

Coronavirus – advisory group publishes recommendations on the economic recovery

A report published today holds the key to a greener net zero wellbeing economy according to the group who wrote it, led by Benny Higgins.

They have recommended solutions for the challenges the economy will face after the Covid-19 pandemic passes by. The group's 25 recommendations, which will now be considered in detail by The Scottish Government and its partners, include:

- an urgent need to access low cost debt requires an accelerated review of the Fiscal Framework, and a significant increase in access to capital investment to support an investment-led recovery
- a Scottish jobs guarantee, in partnership between business and government, should be introduced to address unemployment, with refocused skills strategies and decisive steps to align teaching and learning in universities and colleges to the needs of business
- prioritisation of sector plans to deliver a green recovery, where the coincidence of emissions reductions, the development of natural capital and job creation are the strongest
- critical investment in the country's digital infrastructure to improve connectivity, reduce inequalities and build the country's resilience
- urgent action to develop a stronger relationship between

business and government on the strategy for Scotland's economic recovery

Ms Hyslop said: "I would like to thank Benny Higgins, the independent Advisory Group members and all who contributed to their work in setting out a route to recovery for Scotland to address the economic impacts of COVID-19. Scotland, as with other countries, faces enormous challenges, and we need to all work together as never before to ensure our country emerges through this pandemic with a green economic recovery that has inclusion and wellbeing at its heart. We wanted the report to be ambitious and far-reaching, and with this strong and comprehensive set of recommendations this has certainly been achieved.

"The report identifies the importance of employment, the environment, education and equality. I agree that each one of these will be vital as we seek to create a society that is resilient, fair, and one in which everyone has the opportunity to be successful. We will now develop a detailed response to the report which will be published before the end of July.

"This report represents a clear call to action that goes beyond the Scottish Government and the public sector. We will only be able to build the kind of post-COVID-19 recovery we want with the active involvement of the private, cultural and third sectors and, importantly, the public. It is therefore vital that everyone continues to work together in the crucial weeks and months to come to deliver the action Scotland needs to recover from the impact of COVID-19."

Benny Higgins, Chair of the Advisory Group on Economic Recovery, said:

"Scotland faces an economic challenge of monumental scale. If we do not intervene radically to transform our economy, inequalities will drastically widen with long-term scarring

for communities across the country, and for our young people in particular. This cannot be allowed to happen.

“The Advisory Group on Economic Recovery has worked at great speed over the past two months, engaging extensively with businesses and with wider civic society to understand the challenges that we face, but crucially to curate a set of recommendations that emphasise the immediate need to protect and create jobs, reduce inequalities by building a green and technology-led recovery, and make Scotland an attractive place to do business.

“To create a robust, resilient wellbeing economy, the public and private sector must now build a new partnership to prioritise and deliver bold action. And they must do so with purpose and urgency.”

Lord Robert Smith of Kelvin, who led the business engagement for the group, said:

“It is evident that Scotland faces a lengthy road back to economic recovery and renewal. To succeed this must be led and delivered by the business community with the active support of government.

“I have engaged broadly with the business community over the last two months and there is consistent feedback. Across almost every sector, businesses are exposed to a collapse in demand and profitability, and with the threat of very significant job losses, generations are exposed to chronic economic harm.

“We need to restart the economy, get people back to work across the country, and invest in jobs and businesses that can succeed sustainably. A large part of that will mean securing a significantly enhanced relationship between government and business to ensure that policy and interventions can be delivered practically and with purpose.

“I therefore welcome the speed and conclusions of Benny’s Advisory Group – it has ambition and sets out a clear path for what is needed next for our economy to recover and renew as the restrictions of activity are lifted.”

[The report of the Advisory Group on Economic Recovery.](#)