Chief Executive's Report to the SPCB September 2026

Introduction

1. The Chief Executive's report provides an overview of key organisational activity from June to September 2026.

2. Items highlighted include:

    - An overview of initial work undertaken by the Parliamentary Business Directorate in Session 7
    - Recent engagements undertaken by the International Relations Office
    - Work undertaken by Facilities Management over Summer recess
    - An update on Learning and Development for MSP Staff

3. The report also includes the Quarter 1 reports as annexes:

    - Annex A: Organisational performance
    - Annex B: Finance
    - Annex C: Workforce

David McGill
Clerk/Chief Executive

Parliamentary Business Directorate

Scrutiny

Criminal Justice Committee

The Criminal Justice Committee has used its first months to develop a focused programme of scrutiny covering key issues across Scotland's justice system. The Committee held initial evidence sessions on prison population pressures, including taking evidence from HM Inspectorate of Prisons for Scotland, and has continued to gather information from a range of stakeholders on challenges facing the prison estate, remand populations and wider criminal justice reform. The Committee has also undertaken scrutiny of subordinate legislation and considered legislative consent matters arising from UK legislation.

Alongside formal scrutiny, members have undertaken a programme of strategic planning to inform the Committee's priorities for Session 7. On 19 August, the Committee visited HMP Low Moss, enabling members to gain first-hand insight into prison operations and current challenges facing the prison service. The Committee subsequently held a business planning event in Stirling on 26 August, where members considered stakeholder feedback, discussed emerging justice issues and options for its initial work programme. This is expected to include scrutiny of prison population pressures, remand and bail, court delays and system efficiency, policing, violence against women and girls, and community justice.

Through this early work, the Committee has sought to align its scrutiny with issues of significant public interest and operational importance, while ensuring that its programme reflects stakeholder engagement and supports effective parliamentary scrutiny of Scotland's justice system.

Equalities, Human Rights and Civil Justice Committee

During September, the committee met three times to hear from a wide range of stakeholders, in a round-table format, on each of the three elements of its remit – civil justice on 3 September, equalities on 10 September and human rights on 17 September. On 24 September, the committee heard from the Minister for Equalities and the Minister for Victims and Community Safety to gain an understanding of the Scottish Government’s priorities and ministers’ responses to some of the issues raised during the round-table sessions.

The Committee has also agreed its approach to pre-Budget scrutiny.

Finance and Public Administration Committee

The Committee agreed its approach to pre-budget scrutiny 2027-28 so it could issue a call for views to run over the summer. It agreed to focus work on the Affordability and Sustainability of Scotland's public finances, a broad theme intended to provide a grounding in a range of issues rather than focusing on one specific topic. The expectation is that potential inquiries to delve deeper into particular issues of interest will arise from this work.

The Committee prioritised agreeing Guidance for Committees on the Budget Process in June to support subject committees in their early decisions around pre-budget scrutiny.

The Committee began evidence-taking in September with the Scottish Fiscal Commission on its Fiscal Update and expects to take evidence on pre-budget scrutiny throughout September.

Public Service Reform Committee

The Committee held two meetings in June before the summer recess. The Committee agreed its approach to its pre-budget scrutiny 2027-28, launching a call for views over the recess on how the Scottish Budget can best advance public service reform, including the removal of barriers to progress, the promotion of preventative approaches, and simplification of the delivery of public services.

On 3 September it held a 'scene-setting' evidence session on delivering public service reform, hearing from expert stakeholders. The Committee heardfrom the Cabinet Secretary for Public Service Reform at its meeting on 10 September, wit the remainder of September focussed on hearing evidence on pre-budget 2027-28.

Rural Affairs Committee

At its first meeting, Rural Affairs Committee agreed to issue a targeted call for views and to take evidence during September on the Rural Support Plan. The first roundtable evidence session on the Plan took place on 2 September. The Committee also agreed to take evidence from stakeholders on priorities for the Session in September/October.

The Committee also agreed to hold a business planning event and in August visited Lochaline. In addition to sessions to discuss topics of interest to members of the Committee and help shape the future work programme, Members undertook several engagements with stakeholders including a visit to Lochaline Community Forest, Lochaline Native Oysters Project and meetings with a variety of local stakeholders.

SPICe

SPICe played a significant role in the induction programme for new Members, participating in a number of policy-focused 'Meet the Team' events. We also

hosted several exhibition stall events throughout June, and supported the P1.02 Chamber support service, providing valuable opportunities to engage with both new and returning Members and their staff. In addition, SPICe delivered two Key Issues seminars at the end of June, complementing our flagship Key Issues Briefing.

As the induction programme came to a close and the CPD programme began, SPICe has been active in supporting this programme.

On Monday 7 September, SPICe delivered a "Fiscal Literacy: the essentials" event, which is the first part of the Fiscal Literacy programme that was recommended by the Session 6 Finance and Public Administration Committee. Half of MSPs registered for the event, including both new and returning MSPs and the event was supported by both the Presiding Officer and me, and we participated in the day alongside a range of internal and external speakers. Members of the Session 6 Finance and Public Administration Committee also took part in a panel session on the day.

As well as the Key Issues briefing mentioned above, SPICe also published a briefing and blog on the 2026 election results and has since been publishing an extensive range of blogs and subject profiles through recess and early September to support Members in getting up to speed on new areas. These will be particularly valuable to Members joining committees; SPICe has provided extensive support and input to the first meetings of committees and to their Business Planning Days.

Alongside these activities, SPICe began a post-election exercise to gather information from Members for inclusion on the Parliament's website, including their preferred contact details. This session, we adopted a new approach by working with colleagues in Digital Services to gain a clearer understanding of local office set-up dates. This enabled a more targeted and tailored approach to contacting Members, which has proven beneficial.

