

Built Environment Forum Scotland (BEFS) is an umbrella body for organisations working in the built environment in Scotland. Drawing on extensive expertise in a membership-led forum, BEFS informs, debates and advocates on the strategic issues, opportunities and challenges facing Scotland’s existing built environment. BEFS is a supporting member of the [Climate Heritage Network](#).

Other relevant consultation responses from BEFS can be seen below, as many issues overlap and demand associative consideration:

- [Draft Heat in Buildings Strategy, Achieving Net Zero Emissions in Scotland’s Buildings Consultation](#)
- [Developing Scotland’s circular economy](#)
- [Housing to 2040](#)
- [Domestic Energy Performance Certificates \(EPC\) reform: consultation](#)
- [NPF4 Committee for Local Government, Housing and Planning – call for views](#)
- [The Role of Local Government and its cross sectoral partners in financing and delivering a net-zero Scotland](#)

BEFS will be responding only to relevant questions of the consultation, as below:

## Part One – Carbon budgets

### 1. Do you agree or disagree with the proposed shift to 5-yearly carbon budgets (in place of current system of annual targets)?

Please set out any advantages or disadvantages of a 5 yearly carbon budget approach in Scotland

Please set out any advantages or disadvantages of retaining the current annual target system

Concerning the ways in which an annual target system is useful, HES outlines the following in their publication [Sustaining Our Future to Protect Our Past](#);

*‘An annual carbon budget is set against each year, representing a guide to how much carbon may be ‘spent’ in each year of the plan in order to stay on track. An annual change and change from baseline (in per cent) [...] can be utilised to illustrate year-on-year performance as well as informing annual corporate KPI targets. Actual performance is measured against the targets cumulative budget saved. As performance is measured cumulatively, this means that any ‘under’ or ‘overspend’ in the interim years may be carried forward. This approach ensures all years are considered in measuring performance, as well as evening out peaks and troughs in performance and reducing exposure to risk from specific events.’*

### 2. What are your views on the advantages and disadvantages of carbon budgets / targets being expressed as a percentage reduction or as absolute levels of emissions?

Not answered

### 3. The Climate Change Committee (CCC) suggested that the Scottish Government should consider aligning the proposed 5 yearly carbon budgets with the periods that are used for UK carbon budgets (i.e. 2023-27, 2028 – 32, 2033-2037 and 2038-42). What are the advantages and disadvantages of alignment with UK carbon budget periods?

Not answered

**4. At the end of a carbon budget period, there can be a surplus or deficit of emissions reductions. What do you think the legislation should say about how future surplus or deficits in emission reductions are dealt with?**

BEFS suggests that legislation should require surplus to be allocated to sustainable carbon spending. Here, it is useful to note that Scotland's proportion of pre-1946 housing stock - 52% - is the highest in the world and therefore the need for maintenance will only grow. As BEFS has stated before, there is no policy within guidance or legislation such as the Climate Change Plan or its updated version that addresses the need to improve building condition through regular maintenance and repair. Until the need for buildings to be well maintained is addressed future governments will likely remain in a cycle of dealing with building neglect and decay that require carbon intensive interventions which would undermine the carbon targets set. We would highlight the National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) position statement that raises the need for carbon assessments in planning decisions, and maintain that this should be embedded within the Climate Change Plan, but also that housing stock maintenance be taken into account concerning the allocation of carbon budget surplus. Effective maintenance may mean that deficits, too, can be planned and accounted for more efficiently.

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BEFS notes previous comments in relation to a circular economy – it is known that construction and demolition accounts for around half of all waste produced in Scotland, with The Circular Economy Bill under-representing construction waste and the potential for reuse - and reiterates that building maintenance and repair should be seen as a preventative measure to reducing the need for new build, preventing both the creation of construction waste and the associated carbon costs.

We would reiterate comments made previously that current EPC baselines for traditionally constructed buildings are not reflective of their real-world performance. The inefficiencies of the EPC in relation to traditional buildings has been raised previously; the existing built environment is the most sustainable building resource we have, through the embodied energy present, and the potential for adaptation and reuse. BEFS considers that any changes to the EPC should reflect the embodied carbon inherent in existing and historic properties.

