



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Scottish Parliament 25th Anniversary Programme

26 October 2023

Reference: SPCB (2023) Paper 64

Executive Summary

1. This paper seeks the SPCB's views on the proposed overall programme for the Scottish Parliament's 25th Anniversary, including a major event on Saturday 29 June 2024 to mark the anniversary.

Background

2. The Scottish Parliament will be 25 years old next year on its anniversary 1 July 2024. This is an important milestone in the Parliament's life and should be officially recognised by the Parliament.
3. Following the opening ceremony to celebrate the transfer of powers to the Scottish Parliament in 1999, the Parliament marked its 10th and 20th anniversaries with year-long programmes of events and activities. For both anniversaries these included a number of business-as-usual events and activities themed under the anniversary year, along with a number of specifically designed events and activities held across Scotland to mark the anniversary and engage with as wide an audience as possible. The anniversary programmes also included an Address by the Late Queen attended by MSPs and guests from across Scotland representing civic society, academia, youth organisations and the international community through the Consular Corps with involvement with those young people born on 1 July 1999.
4. For both anniversaries, the programme also included engagement with people across Scotland in their regions. For the 10th anniversary we curated and developed a travelling exhibition – *Moving Stories* – which was displayed in all eight regions over 2009 and 2010 and for the 20th anniversary the plan was for

the Presiding Officer to visit all 8 regions over 2019 and 2020 but this was curtailed due to the pandemic.

Issues and options

Public Engagement Strategy

5. As with previous anniversary years and in keeping with the overall vision of the Scottish Parliament, the purpose of marking the 25th anniversary would be to highlight/reflect on the positive difference that the Parliament has made to the lives of the people of Scotland as well as considering how the Parliament can best operate over the coming years. The proposed programme would support the SPCB's Public Engagement Strategy whose focus is on people and communities who do not normally engage with us and its aims are to increase the reach of the Parliament's engagement and the diversity of those engaging with us; improve the knowledge and confidence of people to engage with us and with the democratic process; and improve the Parliament's reputation as a relevant and trusted institution.
6. The proposed programme also has the potential to align well with the recommendations from the Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee (CPPPC) which, in its recent report on public participation, identified a gap in our activities around making the Parliament visible in and engaged with local communities. The Presiding Officer is particularly keen to engage with the communities identified as targets under the Public Engagement Strategy, in particular low-income groups. These are the same target audiences that the CPPPC recommended we engage with. There is also potential to engage with women's community groups across the country on the work of the Gender Sensitive Audit. The overarching theme of proposed engagement is that the Parliament should engage with everyone and be truly representative of the diverse communities of Scotland.

25th Anniversary Programme

7. As with previous anniversary years, it is recommended that there should be a programme of events and activities to mark the 25th Anniversary year that reflects the Parliament's vision, and which is cognisant of other strategic priorities including how the Public Engagement Strategy has evolved, while taking account of financial pressures and resources.
8. The 25th Anniversary programme offers an opportunity for the Parliament to pilot some of the CPPPC recommendations and test different engagement approaches and products that could deliver clear and longer lasting benefits for the delivery of the Public Engagement Strategy. Some previous Parliamentary initiatives have been criticised for not involving local communities in design and delivery, and for being one-off events with no longer term impact or ongoing relationship.
9. A genuinely impactful programme, which could shape the Parliament's community engagement strategy for the next few years, would need to be co-

designed with local partners such as the Third Sector Interfaces and local MSPs, both of whom understand the local context and have existing relationships which we can draw on to find the most appropriate groups to engage with.

10. Detailed plans will be worked up based on a day's visit in each parliamentary region and like the other anniversary years we would look to achieve that over two years: 2024 and 2025 (with the majority in 2024). Each day could be tailored to the particular location and date, drawing on a menu of different elements that we would offer, including: meetings with community groups; education activities for local schools; and a forum for the Presiding Officer and local MSPs to meet members of the community (this could be more or less structured depending on what would work best in each area).
11. All initiatives, events and activities launched in the 25th Anniversary year by the Parliament will be in keeping with the aims and messages of our 25th year and its public engagement focus. They will be branded and promoted as such as well. This will include new initiatives and products launched for visitors as well as for schools and education establishments.
12. Major events like the annual Festival of Politics and others that take place over 2024, where appropriate, will be themed around the 25th Anniversary and will contribute towards the overall programme of events and activities throughout the year.
13. Resources allowing, SPICe may be able to support corporate or scrutiny activities related to 25 years of the Scottish Parliament. For the 20th Anniversary they produced a [related blog series](#). Any specific work by SPICe would ideally contribute to their core policy scrutiny functions as well as highlighting aspects of developments over the last 25 years. As with other aspects of the Parliament's work, SPICe would collaborate with Scotland's Futures Forum to deliver events, blogs and briefings.
14. The Futures Forum will also explore partnership activity around the 25th Anniversary, focusing on the strategic trends affecting democracy and their impact on Scotland and the Parliament in particular. This would continue and complement its work on the impact of the climate emergency on parliaments, structural inequalities, the challenges around artificial intelligence, and the changing role of people and institutions. It will also seek to support creative reflections around the 25th anniversary, for example through a story competition.
15. It is also suggested that new quotes could be added to the Canongate Wall, working with the current and previous Makars to ensure these increase the diversity of authors included on the Wall. Currently there is only one woman quoted on the wall – Mary Brooksbank from *The Jute Mill Song* - added as part of the Parliament's 10th anniversary programme.
16. As with previous anniversary years, it is recommended that there should be a major event as a centrepiece to the anniversary – held around the actual

anniversary of the Parliament taking up full powers on 1 July 1999. It is recommended that the event should combine a ceremonial element in the morning, a major public engagement event in the afternoon and an opportunity for Members and their families to mix throughout the day.

