

# **Government reaches agreement with other parties on budget proposals**

**The Scottish Government has made agreements with both the Scottish Liberal Democrats and also separately with the Scottish Green Party to support the proposed 2025-26 Budget.**

This will include deals on bus fares, drug services and free school meals.

Finance Secretary Shona Robison has announced she will table amendments to the 2025-26 Budget Bill to allocate £16.7 million funding to:

- Bolster drug and alcohol services, including £1 million for specialist support for babies born addicted to drugs
- Begin a £2 bus fare cap pilot in one regional transport area
- Further strengthen support for hospices from £4 million to £5 million
- Increase Nature Restoration by £3 million to its highest ever level
- Invest in targeted support for the College sector and protect Corseford College
- Extend free school meal eligibility in S1-S3 in eight local authority areas for pupils in receipt of Scottish Child Payment
- Offer flexibility for Orkney Island Council in terms of capital and resource funding

Ms Robison said: “We are determined to deliver on the issues that matter most to the people of Scotland – and that is why this Budget invests in public services and in eradicating child poverty, acts in the face of the climate emergency, and supports jobs.

“The First Minister was clear that we would bring forward a budget by Scotland for Scotland, and the negotiations we have taken forward have been in that spirit. These additional initiatives demonstrate the value of a progressive approach and dialogue.

“During every stage of this process the Liberal Democrats and the Greens have engaged in our discussions in a positive and constructive manner.

“Through seeking compromise I believe we are delivering a budget that will strengthen services and support our communities. With the agreements with these two parties now in place this will secure a majority in parliament in support of the Budget Bill.”



Shona Robison Finance Secretary

Scottish Greens finance spokesperson Ross Greer MSP said: “The Scottish Greens put climate action, tackling child poverty, cheaper buses and ferries and funding for schools at the heart of our budget negotiations. We have delivered progress on all of these fronts, so our MSPs will be voting for the budget.

“No young person should be sitting in school hungry. As a result of our work, thousands more pupils in S1-S3 will now receive a free school meal. This will build on the success of expanding free school meals in primary schools, a policy delivered by the Scottish Greens a few years ago.

“Our Green MSPs have also secured a year-long regional trial where bus fares will be capped at £2, because we know the cost of public transport needs to come down. This also builds on the success of free bus travel for young people, another Scottish Green policy we made a reality.

“With climate chaos all around us, we have worked to deliver record funding for nature restoration and our environment.

These Green projects are creating well-paid jobs in communities across the country, particularly in rural areas.

“From schools to libraries to social care to bin collections, our councils deliver the services we all depend on. We have worked with Scottish Green councillors to ensure that this year’s budget delivers a fair deal for local councils, including an end to the Council tax freeze.

“These changes secured by Scottish Green MSPs will lift more children out of poverty, reduce the cost of public transport, create good quality jobs, tackle the climate crisis and protect local services. That’s in stark contrast to Labour, who agreed to let the SNP’s budget pass without making any attempt to improve it. If you want action to help people and planet, voting Scottish Greens is the best way to deliver it.”

Leader of the Scottish Liberal Democrats, Alex Cole-Hamilton, said: “We have today reached an agreement with the Scottish Government. There is a long list of policies and projects that we’ve won for our constituents, and for Scotland as a whole, and so we will be voting for the Budget.

“In a Parliament of minorities Scottish Liberal Democrats will always act responsibly and try to find common ground.

“As a result, Lib Dem priorities will now be backed by hundreds of millions worth of government investment. I am pleased that we have secured money for new drug and neonatal services. As a former youth worker I know how important it is to give children the best start in life and few have it tougher than babies who are born addicted to drugs.

“Alongside the long list of Lib Dem demands baked into the first draft of the budget, we have also secured additional money for new college programmes focused on care and offshore wind, more money for hospices, and backing for the young people attending Corseford College.

“Scottish Labour’s decision to abstain on the Scottish Budget confirmed once and for all that there would be no early election. This was always very unlikely and that’s why all along Scottish Liberal Democrats have sought to shape the budget to unpick some of the damage caused by years of SNP neglect.

“This budget shows that by backing the Liberal Democrats you get a local champion focused on the issues that matter the most.”