
Corporate Plan 2025-28

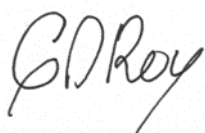
Foreword

We're confident that the Scottish Fiscal Commission has now matured into a trusted institution at the heart of Scotland's fiscal framework. Our independent forecasts and assessments are now a core part of the Scottish Budget process. We've developed from an institution primarily focused on devolved tax and social security forecasts into one that provides comprehensive, independent analysis of Scotland's fiscal sustainability.

Scotland's fiscal context, however, is becoming increasingly complex. The Scottish Government faces mounting budgetary pressures arising from demographic change, rising healthcare costs, new social security responsibilities, and climate commitments. In this environment, the Commission's role in empowering political and public understanding of difficult budget choices is more important than ever.

In this corporate plan we set out our strategic plan for the next three years. The OECD published its review of the Commission in 2025 and their recommendations have guided our development of this plan. We will intensify our work on fiscal sustainability, funding and spending analysis. We hope to increase the impact of our work by spreading out our analysis over the year. We also plan to enhance the support we provide to parliamentary scrutiny and to further increase the frequency and reach of our external engagement.

At the heart of our work remain our values: independence, working well with others, transparency, clarity and accessibility, rigour and relevance. These values underpin the trust placed in us by Parliament, government, and the public. This Corporate Plan sets out how we will continue to strengthen that trust, safeguard our independence, and ensure Scotland's public finances are subject to effective and transparent scrutiny.



Professor Graeme Roy



Dr Eleanor Ryan



Professor Domenico Lombardi



Justine Riccomini

October 2025

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Corporate Plan Summary

Mission

We produce independent, authoritative forecasts and assessments of the Scottish Government's tax and spending plans. We improve Scottish Government and Scottish Parliament's understanding of fiscal pressures and risks. Our work makes the Scottish Budget more transparent and better scrutinised.

Why we do it: Vision

The Scottish Budget is transparent and well-scrutinised. Government, Parliament and others understand the inevitable uncertainties and risks relating to devolved public finances, and the potential trade-offs needed to ensure public finances are on a sustainable path.

Our Strategic Objectives

Provide authoritative, independent, official forecasts of Scotland's economy, devolved tax revenues and social security spending, and explain what these mean for the Scottish Budget.

Provide insightful, impartial analysis of the Scottish Government's funding and spending.

Analyse and report on issues with major impacts for the long-term fiscal sustainability of the Scottish Budget.

Be an effective and efficient organisation with skilled, knowledgeable people.

Our Values

Everyone can trust our work because:

- We are independent – we are impartial, honest and objective
- We work well with others
- We are transparent and promote transparency in Scottish public finances
- We explain complex matters clearly and make our work easy to access
- We produce quality work which informs public debate

Our Commissioners

Professor Graeme Roy – Chair – until 31 May 2026

Professor Domenico Lombardi – until 31 May 2026

Dr Eleanor Ryan – from 8 October 2025 until 7 October 2029

Justine Riccomini – from 8 October 2025 until 7 October 2029

Our Resources in 2025-26

Budget: £2.788 million

28 staff

What we do: Our Mission

We produce independent, authoritative forecasts and assessments of the Scottish Government's tax and spending plans. We improve Scottish Government and Scottish Parliament's understanding of fiscal pressures and risks. Our work makes the Scottish Budget more transparent and better scrutinised.

- 1 We are the independent fiscal institution for Scotland. We tell the Scottish Government how much they can spend each year and how much they will need for social security payments. We are independent so the public can have confidence in our figures.
- 2 We explain what might affect the Scottish Government's funding and spending plans and we report how that funding and spending changes through the year. We do this to help the Scottish Parliament to scrutinise the Budget.
- 3 We explain how big changes over the next fifty years could affect how much money the Scottish Government could spend in the future. We look at things like the aging population, health service spending and climate change. This helps politicians make long-term financial plans.

Why we do it: Our Vision

The Scottish Budget is transparent and well-scrutinised. Government, Parliament and others understand the inevitable uncertainties and risks relating to devolved public finances, and the potential trade-offs needed to ensure public finances are on a sustainable path.

