenditure for the year to date is £464k against the budget of £540k, a variance of £76k (14.1%).

Commitment

13. The Parliamentary Service (including Revenue Projects) has committed 91.4% of its approved annual budget as at the end of October 2011.

