

Using our resources to support the delivery of our goals 2021/22 | Electoral Commission Search Using our resources to support the delivery of our goals 2021/22 You are in the Annual Report and Accounts 2021/22 section Home Our plans and priorities Annual Report and Accounts 2021/22 On this page Our people Our environmental impact Using our financial resources efficiently Freedom of Information, complaints and parliamentary questions First published: 1 August 2022 Last updated: 1 August 2022 Our people Staff relations and engagement The expertise, hard work and high level of commitment of our workforce enable successful performance and delivery of our Corporate Plan. We value the positive and constructive relationship we have with colleagues and work hard to maintain it. Our staff engagement group meets on a regular basis to seek input from colleagues on emerging issues and help to maintain good relations with staff. We also actively encourage staff involvement as part of the day-to-day process of line management, and we share information on current and prospective developments widely and regularly. To support this, we have a recognition agreement with the Public and Commercial Services Union. We completed our latest staff survey in December 2021 and 89% of employees responded. Our employee engagement score was 67% (down from 72% in 2020). Our scores compared most positively to the Civil Service benchmark in areas such as our people agreeing that: we took action after the previous survey they have an opportunity to contribute their views before decisions are made that affect them they would recommend the Electoral Commission as a place to work The areas where we compared least positively to the Civil Service benchmark and we need to improve on include people agreeing that: there are opportunities for them to progress in their careers at the Electoral Commission they have the IT systems and equipment they need to do their jobs effectively Change is managed well at the Commission Occupational health and safety We review our health and safety policy annually. We also have procedures, guidance and risk assessments in place to cover our core activities. A health and safety group oversees our arrangements. They meet regularly and report to our senior leadership group. However, primary responsibility for health and safety sits with people managers. We initiate independent health and safety audits of our premises each year, which involves inspecting working environments and reviewing safety management systems. These audits tell us if our arrangements are suitable and highlight any improvements we need to make. In 2021/22 we carried out specific risk assessments to ensure our sites were Covid secure prior to re-opening; routine assessments will restart once travel across the UK is permitted and our sites are fully back in use. Our environmental impact We recognise that delivering our activities has an impact on the environment and we continue to work towards minimising this impact. We lease office space in four cities from a combination of public and private sector property owners. We do not have direct control of utility supplier and waste disposal targets and management at our premises. For a number of our offices, the property owner manages energy and water consumption as well as waste disposal and recovers costs through a consolidated service charge. Offices in Edinburgh, Cardiff and Belfast have relocated to smaller, more environmentally efficient premises in the last 10 years. We completed the renewal of the lease for our London office in 2020. Initiatives are in place to help minimise environmental impact: reduced printed resources provided to electoral administrators and other groups, focusing on electronic provision wherever possible encouraged the use of video and teleconferencing to avoid unnecessary travel with consequential CO2 emissions operated recycling facilities in all our offices upgraded to more energy efficient information communication technology equipment Summary (London office)

Performance commentary on emissions We aim to decrease our fossil fuel consumption year on year, an ongoing effect of the property owner's introduction of measures to reduce levels of electricity consumption, including lower 'out of hours' operation of plant and machinery and the introduction of energy-efficient lighting. Due to being in rented accommodation, we are restricted in our plans to cut emissions as these are primarily driven by our landlord.

Emissions Report Greenhouse Gas emissions

	2021-22	2050 Target	2017-18 (Baseline)
Non-financial indicators (CO2e in tonnes)			
Total gross emissions	110	175	235
Non-financial indicators (CO2e in tonnes)			
Gross emissions – Fossil fuel consumption	105	149	198
Non-financial indicators (CO2e in tonnes)			
Gross emissions - Travel	5	26	37
Related energy consumption (Kwh)			
Electricity	384,376	365,708	487,611
Related energy consumption (Kwh)			
Gas	216,786	158,993	211,990

Financial indicators

	2021-22	2017-18 (baseline)
Expenditure on Energy	Not available	Not available
Expenditure on travel	£23,965	£51,233
Coronavirus meant that the offices were not fully open during 2020-21 therefore our performance was not available from the landlord. We have reduced its out of hours working since 2017-18 to help cut our emissions. Since the introduction of hybrid working we have reduced our travel and energy consumption within the office.		

