



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Finance and Public Administration Committee

Ivan McKee MSP
Minister for Public Finance
Scottish Government

25 September 2025

Dear Ivan McKee,

Public sector reform and the civil service

The Committee held an evidence session with Joe Griffin, the Permanent Secretary, on [24 June 2025](#).

In his opening statement the Permanent Secretary referred to the newly published [Scotland's Public Service Reform Strategy: Delivering for Scotland](#) and said—

“The public sector reform strategy sets out a clear vision for change towards a smaller and more agile public sector that delivers better value, eliminates duplication and develops deep digital capability to improve public services. The Scottish Government must be part of that, playing a leading role in reducing the size of the public sector and adopting the best of reform and digital capabilities to improve how we do things”.

In relation to this, the Permanent Secretary was asked about the optimal size of the civil service in Scotland and whether a target has been set for its reduction. The Permanent Secretary said in response that he is open minded about targets but that further discussions would be needed to do this, including with Ministers.

The Committee would like to know whether the Scottish Government has plans to set a target to ensure that its civil service is smaller and more agile and, if so, what form of measurement will be used. For example, would it be a target figure, within a range of figures, or a percentage of the workforce. Also, the Committee would like to know whether any discussions have taken place with the Permanent Secretary about the optimal size of the civil service and what work the civil service is undertaking to identify the optimal size.

Yours sincerely,

Kenneth Gibson MSP
Convener