

Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee
Tuesday 14 January 2025
2nd Meeting, 2025 (Session 6)

Evidence session with the Scottish Government on the Scottish Budget 2025-26

Background

1. On 18 December 2024, the Scottish Government introduced the [Budget \(Scotland\) No.4\) Bill](#). A Budget Bill is lodged annually to allow the Scottish Parliament to consider the Scottish Government's tax and public spending proposals before the new financial year begins in April. There is a discrete process for Budget Bills, as set out in Rule 9.16 of [Scottish Parliament Standing Orders](#).
2. The effect of the Bill, if agreed to, would be to implement the [Scottish Budget 2025-26](#). Supporting documentation and a more detailed breakdown of the budget within Cabinet Secretary portfolios, as well as the climate change and carbon assessments of the Budget [can be found via this Scottish Government link](#).
3. SPICe has published a full briefing on the [Scottish Budget 2025-26](#) alongside [broader budget research and infographics](#).

Pre-Budget Scrutiny by the Committee

4. The Committee's pre-budget scrutiny for 2025-26 has been concerned with—
 - Monitoring how the Scottish Government's requirement¹ to achieve a just transition² to net zero by 2045 is reflected in Budget spending; and
 - How the Scottish Government spending in 2024-25, and longer-term spending plans, align with the Climate Change Committee's (CCC) "balanced pathway" to net zero.³
5. The Committee's 8 November pre-budget scrutiny [letter](#) focused on:
 - the Scottish Government's approach to policy making and prioritisation, as well as wider governance arrangements; and

¹ <https://www.gov.scot/policies/climate-change/>

² The concept of a "just transition" to net zero by 2045 focuses on achieving climate goals in a way that is fair and inclusive, ensuring that no one is left behind.

³ The CCC's "balanced pathway" to net zero is a series of carbon budgets that will reduce the UK's greenhouse gas emissions and put the country on a path to reach net zero by 2050 that was designed to provide choice and flexibility to decision makers. It is a central pathway that can be contrasted with a more conservative scenario (termed "headwinds") and a more optimistic pathway at the limits of what is feasible (termed "tailwinds").

- spending for those sectors highlighted by the CCC where progress is lagging and where more targeted action is needed to accelerate change.
6. The Scottish Government responded to the Committee's letter on [5 December](#).
 7. In early July 2024, the Committee also wrote to every Scottish Government Cabinet Secretary to ascertain how they are ensuring that they meet the Scottish Government's overriding net zero goals. These letters and their responses are available on the [Committee correspondence webpages](#).
 8. While not formally pre-budget scrutiny, the Committee held a wide-ranging evidence session with the Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero and Energy on [28 May](#) that included budgetary considerations in relation to several areas of her portfolio.
 9. Budget issues were also discussed with the Acting Cabinet Secretary in her [Stage 1 evidence](#) on the Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Bill, having been raised by stakeholders throughout Stage 1 scrutiny.

Oral evidence on the Scottish Budget 2025-26

10. The Committee agreed on 17 December to invite the Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero and Energy and the Cabinet Secretary for Transport to each give evidence on the impact of the 2025-26 budget proposals on matters within their remit. The Cabinet Secretary for Transport will give evidence on 21 January.

Next steps

11. The evidence taken by the Committee in January does not formally amount to Stage 1 evidence on the Budget Bill, scrutiny of which falls formally to the Finance and Public Administration Committee. However, by taking evidence in this way, the Committee contributes to the general public discussion around the Scottish Government's budget plans for next year, and seeks to influence the final content of the budget before the Scottish Parliament is asked to pass the Bill.
12. These sessions also form part of the Committee's rolling programme of evidence-gathering on core matters within its remit relating to energy, transport and the environment, and on the funding necessary to ensure that policies and strategic goals in these areas can be delivered. This includes the overall goal of achieving net zero in carbon emissions in Scotland by 2045.

Clerks to the Committee January 2025