

Briefing: Climate Change Bill, July 2017

Ensuring the Scottish Budget invests in our zero carbon future



We want the Scottish Government to put its money where its mouth is when it comes to meeting our climate change targets.

Literally.

We want to make sure that when the Scottish Government is deciding when and how to spend its budget – our money – that it's investing in our zero carbon future. **We can't afford to be short changed.**

There are three key steps we want the Government to take to make sure it's investing wisely in #OorFuture.

Show us the money

At the moment, the Scottish Government has a Climate Change Plan which outlines the next steps they'll take on the road towards our zero carbon future.

But as it stands, the Government doesn't have to say how much it's spending or planning to spend (if anything!) on specific initiatives to help achieve this plan.

That means when the Scottish Government sits down to plan its budget, it's not obliged to think about the Climate Change Plan. That means it's easy to forget and it's too easy for it to sit on the shelf, gathering dust. We want the new Climate Change Bill to legally require the Government to show us the money, and link its budget to the Climate Change Plan. That way, actually delivering the Climate Change Plan will become more of a priority and we'll be able to tell more easily if the Government's investing the money needed to achieve it in practice.

Put us in the picture

If we're going to know how the Scottish Government's doing in meeting its climate targets, then we need to be able to actually see the full picture. It's important that the Scottish Government publishes accurate, transparent and comprehensive information about the long-term carbon effect of its spending.

At the moment, a loophole in the existing law means that the data the Government publishes is far from comprehensive. This can have bizarre consequences, such as the new Forth Bridge appearing much better for the climate than the re-opening of the Borders Railway, because it used less concrete and steel to build.

Clearly looking at the building materials used only gives us half the story. Of course if you looked at the full picture, you'd also take into account the fact that the railway will get loads of cars off the road (great news for our climate targets) while the new bridge actually encourages more traffic.

If we're going to be properly informed about the true impact the Scottish Government's spending is having, we need to know the whole story. That's why it's important that Scotland's new Climate Change Bill makes sure the Scottish Government is required to put us in the picture, and give us a comprehensive view of the impact its budget is having.

Set up a low carbon watchdog

If we're going to achieve Scotland's zero carbon vision, then we're going to have to change some of Scotland's key infrastructure. That means building more energy efficient homes, new district heating networks, more walking and cycling paths, and new public transport infrastructure.

To help achieve these changes, we want the new Climate Change Bill to establish a new, independent low carbon infrastructure commission. The commission's main job would be to advise the Government on what sort of new infrastructure projects are needed but it'd also have an important watchdog role to keep an eye on how the Government's spending our money to make sure it's investing in our low-carbon future.

We know what the benefits are of the Scottish Government investing in a low carbon future and including these three simple steps in its new Climate Change Bill: cleaner air, warmer homes, new jobs and investment opportunities.

But we need your help to make it happen. Ask the Scottish Government to put its money where its mouth is on climate change. Take action now,

Find out more about the other things we'd like to see in the new Climate Change Bill [here](#).