Chamber business

Business Team and Chamber Desk

Changes to the new parliamentary week were introduced at the beginning of the session by the Presiding Officer. and were initiated in the Chamber meetings of 9-11 June. These changes included:

- two FMQ sessions: one on Tuesday for backbenchers and one on Thursday for party leaders (the Parliament no longer meets on a Thursday morning).
- two General Question time sessions: one on Tuesday before backbench FMQs and one on Thursday before FMQs;
- two Portfolio question time sessions on a Wednesday;
- Members Business taking place after Decision Time each day

The Parliamentary Bureau agreed a proposal for electing Committee conveners and, following those elections, proposed a motion establishing committees.

Non-Government Bills Unit (NGBU)

At the time of writing, NGBU has held initial discussions on Member's Bill proposals with 14 Members. Some of this engagement relates to Session 6 Bills that Members are seeking to bring back for consideration in Session 7, while most discussions have been on new Bill proposals. NGBU is currently engaging with a cross-party spread of proposals. This early level of engagement suggests considerable interest in the Member's Bill process at the start of the session from both new and returning members.

NGBU is encouraging Members with proposals for Members' Bills to engage with the Unit as early as possible in the session, and ideally before Christmas. This will help ensure that their proposals have sufficient time to progress through the various stages of the Members' Bill process before the introduction deadline. Standing Orders were amended for Session 7 to bring the introduction deadline forward 6 months from that of Session 6, making the deadline for this session 3 December 2029. Early engagement also helps Members understand the procedural requirements and likely timescales involved.

As part of the induction process for newly elected Members at the start of Session 7, NGBU clerks hosted an introductory CPD session explaining the work of NGBU and the Member's Bill process. NGBU is developing plans to hold a similar CPD session for MSPs and MSP staff in the near future.

Official Report/Parliamentary Business Levels

With the establishment of new committees and the introduction of the new parliamentary week, the Parliament continued its recent trend of higher levels of public parliamentary business.

The first week in September 2026 saw just over 37 hours of public business in committee and chamber, compared with just under 37 hours in the historically busier final year of the previous session. This was despite four committees not meeting in public in the first week. **As a result, business levels in this session therefore look likely to be higher than in previous sessions.**

Chief Executive's Group

International Relations

In the first weeks of the new Session, the Presiding Officer has hosted a number of Courtesy Calls including with the European Union Ambassador to the UK, the Australian High Commissioner and with a delegation from the Council of State Governments.

Claire Baker MSP and Michelle Campbell MSP represented the Scottish Parliament at the Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference (CPC) in Cape Town from 13-19 September. The Conference included meetings and workshops for Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians and Commonwealth Parliamentarians with Disabilities.

The CPC included sessions on:

- Parliamentary leadership in promoting climate adaptation
- Artificial intelligence in Parliaments
- Post-legislative scrutiny
- The General Assembly

I accompanied the delegation and, as well as attending CPC plenary and workshop events, I also attended the two-day meeting of the Society of Clerks at the Table which ran alongside the CPC. Discussions included:

- Parliamentary privilege
- Facilitation of public participation in legislatures
- Leadership Capability Frameworks for the role of Clerk.

Operations and Digital Directorate

Events and Exhibitions Team

The **Festival of Politics 2026**, held on Thursday 27 and Friday 28 August, brought together Members, academics, subject experts, journalists and over 2,000 members of the public for a programme of discussions and debates on some of the most pressing issues facing Scotland and beyond. This year's Festival offered 24 Panel discussions on topics including AI, climate change, housing, poverty, free speech and democratic participation, reinforcing the Parliament's commitment to civic engagement and accessibility. The Festival Cafe Bar also supported performances from Ukehoot, Choir 21, MDA Morningside Dance Academy, a Bollywood performance and the Earth in Common Choir. The Festival also hosted a Climate Café, organised by the Parliament's Sustainability Team.

To coincide with the Festival, 16 **Mother Glasgow** portraits by artist Gerard M. Burns were on display and loan to the Art Collection from Tuesday 11 to Friday 28 August. The project features women, and one schoolgirl, from diverse international backgrounds who have made Glasgow and Scotland their home. Most of the 16 works were displayed in public areas, with Visitor Services supporting access to all portraits through a special guided viewing programme, placing the artworks in the context of the Parliament's art and portraiture collections.

As part of the 2026/27 Major Events and Exhibitions Programme, the National Theatre of Scotland's **One Hundred Voices** interactive, audio-guided

installation about living in the care system, by lead artist and scriptwriter Nicola McCartney, and **Ten Portraits** by Dundee-based and care-experienced photographer Chris Scott, were open to the public in the Main Hall from Wednesday 12 to Friday 28 August. The immersive experience aimed to bring creative insights into the experiences of people living in the care system in Scotland and drew on the oral histories collected over three years by playwright Nicola McCartney. One Hundred Voices won a Scotsman Fringe First award, which are awarded to recognise outstanding new writing premiered at the Edinburgh Fringe. The installation will be touring to Glasgow, Dumfries, Stranraer, Forfar and Glenrothes.

Facilities Management

Scottish Parliament Catering Contract

The new Catering Services and Pest Control contract was successfully mobilised over summer, commencing on 1 August. This included the rebranding of catering outlets supported by a refreshed food and beverage offering. Menus were enhanced through the introduction of calorific and carbon labelling whilst increased emphasis was placed on Scottish provenance across menus. In addition, a dedicated focus on supporting Small and Medium Enterprises was delivered through ‘Meet the Maker’ showcases in The Gàrradh.

