

Conveners Group
Wednesday 18 June 2025
4th Meeting, 2025 (Session 6)

Draft Climate Change Plan

Introduction

1. The Group will consider committee correspondence related to the draft Climate Change Plan in agenda item 4.
2. Gillian Martin, Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero and Energy, wrote to the Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee on 30 May 2025 (**Annexe A**). A response was sent on 4 June 2025 from Edward Mountain MSP, Committee Convener (**Annexe B**). The Cabinet Secretary replied to this correspondence on 9 June 2025 (**Annexe C**).

Action

3. The Group is invited to note the matters raised in the correspondence.

Clerks to the Committee
June 2025

Annexe A: Letter from the Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero and Energy to the Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee

30 May 2025

Dear Edward,

Further to my letter of 22 January I am writing to update you on the latest position on the Climate Change Committee's (CCC) Scottish Carbon Budget advice and work to develop an SSI that Scottish Ministers plan to lay to set Scottish carbon budgets in legislation.

As the committee will be aware, it is important that Scottish Ministers consider the CCC's advice carefully before making decisions on which levels to set carbon budgets in legislation. I can confirm that the CCC's advice was received on 21 May and that working is ongoing to consider this advice carefully and at pace. While it has not been possible to complete that consideration on a timescale that would enable the SSI to be laid by the end of May, my intention is to lay the SSI to set Scottish carbon budgets in legislation as soon as possible following Scottish Minister's consideration of both the CCC's advice and the target setting criteria contained in the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009.

I will update you on the timing for laying the carbon budgets SSI in Parliament as soon as possible.

Gillian Martin
Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero and Energy

Annexe B: Letter from the Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee to the Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero and Energy

4 June 2025

Scottish carbon budgets

Dear Gillian,

Thank you for your letter of 30 May about the latest position on the laying of Regulations to set carbon budgets. The Committee considered this yesterday when we discussed our work programme.

Until this letter, the Committee and Parliamentary officials had understood the Regulations would be laid by end May, in line with published correspondence from you. When I received an online briefing from you on 22 May, alongside Scottish Government and Parliamentary officials, I was not given to understand that this position had changed. I note that this briefing took place after the Climate Change Committee's advice on carbon budgeting to the Scottish Government had been published.

Discovering that the Regulations would now be laid at a later - and unspecified - date therefore came as a surprise to the Committee. It also concerns us because a delay in laying the Regulations seems likely to have direct consequences for the timetabling and scrutiny of the next Climate Change Plan. Laying the Regulations later would appear to then mean a later laying of the draft Plan, leading in turn to the Scottish Government having even less time to consider the Parliament's recommendations on the draft than previously. (Officials had estimated that laying the Regulations by end May would result in a gap of around 8 weeks between Parliamentary scrutiny of the draft ending and dissolution in late March 2026.)

Timetabling difficulties of this nature arose when the Parliament considered the draft Climate Change Plan Update in the closing months of the last session, when the gap between committees reporting and the Scottish Government responding was narrow. This was widely seen as unsatisfactory, and the Committee is keen to avoid history repeating itself.

The Committee therefore agreed that I should write to you to set out these concerns about the delay and to request more information about the reasons behind it: for instance whether there are particular aspects of the CCC advice that the Scottish Government is questioning or considers problematical to implement.

I would also be grateful if, in your response, you could set out the proposed new laying date for the Regulations and how, to your understanding, this would affect the timeline for Parliamentary consideration and agreement of the Climate Change Plan.

In recognition that scrutiny of the Plan will be a collective effort by Committees and that other Conveners will have an interest in this matter, I have copied this letter to Conveners Group Chair, Liam McArthur MSP.

CG/S6/25/4/3

I would be grateful for a response by the morning of Monday 9 May so that the Committee may further consider this matter at its meeting on 10 June.

Edward Mountain MSP

Convener

Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee

Annexe C: Letter from the Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero and Energy to the Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee

9 June 2025

Dear Edward

Thank you for your letter of 4 June requesting further details on the Regulations to set the carbon budgets.

As I outlined in my letter of 30 May, I consider it important that Scottish Ministers consider the implications of the advice from the CCC carefully before finalising the carbon budgets that will be set in legislation.

It remains my intention to lay the Regulations setting carbon budgets as soon as possible to allow the Committee and the Scottish Parliament as much time as possible for the scrutiny of secondary legislation and the subsequent draft climate change plan.

I will update the Committee on the timing of the secondary legislation as soon as possible.

Gillian Martin
Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero and Energy