

T: 0300 244 4000
E: scottish.ministers@gov.scot

Edward Mountain MSP
Convener
Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee
Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

By email - netzero.committee@parliament.scot

16 February 2026

Dear Convener,

Net Zero, Energy and Transport (NZET) Committee: Draft Climate Change Plan and Budget evidence session

Following my letter dated 5 February, in which I provided a response to the queries raised by members of the NZET Committee on Tuesday 3 February relating to the draft Climate Change Plan, please find below my response to the remaining queries, along with additional information on some of the points discussed during the session.

Draft Climate Change Plan Evidence Session

Building standards for new homes and EV charging infrastructure

As mentioned at Committee, in 2023, the Scottish Government introduced updated building standards identifying clear requirements to ensure new homes, workplaces and major renovations are equipped for the transition to EVs. The Committee asked for further details of interaction between building standards for new homes and EV charging infrastructure.

The 2023 standards require that, for new domestic buildings, every dwelling with a parking space must include at least one 7kW EV charge point socket, with ducting required as a fallback where installation would trigger excessive grid-connection costs. Major renovations to domestic buildings with more than ten parking spaces must also provide ducting to all residential spaces and install as many charge points as the upgraded electrical capacity allows. This approach ensures that EV-ready infrastructure is built in from the outset, avoiding expensive future retrofits.

For non-domestic buildings—including offices, retail sites and workplaces—the standards require a proportion of parking provision to be EV-enabled. New and renovated buildings with more than ten non-residential parking spaces must install ducting to one in every two spaces and provide at least one 7kW charge point for every ten spaces. The policy also

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considers accessibility by requiring a quarter of accessible parking spaces to be served by an EV charger, ensuring equitable access as the EV transition accelerates. Although existing non-domestic buildings were ultimately excluded from the final legislation, the standards set a strong baseline for all new non-domestic developments.

These regulations collectively support the growth of EV charging by future-proofing Scotland's built environment. They reduce long-term costs by embedding infrastructure during construction, expand consumer confidence by ensuring charging availability at home and work, and help normalise EV ownership. By focusing on ducting as well as operational charge points, the standards also give developers flexibility while ensuring that future installation can be achieved without disruptive and costly civil works. Overall, the framework underpins Scotland's wider decarbonisation aims by making EV charging a standard and expected feature of modern buildings.

£30 million EV infrastructure fund and local supply chains impacts

The Committee requested details on the £30 million EV Infrastructure Fund and local supply chain impacts. Through our £30 million EV Infrastructure Fund we have supported local authorities across Scotland to partner with each other and the private sector to continue to expand Scotland's public EV charging network.

All local authorities which are delivering EV Infrastructure Fund projects, with the exception of Dundee City Council, are doing so by delivering projects through regional collaborations comprising between three and eight local authorities. This regional approach creates a scale of delivery and investment that helps to ensure projects are attractive to charge point operators and creates opportunities for local employment and supply chains. These opportunities will arise both during project delivery and throughout the lifetime of EV Infrastructure Fund contracts, which are typically being established for up to 20 years.

Given the varied geography and socio-economic factors that exist across project areas it is not possible to apply a standard approach or set of requirements to be delivered through EV Infrastructure Fund projects. For example, the project being delivered across the north of Scotland includes significant rural areas and covers over 40% of Scotland's land mass. Another covering Glasgow City Region includes dense urban areas and around 1/3 of Scotland's population. Yet another is being developed to reflect the unique challenges and opportunities that exist across the Orkney, Shetland, Western Isles and Argyll and Bute council areas. As part of applying for support through the EV Infrastructure Fund, each project is required to demonstrate how they plan to deliver a range of outcomes, including community wealth building and creating new economic opportunities in Scotland.

