



Carnegie UK
Andrew Carnegie House
Pittencrieff Street
Dunfermline
Fife Scotland
KY12 8AW

T 01383 721445
carnegieuk.org

2 June 2026

First Minister **John Swinney MSP**
Lord **Malcolm Offord MSP**
Anas Sarwar MSP
Gillian Mackay MSP and **Ross Greer MSP**
Russell Findlay MSP
Alex Cole-Hamilton MSP

CC: Presiding Officer **Kenneth Gibson MSP**

By e-mail

Dear Party Leaders,

Development of a Scottish Parliament Committee for the Future

Ahead of the recent election, each of your parties [produced an essay for Carnegie UK in which you outlined a positive vision for Scotland in twenty years' time](#). Indeed, we were grateful that many of you personally took time out of your busy schedules to detail your thoughts about the way forward for the country.

However, none of the visions you described can be realised if long-term thinking is only practised during significant moments such as elections. Rather, all government decision-making needs to consider the impact on the people of tomorrow alongside the requirements of those living today, and to be informed by what is known about that emerging future.

With this in mind, I write to highlight this recommendation from last term's [Finance and Public Administration Committee's legacy report](#) which states: *"We also support the idea of a committee focused on scrutiny of Government future thinking, building on the lessons learned from our visit to Lithuania and our discussions with Members of the Lithuanian Committee for the Future."*

As the Scottish Parliament looks to establish committees for this new term, Carnegie UK urges you to give this proposal serious consideration. Drawing on multiple international examples, we believe that such a committee could play a crucial role over the next parliamentary term by creating capacity on two important fronts:

Carnegie United Kingdom Trust

Chair
David Emerson CBE

Chief Executive
Sarah Davidson

Examining cross-cutting long-term issues beyond single portfolios.

Our economy and society are likely to be substantially affected by long-term trends such as climate, demographic and technological change, and how governments choose to respond to these. A new Scottish Parliament Committee for the Future could examine these issues across Scottish Government portfolios, drawing on available data about long-term trends and intergenerational impacts. As well as being the focal point for scrutiny of whether current approaches prepare Scotland sufficiently for the future, it would strengthen the work of other committees by highlighting major future challenges and opportunities, and help to embed long-term thinking across the work of the Parliament.

A Committee of the Future would also provide a valuable forum for scrutinising the implementation and impact of the reformed National Performance Framework, Scotland's existing tool for long-term, cross-portfolio policy governance. While the 2021-2026 Finance and Public Administration Committee showed what can be done to monitor the impact of the NPF, we believe a new Committee for the Future could bring even more focus to scrutinising the extent to which the long-term vision and outcomes are in practice guiding the policies, practices and spending decisions of the Scottish Government.

Strengthening democratic participation

Public confidence in democratic institutions is now at a worrying low. Many factors conspire to focus our politics on short-term pressures and immediate crises, and this contributes to the widespread sense that governance is no longer effective and that there is no plan for the long-term. A new Committee for the Future could deepen the new ways of working that the Scottish Parliament has already begun to pioneer by – for example – integrating deliberative and participative methods into its work. Our new report [Blueprints for Democratic Wellbeing](#) offers models to involve members of the public in political deliberation and decision-making, approaches which this new committee could champion.

With these two important aims in mind, I would ask you to work together across party lines to establish a Scottish Parliament Committee for the Future as early as practicable. Doing so would send a clear and confident signal that Scotland is serious about aligning short-term decisions with long-term outcomes, and about strengthening the connection between policy, public spending and the wellbeing of current and future generations. Done well, the work of this Committee could help to rebuild trust between the Parliament and the public.

This is a practical, credible step that can help ensure that the vision each of you set out for Scotland's future is not only articulated at election time, but actively guided, scrutinised and delivered throughout the lifetime of the Parliament.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in grey ink that reads "Sarah Davidson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Sarah Davidson

Chief Executive

sarah.davidson@carnegieuk.org