Gas Suppression Project – Critical Infrastructure Resilience Enhancement

Over the Summer Recess, Factifies Management and an appointed specialist contractor successfully completed the installation of new gas suppression systems within the High Voltage (HV) supply, Low Voltage (LV) supply and Uninterruptable Power Supply (UPS) rooms, strengthening the resilience and protection of some of the building's most critical infrastructure and accommodation.

The project was initiated following a review which identified the need for enhanced fire suppression measures within these business-critical spaces. The new systems provide an effective means of protecting essential electrical and power infrastructure while minimising the risk of damage and service disruption by using highly pressurised inert gas to quickly ‘suffocate’ any fire outbreak.

Delivered throughout July and August, the works represented a highly complex programme involving activity within live, high-risk plant environments and careful coordination to minimise operational impact. A key milestone was the successful closure of the Parliament to staff and visitors over one long weekend, allowing critical elements of the installation and testing programme to be completed safely and efficiently.

Despite the technical challenges and extensive planning requirements, the project was completed successfully, on programme and slightly under budget.

The works were undertaken with a strong focus on safety, quality, and operational continuity, resulting in a significant improvement to the resilience of the Parliament's critical power infrastructure and providing greater assurance for the future protection of essential services.

Lift Evacuation - Secondary Power Supply

During the Summer Recess, the Parliament successfully completed a significant resilience enhancement project to provide dedicated secondary power supplies to four key evacuation lifts: Lifts 2, 12, 13 and 15.

The project was commissioned following a review which identified an opportunity to further strengthen life safety provisions and business resilience. By providing independent secondary power supplies to these evacuation lifts, the works help ensure that vertical transportation remains available during emergency situations, enhancing both occupant safety and operational resilience in the event of a fire or evacuation.

Delivered throughout July and August, the project required extensive planning, coordination, and technical expertise. The works were carefully programmed alongside the Gas Suppression Project above, with both projects sharing key shutdown periods and requiring close collaboration to minimise disruption and maximise efficiencies. Given the critical nature of the infrastructure involved, works were undertaken during planned periods of building closure with rigorous controls in place to ensure safety and continuity of service.

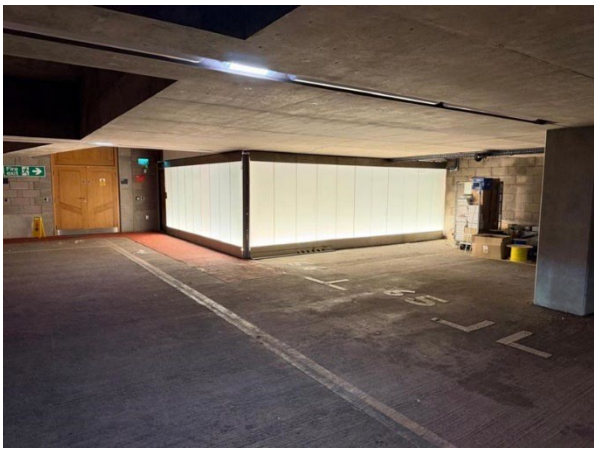
Carpark Lighting and MSP Lightwell Improvement Project

Over the Summer Recess, the Parliament successfully delivered a significant programme of lighting improvements across the Car Park and MSP lift lobby areas, enhancing energy efficiency, resilience, asset management, and the overall appearance of these important and heavily used spaces.

A key element of the project was the upgrade of the Car Park emergency lighting system through the introduction of an automated testing and monitoring system. As a proof-of-concept installation, the new system continuously monitors the condition and performance of emergency lights and can automatically identify faults or maintenance requirements. This removes the need for many traditional manual testing activities and provides real-time asset information. Following a period of operational data gathering and review, there is potential for this technology to be expanded across other areas of the Parliamentary estate, helping to optimise maintenance resources and allowing greater focus on other critical asset management activities.

Coordinated alongside other major infrastructure projects, the works have delivered a number of long-term benefits. These include reduced energy usage, lower maintenance requirements, improved asset performance monitoring, and enhanced visual presentation within key public and staff circulation areas. The result is a more sustainable, efficient, and attractive

environment that better reflects the quality and design intent of the Scottish Parliament building while supporting the estate's wider resilience and energy saving objectives.



Canongate South Wind and Water Ingress Remediation Project

The Parliament continued its long-term programme of wind and water ingress improvements to the Canongate South elevation, addressing a known latent defect affecting a number of windows on this façade.

To facilitate the works, a highly specialised scaffold structure was designed and erected, providing safe access to ten affected windows across the elevation. Investigations had previously identified defects within the window head details which, during periods of driving rain, allowed water penetration into the building fabric. This resulted in recurring water ingress and associated damage to internal finishes and accommodation.

Working from the bespoke scaffold arrangement, contractors successfully carried out remedial works to the waterproofing system at affected window heads. The repairs involved the careful removal of external cladding and building fabric, installation of enhanced waterproofing and weatherproofing systems, and the subsequent reinstatement of the façade in accordance with the original design requirements. The works required a high degree of precision to ensure both the performance and appearance of the building envelope were maintained.

The project was delivered successfully throughout the Summer Recess, and the Canongate returned to service prior to business restarting. A further phase of works is planned for the October Recess, during which the final four windows on this elevation will be addressed, completing the wind and watertight programme for this area.

Completion of these works will represent a significant milestone in improving the integrity of the building fabric to the Canongate and reducing the risk of future water ingress. Importantly, it will also provide confidence to progress future refurbishment and improvement works within the affected internal Canongate accommodation, knowing that the underlying source of water

penetration has been addressed. This will help protect future investment in the internal spaces while improving the long-term condition and resilience of this important part of the Parliamentary estate.

Overall, the project has demonstrated a proactive approach to protecting the Parliament's assets, resolving a longstanding issue, and supporting the ongoing preservation and performance of the building for years to come.