All EV Infrastructure Fund projects are being delivered through public procurement exercises conducted by Local Authorities, which through the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014, requires local impact to be considered as a contractual requirement. This includes identifying opportunities for training and recruitment as well as the availability of sub-contracting. These opportunities feature in EV Infrastructure Procurements that are currently live, and outcomes related to local economic impact are already being delivered. For example, the private operator working on the North of Scotland Project has recruited staff in Scotland to manage the project, is establishing an office in Aberdeen and is working to subcontract local businesses to install and maintain EV charging across the project area. Grants to Local Authorities to undertake these procurements are subject to Section 17 of the Subsidy Control Act which prohibits subsidies being given which are contingent on

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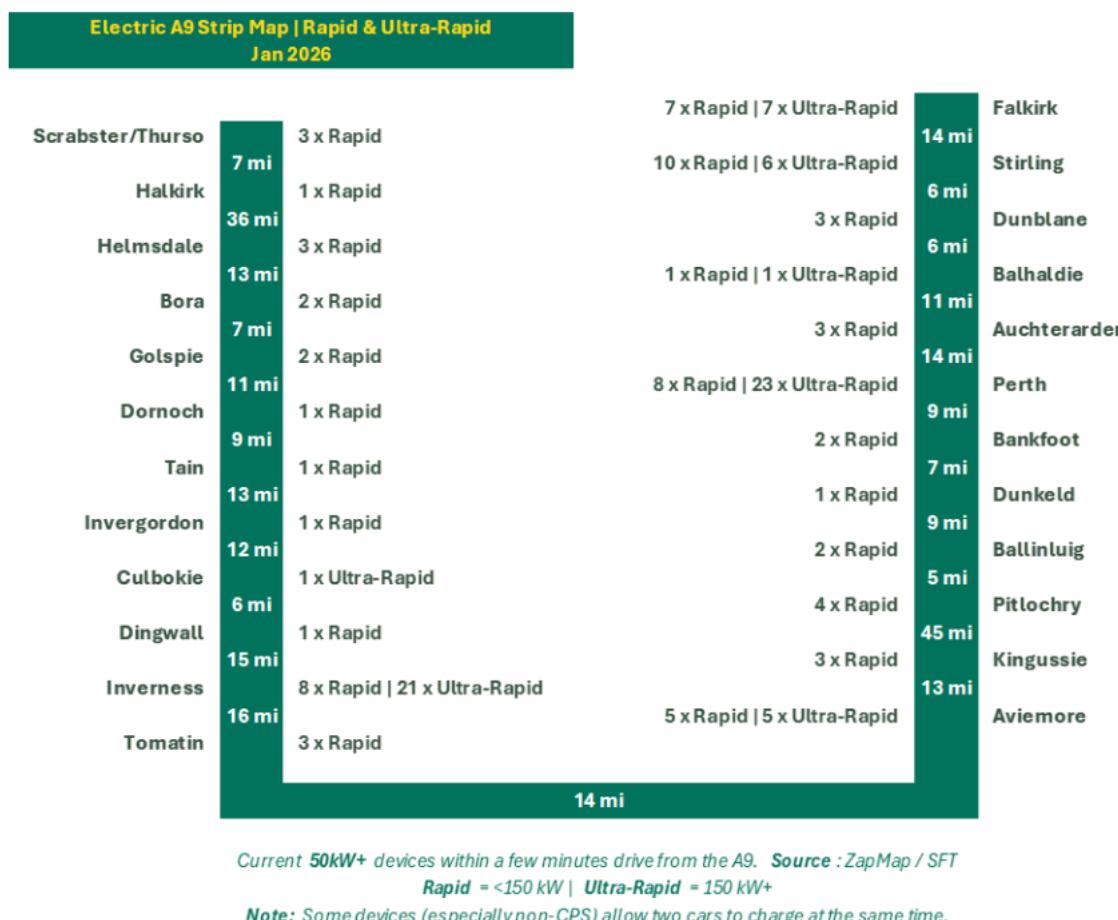
using domestic over imported goods or services (often referred to as 'local content' subsidies). This prohibition is founded in long-standing WTO law and also implements our commitments in the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA).

EV charging along the A9

During the session, I offered to share with the Committee more information on existing and planned EV charging along the A9. Announced in June 2018, the Electric A9 project supported the installation of public EV charging infrastructure along the length of the A9. As a direct result of this project, and increasing private sector investment, there are now 139 high powered rapid and ultra rapid (50kW+) public charge points in 25 communities along the A9 (see figure 1 below).

Work is currently ongoing to develop a further 12 sites, or to expand existing sites, through which approximately 70 additional rapid or ultra-rapid public charge points are expected to be delivered on or close to the A9. The EV Infrastructure Fund projects, such as the North of Scotland Project being taken forward by Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire, Moray and The Highland Council, are also expected to support the expansion of public EV charging infrastructure on or close to the A9.

