

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

Edward Mountain MSP  
Convenor of the Net Zero, Energy and Transport  
Committee  
E: [netzero.committee@parliament.scot](mailto:netzero.committee@parliament.scot)

18 December 2024

Dear Edward,

Thank you for your correspondence of 6 November 2024 to the Deputy First Minister regarding the Committee's input into the inquiry on the review of the proposed National Outcomes. The feedback from the Committee will be helpful as the Scottish Government finalises and implements the next iteration of the National Performance Framework (NPF).

### **Environment Outcome**

I welcome the Committee's support for the revision to the Environment outcome to reflect the need to proactively restore the natural environment and recognise the importance of biodiversity. You highlighted several additional suggestions that could be included within the outcome, and we will consider these further as we finalise the National Outcomes.

In addition, our recently published Scottish Biodiversity Strategy has acknowledged the need for urgent action and sets out a range of ways in which we will ensure that is delivered, over and above the detailed range of actions set out in our Delivery Plan. These include enhanced governance arrangements, plans for mainstreaming biodiversity in a wider range of Government policies, investment and public engagement, and a proposal to introduce statutory targets for nature restoration through our Natural Environment Bill.

### **Climate Action Outcome**

I am pleased to note the Committee's support for the new Climate Action outcome and the additional observations shared from the responses to the Finance and Public Administration Committee's call for views. As with those highlighted in relation to the Environment outcome, they will be considered as work to implement the revised NPF progresses.

I agree that it is important this ambition is matched with tangible action. This government's commitment to ending Scotland's contribution to global emissions as soon as possible, and by 2045 at the latest with our net zero target, is unwavering. To that end, I am delighted the Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Bill has now received Royal Assent. This Act moves us to a carbon budget approach and maintains annual reporting on

Scottish Ministers, special advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See [www.lobbying.scot](http://www.lobbying.scot)

emissions and our commitment to the just transition principles. It underpins our drive for credible, deliverable climate action across the portfolios of government.

Successive budgets have demonstrated Scotland's commitment to addressing the twin crises of climate change and biodiversity loss, using all the power and resources at our disposal to accelerate the just transition to a net zero, climate-resilient and biodiverse Scotland. Between 1990 and 2022 our emissions halved while the economy grew by 66.2%, demonstrating that a thriving economy and falling emissions are not just compatible, but can support each other.

We know the scale of change needed for the next part of our journey is significant. Delivering our net zero target by 2045 will require the transformation of our economy and society, underpinned by sustained investment, both public and private, in physical infrastructure.

That is why we are committing £4.9 billion in capital and resource for activities that will have a positive impact on delivery of our climate change goals in the 2025-26 Budget.

## **Alignment and Integration**

Your letter also emphasised the importance of alignment across National Outcomes and the importance of collaborative working to tackle climate change. I wholeheartedly agree that action to tackle climate change requires significant cross-portfolio, and cross-societal, working.

In the Programme for Government 2024-25, we committed to publishing Just Transition Plans for energy, transport, built environment and construction, and land use and agriculture. We have engaged and worked with interested parties across Scotland to make sure that the plans consider issues that are important to stakeholders. We have been working with sectoral teams across government to develop these plans, making sure that the just transition principles of a transition to net zero are embedded in policy making throughout the Scottish Government.

We also have a statutory duty to regularly report on progress towards the outcomes, which we do through the National Indicator Set. Although a review of the National Indicators does not fall within the scope of our statutory duty to review the National Outcomes, we want to ensure the indicator set remains fit for purpose and focussed on measuring progress towards the updated National Outcomes. Therefore, indicator development is required to ensure the indicator set best reflects the new National Outcomes. It may be helpful to note that as part of this work better use and reporting of cross-cutting indicators to evidence multiple outcomes and show the links between outcomes is also being explored.

## **Next steps**

As you will be aware, the Finance and Public Administration Committee's report on the inquiry has also now been published. The debate which follows will provide an opportunity to discuss the inquiry's findings, including the Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee's recommendations, in more detail.

The timetable for publishing the agreed National Outcomes, the associated Implementation Plan, and the National Indicators will be confirmed following conclusion of the inquiry.

Scottish Ministers, special advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See [www.lobbying.scot](http://www.lobbying.scot)

St Andrew's House, Regent Road, Edinburgh EH1 3DG  
[www.gov.scot](http://www.gov.scot)

**INVESTORS IN PEOPLE**<sup>™</sup>  
We invest in people Silver



Once again, I extend my thanks to the Committee for its consideration of the National Outcomes.

Yours sincerely,

**GILLIAN MARTIN**

Scottish Ministers, special advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See [www.lobbying.scot](http://www.lobbying.scot)

St Andrew's House, Regent Road, Edinburgh EH1 3DG  
[www.gov.scot](http://www.gov.scot)

**INVESTORS IN PEOPLE**<sup>™</sup>  
We invest in people Silver