Waste report (London office)

General waste and recycling figures are based on a proportion of total building waste and are not directly controllable by us. Confidential waste disposal for the organisation is handled separately from that for other building occupants. We shred the confidential waste we generate on-site before it is recycled into low-grade paper. The general and recycled waste is based on a proportion of total building waste. All general waste produced in the building, including that generated by us, is sent to a nearby energy from waste plant, instead of landfill sites. We have reduced our use of paper since 2017-18 to help cut our waste, since the introduction of hybrid working; we have further reduced our paper use significantly.

Non-financial indicators

	2021-22	2017-18 (baseline)
Non-hazardous waste: confidential	0.00 tonnes	2.81 tonnes
Non-hazardous waste: General waste (incl. recycled)	2.84 tonnes	7.26 tonnes
Total waste	2.84 tonnes	10.01 tonnes
Quantity of paper purchased	150 reams	650 reams
Total disposal cost		
Financial indicators		
2021-22	2017-18 (baseline)	
Confidential	£0	£1,134
General waste (incl. recycled)	Not available	Not available
Total disposal cost	Not available	Not available

Coronavirus meant that the office was not fully open during 2020-21 therefore our performance were not available. Using our financial resources efficiently In 2021/22, our funding arrangements changed. Our funding is received from 3 Parliaments – UK, Scottish and Senedd. The combined resource initially made available to us was £22.5m voted activity. We also received non-voted funding of £200k to pay Commissioners' fees. This can be broken down by Parliaments: Parliament £m UK Parliament £18.3 Scottish Parliament £2.6 Senedd £1.8 Total Budget £22.7 In January 2022, we had our Supplementary Estimate Approved (HC1135). This changed our resource to capital mix, which increased our total budget by £0.3m. Our final budget breakdown: Department Expenditure Limit Voted £m Non-Voted £m Total £m Resource £17.3 £0.2 £17.5 Capital £0.9 - £0.9 Annually Managed Expenditure Voted £m Non-voted £m Total £m Resource £0.2 - £17.7 Total Net Budget Voted £m Non-voted £m Total £m Resource £17.5 £0.2 £17.7 Capital £0.9 - £0.9 Net cash requirement £17.5 - - The £2.6m from Scottish Parliament and £1.7m from Senedd, is shown as income throughout the accounts and Statements of Parliamentary Supply (SoPS). The remainder of the budget drawn down and not spent is included as deferred income in the Statement of Financial Position. In achieving our objectives, we have used £16.7m worth of resources for the whole year. This was out of the available sum of £17.7m approved by the UK Parliament in our Supplementary Estimate for the net

resource voted requirement, net of income received from the devolved authorities. The graphic below summarises our financial performance on the 'voted' element of our budget.

Financial performance 2021/22 Our financial performance follows our strategic performance, being dominated by a shifting electoral timetable. For the year 2021/22: our staff costs represented 65% of our resource expenditure, which is an increase from 2020/21 due to additional staff for the Elections Act and a lower overall budget from 2020/21. our capital expenditure decreased by £0.6m from 2020-21 due to the refurbishment works within the London office during 2020/21.

Overall Expenditure 2021/22

Type	Expenditure (£m)
Staff costs	£10.8
Public awareness	£3.9
Other operation costs	£3.6
Policy development grants	£2
Depreciation and other non-cash items	£0.7
Capital	£0.5

The figures in the table above include costs funded by the Scottish Parliament and Senedd. We report our underspend to reflect in-year operational decisions, using HM Treasury's preferred measure of current public spending (R-DEL excluding depreciation) and excluding Policy Development Grant which is distributed by formula set by government. In 2021/22 the underspend on this measure was £0.8m against the voted budget of £14.8m (5%). This was predominantly due to unused contingency, savings in campaigning for the May 2022 elections and staffing. The operating underspend is comprised of: £320k of unused contingency £159k reduced spend within the May elections £120k of underspends within staffing costs arising from delays filling vacancies, partly due to post-Covid labour-market conditions £116k within the digital transparency campaign and related expenditure 43k unspent Policy Development Grant from political parties Other underspend: £42k in depreciation £214k in provisions (Resource AME) due to less than expected pension and dilapidation movement £228k in capital projects due to shifts towards current investment in IT and delays to projects Our income in the accounts relates to charges for registering political parties. We also report and are accountable to the Senedd and Scottish Parliament Corporate Body. The income recognised in the accounts is predominately for devolved elections and referendum work. All income is recognised in note 4 of the accounts. We collect fines raised against political parties and individuals for failure to comply with the rules on party and election finance and then surrender these to the Consolidated Fund as required by law. The penalties due was £58k in 2021/22 received by 31 March 2022 and surrendered to the Consolidated Fund. In addition to monitoring performance against budgets, we also managed within our cash limits set by the UK Parliament. We required cash amounting to £16.3m in 2021/22 to finance our voted activities, which was £1.2m less than the sum of £17.5m approved by the UK Parliament in our Supplementary Estimate. The reconciliation of net resources outturn to net cash requirement provides a reconciliation from our outturn to the net cash we required in-year. The Statement of Cash Flows shows that the cash balance as at 31 March 2022 was £0.6m. The Statement of Financial Position as at 31 March 2022 shows positive taxpayers' equity.