Sustainability

Sustainable Development and Environmental Management

Work has continued across the sustainable development priorities set out in the Sustainable Development Strategy during the reporting period.
One key activity was the publication of the Scottish Parliament's Biodiversity Statement, which sets out how we will meet our duties under the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004 and contribute to Scotland's wider nature restoration ambitions. The statement provides clear actions to protect and enhance biodiversity across the parliamentary estate.
We have refreshed and expanded our sustainability and environmental management intranet pages, making it easier for staff to access information on our commitments, performance and how they can get involved.

Two new governance groups have been established covering sustainable development, climate change and operational delivery. These groups are helping to improve coordination, monitor progress and ensure sustainability remains part of wider organisational decision making.

Work has continued to maintain and improve the Parliament's ISO 14001 certified Environmental Management System. Actions are underway to address findings from recent audits and preparations are being made for upcoming internal and external audits. The environmental audit programme continues to be delivered with support from the Internal Audit and Risk team, providing independent assurance on environmental management arrangements.

As part of the Festival of Politics, the Sustainability Team hosted a Climate Café, creating an opportunity for open and constructive conversations about climate change, sustainability and the role we can all play in responding to these challenges.

Working closely with Finance colleagues, further progress has been made in strengthening climate-related reporting, including incorporating carbon footprint information and tracking progress against climate targets. This work supports our climate disclosure requirements and contributes to reporting that is subject to external scrutiny through Audit Scotland. We have also continued to develop our understanding of the carbon impacts associated with our purchased good and services to help inform future decision making about our supply chain.

Overall, the period has seen good progress in strengthening governance, improving reporting, maintaining compliance and embedding sustainability more fully across the organisation.

Information Management and Governance

Digital Services

Mobile Device Report

The SPCB Mobile Device Policy includes a requirement to report to the SPCB on a quarterly basis. The period covered by this report is the first quarter of Financial Year 2026/27 (April-June).

All Parliament SIMs continue to operate under the terms and tariffs put in place as part of the mobile voice and data contract which became operational in February 2024. This includes additional technical controls including spend caps set on each SIM.

There were no cost exceptions to report during this period with the total expenditure on mobile charges for the Quarter 1 (Q1) period being £5,888.22, or an average of approximately £2.59 per SIM per month.

The Q1 total cost for financial year 2026/27 (£5,888.22) has seen an increase from the same period last financial year (£5,113.94). This increase is the result of a larger number of mobile SIMs being required during election period.

Personal Cyber Advice Service

Digital Services, in partnership with the UK Government Defending Democracy Task Force, have launched the Session 7 Personal Cyber Advice Service for Members.

The service offers Members access to independent, one-to-one cyber security advice and health checks for personal devices and accounts that fall outside parliamentary provision.

The consultations provide practical, impartial guidance to help Members strengthen their personal cyber security and adopt safer online practices.

When the programme was run in Session 6, demand was high, demonstrating the value of the service which complements the support already available through Digital Services. Feedback highlighted the benefit of personalised advice in increasing cyber awareness and helping Members better protect themselves against evolving online threats.

The service is available on Tuesdays and Wednesdays at Holyrood through to the end of March 2027. Appointments can be arranged by emailing

PCAS@parliament.scot or by speaking to the PCAS consultant at the Engagement Desk in the Garden Lobby.

People, Communications and Inclusion

Learning and Development Commitment for MSP Staff

Since the election, we have demonstrated a strong commitment to supporting MSP staff through a range of learning and development opportunities designed to help them succeed in their roles and provide effective support to their MSPs.

We have proactively engaged with all new MSP staff members, ensuring they received essential information, access to key resources, and signposting to a self-directed induction programme that can be completed at a pace that suits their individual needs. This approach has enabled new staff to quickly build their understanding of Parliament, their role, and the support available to them.

In addition, all new MSP staff were invited to participate in a facilitated session led by Professor Jennifer Lees-Marshment of the University of Dundee, entitled *Becoming an MSP Staff Member*. Drawing on research from parliaments around the world, this session provides valuable insights into the role while helping new staff establish professional networks and a sense of community at an early stage in their parliamentary careers.

We have also seen excellent engagement with a range of development opportunities tailored to the needs of MSP staff. These have included:

- Manager development sessions
- Media Mentor training
- Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) complaints training
- Having Conversations About Mental Health sessions delivered in partnership with SAMH

From July to date, MSP staff have engaged in **343 hours** of learning and development activity, demonstrating both demand for and commitment to continuous professional development.

Our programme of support continues to grow. Planned learning opportunities in October and beyond include:

- Caseworker Training with Elected Technologies
- Bulk Correspondence Training with Elected Technologies
- Speechwriting workshops
- The Office Manager Autumn Development Programme
- Subordinate Legislation
- Understanding the Scottish Economy with Fraser of Allander

These initiatives represent just a selection of the development opportunities available.

It remains our priority to ensure that MSP staff have access to the learning, skills development, and professional support they need and want to perform effectively in their roles, develop their careers, and provide the highest level of support to their MSP.

Q1 2026–27 Performance Report – April to June 2026

1. The SPCB delegates responsibility for the running of the Parliamentary Service to the Clerk/Chief Executive as Accountable Officer. Quarterly performance reporting forms part of his report to the SPCB on how that responsibility is being discharged. It provides the SPCB with assurance on how services are being delivered and on progress against our Strategy and Delivery Plan.

Background

The Scottish Parliament strategy covers:

- Running Parliament through regular day to day activity - Key performance indicators (KPIs) measure how well we are delivering day-to-day parliamentary services.
- Projects and other activities to address risk, improve or change how we work - Key activity updates report progress.