- 4 Our vision describes why we exist. We want the key decision-makers in Government and Parliament to really understand the issues that are most relevant for the next few years, and to be just as familiar with the factors that drive whether current policies could be sustained over the next 50 years. We want to help key players understand why trade-offs will be needed for public finances to be sustainable in that longer-term.
- 5 Of course, we don't expect to be able to deliver this vision alone. The Scottish Government, the Scottish Parliament and Audit Scotland have key roles. The work of other organisations such as the Office for Budget Responsibility, the Fraser of Allander Institute, the Institute of Fiscal Studies and the Resolution Foundation supports transparency, understanding and scrutiny.
- 6 So when we consider new areas of work, alternative approaches, or think about whether we have been successful, we can ask ourselves: Will this make the Scottish Budget better scrutinised or more transparent? Will this explain an important long-term financial pressure? Will this help Parliament better understand an important risk?

Our Strategic Objectives

Provide authoritative, independent, official forecasts of Scotland's economy, devolved tax revenues and social security spending, and explain what these mean for the Scottish Budget.

Provide insightful, impartial analysis of the Scottish Government's funding and spending.

Analyse and report on issues with major impacts for the long-term fiscal sustainability of the Scottish Budget.

Be an effective and efficient organisation with skilled, knowledgeable people.

- 7 Our strategic objectives set out what we do to fulfil our mission. Our annual business plans give more detailed information about our work plans each year. [Business Plans | Scottish Fiscal Commission](#). We explain how we approach our work in the Values section of this corporate plan.

Objective 1 - Provide authoritative, independent, official forecasts of Scotland's economy, devolved tax revenues and social security spending, and explain what these mean for the Scottish Budget.

- 8 Our forecasts need to carry weight with the Parliament, Government, media and others. To produce good forecasts our data, models and judgements must all be robust.
- 9 We need reliable, accurate and timely data and information, so we build strong relationships with our data providers. We also have a right of access with Scottish public bodies and publish statements of data needs to set out our priorities for improving data.
- 10 Forecasting models can be complicated; with all our models we aim to find the right balance between transparency, story-telling, complexity and forecast accuracy. We follow a rigorous quality assurance process.
- 11 For good judgements, we need expert Commissioners with diversity of thought and a culture of debate and constructive challenge.
- 12 We try to explain both how our forecasts are produced and what they mean for the Budget, the "so what?" question, in a way that is understandable and accessible. We publish this analysis and provide clear assessment of our forecast accuracy. This adds transparency to the Scottish Budget and the complex Fiscal Framework.

Objective 2 - Provide insightful, impartial analysis of the Scottish Government's funding and spending.

- 13 To be able to scrutinise the Scottish Budget fully, Parliament and others need to be able to understand the Scottish Government's overall funding position, its spending plans, the potential risks to them, and then how those all change over the year. We have a duty to assess the reasonableness of the Scottish Government's borrowing, and we have a power to report on any factor used to ascertain the resources available for the Scottish Budget.

- 14 We have developed unique expertise by producing economic and fiscal forecasts. This means we can produce high quality, independent analysis of these important issues that are not generally well understood.

Objective 3 - Analyse and explain issues with major impacts for the long-term fiscal sustainability of the Scottish Budget.

- 15 The Scottish Budget, and scrutiny of it, needs to consider both the immediate financial year and the potential effect on future years.
- 16 The current fiscal framework means that fiscal risks do not arise if changes in revenues and spending in Scotland are mirrored in the rest of the United Kingdom. But different pressures on spending or different changes in tax revenues could present sustainability issues for the Scottish Budget.
- 17 We will focus on analysing issues with the most substantial impacts over a longer timescale (up to 50 years), rather than trying to assess all factors which may have an impact.

Objective 4 - Be an effective and efficient organisation with skilled, knowledgeable people.

- 18 Having the right people, performing well, is essential for our small organisation. Our people should be able to bring their whole selves to work and thrive in our culture. They should feel empowered, respected and supported. We invest in our people, and we make specific commitments to make us a more inclusive and diverse organisation. We want the capacity for economic and fiscal analysis in Scotland to grow.
- 19 We want to make sure the Commission is a great place to work, so that our people can give their best. And we must also make sure we are well-run to avoid damaging the credibility of our forecasts. This means responsive leadership, robust governance and effective and efficient administration. We learn from and collaborate with others to help us achieve this.