**5. In early 2025, the Climate Change Committee (CCC) will advise the UK on the level of its Seventh Carbon Budget. This is the legal limit for UK net emissions of greenhouse gases over the years 2038 to 2042.**

**The CCC have suggested that could be used as the basis for advice on appropriate levels for carbon budgets in Scotland.**

**The Cabinet Secretary told the Committee that this ‘might be the point at which we are able to have clarity on the targets, and I would want a plan to be produced very quickly thereafter’.**

- **Should the Scottish Government wait for the planned advice on the UK’s seventh carbon budget from the CCC, before setting their carbon budgets?**
- **Should the Scottish Government propose multiple 5-year carbon budgets in 2025 up to the year 2042?**
- **How soon after the Scottish Government has received advice from the CCC should it propose their carbon budgets?**
- **What should the process of parliamentary scrutiny look like for the laying of carbon budgets and plans for meeting budgets?**

BEFS maintains that the Government should be cognisant of the wider policy landscape and that various policies and strategies addressing climate and Net Zero targets, such as the Heat in Buildings Bill and associated legislation, should be considered in holistically for them to be truly effective in practice. This also applies to Parliamentary scrutiny which should involve reviewing the carbon budget against relevant policies and strategies. This ensures that it is in alignment with relevant legislative frameworks such as the National Planning Framework, and strategies for the Scottish Circular Economy, for example.

## Part Two – Climate Change Plan

**6. Under the current statutory regime, the legal deadline for laying a draft of the Climate Change Plan (CCP) is November 2024. This Plan was due to apply to the period of 2025-2040. The Scottish Government intends to use the Bill to change the timing for the production of the CCP.**

- **Do you have views on when and how the Scottish Government should publish their plans for meeting the proposed carbon budgets?**
- **What period should the next Climate Change Plan cover?**
- **Do you think the current requirements for Climate Change Plans within the existing legislation provide an effective regulatory framework?**
- **Are there any other aspects of the current legal framework for the creation of Climate Change Plans that you think should be updated?**

Not answered

## Part Three: Monitoring and reporting

**7. The Scottish Government has confirmed that their annual reporting on progress towards targets will be retained. The CCC have however, suggested that if 5-yearly budgets are adopted in Scotland, CCC reporting may move from a system of annual Scottish ‘Progress’ reports to two dedicated reports on Scottish progress every 5 years.**

- **What are your views on whether there should be changes to the existing Scottish Government monitoring and reporting framework?**
- **What are your views on the potential changes to the level of Scottish reporting provided by the CCC?**

Not answered

**8. A Bill, according to the Standing Orders of the Scottish Parliament, must “..be accompanied by a Financial Memorandum which sets out best estimates of the costs, savings, and changes to revenues to which the provisions of the Bill would give rise, and an indication of the margins of uncertainty in such estimates.” (Rule 9.3.2).**

- **The 2045 target will not be amended. How much do you estimate it would cost to achieve that target?**
- **Are current spending levels on policies to achieve this in line with what is required?**

Not answered

**Budget**

- **How can the Scottish Government use this year's Budget to ensure all portfolio areas are focused on achieving the 2045 target?**

BEFS reiterates the importance of investing in not only retrofit, but also maintenance and repair of Scotland's historic and existing building stock alongside maintenance of retrofitted buildings. It is also pertinent to remember that investment in green skills relating to maintenance and repair is integral to the wellbeing, regeneration, and economy of Scotland, as part of the Circular Economy. Providing portfolios both directly and indirectly relevant to the existing built environment with the means to support regeneration and investment will help ensure that the 2045 target can be met in addition to contributing to materialising a truly sustainable Scotland 25, 50, and 100 years beyond 2045.

- **Has the inclusion of a Climate Change Assessment of the Budget improved outcomes and progress towards a target?**
- **What are your views on the presentation of the Climate Change Assessment and are there any changes you would like to see to this?**

BEFS considers that up to date and accessible data is essential towards enabling joined up action towards reaching national climate change targets.

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BEFS responses to a number of Consultations in relation to the Built Environment can be found at:

<https://www.befs.org.uk/resources/consultations/>

**RESPONDENT INFORMATION**

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The Scottish Government would like your permission to publish your consultation response. Please indicate your publishing preference: **Publish response with name**

We will share your response internally with other Scottish Government policy teams who may be addressing the issues you discuss. They may wish to contact you again in the future, but we require your permission to do so. Are you content for Scottish Government to contact you again in relation to this consultation exercise? **YES**

I confirm that I have read the privacy policy and consent to the data I provide being used as set out in the policy. **I CONSENT**