2. We use a traffic light system of red, amber or green (RAG) to rate how we are doing. Green means performance is on track. Amber means it is below target but within an acceptable tolerance, with management action in hand. Red means it is outside tolerance and further action or decisions are needed.

   The Senior Executive Team (SET) role includes reviewing performance every quarter, before the report comes to the SPCB. At these reviews SET considers the actions being taken on red items, notes amber items, and agrees any corrective action or reprioritisation needed.

3. Some amber and red ratings should be expected. Our targets are set to be stretching, and our programme of change is significant. Teams have differing demands at any given time which can impact delivery, and circumstances can materialise which were not foreseen or planned but which need to be dealt with. Amber and red ratings show that issues are being identified early and reported openly, which is what effective governance depends on.

4. The SPCB's role is one of assurance that issues are understood and that appropriate action is being taken.

5. This report provides a high-level summary of organisational performance for Quarter 1 (April – June) 2026–27.

6. In Q1 SPCB parliamentary service performance remained positive overall, with no red indicators, 4 amber and 28 Green. Issues are expected to return to green in the next Quarter.

Delivering our services

Objective	Status	Trend	Number of Red, Amber and Green (RAG) Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)
Scrutiny and debate	Green	Improved	1 / 15
Members support and resources	Green	No change	1 / 3
Public Involvement	Green	Improved	1 / 5
Corporate services and governance	Green	No change	1 / 3
Working Environment	Green	Improved	3

- Parliamentary business was delivered without disruption. The Amber KPI reflected the later than planned delivery of the Chamber OR on two occasions in the quarter (89% against a 95% target). Given the smaller than normal number of sittings in the quarter these isolated incidents, relating to bedding in of the new production system, had a disproportionate effect on overall performance and are not expected to recur.

- Members' services showed strong performance with the only Amber rating relating to Members expenses paid within 10 working days. Of 1,154 expense claim payments processed in Q1, 1,046 (91%) were paid on time, below the target of 95%. Performance was affected by additional election-related support for Members and coding issues within the Finance system affecting claims from new Members. Additional Member guidance and training, and work with Finance resolved most issues, with one workaround now in place pending a permanent fix.

- There was strong performance across governance and financial management with budget spend 1.1% under year-to-date forecast (against a target for Q1 of 0-5%). There was an amber rating against compliance due to one Directorate reporting outstanding actions relating to mandatory training and DSE roles. This is being addressed.

- Social media engagement remained amber because Facebook engagement narrowly missed target. While reach increased substantially, due to election-related content reaching a significantly larger audience than usual, engagement did not increase at the same rate, reducing the overall engagement percentage. This is a common feature of high-reach content and expected to return to green next quarter.
- Workforce KPIs returned to green status, Staff absence for the quarter being 3.7% against a 4% target (previous quarter 4.1%).

7. Delivery of our change projects remained positive. The majority of completion dates and budgets remained in line with current plans.

Strategic change objectives

Objective	Status	Trend	Number of RAG key activities
A modern, dynamic parliamentary democracy	Green	No change	1 | 1
A values-driven culture	Green	No change	1
Adapting for a sustainable future	Green	Improved	2
Operational Excellence	Red	No change	2 | 3 | 5

8. Key project updates include:

- Progress on election and Session 7 first day's preparations was on track. The main delivery phase is complete, and early feedback indicates the programme has achieved its key aims and been well received by Members. Evaluation of Members' feedback continues, with follow-up actions planned after Summer recess along with ongoing support for Members' continuing professional development.

- The Two-Factor Authentication Modernisation Project is Green and on track. This project will replace the Parliament's ageing fingerprint-based access control arrangements with a more secure, reliable and accessible facial authentication solution, while retaining biometric template-on-card technology. The project is currently at the design assurance stage, with network works and reader replacement due to begin in November, alongside further engagement and communications with passholder groups ahead of enrolment and rollout.

- Session 7 strategy planning is on track with the final strategy to be presented to the SPCB for approval in October 26.

- Chamber Dias – Green. The key construction phase of the new chamber dias was completed prior to commencement of business after the election. Snagging works were completed over the summer and project closure expected to be finalised by October.

- Business continuity – loss of IT project. Timescales are Red as the activity completion date has been extended from June 2026 to take into account additional business demands flowing from the election and start of session 7. Revised resilience plans will be completed by January 2027 with planned testing activity by April 27. Budget, resources and outcomes remain Green.

- Committee room consoles – Green. The project remains on track ahead of the initial installation of the updated conferencing systems in the first committee room in October 2026. Training and familiarisation will be provided for committee clerks, BIT staff and Members following installation, with clerks involved in evaluation and configuration activities. Engagement with the Conveners Group is also planned.

- Corporate systems phase 1b. As part of a shared services programme, the Parliament agreed to implement the Oracle Fusion finance system supplied by the Scottish Government. This was judged at the time to be the most cost-effective option for delivery of our finance systems requirement following the SG cessation of the SEAS system. At the end of the project, work remained outstanding on implementing the planning, forecasting, budgeting and reporting module (called Enterprise Performance Management or EPM). This work project is currently paused and rated Red. Despite escalation the Scottish Government have advised that they do not currently have the resources to address the issues we are facing and therefore unable to assist in ensuring that the EPM module works for the Parliament. As a result, we are now reconsidering our approach regarding the EPM system as there is little prospect of this work now being scheduled in the near future. This will be taken forward as part of our future corporate systems requirements.

- Corporate systems phase 2 – Amber. This project relates to improved integration of workforce and finance data to aid management decision making. Timescales have been extended pending consideration of a related business case for our overall data strategy. As a result, the planned completion date has been extended from December 2026 to March 2027.