Main activities

Scotland's Economic and Fiscal Forecasts

- 20 Our statutory duty is to provide the independent and official forecasts of Scottish GDP, devolved tax revenue and devolved social security spending for the Scottish Government to use in its budget and financial planning. These include the official costings for tax and social security policies. We provide these independent forecasts and assess the Scottish Government's borrowing usually twice a year, alongside the Scottish Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy.
- 21 Our forecasts are prepared in-house by the Commission's staff, using models developed and maintained by the Commission. Our Commissioners are personally and collectively responsible for the judgements that underpin our forecasts. For transparency, we publish information on how our forecasts are produced, and the assumptions and judgments we made in producing the forecasts. We also publish evaluations of the accuracy of our forecasts once outturn data is available in our Forecast Evaluation Reports each autumn.

Fiscal Trends and Fiscal Updates

- 22 We publish commentary on the Scottish Budget, considering how developments in the economic and fiscal outlook have affected the current Scottish Budget and how they may affect the next Budget. In its 2025 report the OECD recommended that we should broaden and deepen our spending analysis beyond social security.
- 23 We intend to intensify our work on funding and spending analysis. In particular, we want to support Parliament's pre-Budget scrutiny by reporting in late summer on the changes that happen each year after the Budget Bill has passed. We recognise that the uncertainty the annual fiscal timetable poses may limit our ability to deliver this.
- 24 We also hope to increase the impact of our work by spreading out our analysis over the year. We currently focus on the two fiscal events each year (usually May and December). By changing the rhythm of our publications, we can highlight issues that may be overshadowed by a Budget announcement.

Fiscal Sustainability Reports and Perspectives

- 25 It's vital that the decision-makers in Government and Parliament really understand the pressures and risks to funding and spending over the next 50 years, and how and why they might evolve. We do not make recommendations about particular policies; rather we explain the key factors that drive the long-term sustainability of current policies.
- 26 We intend to continue producing updated long-run projections every two years as well as thematic reports. We previously explored demographics, climate change and health.
- 27 This thematic approach brings our work to new, subject specific audiences, and allows us to engage with different Parliamentary committees to explain key issues that affect fiscal sustainability.

- 28 As we develop thematic fiscal sustainability reports, we need engage with subject area expertise from outwith the Commission staff. Just as key partners are essential for us to get the data and information, we need for forecasting models and judgements, partners with expert subject knowledge of the themes we are analysing will be vital for our fiscal sustainability work. Working with these partners also helps to ensure we have the diversity of thought we need to produce robust, impartial judgements and analysis for their staff and media briefings for journalists.

Communication and engagement

- 29 We support our publications by giving evidence to Parliament about them so that Parliamentary Committees can probe and scrutinise our work. We also hold online public events to give people the opportunity to ask questions, as well as events for MSPs and media. We have been increasing the frequency and reach of our external engagement over the last 18 months, and intend to continue to do so, in line with the OECD's recommendations and our 2024 stakeholder survey. Our approach to our engagement and communication work recognises that fiscal sustainability issues have broader audiences than for forecasts and the fiscal framework.

Other analytical activity

- 30 Our core analytical publications are supported by our work to develop and test our models and maintain relationships with our data providers. We produce a statement of data needs every two years, which sets out the data we need to produce our forecasts. We review our [Statement of Voluntary Application of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics](#) at least every three years. We also produce policy costings and occasional papers, as required.

Corporate activity

- 31 We need to be a well-run public body with excellent people. Our corporate work should support the rest of the organisation to thrive and deliver, without becoming an industry in its own right. Through our business planning, we review our work programme to see where we can add greater value and best use our resources to improve quality.
- 32 Despite our small size, as an independent public body we must maintain robust, compliant corporate processes. We work with other public bodies, the Scottish Government and auditors to help us do that as efficiently as possible.

