

# Parliamentary Bureau – Correspondence from the Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee

## Introduction

1. The Bureau considered a letter from the Citizens Participation and Public Petitions Committee (CPPPC) at its meeting on 4 February. The Committee's letter invited the Bureau to consider the establishment of a new committee, focused on scrutiny of the A9 dualling programme, in the current session.
2. The Bureau agreed to seek the view of the Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee (NZETC) before deciding how to proceed and a response from the NZETC is set out in the Annexe to this paper.

## Bureau consideration

3. The Bureau is invited to consider its response to the CPPPC's request that a new Committee be established.

Parliamentary Business Team  
March 2025

Rt Hon Alison Johnstone MSP  
Presiding Officer  
Chair – Parliamentary Bureau

**3 March 2025**

Dear Presiding Officer,

## **A9 dualling project- parliamentary scrutiny**

Thank you for your letter of 6 February, which the Committee discussed at our 25 February meeting.

The NZET Committee welcomes scrutiny by the Citizen’s Participation and Public Petitions Committee of the A9 dualling project in 2023-24, during a period when the NZET Committee was very busy with other work (mainly legislation) and would not have had time to consider this matter to the same level of detail.

The NZET Committee would not support setting up an A9 Committee over the remainder of this session. The dualling of the A9 and the delays and cost overruns associated with that project are clearly matters of great public importance. This is also true of other infrastructure-related transport matters, such as problems with our ferry fleet. To set up an A9 Committee would seem to risk either taking an inconsistent approach in how the Parliament keeps watch over capital projects or, alternatively, setting a precedent that would be difficult to sustain.

The CPPP Committee’s work on the A9 does however highlight an important underlying issue: the lack in this session of a committee with the specific role of considering transport and associated major infrastructure projects. In developing this point, it may help to outline the main aspects of the NZET Committee’s own remit:

- Overall cross-portfolio scrutiny of progress in achieving net zero in emissions by 2045
- Energy
- Environment and biodiversity
- Land reform
- Transport
- Waste management and circular economy
- Water regulation and provision
- Associated Parliamentary oversight of relevant public bodies: ESS, SEPA, NatureScot, Royal Botanic Gardens, Scottish Land Commission, Scottish Water, Water industry Commissioner for Scotland, Zero Waste Scotland, etc, including oversight (in many cases) of public appointments to those bodies.

Since the Scottish Parliament was re-established in 1999, there had always been a transport committee, in recognition of the importance transport has in the everyday lives of people and the size of the transport budget. It is not clear why a different approach was taken in this session nor why, when the Scottish Government in 2022

restored Transport as a distinct, separate, cabinet position (a change in which the Committee considers we played a part<sup>1</sup>) this was not taken as an opportunity to make a corresponding update to our committee structures.

The Committee accepts that this quite late point in Session 6 is not a good time to re-establish a transport and infrastructure committee but we hope this can be addressed at the start of Session 7. That new committee would then be in a strong position to take forward the CPPP Committee's work on the A9, alongside other major issues concerning buses, trains, ferries, aviation, roads, active travel, and associated capital projects, plus work to decarbonise the transport sector.

If the Parliament determines not to establish an A9 Committee over the rest of this session, the NZET Committee commits to use whatever opportunity it can to carry on the valuable work on the A9 the CPPP Committee has started. The regular reports on A9 progress that the Scottish Government has now committed to provide are one obvious "hook" on which to hang that future work. The CPPP Committee invited a NZET Committee Member to act as reporter during their inquiry; an invitation I was pleased to accept, and I would also be pleased to reciprocate that arrangement going forward so as to help both committees share their institutional memory on this matter over the remainder of this session.

I hope this reply is helpful. I have copied it to the CPPP Convener. I would be grateful if the Committee could be kept updated as to the Bureau's thinking on this matter.

Yours sincerely,

**Edward Mountain MSP**  
**Convener**  
**Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee**

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<sup>1</sup> In our report on a [A Modern and Sustainable Ferry Service for Scotland](#)