

Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Net Zero and Just
Transition
Mairi McAllan MSP



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Liam McArthur MSP
Chair of the Convener's Group
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
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To: ConvenersGroup@parliament.scot

19th December 2023

Dear Liam,

I am writing in response to correspondence from the Minister for Parliamentary Business on 27 November, this was following a private session he had held with the Convener's Group. The Minister flagged two queries during this session from Edward Mountain MSP and Richard Leonard MSP which I include responses to below.

In response to Mr Mountain's query regarding the draft Climate Change Plan (CCP), Mr Mountain will be aware from previous correspondence that we regrettably made the decision to delay the draft plan being laid before Parliament in November 2023.

The Scottish Government are continuing to develop climate policies and are fully committed to bringing forward a draft of the next Climate Change Plan, covering the period 2025 to 2040, which ensures our transition to net zero is fair and just for everyone. Whilst it was regrettably not possible to produce a draft by our own November deadline, we will progress in line with statutory deadlines.

Under the terms of section 35 of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act the deadline for laying a final Plan in Parliament covering the period 2025 to 2040 is 23 March 2025. Also under the terms of the Act, we must allow 120 days for Parliamentary scrutiny of a draft (of which no fewer than 60 must be days on which the Parliament is not dissolved or in recess). Therefore, the legal deadline for laying a draft of our Plan is not until the latter part of 2024. I will keep Parliament informed of our progress and hope to firm up dates for laying the draft next year.

Regarding the query from Mr Leonard, I can advise that, following the Joint Scottish Government and Scottish Parliament review of the budget on matters relating to climate (JBR), we are in the process of putting three recommended strands of work into place. Strand 1 is the dedicated climate annex of the Scottish Budget - this was first published for Budget 2023-24 and provided increased scrutiny and transparency on how spending decisions are supporting the journey to net zero. As part of the suite of documents for Budget 2024-25 we will be publishing a refreshed annex. For strand 2, Scottish Government officials have been

developing a revised approach to a climate impact taxonomy for budget lines - this will be applied to level 4 spending lines in the 2024-25 Budget across both resource and capital spend. The dedicated climate annex will set out the changes made to the taxonomy methodology and how this has been developed.

Finally, for strand 3 we are establishing a net zero assessment which will support and influence the development of policies. The pilot of the net zero assessment is due to commence before the end of 2023 – it will involve taking a broad sample of new and/or policies in development and applying the net zero assessment to the policy as part of its development. Once established it will be incorporated into the policy-making process appropriately and proportionately.

Within Government we continue to improve and strengthen our cross government leadership and co-ordination. We now have a Portfolio that places Climate and Just Transition together for the first time; a Cabinet Sub Committee which was established in 2021 to provide a route through the civil service, the GCE Programme Board and Ministers, alongside a Net Zero Director General role also established in 2021. All three are responsible for leading the Scottish Government's work on supporting the delivery of net zero targets and adaptation outcomes, and providing that strong leadership across Government, as recognised by the Audit Scotland report of April 2023: "How the Scottish Government is set up to deliver climate change goals." The twin challenges of climate change and biodiversity loss require not just active and determined leadership, but all the experience and focus that the public sector can bring to governance, planning and delivery – we continue to take action to do this.

I am copying this letter to the Minister for Parliamentary Business.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mairi McCallan', with a stylized flourish at the end.

MAIRI MCCALLAN