Main performance measures

- 33 We report on our performance through three reports each year: our Forecast Evaluation Report, our Annual Report and Accounts, and our Public Service Reform Act 2010 report.
- 34 Every five years we commission an external, statutory, independent review of our performance. The most recent review by the OECD was published in March 2025. The next review is due to take place in 2029.
- 35 Much of our performance should be judged on the quality of our core analytical publications and how we communicate those for different audiences, but we recognise this is difficult to measure quantitatively.

Analytical performance measures

What we report	How often	What does it show
Forecast Evaluation Report	Every year	Evaluates how our past forecasts compare to outturn data How our forecast accuracy compares to that of the OBR forecasts for the rest of the UK Lessons for our next forecast
Statement of Data Needs	Every two years	Outlines the data we require to produce our forecasts
Number of publications (in Annual Report)	Every year	Number of analytical reports produced
Parliamentary Indicators (in Annual Report)	Every year	How often we appear at Scottish Parliamentary Committees How often we are referred to Committee Reports How often we are cited in Committee meetings
Engagement indicators (in Annual Report)	Every year Every two years	Media coverage Number of events hosted or attended Presentations made to other organisations How much our website is used Results of stakeholder survey
Statement of Voluntary Application of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics	Every three years	Continued voluntary application of the code of practice for official statistics

Corporate performance measures

What we report	How often	What does it show
Staffing and diversity information (in Annual Report)	Every year	Staff survey results Number of leavers, joiners in a year and turnover Sickness absence Gender Pay Gap Gender composition at Committee appearances Staff recruitment applicant diversity information
External audit report	Every year	Audit opinion on annual report and accounts Audit conclusions on performance management, corporate governance, financial position, and financial sustainability.
Public Body Corporate Indicators (in Annual Report)	Every year	Number of complaints Number of Freedom of Information requests Invoices paid within 10 days
Website effectiveness (in Annual Report)	Every 2 years	Results of independent audit of website accessibility Website user survey on content and ease of use
Public Service Reform Act report	Every year	Expenditure on public relations, overseas travel, hospitality and entertainment, external consultancy and payments over £25,000 Steps taken to promote efficiency

Values

- 36 Our values express the personality of our organisation. These principles guide how we go about everything we do, how we approach any new work, and they help us to be mindful of our longer-term vision in our daily work.
- 37 We want to make sure that our work and our assessments can be trusted. Having the right values, and embodying them in all that we do, is essential for that.
- 38 Our current values are based on [OECD Principles for Independent Fiscal Institutions](#), [the Civil Service Code](#), [the Code of Practice for Statistics](#) and [the Code of Practice for Commissioners](#). These have not changed.

We are independent - we are impartial, honest and objective in everything we do.

- 39 Our independence is essential to us so that our work is able to be equally trusted by all participants in public life. We are independent of the Scottish Government, UK Government, Scottish Parliament and all political parties.
- 40 Our structural and operational independence is set out in the Scottish Fiscal Commission Act 2016. In particular:
- The content and conclusions of our reports are the sole responsibility of the Commissioners.
 - The Chief Executive is accountable to the Scottish Parliament for the use of resources.
 - Commissioner appointments must be approved by the Scottish Parliament.
- 41 However, we are conscious that aspects of our work could be misunderstood or deliberately misconstrued as favouring a particular political party or position. We take other measures to assure our independence. In particular:
- Comply voluntarily with the Code of Practice for Statistics, including pre-announcing publications.
 - Publish a log of our correspondence and contact with Scottish Government Ministers and Special Advisers.
 - Require a written indication of our funding from the Scottish Government for the next three years.
 - Always have independence as a category in our risk management framework.

We work well with others.

- 42 We are open to others' ideas – whether that be Commissioners listening to all our analysts or formal forecast meetings with Government. Inviting comments and feedback, both internally and externally, helps us to build trust by understanding our users' needs and whether we have missed or misunderstood important factors that could affect our forecasts. It also allows us to consider and try new approaches. In particular:

- We have a collaborative culture: we ask for help, we encourage our colleagues to critique our work and we offer support and challenge.
- We seek feedback on our processes, reports, events and website.
- We understand the challenges facing the organisations we rely on for the data and information we need to produce robust forecasts and work with them to find solutions.
- We work with partners and peers in the UK and internationally to share knowledge and best practice.
- We are active in networks of other Independent Fiscal Institutions and other Scottish Public Bodies.