- IT disaster recovery – Red. Improvements to the recovery times of business-critical Chamber IT services remain on track to deliver by October 2026, the project is amber as recruitment of a specialist contractor to address a resource gap was delayed. The activity is anticipated to return to Green in Q2.

- The Review of the public engagement strategy was completed.

- Fire safety improvements Budget is rated Amber. This project involves the installation of enhanced fire protection measures to improve resilience of electrical infrastructure and safety system in the Holyrood building. Finalisation of design and tender costs for this work saw the budget increase to £735k from £700k, though this remained within the £600-800k range advised to the Finance Committee in January. Budget is therefore rated as Amber. An updated business case was approved by SET in May, and these works are nearing successful completion.

- Car Park Sprinkler design work has been paused pending reconsideration of the business case and the SPCB will be updated on recommendations when that exercise has concluded.



Scottish Parliament

P04 SPCB Summary Financial Report

1 April 2025 to 31 July 2026

Contents

1. SPCB Overview 3
1.1 Year to date variance and forecast out-turn 3
2. Parliamentary Service (SPS) 4
2.1 Year to date variance and forecast out-turn 4
2.2 Staff Costs 4
2.3 Staff related costs 4
2.4 Property costs 4
2.5 Running costs 4
2.6 Projects 5
3. Members & Officeholders spend 5
3.1 Members spend to date and forecast outturn 5
3.2 Officeholders spend to date and forecast outturn 5

1. SPCB Overview

1.1 Year to date variance and forecast out-turn

	2026-27 Year to Date				2026-27			
	Actual	Budget	Variance	Variance &	Forecast Outturn	Current Annual Budget	Variance	Variance &
	£'000	£'000	£'000	%	£'000	£'000	£'000	%
Parliamentary Service Costs	22,524	23,402	878	3.8%	71,521	70,865	(656)	(0.9%)
Members Costs	21,197	13,307	(7,890)	(59.3%)	53,627	47,531	(6,096)	(12.8%)
Commissioners & Ombudsman Costs	7,946	8,198	251	3.1%	24,749	24,749	(0)	(0.0%)
Sub Total	51,667	44,906	(6,761)	(15.1%)	149,897	143,145	(6,752)	(4.7%)
SPCB contingency	-	-	-	-	540	951	411	0.0%
SPCB contingency - Election	-	6,000	6,000	100.0%	0	6,000	6,000	
Total SPCB Expenditure	51,667	50,906	(761)	(1.5%)	150,437	150,096	(340)	(0.2%)

The latest forecast indicates a year-end overspend of £0.34 million (0.2% of budget). This relates mainly to shortfalls in expected vacancy gap savings that are built into the Parliamentary Services staffing budget.

The year to date overspend of £0.76 million at the end of P04 is driven primarily by Members' spend which has out-stripped budget by around £1.9 million. However, this is most likely due to the timing of spend in this post-election year e.g. actual spending is not matching budget phasing.

As noted in the 2026-27 budget submission, it is always difficult to forecast Member spending in an election year due to variables around time taken to hire staff and set up offices as well as estimating the number of new MSPs. Additionally, this year has already seen several unanticipated pressures including two additional new MSPs post-election with resultant additional winding up and settlement costs.

We will continue to monitor spending in this area closely. Further analysis will be undertaken over the next few months to review this variance and the year-end forecast to establish whether the initial Election contingency fund was adequate and (if required) seek further funding from Scottish Government in the Spring Budget Revision. This will also be feeding into future year budget forecasts as part of the MTFP/budget work.

Given the ongoing uncertainty around the financial position, we are continuing to bear down on any additional spending and contingency requests.

2. Parliamentary Service (SPS)

2.1 Year to date variance and forecast out-turn

	2026-27 Year to Date				2026-27			
	Actual	Budget	Variance	Variance	Forecast Out-turn	Current Annual Budget	Variance	Variance
	£'000	£'000	£'000	%	£'000	£'000	£'000	%
Staff	15,047	14,963	(84)	(0.6%)	45,473	44,876	(596)	(1.3%)
Staff Related Costs	311	394	83	21.0%	1,151	1,178	27	2.3%
Property Costs	3,134	3,288	154	4.7%	10,348	10,307	(41)	(0.4%)
Running Costs	2,749	2,689	(60)	(2.2%)	8,049	8,004	(45)	(0.6%)
Projects	1,283	2,068	785	38.0%	6,500	6,500	0	0.0%
SPS Expenditure	22,524	23,402	878	3.8%	71,521	70,865	(656)	(0.9%)

2.2 Staff Costs

Based on current projections, the expectation is that Parliamentary staff costs will be overspent by around £0.6 million by the year end due to shortfalls in the vacancy gap recoveries that are built into the staffing budget. This adverse variance is likely to reduce as the year progresses as staff tend to be overly optimistic on recruitment timescales.

2.3 Staff related costs

Staff related costs are forecast to be £0.03 million under budget by the end of the year with underspends in travel & accommodation, training and childcare vouchers partially offset by overspends in relocation costs and health & welfare.

2.4 Property costs

A year-end over-spend of £0.04 million is currently being forecast however this is an early estimate and is expected to reduce in the coming months.

2.5 Running costs

Running costs are £0.06 million overspent in the year to date and this overspend is forecast to reduce slightly to £0.04 million by the year-end. The Finance team are currently working with budget holders to scrutinise spending plans to bring this back into line.

