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Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee

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30th July 2024

Dear Edward,

SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT BUDGET 2025/2026 – Constitution External Affairs and Culture

Thank you for your letter in relation to budget 2025/26 and to the Scottish Government's strategic spending to achieve the Climate Change Committee's "balanced pathway" to a net-zero Scotland by 2045.

The Constitution, External Affairs & Culture portfolio engages at home and internationally to enhance Scotland's reputation and increase our economic success, prosperity and wellbeing. We also promote Scotland as a great place to live, visit, work, study and do business.

This portfolio is responsible for our constitutional policy and strategy, managing our global affairs network and supporting the culture sector. It is also responsible for the funding of the National Records of Scotland and the British Irish Council.

We remain committed to being a good global citizen and to playing our part in tackling global challenges, including climate change, poverty, injustice and inequality.

The Scottish Government is currently considering its approach to the 25-26 Scottish Budget, and details will be available when the new Scottish Budget is published.

The First Minister has made tackling the climate crisis one of his top priorities for the Government. I will continue to support this through my portfolio budget.

Within our funding envelope the CEAC portfolio has invested in activities that will have a positive impact on delivery of our climate change goals and will continue to seek opportunities to do so in the 25/26 budget.

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External Affairs

Through our international work we support the National Strategy for Economic Transformation and the transition to Net Zero, highlighting the opportunities to build a hydrogen economy.

The external network of offices have outlined, on the SG website, how they will contribute to Scotland's climate change, biodiversity and renewable energy objectives in 2023/24. These will shortly be updated for 2024/25 and reviewed for 2025/26 activity. This is one of three priorities for our overseas network and takes up overall at least a third of our overseas activity. This also relates to trade and investment another one of our priorities, particularly with respect to energy, and so in reality the staff time and effort on this agenda of all of our nine offices is likely to be above that figure.

We consider climate impact across all aspects of Scotland's International Development programme, in 2024/25 budgeted at £11.5 million, though the majority of direct climate spend is spent through the Climate Justice Fund. One specific aspect of spend for the International Development Fund is the commitment to spend £200k pa to support the international component of the Scottish Government Global Renewable Centre (GRC), to fund the Malawi, Zambia and Rwandan partner based activities. The Scottish GRC partner Strathclyde University is funded by DG Net Zero.

We established the GRC in 2022, with its launch announced by Minister for International Development in May 2022. The GRC provides a hub for facilitating knowledge exchange between stakeholders in international development partner countries and the Scottish renewables sector, offering networking, shared learning, and resources that enhance global citizenship and enables increased deployment of sustainable energy.

Historic Environment Scotland

The Historic Environment has a key role to play in tackling the climate emergency and realising a just transition to net zero. SG Resource and Capital "Grant in Aid" funding to Historic Environment Scotland's enables the organisation to invest in running and maintaining its properties, lowering their carbon emissions, delivering grants for the transition to net zero for the historic environment and continuing research on Climate Change and Net Zero.

Culture

SG's commitment to a further £100m for culture by 2028/2029 will also contribute to Net Zero. As part of the increase in 2024/25 which is subject to ongoing internal approval, Creative Scotland (CS) are planning to use £385k for work in relation to Net Zero. In particular they propose to use this funding to launch initiatives which will directly support sector organisations to respond to the climate emergency including:

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- Building on current research work to map the net zero readiness of Scotland's cultural estate, CS propose to fund a group of Net-Zero buildings pathfinders. A cohort of cultural organisations would act as pathfinders to test and clarify the 'what' and 'how' of a just net zero transition and the potential to balance organisational sustainability with net zero aspirations. They intend to launch this Open Access Fund later in the financial year, following the conclusion of the multi-year programme.
- A targeted fund will support the sector to record and understand their audience travel emissions and draft transport plans (for staff, performers, and audiences) that respond to local climate risk.
- A national Net Zero Adjustments Incentive fund for cultural, community cinemas and film exhibition venues, delivered in partnership with sector bodies including Film Hub Scotland, BECTU and UK Cinemas Association. The programme will provide incentives and information to enable organisations to achieve a triple benefit of reducing impact and emissions, reducing outgoings (through lower energy bills, circular economy systems and reduced outgoings) and improved customers experience (thanks to low energy laser projectors, improved HVAC systems etc.).

In 2025/26 in the CEAC portfolio and across Government we will continue to support businesses and people in Scotland so they can share in the enormous economic and job opportunities of the global transition to net zero.

Best wishes,

Angus Robertson

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