

## **PARLIAMENT DOMAIN NAME**

### **Executive summary**

1. Since 1999, the Scottish Parliament has used the domain name scottish.parliament.uk. Last year, as part of a programme to expand the number of top level domains, the .scot domain was agreed by the organisation responsible for the control of internet domains.
2. The introduction of the .scot domain presents an opportunity to consider changing the primary internet identity used by the Scottish Parliament from scottish.parliament.uk to parliament.scot. This paper seeks the approval of SPCB to begin work to move to the new primary domain name and seeks endorsement of the proposal that the timing of the official move from scottish.parliament.uk, to parliament.scot, should coincide with the election next year.

### **Issues and Options**

3. Until 2013 there were only twenty two top level internet domains available (e.g. .uk, .com, .gov). This number has now expanded to over eight hundred, with the new top level domains being associated with geographic locations, activities and brands.
4. The recent expansion included the introduction of more than two hundred country specific domains, and has provided organisations with many more options on how they brand their online presence.
5. The .scot domain became available late last year and has been made available to give people, organisations and businesses the opportunity to clearly identify themselves on the internet as Scottish, or having an association with Scotland. Pioneer users went live last summer and since then many thousands of individuals as well as public, private and third sector organisations have already registered or moved to .scot domains.
6. Since 1999, the Scottish Parliament has primarily used scottish.parliament.uk to identify and brand itself on the internet. As part of the initial release of .scot domains, the Scottish Parliament has registered several .scot domains for potential use, and to help prevent cyber-squatting.
7. The introduction of the .scot domain, and the successful registration of the parliament.scot domain, presents an opportunity to consider changing the primary internet identity from scottish.parliament.uk to parliament.scot. Should a move to a .scot domain be agreed then, from an internet identity perspective, there would be no need to continue to explicitly use the word 'scottish' in the domain name, ie email addresses could become

[first.last@parliament.scot](mailto:first.last@parliament.scot) and the website address could become [www.parliament.scot](http://www.parliament.scot).

8. There are several benefits of a move to [parliament.scot](http://parliament.scot) as the primary domain for the Scottish Parliament and these include:
  - A clearer association with Scotland
  - Less likely to cause confusion with the UK Parliament ([parliament.uk](http://parliament.uk))
  - Clearer ownership of the domain name (currently we effectively use a sub domain of the UK parliament)
  - A more visible symbol for the Scottish Parliament's online presence which could potentially help capitalise on the increased interest in Scottish politics.
  - Shorter email and website addresses.
9. The main impacts of a change in primary domain name would be:
  - The requirement to make technical changes to our email system and our website.
  - Requirement to change business cards, signage, stationery and any other items using the current domain name.
10. Should a move be agreed, the suggested change strategy would be to make the technical changes required as soon as possible. This would enable a period of dual running and the official switch over could then be timed to minimise the impact on the organisation, with the 2016 Scottish election providing an ideal opportunity. There would then follow a period of time where the old domain would be gradually phased out and eventually retired.
11. This approach would minimise the financial impact to the organisation as it would allow the current stocks of stationery to be run down and exhausted and allow new Members to start the next session with the new domain identity and any signage changes to be phased.
12. SPCB is invited to agree the move to the new [.scot](http://parliament.scot) domain identity and to endorse the proposal that the official move coincide with the 2016 Scottish election. Agreement will allow officials to progress with the development of a detailed transition plan and to start implementation of the technical changes.

### **Resource Implications**

13. There are no direct resource implications with this change as the [.scot](http://parliament.scot) domains have already been purchased and the technical work will be undertaken by the Business IT Office as part of normal business.

### **Governance issues**

14. There are no governance issues to consider.

### **Publication Scheme**

15. This paper will be published in line with the SPCB's Publication Scheme.

### **Next steps**

16. Should SPCB agree to the domain name move and the proposed timing then the next steps will be to plan and implement the necessary technical changes. A transition plan will also be developed and SPCB will be kept informed via the Chief Executive's Report.

### **Decision**

17. SPCB is invited to agree the move to the new .scot domain identity and to endorse the proposal that the official move coincide with the 2016 Scottish election.

Business IT  
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