

Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government  
Rùnaire a' Chaibineit airson Ionmhas agus Riaghaltas  
Ionadail

Shona Robison MSP  
Seòna Robastan BPA



Scottish Government  
Riaghaltas na h-Alba  
gov.scot

F/T: 0300 244 4000  
E: [scottish.ministers@gov.scot](mailto:scottish.ministers@gov.scot)

Kenneth Gibson MSP  
Convener  
Finance and Public Administration Committee  
The Scottish Parliament  
Edinburgh  
EH99 1SP

By email to: [fpa.committee@parliament.scot](mailto:fpa.committee@parliament.scot)

21 May 2024

Dear Convener,

## **PUBLICATION OF THE 2024 MEDIUM-TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY**

I am writing to engage with the Committee on the new publication date for the 2024 Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), following my letter of 7 May, and to respond to the Committee's letter of 9 May.

I previously notified the Committee that the publication of the 2024 MTFS, the draft Tax Strategy and the Infrastructure Investment Plan (IIP) annual report and pipeline refresh would be postponed, pending the appointment of a new First Minister.

Due to this postponement, the Scottish Government will not meet the timeframe as set out in the Written Agreement between the Committee and the Scottish Government, which sets an expectation of publication at least 4 weeks prior to summer recess.

I am aware of the importance of the MTFS in informing the Committee's pre-budget scrutiny and seek to balance this with the time needed for Scottish Ministers to take relevant policy decisions both to shape the MTFS publication and also achieve the Scottish Fiscal Commission's (SFC) timetable for publication of their Economic and Fiscal Forecasts.

I therefore propose a new publication date for the Medium-Term Financial Strategy, the draft Tax Strategy and the Infrastructure Investment Plan (IIP) annual report and pipeline refresh of 20 June 2024. My officials have discussed this date with the SFC to ensure that it is deliverable within the timetable agreed as part of the shared protocol, and I have written to Professor Roy today on this basis to allow the forecasting process to resume.

As noted in your letter of 9 May, the Committee is due to take evidence on the Medium-Term Financial Strategy and SFC's Economic and Fiscal Forecasts on 18 June. I recognise that a publication date of 20 June will require this evidence session to be delayed, and I do regret

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the inconvenience caused to the Committee as we approach summer recess. I will appreciate any flexibility you can show in adjusting the timing of this session, and understand there may be an option of rescheduling it to 25 June. I would be grateful if you could confirm your preference for a rescheduled scrutiny session as soon as possible. I welcome the opportunity to discuss my portfolio priorities at this session, as per your letter.

I trust that the Committee will support the new publication date of 20 June, recognising the need for the in-coming First Minister to take a view on critical policy issues and align the fiscal strategy with the Government's wider approach.

Looking beyond MTFS, I also note your request for a private meeting to discuss the timetable for publication and scrutiny of the Scottish Budget and other relevant Scottish Government publications. I would be happy to have an initial discussion prior to summer recess and my Private Office will be in touch to schedule this.

I continue to support a parliamentary debate on longer term fiscal sustainability. This debate would most helpfully take place after the publication of the MTFS. Given the proximity of the MTFS publication to summer recess, I would propose to prioritise scheduling this debate after summer recess.

Once again, I would like to thank the Committee for their continued scrutiny and engagement and look forward to building on our constructive and positive relationship.

I have copied this letter to the SFC for information.

Yours Sincerely,

**SHONA ROBISON**

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