

# Opposition parties react to new cabinet

**As you would expect the opposition parties have lots to say about the new cabinet, particularly, that as it stands there is scant mention of local government or transport.**

The new Deputy First Minister Shona Robison confirmed to the BBC this afternoon that she will have responsibility for local government in her role both as Deputy First Minister and as Finance Minister. Ms Robison is a long term friend of former First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon, and is almost 20 years older than her boss, the First Minister.

The former Transport Minister, Jenny Gilruth, has moved to Education. It appears that Mairi McAllan who joins the cabinet for the first time also has responsibility for Net Zero and Just Transition, but whether any of that is transport-related remains to be seen.

The First Minister, Humza Yousaf said outside Bute House: "I have assembled a cabinet that is fresh, is going to take a more radical, progressive agenda that I have set out throughout this leadership contest, and that I expect now to deliver for the people of Scotland. Our immediate priorities will be to tackle the cost of living crisis, which we continue to face, and our public services and to progress our wellbeing economy. That is going to be the team who is going to help me to deliver that."

*assembled the first members of his cabinet and then spoke to press outside the official residence at Bute House – three new faces but no Kate Forbes, Ash Regan or Keith Brown in the new team to deliver a “radical, progressive agenda”*  
[pic.twitter.com/8wwu8fWCAB](https://pic.twitter.com/8wwu8fWCAB)

– *Edinburgh Reporter (@EdinReporter)* [March 29, 2023](#)



First Minister Humza Yousaf appoints his first cabinet ©2023  
The Edinburgh Reporter  
The new cabinet is:

- Shona Robison, the new Deputy First Minister, will take on the Finance portfolio, including responsibility for the Scottish Budget
- Michael Matheson becomes the Cabinet Secretary for NHS Recovery, Health and Social Care
- Jenny Gilruth joins Cabinet for the first time as Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills

- Màiri McAllan joins Cabinet for the first time as Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero and Just Transition
- Neil Gray joins Cabinet for the first time as Cabinet Secretary for Wellbeing Economy, Fair Work and Energy
- Mairi Gougeon remains Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform and Islands
- Angus Robertson remains Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture
- Shirley-Anne Somerville becomes Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice
- Angela Constance returns to Cabinet as the new Cabinet Secretary for Justice and Home Affairs

Asked about why Kate Forbes was not in the cabinet, the First Minister said: "Kate is rightly popular. She has some great ideas. Her tweets showed last night in the words that she has put out that she is 100% behind the cabinet team, and is behind me as First Minister."

And of course there is a position in the new cabinet for Neil Gray who was the First Minister's campaign manager in the leadership election. He becomes a cabinet minister for the first time and will be Cabinet Secretary for Wellbeing Economy, Fair Work and Energy.

There is no mention as yet of any ministerial appointments for the Scottish Greens, and we are told that other junior ministerial roles will be announced soon.



First Minister Humza Yousaf appoints his first cabinet ©2023  
The Edinburgh Reporter

## Scottish Conservatives

Scottish Conservative chairman Craig Hoy MSP said: “This is a cabinet in Humza Yousaf’s image – failed, continuity ministers appointed by a failed, continuity minister.

“The likes of Shona Robison, Michael Matheson, Angela Constance and Jenny Gilruth have been found sorely wanting in previous ministerial roles, yet all have been ‘rewarded’ with promotion by the new First Minister.

“In a rare display of self-awareness, Humza Yousaf appears to have recognised his own abject failure as health secretary by adding ‘NHS Recovery’ to that brief.

“This cabinet of proven flops and lackeys not only excludes Kate Forbes – who came within a whisker of beating Humza Yousaf in the vitriolic SNP leadership race – but anyone who

backed her.

“Humza Yousaf clearly has no intention of ending the SNP’s civil war – just getting his revenge and declaring victory in it.

“Instead of offering an olive branch to the huge chunk of the party that didn’t back him, he would rather pander to the extremist Scottish Greens by giving a ‘wellbeing economy’ minister cabinet status.

“We all fear for the wellbeing of the economy with the Greens in government.”

## **Scottish Labour**

Scottish Labour deputy leader Jackie Baillie said: “The First Minister promised to bring the country together, but he can’t even bring his own party together.

“This dismal cabinet cements the SNP’s new status as a deeply divided party led by B-rate politicians.

“Loyalty is being rewarded over talent – but both are in short supply in the SNP.

“At the heart of this continuity government are some of the most incompetent politicians of the last decade, set to deliver more of the same failure.

“While the SNP are mired in chaos, Scottish Labour is united in our vision to deliver the change Scotland desperately needs.”

## **Scottish Liberal Democrats**

Scottish Liberal Democrat leader Alex Cole-Hamilton MSP said: “I wish nothing but the best for any ministers who are prepared to actually focus on the people’s priorities. But all

of these figures have been part of the ministerial team that has fixated on division at the price of spiralling NHS waiting lists, disruption in our schools and missed climate emergency targets.

“The downgrading of housing and local government doesn’t bode well for sectors already in crisis on the SNP’s watch.

“Humza Yousaf could instead be adopting Scottish Liberal Democrat plans that would make every home a warm one and value the important work of councils through a power surge.

“It’s also not clear where transport fits into this mix. Will they just be taking it in turns to make excuses about the ferries?

“While we are crackling with ideas, the SNP will continue to haemorrhage reasonable, fair-minded minded voters who simply want good governance and aren’t fussed about the constitution.

“Change is coming and Scottish Liberal Democrats will be part of what’s next.”