17. Members' families would be invited to join in the celebrations and other guests would come from across Scotland representing every constituency/region and all aspects of a modern and dynamic Scotland. As with previous major events, it is also recommended that we work with MSPs to nominate people from their constituency/region that have inspired others and worked over the past 25 years in their communities largely without recognition.
18. The afternoon activities will build on the Chamber programme aimed at attracting the public to the Parliament. This element of the day is an important aspect of the overall programme that allows as many people as possible to engage with their Parliament whilst at the same time providing opportunities for them to learn about and engage with the work of the Parliament through a series of planned events, talks and activities.
19. Parliamentary officials believe that this year-long programme of events and activities will not only provide a platform for the Parliament to mark its 25th Anniversary but also deliver against the aims of the Public Engagement Strategy whilst providing an opportunity to pilot some of the CPPPC recommendations.

Communications

20. Detailed communications plans will be developed to support both the major event and the associated programme of activity. In keeping with the events themselves, our communications will include a blend of approaches designed to appeal to a wide general audience and those specific audiences identified in our Public Engagement Strategy. As with previous anniversaries, a logo or badge will be designed as part of this. It will be used across our platforms and outputs as a visual aid to bring together the activities we deliver under the same anniversary umbrella.

Resource Implications

21. Whilst the majority of events and activities planned as part of the year-long 25th Anniversary programme can be delivered with minimum impact on staff and financial resources, to deliver the major event and the community outreach programme across all 8 parliamentary regions there would be a need for additional staff and non-staff costs.
22. On the staffing side, there would be a temporary need to augment the Participation and Communities Team, the Events and Exhibitions Team and the Parliament Communications Office. We would need to recruit three temporary additional staff - grade 3 community participation specialist for 12 months from

April 2024 to develop and deliver the regional events; a grade 3 Events Officer from 6 months from mid-January to support and deliver the major event; and a grade 4 Communications Manager also for 6 months from February to enable the team to support the marketing and communications around the anniversary programme and major event in addition to the Festival of Politics, other major events and parliamentary business.

23. On the non-staff side, for the events across Scotland there would be costs for travel and accommodation, potentially travel for participants if we want to reach people on low incomes, venue hire, promotional materials, overtime and catering and for the major event the majority of these costs would be for transportation and accommodation of invited guests from across Scotland as well as additional broadcasting costs, performance fees, overtime and costs to support a programme of afternoon activities.
24. The total cost of the 25th Anniversary programme would be approximately £297k. We are undertaking an assessment of how existing budgets and activities can be reprioritised, in line with the expectations of the Strategic Resources Board. We have identified we can reprioritise and absorb approximately £90k from existing budgets, reducing this cost to approx. £207k. In addition, parliamentary officials would recommend that for next year we do not host the World Press Photo exhibition which would save a further £50k and we would release these funds to support the 25th Anniversary programme. Therefore, the total estimated additional costs to the SPCB in financial year 2024/25 to deliver the year-long 25th Anniversary programme would be approximately £157k.

Governance

25. If approved by the SPCB, the day-to-day delivery of the overall 25th Anniversary programme would be governed by the Engagement and Communications Group.
26. For the major event, we would recommend a similar governance structure to previous ceremonial events with the Clerk/Chief Executive chairing the Gold Group that will oversee the detailed planning and delivery of all the associated events and activities. Gold Group would include representatives from a number of external organisations involved in the planning of this event.

Publication Scheme

27. This Paper should be withheld until the 25th Anniversary programme has been announced and the major event on Saturday 29 June has taken place.

Next steps

28. Following approval, if given by the SPCB, parliamentary officials will develop a programme of events, activities and new initiatives to mark the 25th Anniversary of the Scottish Parliament and within that develop and deliver a major event on Saturday 29 June 2024. Parliamentary officials will also take forward all the necessary arrangements including the recruitment of temporary staff to support the overall programme.
29. The Clerk/Chief Executive will chair meetings of the Gold Group to discuss the detailed planning and delivery of the all the associated events and activities which will mark the Scottish Parliament's 25th anniversary.

Decision

30. The SPCB is asked to consider this paper and:
 - to agree the outline programme of proposed events and activities to mark the Scottish Parliament's 25th Anniversary, including:
 - a major centrepiece event on 29 June 2024;
 - a programme of engagement events in each parliamentary region;
 - other events taking place across 2024 (such as the Festival of Politics) to be themed around the 25th anniversary;
 - a programme of other activities to help focus on the Parliament's development over 25 years and its future (including work by SPICe and the Futures Forum, and commemorative initiatives such as new quotes on the Canongate Wall);
 - to agree the governance structure for the detailed planning and delivery for both the overall 25th Anniversary programme and the major event on Saturday 29 June 2024; and
 - to note the staffing and resources implications as detailed in the paper.

Engagement and Communications Group
October 2023