



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Minute of the Senior Executive Team (SET) meeting held on Monday 19 May 2025 at 9.30am

Present:

- Michelle Hegarty, Deputy Chief Executive (chair)
- Lorna Foreman, Director of People, Communications and Inclusion
- Lynsey Hamill, Director of Operations and Digital
- Callum Thomson, Director of Parliamentary Business

Apologies:

- David McGill, Clerk/Chief Executive

In attendance:

- Willie Heigh, Erin Borthwick (items 3 and 5)
- Beki Stark, Helen Nicolson, Vicky McSherry (item 3)
- Andrew Munro (items 3 and 4)
- Alan Durward (items 6 and 7)
- James Vinestock, Nigel MacGillivray, Douglas Thom (item 6)
- John McArthur, Lianne Robertson (item 7)
- Allan Campbell, Head of Operations (items 1-9)
- Joanna Purves (items 1-9)
- Lynn Russell, Head of Secretariat (items 1-9)

Item 1: Information sharing

1. SET discussed and noted updates in relation to the independent review of complaints and the SPCB evidence session at the SPCB Supported Bodies Committee meeting on 15 May 2025.
2. It also had an initial discussion on the plans for a future consultation exercise, intended to inform further practical changes that may be needed in the medium to longer term in light of the UK Supreme Court ruling regarding the terms “man”, “woman” and “sex” in the Equality Act 2010.
3. SET also discussed an information request from the Scottish COVID-19 Inquiry and the Stage 1 Debate on the Assisted Dying for Terminally Ill Adults (Scotland) Bill held on 13 May 2025.

Item 2: SPCB and SET forward looks

4. SET noted the items currently planned for future SPCB and SET meetings and provided updates.

Item 3: Quarter 4 reports

5. Summaries of the following reports would be included in the next Chief Executive's report to the SPCB—

Performance report

6. SET noted that the "Our services" KPIs had improved slightly during the quarter.
7. SET discussed in detail the KPIs that have not met their targets in consecutive reporting years. It agreed that while the current target and tolerances for these KPIs remain reasonable for 2025/26, a thorough review of all KPIs should be undertaken to align with the Session 7 strategy.

Finance report

8. SET noted that delays with the implementation of the new finance budget and reporting Oracle platform for the wider public sector continued to require extensive effort from staff to collate, analyse and produce reports and management information manually.
9. Despite these challenges, SET noted that the 1.3% outturn against the SPCB budget for 2024-25 was an excellent result and well within the 2.5% target. SET recorded its thanks to all staff involved for their hard work in achieving this positive outcome.
10. Regarding staff costs, SET noted that, overall, the initial vacancy gap target had been met. It also agreed to reflect on the contingency position, both retrospectively for 2024-25 and the forecasted projections for 2025-26, as part of its forthcoming discussion on medium-term financial planning.

Action: Andrew, Beki

11. SET also discussed the increase in the Officeholder underspend since quarter 3 and discussed ways in which Officeholders can be supported to address and more actively manage potential underspends in the future.

Action: Andrew, Allan

Workforce report

12. SET welcomed the 95.8% attendance rate in Quarter 4 which represented an increase in attendance of 0.8 percentage points since Quarter 3.
13. SET also noted that the overall sickness absence rate in Quarter 4 had decreased by 0.8 percentage points since Quarter 3. It sought assurance that long-term absences were being actively managed and addressed. SET further noted that there had been low uptake for the sickness absence management training and agreed to encourage staff to attend this training.

Action: SET members

14. SET also discussed staff turnover rates and agreed that it would be helpful to receive this information broken down by the different contractual conditions. It further agreed that it would be useful to receive additional information to better understand how flexi-leave is being used by staff on different presentations of absence rates across different directorates.

Action: Helen, Vicky

Item 4: Internal Audit Update

15. The Head of Internal Audit has been appointed as Interim Chief Financial Officer for the Parliament for 6 months until 31 October 2025. New Global Internal Audit Standards (GIAS) require that when a Chief Audit Executive (Head of Internal Audit) has a role beyond internal auditing, sufficient and appropriate steps are taken to ensure continued objectivity and integrity of internal audit provision.
16. GIAS further requires that the arrangements established to protect the independence of internal audit, both actual and perceived, is communicated to 'the Board'. For the purposes of this essential requirement, the Board is interpreted as being SET, as the principal recipients of independent internal audit assurance.
17. SET noted the temporary arrangements designed to ensure continued independence of internal audit. It also agreed that it was content with the proposed outline Internal Audit Plan for 2025/26 and approved the Internal Audit Charter.
18. SET further agreed to consider an audit of the outcomes that have been delivered through the Session 6 strategy at the appropriate point in 2026.

Action: Andrew

Item 5: Findings and analysis of Members' feedback interviews

19. SET noted the high levels of satisfaction reported by Members in relation to current parliamentary services and facilities, further noting that all Delivery Plan KPI targets had been exceeded.
20. SET discussed how the feedback can inform the support for new and returning Members following the 2026 election as well as the priorities for the Session 7 strategy.
21. SET is grateful to all staff involved in conducting these interviews. This information provides an invaluable insight to assess Member satisfaction with parliamentary services and consider plans for future development and continuous improvement.

Item 6: High-level Building Maintenance contract

22. SET commended the work that had gone into the tender exercise to relet the High-Level Fabric Maintenance Contract, due to expire on 31 July 2025.
23. SET sought assurances that the exercise had maximised competition and noted that additional value had been built into the contract in the form of enhanced control over labour price increases.
24. Following detailed discussion, SET agreed the award of the High-Level Maintenance Contract to TRAC International.

Item 7: Preparing the building for the future

25. SET received a presentation on the work that has been progressing to identify options to achieve a credible path to net zero as well as plans to replace existing assets within the Parliamentary estate, as would be expected for a building that is over 20 years old.
26. SET endorsed the approach that has been taken to date, the work that is planned in the coming months and noted that a further update would be provided in 2026.

Action: Alan, John, Lisanne

Item 8: Lessons learned reflection to inform death of a member guidance

27. SET reflected on the arrangements that had been put in place following the death of Christina McKelvie MSP in March 2025.

28. Following discussion, SET agreed for a revised version of the guidance and procedures document to be produced and held on file by the Chief Executive Office.

Action: Allan

Item 9: SPCB and SET Planning Days

29. SET discussed and agreed the agenda for the SET planning day. It also agreed to seek the SPCB's views on the proposed agenda for its planning day.

Date of next meeting

30. The next SET meeting is scheduled on 9 June 2025.

SET Secretariat
May 2025