We are as transparent as we can be and promote transparency in Scottish public finances.

43 Transparency is essential for building trust in our independence and in the quality of our forecasts. We are committed to transparency in everything we do. In particular:

- We are transparent about our forecasting methods and assumptions. We explain our assessment of the risks and benefits of each source of information. We publish supplementary spreadsheets on our website.
- We comply with the Code of Practice for Statistics voluntarily and in 2020, we won the first ever Voluntary Application of the Code Award.
- We follow a robust error policy and publish our corrections and revisions.
- We welcome scrutiny. Most obviously this takes place through our appearances in front of the Scottish Parliament's Committees. We also engage actively with the media, external experts and other stakeholders, and hold public events to make it easier to question our work. We publish our Forecast Evaluation Report annually to help people to scrutinise our work.
- We publish our corporate policies, reports and minutes.
- We encourage transparency from other organisations. Our Statements of Data Needs request the publication of accessible, timely information. We encourage our data providers to align their data developments with the practices and principles for production of official statistics to enhance the transparency of the data we use. We encourage other organisations to publish more fiscal information.

We explain complex matters clearly and make our work easy to access.

44 Information and analysis is of little use if no-one can access it, use it or understand it. So we are committed to making our forecasts, our reports, and responses to queries accessible and understandable. In particular:

- We produce summaries and infographics of our work to deliver direct, clear messages for a range of users and requirements.

- We produce a detailed report and supplementary tables for more technical users.
- We limit the length of our publications.
- We are responsive to user needs and we will survey our stakeholders and website users periodically to make sure we understand those needs.
- We raise awareness of our work, for example through holding our own media conferences and open public events following the Scottish Budget.
- We continue to work on improving the accessibility of our website and publications and we recognise the shortcomings of pdf reports and excel spreadsheets.

We produce quality work which informs public debate.

- 45 We produce quality work which informs public debate. This value informs much of our planning and our decisions. we ask ourselves: Is it relevant? Will it inform public debate? Can we do this to a high quality? How can we increase the quality or add greater value? In particular:
- We engage with the Scottish Government, Scottish Parliament and other stakeholders to check that the work we plan will be useful to them.
 - We recruit openly to find the best people then support and develop them, so that we have highly skilled people performing well.
 - We have a rigorous internal quality assurance process for our reports and voluntarily comply with the Code of Practice for Statistics.
 - We do not shy away from delivering analysis which the UK Government, Scottish Government or Scottish Parliament might find challenging.

