

Health, Social Care and Sport Committee
Tuesday, 17 December 2024
36th Meeting, 2024 (Session 6)

2025-26 Budget Scrutiny

Background

1. At its meeting on 25 June 2024, the Committee decided it would focus its pre-budget scrutiny for 2025-26 on the financial position of integration joint boards (IJBs) – with a key focus on the findings of the [Accounts Commission Finance and Performance report on Integration Join Boards](#), published 25 July 2024.
2. A targeted call for views was issued over the summer recess - running from 9 July 2024 to 20 August 2024. A total of [27 responses](#) were received and published on the Committee's webpages. Written submissions from [Public Health Scotland](#) and [Professor David Bell](#) were also received in advance of the Committee taking oral evidence.
3. The Committee then took oral evidence as part of its pre-budget scrutiny for 2025-26 at its meeting on [3 September 2024](#). The Committee heard evidence from two panels of witnesses comprising the following:

Panel 1

- Professor David Bell - Professor of Economics, University of Stirling;
- Michael Kellet - Director of Strategy, Governance and Performance, Public Health Scotland;
- Kathrine Sibbald, Senior Manager, Audit Scotland;

Panel 2

- Caroline Cameron, Chief Officer, North Ayrshire IJB;
 - Pat Togher, Chief Officer, Edinburgh IJB;
 - Sharon Wearing, Chair, Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA), Integrated Join Boards Chief Finance Officer Section.
4. The Committee concluded its pre-budget scrutiny by publishing a [pre-budget scrutiny report on 14 October 2024](#).
 5. On [10 September 2024](#), the Committee held an evidence session on the proposed National Outcomes as part of the Scottish Government's five-year review of the National Performance Framework. This session also touched on a number of budget-related issues. The Committee published a [report on its](#)

[scrutiny of the Scottish Government's proposed National Outcomes](#) on 4 November 2024.

6. The [Scottish Government provided a response to the Committee's pre-budget scrutiny report](#) on 4 December 2024. The Annex to this response sets out detailed responses to the key conclusions and recommendations contained in the Committee's report.
7. The Scottish Government published the [Scottish Budget for 2025-26](#) on 4 December 2024. SPICe published an [initial blog analysis of the budget](#) on the same day, with more detailed briefings and blog analysis to follow in due course.
8. It is important to note that the presentation of the budget data has changed this year. Budget documents normally present the proposed budget compared with the budget that was proposed the previous year (budget-budget presentation). This year, the proposed budget for 2025-26 is presented alongside the latest budget position for 2024-25 i.e. following [Autumn Budget Revisions that were set out in October 2024](#). This has important implications for interpretation of the budget information, especially for the health and social care portfolio.
9. For the health and social care portfolio, this means that the 2024-25 baseline figures reflect some in-year transfers that have taken place – most significantly to local government in respect of social care. There were also additions to the health and social care portfolio made at the 2024-25 Autumn Budget Revision (deployment of underspends and application of some Barnettts).
10. Furthermore, the Scottish Government received significant levels of Barnett consequential as a result of the UK budget of October 2024 (£1.5 billion for 2024-25 and £3.4 billion for 2025-26). These will be included in the Scottish Government's planned spending for 2025-26, but will not be reflected in the 2024-25 baseline as they will not be allocated until the 2024-25 Spring Budget Revision (likely to take place in January 2025).

Today's meeting

11. At today's meeting, Members will have an opportunity to put questions to the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care, Neil Gray MSP, regarding the Scottish Government's 2025-26 Budget as it relates to those policy areas falling within the Committee's remit.

**Clerks to Committee
December 2024**