2.6 Projects

Portfolio	2026-27 Year to Date				2026-27			
	Actual	Budget	Variance	Variance	Forecast Outturn	Current Annual Budget	Variance	Variance
	£'000	£'000	£'000	%	£'000	£'000	£'000	%
BIT and Digital	183	242	59	24.3%	722	722	0	0.0%
FM Building & Equipment	377	633	256	40.4%	2,113	2,394	281	11.7%
Broadcasting	0	0	0	0.0%	432	432	()	0.0%
Other	83	94	11	12.0%	296	258	(38)	-14.8%
Election	721	919	197	21.5%	2,133	2,275	142	6.2%
Security	(82)	180	262	145.5%	421	443	21	4.8%
Unallocated budget	0	0	0	0.0%	382	(24)	(406)	1696.1%
Total projects	1,283	2,068	785	38.0%	6,500	6,500	0	0.0%
Categories:	Actual	Budget	Variance	Variance	Forecast Outturn	Current Annual Budget	Variance	Variance
Capital projects	51	139	87	63.0%	2,121	1,000	(1,121)	-112.1%
Revenue projects	1,232	1,929	698	36.2%	4,379	5,500	1,121	20.4%
Unallocated budget								
Total projects	1,283	2,068	785	38.0%	6,500	6,500	0	0.0%

Project spend is £0.79 million behind where we expected it to be by the end of P04, but the budget is forecast to be fully spent by the end of the year. Historically, project spend tends to lag in the opening months and then gain in pace towards the end of the year.

3. Members & Officeholders spend

3.1 Members spend to date and forecast outturn

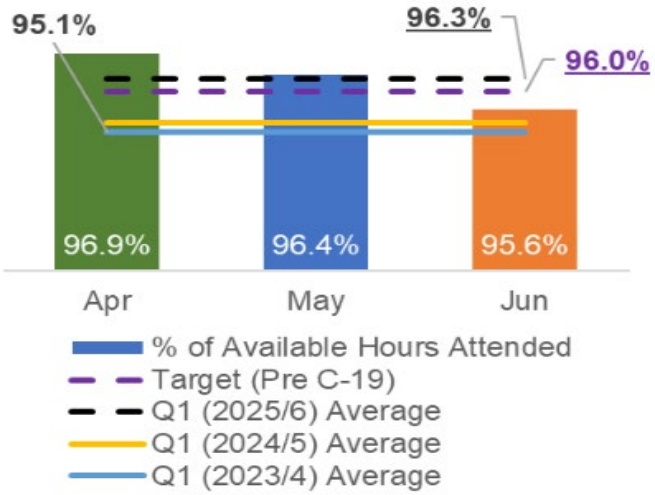
Members expenses are higher than expected by the end of period 4. However, this is due mainly to the timing of spend in this post-election year which is difficult to forecast. This budget phasing issue is expected to reduce as the year progresses, and we are currently forecasting a slight overspend by the end of the year. Detailed analysis will be taken over the next few months to review this variance and forecast.

3.2 Officeholders spend to date and forecast outturn

Officeholders have underspent by £0.251 million at the end of period 4 with variances spread amongst all commissioners. Forecasts are expected to be submitted by Officeholders at the end of August, and an updated position will be reflected in the Q2 report.

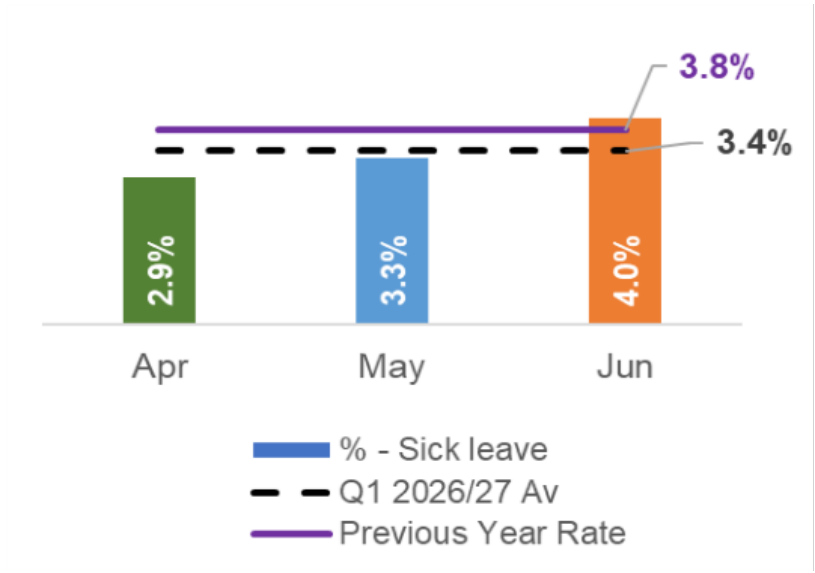
Quarter 1 2026/27 Workforce Report

Attendance

Attendance Rate %
Average for Quarter: 96.3% — % Change from Q4: ▲ 0.4%


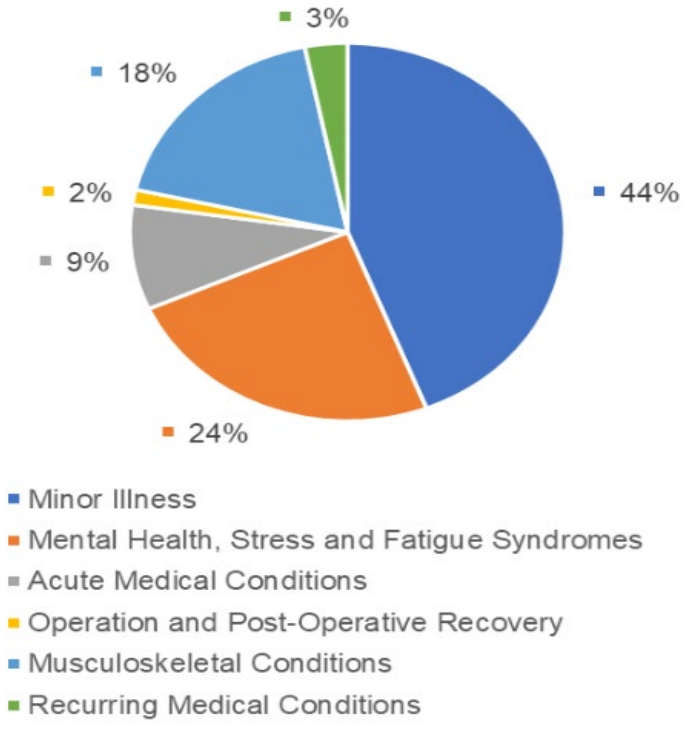
The Attendance Rate was 96.3%, an increase of 0.4% on the previous Quarter. The Rate was the same as Quarter 1 in the previous year.

