

Call for Evidence
Implications of COVID-19 for the Scottish budget related to connectivity and the rural economy

The Rural Economy and Connectivity Committee invites all interested individuals and organisations to submit written evidence on the implications of COVID-19 for the Scottish budget as this relates to the rural economy and connectivity in Scotland.

The Committee has previously issued a general [call for written evidence](#) on the impact of COVID-19 on the rural economy and connectivity in Scotland. Responses received can be accessed on the [Committee website](#).

This new call for written evidence is specifically focused on the financial implications of COVID-19 on policy areas falling within the Committee's remit. Responses received will inform the Committee's pre-budget scrutiny which is designed to influence the formation of the Scottish Government's subsequent draft budget, and to examine the outcomes being derived from public spending.

In particular, you are invited to respond to the following questions:

In relation to the rural economy:

1. In light of the impact of COVID-19 on the rural economy, how can future budgets best be deployed to develop resilient rural businesses, communities and supply chains?
2. Is Brexit likely to pose additional challenges for the rural economy in recovering from the impacts of COVID-19 and how should funding best be allocated to support recovery of the rural economy in this context?

In relation to connectivity:

3. What, if any, specific financial support should the Scottish Government provide to transport operators while social distancing measures remain in places and passenger-carrying capacity remains significantly reduced as a consequence?
4. What are the implications for future Scottish budgets of action already taken to provide financial support to public transport operators during the COVID-19 lockdown and how could these implications be addressed?
5. How can future budgets best be deployed to lock in the shift towards active travel that has occurred during lockdown and to support the Scottish Government's goal for modal switch, increasing the use of public transport and to reduce private car use?

6. In light of the specific impacts of COVID-19 on the ferries network in Scotland, what should be the Scottish Government's long-term funding plans for vessel procurement to support a revised Ferries Plan?

In relation to both the rural economy and connectivity:

7. What are the implications for the Scottish budget related to these policy areas of the Scottish Government's stated intention to ensure a "green recovery" and to build a "wellbeing economy" after the COVID-19 crisis?
8. Are lessons learned during the pandemic likely to lead to major shifts in future Scottish Government spending in these areas and, if so, what should these shifts look like?

How to submit your evidence

Before making a submission, please read our [Policy on Treatment of Written Evidence by Subject and Mandatory Committees](#).

Please submit your response **no later than Friday 18 September**.

Responses should be sent, wherever possible, electronically and in MS Word format to: rec.committee@parliament.scot

Hard copy responses may be sent to: *Rural Economy and Connectivity Committee, T3.60, Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh EH99 1SP*

Ideally, responses should be **no more than four sides of A4 in length**.

All written evidence received may be published by the Parliament and will be treated as a public document. If you wish to submit evidence in confidence or anonymously please read the policy at the link above or contact Alex Bruce, details below.

Contact

Should you require alternative formats of this information or further assistance in making a written submission to the Committee, please do not hesitate to contact the clerking team of the Committee.

For Committee information, contact: Steve Farrell, email:

rec.committee@parliament.scot

For information about submitting evidence in confidence or anonymously,

contact: Alex Bruce, email: alex.bruce@parliament.scot

For further information, the media contact is: Baktosch Gillan, email:

baktosch.gillan@parliament.scot

For general enquiries, contact: email: sp.info@scottish.parliament.uk

Further information on how laws are passed:

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/visitandlearn/100529.aspx>