



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee

Committee Conveners
Scottish Parliament
05 February 2025

Dear Conveners,

Next Climate Change Plan

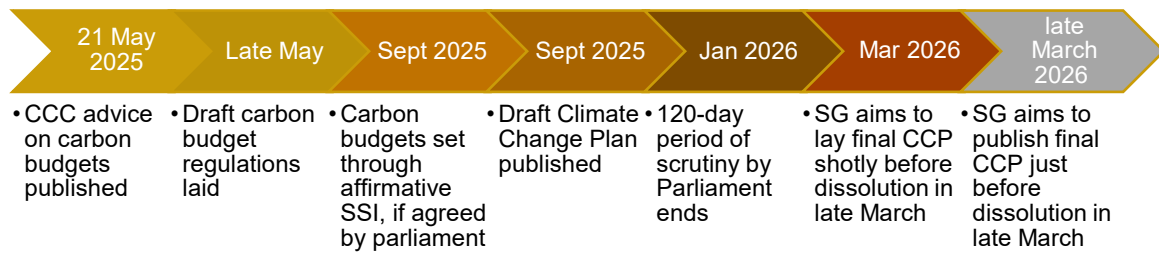
I am writing to update you on the NZET Committee's understanding of next steps for the upcoming Climate Change Plan (CCP), in the light of recent updates from the Climate Change Committee (CCC) and the Scottish Government.

This will be the first time the Scottish Parliament has considered a statutory CCP in draft form since the passing of the Climate Change (Emissions Targets) (Scotland) Acts of 2019 and 2024. The 2019 Act changed the period for Parliamentary consideration of a draft from 60 to 120 days. The 2024 Act:

- Repealed the interim 2030 and 2040 targets for emissions reduction, and abolished the system of annual percentage-based targets for emission reductions set out in a straight line between the interim targets. The 2045 target of net zero emissions was retained.
- Replaced this system of target setting with 5-year carbon budgets, to be set by regulation by the Scottish Government following advice from the CCC.

As you will know, the Conveners Group has agreed this session that net-zero scrutiny is a strategic priority for all committees, with a collective mission to ensure effective scrutiny of a topic which impacts, to some extent, on all Committee remits. I hope this letter helps you with your forward planning to this end.

In January, the CCC told the Scottish Government that their first advice on 5-year budgeting will be provided on 21 May 2025. This will set in motion a sequence of events under the 2024 Act, as set out in the graphic below. This represents our current best estimates from information in the public domain, including a 22 January letter on the process from the Acting Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero and Energy, annexed below for information and a meeting I had with her in early February.



The key Parliamentary milestone will be the laying of the draft CCP, triggering the 120-day scrutiny period that currently looks likely to end in late January.

As lead Committee for this process, the NZET Committee would welcome having sufficient time to consider reports or letters from other committees before we report to the whole Parliament for a debate in late January. **For Committees with an interest in scrutinising relevant aspects of the CCP, the crucial period for evidence-gathering, deliberation, and agreeing a draft of letter therefore looks likely to be October to December 2025.**

Please do not hesitate to contact NZET Clerks for more information as to how they, SPICe, and the net zero and climate change advisor, Dr Jenkins can assist your CCP work planning and scrutiny over the coming months. They are also happy to direct you to both general and sector-specific information about climate change scrutiny available on the Parliament's website, with more coming online over the coming weeks.

I also commit to updating you by letter should the timeline set out above substantially change and to provide any more information you may find helpful, including information the NZET Committee has recently requested from a small number of regulatory or monitoring bodies as to what would make a "good" CCP.

Finally, I do hope as many of you as possible are able to make the Conveners Group meeting of 28 May. This will be an important opportunity to hear from the Climate Change Committee about their carbon budgeting advice to Scottish Ministers and on Scotland's overall net zero progress.

Yours sincerely,

Edward Mountain MSP
Convener
Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee

Annexe A: Letter from Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero and Energy

Edward Mountain
Convener
Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee

22 January 2025

Dear Edward,

I would like to provide members of the Committee with an update regarding the upcoming Climate Change Plan (CCP), following your letter on 17 January and given recent developments on the timing of advice on carbon budgets from the Climate Change Committee (CCC). As discussed during the Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee session on 14 January, the CCC have confirmed that they will publish their advice on carbon budget levels for Scotland on 21 May 2025.

My officials are working to finalise timelines for the carbon budget regulations and upcoming Climate Change Plan on the basis of confirmed timescales for the provision of CCC advice, including next steps in the process of initiating legislative and parliamentary procedures. My intention would be to aim to lay the carbon budget regulations in late May, if possible within a week of receipt of CCC advice, and, if standard procedures are followed, under affirmative procedure and by convention, Parliament would have 54 days for consideration of the draft regulations.

Accounting for summer recess, under these standard procedures the earliest the carbon budgets could come into force would be after recess in September 2025, and after confirmation of carbon budgets I would aim for the draft CCP to be laid in Parliament and published in late September 2025, with the aim of publishing the final plan in spring 2026. This final publication date allows for 120 days of parliamentary scrutiny of the draft plan, in accordance with the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009, leaving approximately eight weeks for Government to respond to this scrutiny and the accompanying public consultation in early 2026.

I would also like to clarify details around the funding arrangements for the CCC. The UK Government has the lead sponsorship role for the Climate Change Committee - this includes co-ordination of CCC funding on a four-countries basis and payment of this funding. The Scottish Government and other Devolved Governments contribute to the funding of the CCC.

I hope this letter provides further assurance to members of the Committee on latest timescales under consideration for the next CCP. I will be in touch to confirm timescales in due course, and welcome discussion of any of the above with you if you would find it useful.

GILLIAN MARTIN