Figure 1: Strip Map of rapid and ultra rapid EV charging on the A9



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Shore power facilities at ports

I also offered to share information on support available from the UK Government in relation to shore power facilities at ports.

The UK Government has funded an additional £448m for the UK Shipping Office for Reducing Emissions (UK SHORE) Programme, for the period April 2026 to March 2030. This builds on the existing UK SHORE programme which has to date supported the sector with £240m over the last 3 years to develop clean maritime technologies. This has delivered more than 200 projects from scientific and academic research to factory trials and real-world demonstrations and commercial trials, including funding a hydrogen shore power facility at Port of Leith. The UK Government is working with National Grid and the ports sector to evaluate future electricity demand at ports.

Ports in Scotland are independent statutory bodies – each governed by their own local legislation – and are deemed commercial entities. Therefore, the Scottish Government has no involvement in the day-to-day running of their business, nor business decisions made by a company on how to best utilise its resources. This remains the responsibility of the port authority.

A number of Scottish ports have already introduced shore power facilities, including at Port of Aberdeen, Eyemouth, Forth Ports, Fraserburgh and Montrose.

Caledonian Maritime Assets Limited (CMAL), which owns a number of ports for vital ferry services and is wholly owned by the Scottish Government, is also installing shore power facilities at a number of ports on the lifeline ferry network, including Port Askaig and Kennacraig.

There are significant barriers to wider implementation of shore power. The primary barrier is capital costs, with ports sometimes unable to justify the expenditure on shore power infrastructure, as they would not receive financial returns. The price of electricity in the UK is higher than in countries where shore power is regularly provided, and often higher than using marine fuel. There is a lack of consistent demand from vessels calling in Scotland for shore power, and some ports do not have the volume of vessel calls to justify the expense of installing and maintaining connections. National Grid connection issues have been raised by port operators in Scotland as a significant barrier to installing shore power, so work to improve these connections is imperative. Given the infrequent, but high peak loads that shore power often demands (especially for the amount of energy larger cruise ships require, often at ports in rural locations), network upgrades are often necessary. For large connections, reinforcement is usually needed. This process can be expensive, but also time consuming and complex.

The Cost of EVs

Committee members raised concerns regarding the cost of new and used EVs and I therefore thought it would be beneficial to provide members with further information on these costs in order address some of these affordability concerns.

Recent UK market data shows the median price of new EVs remains higher than petrol or diesel equivalents at £40,000 vs. £25,000. However, most new EVs are leased, meaning that the majority of owners do not fund the full capital costs of these vehicles and due to the

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lower running costs of EVs compared to petrol or diesel equivalents, the total cost of owning an EV is typically lower than petrol and diesel equivalents in the initial three to five years of service life.

Whilst new EVs remain more expensive to purchase than petrol cars, the used EV market is rapidly maturing and now offers a range vehicles that are cheaper than petrol cars. When combined with substantially lower running costs, EV ownership, especially in the used market, is increasingly accessible for households across Scotland.

For used cars of five to 15 years of age, data from Autotrader, the single biggest market for used cars in the UK shows that EVs typically £1,000 to £2,000 cheaper than the median price of a petrol or diesel car of equivalent age. 10-year-old EVs have a median price of £4,500 to £5,000, compared to £6,000 to £12,000 for other fuel types.

Budget Evidence Session

Aberdeen to the central belt rail journey time

During the session, I referred to the [Official Report from the Committee's 2025-26 Budget Scrutiny](#) which answered questions on rail investment in the north-east of Scotland. I would direct you to pages 34-35 for the previous discussion on this.

I also offered to provide additional information to the committee on the Aberdeen to Central Belt service. The Aberdeen – Central Belt Service Improvement Project consists of a suite of enhancements to transform the route between Aberdeen and Perth to improve journey time, resilience and freight capacity. Design work continues to develop the scope of the investment in enhancements to the line between Aberdeen and the Central Belt.

To 6 December 2025 (end of railway period 09 2025-26) a cumulative total of £24.7 million has been spent on schemes to reduce journey times between Aberdeen and the Central Belt.

As regards project timelines, in January 2024, Ms McAllan, then Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero and Just Transition informed the Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee, that the time over which the commitment to deliver journey time improvements and increase capacity, between Aberdeen and the Central Belt, was under review. This remains the position.