Supplier Payments Although we are independent of government, we aim to comply with the Prompt Payment Code that operates across the public sector. The target is to pay undisputed invoices within 30 days. In 2021/22, we paid 100% of invoices (85% in 2020/21) within 30 days.

Freedom of Information, complaints and parliamentary questions We are committed to the principles of openness and transparency in public life and acknowledge the duty to provide information to the public. In 2021/22, we received 140 Freedom of Information (FOI) requests. We responded to 130 (93.1%) of these within the 20 working days statutory timeframe (target: 90%). There were 12 FOI internal review requests received in the financial year, 11 of these were due and responded to in the financial year. Process and training improvements have had a positive impact on our

response rate across this financial year. We have gone up from 91.9% in 2020-21 to 93.1% in 2021-22. We received 10 subject access requests and three requests for erasure under the UKGDPR, all responded to within the statutory response time frame of one calendar month. We handled 96 complaints compared to 51 in 2020/21. Of the 96 complaints handled; 95 have been completed and one is still active. Of the 95 that were completed; 86 were not upheld, three were partially upheld, two were upheld, two were closed due to no clarification being received from the complainant and two were withdrawn. The learnings gleaned from the investigations of these complaints were fed back to the relevant teams to support our commitment to continuous improvement. These complaints spanned a range of topics. Three complaints focussed on concerns regarding a media statement we released announcing our investigation into a party. These complaints were not upheld. 30 complaints focussed on alleged delays in assessing applications to register two new parties. These complaints were not upheld. 34 complaints focussed on concerns that we made mistakes carrying out our work when assessing an application to change the emblem of a party. Specifically when considering whether it may have misled voters. One of these complaints raised concerns about whether we had specifically considered whether voters with disabilities were more likely to be misled by the emblem. This specific complaint was partially upheld due to a lack of evidence but the other 33 were not upheld. We received three requests for review by the Chief Executive. While these reviews did not change the original outcome of the complaint, they did enable further explanation and assistance. In addition, we received correspondence from 668 members of the public that did not constitute complaints under our policy. Where possible the complaints team responded directly to the individual or alternatively forwarded the correspondence to the appropriate team to provide a response if technical expertise was required. Via our dedicated public information service, we responded to 4,463 public enquiries, received by phone and email. Through this service, we answered questions about how to register and vote in the May 2021 elections across Great Britain. We explained the public safety measures in place at polling stations, and how people can use absent voting methods to have their say without attending a polling station. We responded to 27 parliamentary questions during 2021/22, including questions about digital campaigning, electoral fraud, the accuracy and completeness of the electoral registers and the effectiveness of electoral law. Chris Matheson MP, a member of the Speaker's Committee, was our spokesperson in the UK Parliament and answered questions on our behalf.

Supply estimate for 2022-23 Our Main Supply Estimate for 2022/23 (HC1241) provides for a net resource requirement of £25.3m. This is a 44.6% increase from 2021/22 mainly due to the implementation of the Elections Bill. Our Main Estimate is broken down as follows:

Departmental Expenditure Limit	Resource Voted £m	Non-voted £m	Total £m
Electoral Commission expenditure	£18.2	£0.2	£18.4
The Elections Bill	£5	£5	£10
Policy Development Grants	£2	£2	£4
Capital	£1.4	-	£1.4
Annually Managed Expenditure	£0.1	£0.1	£0.2
Total Net Budget	£25.3	-	£25.3

Net cash requirement £26.1m

The Speaker's Committee approved this on 25 April 2022 and it was laid before House of Commons on 25 April 2022. The Commission is established by legislation and following the principles of the FReM there is an assumption of continued provision of service, there is nothing to suggest services provided by the Commission will cease or future funding will not be provided.

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