Sickness Rate %
% of Avail Hours: 3.4% — % Change vs. Q4: ▼ 0.4%



Sickness Categories

GP Fit Note	Self Cert
77.3%	22.7%



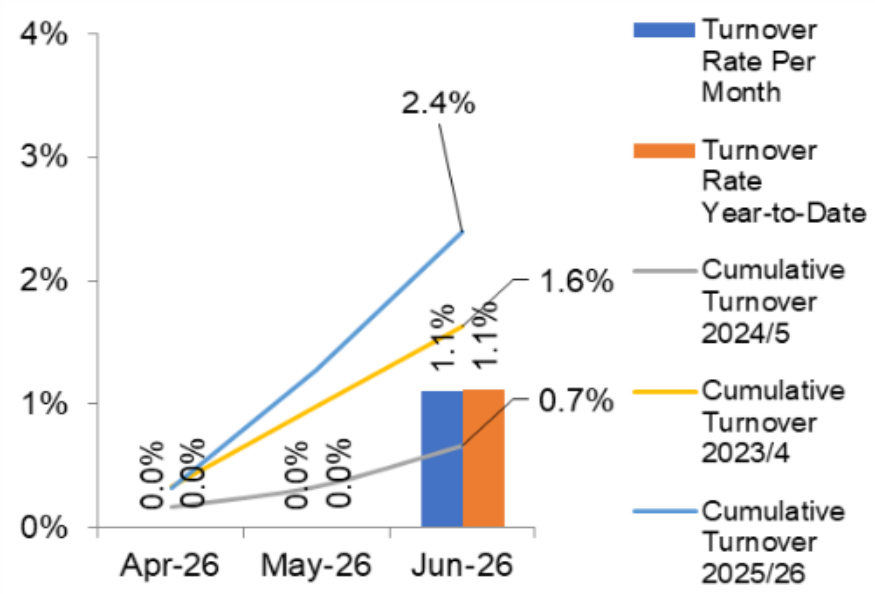
The Sickness Absence rate has reduced compared to the previous Quarter, down by 0.4 percentage points to 3.4%. This is slightly higher than the 3.2% Sickness Absence Rate for the same period in 2025/26. The largest proportion of sickness absence continues to be due to Minor Illness.

Turnover

Turnover Rate %

Cumulative Turnover – To End Q1

1.1%

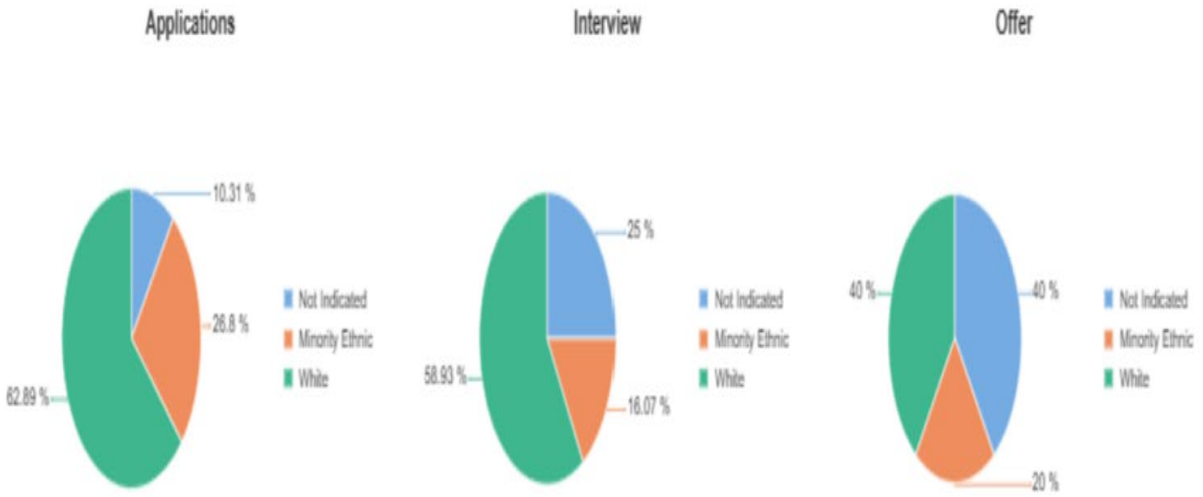


The Turnover Rate for this Quarter was 1.1%, significantly lower than the previous Quarter when it was 2.8%. For the rolling 12 month period this brings the Turnover Rate to 6.5%. There were 7 Leavers in Quarter 1 compared to 18 in Quarter 4 and the average headcount across the period was 631.

Recruitment

In accordance with our commitment to increase the diversity of our organisation and our focus on increasing applications from minority ethnic backgrounds, we monitor the progress of success rates at interview and appointment stage.

Recruitment



Eleven recruitment campaigns were concluded in Quarter 1. Of the 17 job offers made, 3 were candidates from a minority ethnic background.