



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

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Kenneth Gibson MSP
Convener
Finance and Public Administration Committee

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Dear Convener

At the Finance and Public Administration Committee evidence session on the Scottish Parliament Website Project on 17 May 2022, your Committee was advised that further information would be provided in response to some questions. Please find the information below:

Number of Contractors employed with specialist skills

From the project's inception in 2017 until it closed in 2021, the number of contractors employed with specialist skills varied from between 4 and 10, depending on the stage of the project and what was being delivered. The average over the life of the project was 7.25 FTEs at any given time. During one of the busiest times on the project, in the financial year 2019-20, the maximum number of specialist contractors working on the project at one point was 10 FTEs. It should also be noted:

- As usual, at the start of the project there was more focus on the overall infrastructure and user research which then moved into the design and the delivery of content.
- The transition of skills from specialist contractors to internal staff was a key outcome for the project; which as noted in evidence was a key deliverable to ensure ongoing development of the site in coming years.

Agile Methodology

The project followed the recommended Government Digital Services approach to digital service design which was consistent with those adopted by both the [Scottish](#) and [UK](#) Governments' Digital Service Standards. The Service Standards aim is to make sure digital services are continually improving and that users are always the focus. This is best supported by an agile methodology approach which includes undertaking a top task analysis to give an evidence-based approach to the

most important tasks and content for our website. Using agile ways of working is central to the digital service design service standards and the SPCB staff member assigned as project manager was a certified Agile Project Manager.

Governance

All projects undertaken by SPCB staff fall under specific governance put in place under delegation from the Chief Executive. As part of this governance, there is a Digital Strategy Board, currently chaired by the Group Head of Digital Services, and comprising senior managers from across the organisation. The Digital Strategy Board oversees the selection, prioritisation, and delivery of the portfolio of digital projects which are undertaken to deliver strategic and operational objectives of the organisation.

As part of the annual SPCB budget exercise, the Digital Strategy Board proposes an annual budget for digital project spend to the Strategic Resources Board (SRB) (currently this comprises the Clerk/Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive with their senior advisors the Chief Financial Officer, Group Head People and Culture and the Head of Strategy & Portfolio Management). This budget bid is then scrutinised by SRB as part of the overall SPCB budget, before the overall budget is reviewed by the Parliament's Leadership Group and subsequently proposed to the SPCB for its approval, ahead of scrutiny by the Finance and Public Administration Committee. Once the SPCB budget is confirmed, the Digital Strategy Board allocates specific budget to each of the projects from the approved portfolio budget for the financial year.

Each project within the digital portfolio has its own governance mechanisms with a project board and an assigned Senior Responsible Owner (SRO) and a Project Manager.

Internal Audit Programme timescales for the review of SP website project

The Internal Audit Plan for 2022-23 was presented to the SPCB's Advisory Audit Board for approval on 15 June 2023. The plan provides for an evaluation audit of the website project led by the SPCB's Head of Internal Audit with technical support from the SPCB's internal audit partner firm. This will be completed during Autumn 2022. The conclusions and recommendations arising from the internal audit report will be presented to the Advisory Audit Board for scrutiny and approval and, subject to agreement with SPCB, the final report will be sent to the Committee.

I hope this response is helpful.

Yours sincerely

Michelle Hegarty
Deputy Chief Executive