

SCC Respond to the Scottish Budget for 2022-23

Responding to the Scottish Government's Budget for 2022-23, Dr Liz Cameron, Chief Executive of the Scottish Chambers of Commerce said:

“Scotland’s economy is recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic faster and stronger than many expected, and this budget offered the Scottish Government an opportunity to accelerate this return to growth.

“Whilst there was much to welcome in this budget the Scottish Government should have gone further to support Scotland’s businesses, the drivers of economic growth.

“Many economic deterrents as a result of the pandemic remain in place, impacting on footfall on our town and city centre high streets, driving down demand in our vital tourism and aviation sectors, and the looming threat of a return to greater level of restrictions is holding back investment. The Scottish Government should have provided assurances for businesses that targeted financial support will be made available to those ongoing affected sectors to deliver a clear pathway to recovery.”

On Non-Domestic Rates:

“Businesses will welcome the extension of rates reliefs afforded to properties in the retail, leisure, and hospitality sectors for an additional three months, however, this should have gone further to give businesses the time they need to recover from this incredibly challenging period.

“Scotland’s town and city centres have already lost thousands of businesses over the past twenty months and prolonged periods of home working have made the trading conditions for brick-and-mortar retailers tougher than ever, and many ratepayers will question if this extension goes far enough to support them.

“It was also disappointing that the Scottish Budget failed to confirm whether or not the long awaited NDR Revaluation due to take place in 2023 will go ahead as planned.”

Training, Skills and Supply Chain:

“Scotland’s businesses are still experiencing challenges through supply chain connectivity problems, rising cost prices, inflationary pressures, and recruitment difficulties.

“Additional funding for training interventions at all levels is welcome news and investment in Scotland’s workforce drive up business capacity and improve investment opportunities.

“Cost pressures and supply chain challenges require urgent action from government and whilst we await further details in the forthcoming National Economic Transformation Strategy, it’s important Scottish Government act now, collaborate with business and begin to resolve these issues as a priority for our economy.”

Energy and Just Transition:

"The energy sector remains a critical part of Scotland's economy and the funding commitments in the budget to support a Just Transition are a step in the right direction.

"To meet Scotland's Net Zero ambitions and secure the future of jobs in the energy sector and North and North-East though, this investment and funding needs to continue to be stepped up, at pace, in partnership with industry to enable businesses to pivot successfully."