

REPLACEMENT OF THE TRAVEL AND EXPENSES SYSTEM UPDATE

Executive Summary

1. This paper provides the SPCB with an update on the progress made to date to replace the current travel and expenses system.

Background and Next Steps

2. Our current contract with CORE HR is due to expire in February 2022 and in line with public procurement regulations a new procurement process was undertaken to replace that system. This process commenced in Autumn 2019 following the Review of the Reimbursement of Members Expenses Scheme, this ensured that any recommendations from the review could be built into the process and the new Scheme could be supported by the new travel and expenses system.
3. A project team and board were formed internally from colleagues in Allowances, Finance, BIT and Procurement Services, who worked together throughout the procurement process. This involved the development of the tender documentation and subsequent evaluation of the bidding suppliers' tender responses and their systems.
4. The procurement exercise was completed within the agreed timescales and a new contract was awarded to Point Progress Ltd, on 6 November 2020, for the provision of a new on-line travel and expenses system. .
5. The new system will be rolled out for the start of the new financial year in April 2021 for SPS staff and the start of the new session in May for Members and their staff. This will be kept under review given current circumstances.
6. The current travel and expenses system will continue to be used for financial transactions for the current financial year and for reporting purposes thereafter until its end in February 2022. This additional period of double running will allow a smoother transition from one system to another as well as from one Scheme to another.
7. Work commenced on the implementation phase of the project upon contract award, with the setting up of the supplier's vanilla system to enable the input of standing data and system configuration work with the supplier to incorporate parliament coding, workflows and terminology. This will continue between now and the end of December with ongoing testing of the system through that period and into January.

8. During that period the project team will be consulting with other areas of the Parliament on communications and roll out, including some Members' staff through Members' staff focus group.
9. Whilst subject to the outcome of any consultation our starting point for a training programme is to establish super users for SPS staff and train them in April for them to then support SPS colleagues during the roll out. In addition, wider classroom style on-line sessions will be offered as well as training materials and videos.
10. For Members' and Members staff we are considering a combination of approaches from on-line group sessions to one to one support as well as building training into the election programme currently being developed. All training will be carried out by contracted trainers who are familiar with delivering training to Members and Members' staff and supported by the Allowances Office.
11. The SPCB will wish to note that we are required to publish details around the award of this contract within 30 days of the contract being signed in line with public procurement regulations and this will be done during the next week.

Resource Implications

12. The budget to cover implementation and first year costs as well as additional staffing resources for this project have been included as part of the overall SPCB budget for 2020/21 and as part of the bid for 2021/22.

Publication Scheme

13. This paper can be published under the publication policy.

Decision

14. No decision is required from the SPCB this paper is for information only.

Financial Governance Group

November 2020