

SCOTTISH CHAMBERS OF
COMMERCE NETWORK



The Chamber

WEST LOTHIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

2023-2024

SCOTTISH

GOVERNMENT

PROGRAMME FOR

GOVERNMENT

SUMMARY

On Tuesday 5th September 2023, First Minister Humza Yousaf announced his first Programme for Government for 2023-24, which he described as anti-poverty and pro-growth.

One of the key announcements for business was to implement the recommendations of the New Deal for Business Group, which the Chamber network has been heavily involved in.

This includes steps to identifying and remove regulations that are no longer required, establishing a new Small Business Unit and considering improvements to the Non-Domestic Rates system.

Some of the other announcements around business, the economy, and related areas have been included in this summary document:

Supporting businesses and the economy: Page 3

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The Scottish Government has committed to drive forward a programme of targeted export support and promotion, including supporting the Scottish Chambers of Commerce International Trade Programme, implement our Sector Export Plans for life sciences, technology and renewables for developing and delivering a sector export plan for hydrogen, and improve the trade deals and arrangements within which Scottish importers and exporters operate.

SUPPORTING BUSINESS AND THE ECONOMY

A promise to implement the recommendations of the New Deal for Business Group, of which the Scottish Chambers of Commerce are a member. This will include:

WORKING WITH BUSINESS TO IDENTIFY AND REMOVE REGULATIONS THAT ARE NO LONGER REQUIRED

ENSURING THAT BUSINESSES ARE ENGAGED FROM THE EARLIEST STAGE OF POLICY DEVELOPMENT

ESTABLISHING A NEW SMALL BUSINESS UNIT TO ENSURE THAT THE INTERESTS OF SMALL BUSINESSES ARE ALWAYS CONSIDERED

- Working with partners to transform the way the Government and their agencies provide support to small businesses and to help businesses raise productivity and reduce costs
- Considering improvements to the Non-Domestic Rates system - work is ongoing with the New Deal group on this

A NEW £15 MILLION PACKAGE OF MEASURES WAS PROMISED TO SUPPORT ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND INNOVATION, INCLUDING CONTINUED WORK TO IMPLEMENT THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE LOGAN REVIEW, THE INNOVATION STRATEGY, AND ANNA STEWART'S REPORT ON SUPPORTING WOMEN INTO ENTERPRISE

- Working with partners to transform the way the Government and their agencies provide support to small businesses and to help businesses raise productivity and reduce costs
- Considering improvements to the Non-Domestic Rates system - work is ongoing with the New Deal group on this
- A dedicated Investment Unit will be established within the Scottish Government to act on the forthcoming recommendations of the First Minister's Investor Panel and to provide a clear route for investor engagement
- A commitment was made to work with the UK Government on promoting growth, including a discussion of some of the recent recommendations from the Hunter Foundation around using tax incentives and wider economic policy to support investment in key areas such as renewables
- Recognising the role of childcare in helping parents return to work, benefiting families as well as the wider economy, the Programme promised to extend and simplify childcare provision, with expanded access to funded childcare for 13,000 more children and families by the end of this Parliament

ON TRANSPORT, HOUSING AND INFRASTRUCTURE

A HOUSING BILL WILL LOOK TO INTRODUCE LONG TERM RENT CONTROLS, NEW TENANTS' RIGHTS, AND WILL CREATE NEW DUTIES AROUND THE PREVENTION OF HOMELESSNESS

COMMITTED TO INVESTING £752 MILLION THIS YEAR THROUGH THE AFFORDABLE HOUSING SUPPLY PROGRAMME, TO HELP MEET THE LONGER-TERM TARGET OF 110,000 AFFORDABLE HOMES BY 2032

CONTINUED INVESTMENT OF OVER £600 MILLION IN BROADBAND NETWORKS WAS PROMISED, AS WELL AS THE LAUNCH OF A SEVENTH 5G INNOVATION HUB

- October will bring the start of a pilot scheme to remove peak fares from ScotRail services
- Promised to continue planning reform, including digital transformation of the system
- Various commitments were made around improving roads including progressing the dualling of the A9, as well as investing in ferry services
- Implementing the Active Travel Transformation Project: a commitment to £320 million in active travel investment in future budgets and continue the roll out of 20 miles per hour speed limits in built up areas, supporting physical and mental wellbeing as well as safety and emissions reduction.



- Publish a refreshed Rail Services Decarbonisation Action Plan, as well as electrifying the Glasgow to Barrhead Line, opening East Linton station and re-opening the line to Levenmouth, including new stations at Cameron Bridge and Leven.
- Supporting the operation of Low Emission Zones across our four largest cities by June 2024 to improve air quality and protect health, and continue supporting the growth of zero-emission vehicles on our roads and increasing charger numbers to 6,000 by 2026.

ON NET ZERO AND ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

ALMOST £5 BILLION OF INVESTMENT WILL GO INTO THE NET ZERO ENERGY ECONOMY IN SCOTLAND OVER THIS PARLIAMENTARY TERM

A GREEN INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY WILL BE DEVELOPED, SETTING OUT HOW THE SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT INTENDS TO HELP BUSINESSES AND INVESTORS REALISE THE ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES OF THE TRANSITION TO NET ZERO

GOVERNMENT WILL ESTABLISH A SECTOR DEAL WITH THE ONSHORE WIND INDUSTRY TO HALVE THE CONSENTING TIME FOR NEW WIND FARMS, WHILST ALSO STREAMLINING OFFSHORE WIND PROCESSES

- Committed to publishing a Solar Vision for Scotland, as well as continuing to implement the Hydrogen Action Plan
- Agreed to work with businesses to develop plans for the delivery of the Deposit Return Scheme from 2025, subject to UK Government legislation
- Set out how we will continue to drive down emissions in a draft Climate Change Plan, with bold action across transport, heat, our natural environment, and other areas, demonstrating how ambition will be realised while maximising opportunities for the economy, job creation, and health.
- Grow national network of regional Community Climate Action Hubs, supporting local communities to develop place-based approaches to reduce emissions and become more climate resilient.
- Host, with the First Minister, a meeting with key stakeholders to discuss ways forward to meet our climate ambitions ahead of COP28.
- Publish the final Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan and deliver Just Transition Plans for Built Environment and Construction, Land Use and Agriculture, and Transport, as well as a site Just Transition Plan for Grangemouth.
- Continue to deliver £50 million of investment in the North East and Moray through the Just Transition Fund to accelerate the region's Just Transition to net zero – with £25 million allocated to the Scottish National Investment Bank for 2023-24, to be invested on a commercial basis and in line with the Bank's Investment Strategy.



Full Programme for Government 2023 to 2024:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/programme-government-2023-24/>