Any suggestion that the north-east is being neglected in terms of rail enhancements is misplaced. Recent years have seen the dualling of the line between Aberdeen and Inverurie, as part of the £330 million Aberdeen to Inverness enhancement project, enabling a half-hourly service between Aberdeen and Inverurie.

Aberdeen and the Northeast have benefitted from further significant rail enhancements in recent years, including the re-doubling of the line to Inverurie. Kintore Station, between Inverurie and Dyce stations, opened on the 15th of October 2020 and enjoys the same level of service as Inverurie. Aberdeen Station was subject to an extensive £8 million refurbishment in 2022.

Tomatin to Moy capital investment in the A9 community and local economic benefits

I offered to share information on the community and local economic benefits from the Tomatin to Moy capital investment in the A9. The A9 Dualling Social Value Programme (SVP) is an integral part of the wider A9 Dualling programme, created to deliver long-lasting benefits for local communities. Its purpose is to strengthen education, employment, and local opportunities, support economic growth, promote sustainability and wellbeing, and ensure a positive legacy by working collaboratively with stakeholders to meet local priorities.

By delivering on SVP commitments, every activity is focused on maximising positive community impact and achieving the greatest possible value from the investment in the A9 Dualling programme.

Adding value throughout project delivery has long been central to Transport Scotland's approach, and the scale of the A9 Dualling programme offers a major opportunity to enhance this further and secure significant, lasting benefits.

The Tomatin to Moy project has already delivered a broad range of meaningful and high-impact social value activities across the local area.

To date, of the 68 social value commitments made to the Tomatin to Moy project, 37 have either been completed or are currently in progress representing 54% of the total. These commitments are already delivering meaningful benefits across employment, skills, local economic activity, and community support.

Employment outcomes so far include 227 full-time equivalent positions created for at least one year or for the duration of the contract. The contract has also enabled 10 graduates and 4 apprentices to secure employment, alongside providing 482 weeks of on-site training for graduates. In addition, we have realised four new qualifications (BTEC, City & Guilds, NVQ, HNC) ranging from Level 2 to Level 4+ with further support in place to complete them in the coming years.

A strong focus on training and workforce development is evident through 120 hours of diversity training delivered to consultants, contractors, and subcontractors, as well as 483 hours of health and safety training provided to subcontractors. The programme has further supported 24 work placements for school pupils, college learners, and university students.

The contract has contributed significantly to the local economy, with £1.6 million spent through the local supply chain and local SMEs. Beyond economic benefits, we have donated equipment and resources worth £326 to voluntary, community, and social enterprise organisations, and provided £2,500 in donations or in-kind contributions such as plant and materials to local community projects.

Sustainable and Active Travel Budget Comparisons: 2025-26 and 2026-27

During the Committee session, members queried the comparison of the 2025-26 and 2026-27 Sustainable and Active Travel budget. The budget allocation is £226 million in 2026-27. This comprises £12.4 million resource and £213.6 million capital and will deliver sustainable and active travel programmes including the Bus Infrastructure Fund.

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The 2025-26 budget allocation was £164.8 million (£12.4 million resource; £152.4 million capital). In addition to this, in 2025-26, there was £23.9 million allocated in the level 2 'central government grants' line for Cycling, Walking & Safer Routes, making the total 2025-26 original budget allocation for Sustainable and Active Travel £188.7 million. The 2026-27 budget allocation of £226 million is an increase of £37.3 million (20%) from the total 2025-26 allocation.

Low Carbon Level 4 Breakdown

Committee members asked for a breakdown of the Low Carbon level 4 budget. The 2026-27 Scottish Budget provides £85 million for Low Carbon Programmes, which will deliver EV consumer incentives programmes, the EV Infrastructure Fund, the HGV decarbonisation programme, the Freight Facilities Grant, ScotZEB, the Plugged In Communities Fund to help community groups switch to EVs, transport just transition skills and economy projects, and the Low Emission Zone Support Fund. Final allocations for these programmes will be determined as part of the internal budget setting process ahead of the financial year.

Private jet tax income

Since the Committee I have written to the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government to ask her to write to the Committee on the levels of income expected from private jet tax.

I trust this information is helpful for the Committee.

Yours sincerely,



FIONA HYSLOP
Cabinet Secretary for Transport

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St Andrew's House, Regent Road, Edinburgh EH1 3DG
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