Resources

Our Commissioners and staff

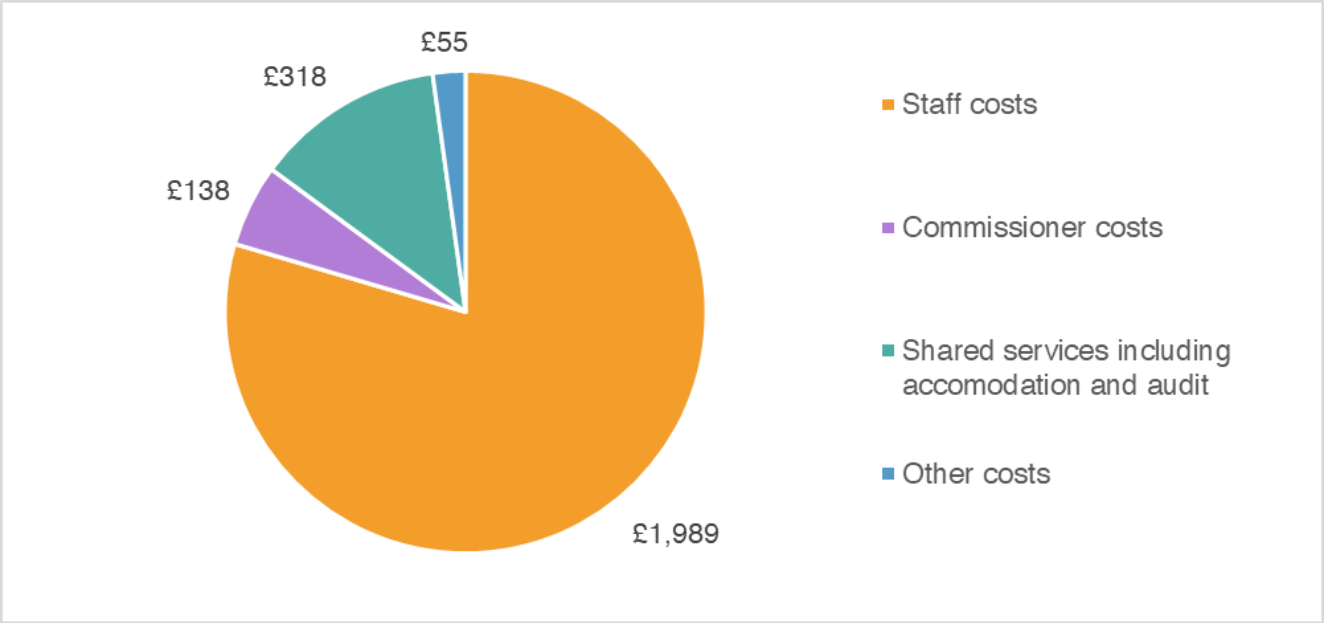
- 46 Our Commissioners are appointed by Scottish Ministers with the approval of the Scottish Parliament. They are collectively responsible for fulfilling the functions and duties set out in the Scottish Fiscal Commission Act 2016.
- Professor Graeme Roy – Chair
 - Professor Domenico Lombardi
 - Dr Eleanor Ryan
 - Justine Riccomini
- 47 The Commissioners are supported by approximately 28 staff, led by the Chief Executive. Staff are organised into four teams: Fiscal Sustainability and Public Funding, Devolved Taxes and Social Security, Economy and Income Tax, and Strategy, Governance and Corporate Services.

Our Budget

Budget for 2025-26	Indicative Budget 2026-27	Indicative Budget 2027-28
£2.788 million	£2.840 million	£2.973 million

- 48 The Commission receives an annual budget approved by Parliament in the Scottish Budget process. Our budget is separate to that of Scottish Ministers. We also receive an indicative budget for the subsequent two financial years, in line with the OECD’s Principles for Independent Fiscal Institutions.
- 49 Staff costs are by far the largest proportion of our costs. Staff are employed on the same terms, conditions, grading, and remuneration arrangements as Scottish Government.

Expenditure Breakdown by Category (£000s)



Risk Management

- 50 We identify, monitor and assess our risks against these five key themes. These impact one another, our values and whether we can deliver our strategic objectives in various ways.

Corporate Systems

- 51 Corporate systems are not sufficient to deliver our work (financial systems, IT, shared services and governance). This risk covers internal systems, those purchased from the Scottish Government as shared services and website providers.
- 52 This risk could impact on delivery of all four strategic objectives.

Reputation

- 53 The Commission suffers a loss of reputation because of its failure to deal with complex contextual change or the perceived quality of its analysis. Political controversy and adverse expert commentary can undermine our reputation, regardless of whether it is justified.
- 54 This risk could particularly impact our value: we produce quality work which informs public debate. Not living our other values – independent, work well with others, transparent and explaining clearly – would increase the likelihood of this risk.

Independence

- 55 The Commission's political and institutional independence is undermined or is perceived to be undermined. The consensus that a Scottish independent fiscal institution is needed breaks down.
- 56 This risk directly concerns our value of independence and delivery of our first three objectives. It also would also increase the likelihood for our reputation, staffing and partners risks.

Staffing

- 57 The Commission cannot deliver its functions effectively because we do not have appropriate staff or Commissioners, or staff or Commissioners cannot work effectively.
- 58 This risk could impact on delivery of all four strategic objectives. It also would also increase the likelihood for our corporate systems, reputation and partners risks.

Partners

- 59 A deterioration in relationships with the Commission's partner organisations limits its ability to deliver quality forecasts and reports, through limited access to data and information, or limited time in fiscal event processes.
- 60 This directly impacts our work well with others value and could affect any of our strategic objectives, as partners are so vital to our work. It could also affect our independence risk and value, our reputation risk and our transparency value.

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Published by the Scottish Fiscal Commission, October 2025

