PCS Alba Scotland

Nicola Sturgeon
First Minister
St. Andrew's House
Regent Road
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG

Dear First Minister

15 November 2017

Scottish Budget

Since the General Election, the civil service unions have been in touch with you, the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Scottish Government officials regarding public sector pay.

As part of an STUC delegation last week, I met with the Cabinet Secretary Derek Mackay in advance of the Budget to advise him that thousands of your workers across Scottish Government and related bodies want resources provided to their employers for above inflation increases, as well as supporting an end to the pay cap.

Whilst we recognise the departure from public sector pay policy of 1% and your recent agreement on earlier access to the pay settlement in 2018, there is an evident expectation amongst your staff that next year's pay award must be above inflation.

Furthermore, we appreciate your statement in May this year that the pay cap is "unsustainable" and that the new policy will need to take account of inflationary pressures on incomes of staff.
With RPI inflation at almost 4%, your workers have been suffering a "real term" pay cut, month by month for approximately a decade. As inflation continues to rise, the take home wages of your workforce is being eroded year on year.

Recently, I was pleased to hear your Cabinet Secretary for Finance tell delegates at SNP conference that "in Scotland, we know that high quality public services, rely on dedicated hard working public servants". I therefore hope you will reward the hard working public servants employed by Scottish Government and its associated bodies with a genuine pay rise this year, not another pay cut.

As you know, PCS held a UK-wide consultative ballot on public sector pay during October. The ballot, conducted independently by the Electoral Reform Services, produced a result with a record turnout and delivered a clear message from our members. Almost 99% want the 1% public sector pay cap to end and for funds to be provided for above inflation pay rises. Nearly 80% have said they are prepared to take strike action if your Government or the UK Government fails to deliver on such reasonable proposals.

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There can only be one interpretation of these results: your staff feel strongly that they deserve a proper pay rise. Therefore, on their behalf, I call on you to use the Scottish Budget on 14th December to make the necessary resources available that would allow for negotiations with trade unions to deliver above inflation pay rises for all staff.

PCS wants a resolution to the growing crisis of public sector pay and to this end we will be making these points to the Cabinet Secretary when we meet him on 21st November.

I have no doubt that all parties wish to find meaningful solutions at this critical point for the future of civil and public services in Scotland.

I am also copying this letter to the Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Derek Mackay MSP.

Yours sincerely

Joy Dunn
National Officer

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By email

Our ref: 2017/0042055
20 December 2017

Dear Joy

Thank you for your letter of 15 November 2017 to the First Minister regarding public sector pay and the Scottish Budget. I have been asked to respond to you on her behalf.

Scottish Ministers are well aware of trade union concerns regarding the impact of rising inflation and social security cuts are having on working households and have sought to deliver a pay policy that sets an important direction of travel which takes early steps to restore earnings in the public sector. They have acknowledged that the pay cap, which has been in place to protect jobs and maintain public services during a time of austerity, which has been hard for public sector workers.

To this end, in his draft Budget statement on 14 December, Mr Mackay delivered on the Ministerial commitment to lift the 1% pay cap with a distinctive and progressive public sector pay policy for 2018-19 which is fair, supports those on lower incomes, protects jobs and services while delivering value for money. The 2018-19 pay policy provides a guaranteed minimum increase of 3 per cent for public sector workers who earn £30,000 or less; sets a limit of up to 2% on the increase in baseline paybill for those earning above £30,000 and below £80,000 to allow employers to vary the level of pay award to meet local circumstances; and limits the basic pay increase for those earning £80,000 or more to £1,600. Furthermore the policy has extended the amount of paybill savings that employers can use to address pay inequalities to 1% and extended the scope to include non-consolidated payments for staff already on the maximum of their pay range (or on spot rates) prioritising those who do not benefit from progression increases. The policy also continues: the requirement for employers to pay staff the real Living Wage; leaves decisions on pay progression as a matter for discussion between employers and their staff representatives; and re-affirms this governments position on No Compulsory Redundancy.

The policy focuses on reducing overall income inequality while reflecting the real life circumstances people face. It continues to provide flexibility for employers and trade unions to negotiate pay settlements which meet local business needs while ensuring that the budgets are kept in balance

I hope this reply reassures you that Scottish Ministers have set a pay policy for 2018 that recognises the pressures you set out in your letter while continuing to target public resources to deliver the best value for the people of Scotland.

I look forward to meeting you to discuss the draft Technical Guide in January 2018 before it is finalised and published on our web pages.

Can I take this opportunity to wish you season’s greetings.

Kind regards

[redacted]

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GS/EF

12 December 2017

Mr Derek Mackay MSP
Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Constitution
Scottish Government
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Dear Derek

Scottish Budget 2017

I am writing to you on behalf of the STUC General Council in advance of beginning of the Parliamentary process for the 2017 Scottish Budget. The STUC, of course, recognises that, in the first instance, it is the Scottish Government which will introduce the budget, but believes that every political party and MSP has a role to play to ensure that the budget best serves the interests of the people of Scotland.

The STUC was again disappointed by the UK Budget. The Chancellor chose to continue with austerity, ignoring the pressures on living standards, the signs of weakness in the economy and the need to address the increasing economic fragility as the effects of Brexit take hold.

The Chancellor announced that Scotland would receive an additional £2bn in spending over the years 2017-18 to 2020-21. However, even a cursory analysis shows that little of this will be available for revenue spending purposes. This is undoubtedly a difficult situation for the Scottish Government, but it is also the case that the Parliament now has additional revenue raising powers at its disposal which can support its long term priorities and ambitions for Scotland. The Scottish Government has a number of ambitious spending plans within the programme for Government, including welcome investment in the NHS and Childcare.

Workers' pay across public and private sectors has spiralled downwards in real terms, living standards are falling and it is generally accepted that this must cease.

The STUC recognises that the Scottish Parliament has limited powers to arrest the decline in private sector wages. We support all available action, through procurement and economic assistance conditionality, to protect private sector workers, particularly the lowest paid.

However through its own pay policy and through its role as the majority funder of devolved public services, the Parliament does have the capacity to halt the real terms decline in public sector wages and to begin the process of restoring pay to acceptable levels. This restoration should be part of an overall increase in investment ensuring that all those living in Scotland benefit from higher quality services.

Public service workers, through their unions, are making claims for pay increases on or over the current (RPI) rate of inflation. This is to halt the decline in wages and to begin the process of restoration. Unions accept that this restoration will take a number of years. But the process must start now.

Although the UK pay cap has apparently been lifted, the UK budget falls short of fully funding an inflation level pay rise for public service workers.

However, for the purposes of meeting its spending commitments and offering a fair pay dal to all public service workers, the Scottish Parliament now has additional revenue raising powers as well as the potential to change course on existing or proposed tax breaks which reduce its spending potential.

Just as it welcomes the Finance Minister's engagement with trade unions, STUC welcomes the Scottish Government's decision to begin a debate on tax. In a generally thoughtful paper centred on income tax options it has suggested that amendment to tax bands and rates are an important means by which sustainable growth and economic justice can be delivered.

However, the STUC is also on record as believing that the revenue raising options within the paper should go further. In the paper's most ambitious proposal, someone earning £2000 per week will only pay around an additional £20 per week in tax.

Given the prevalence of low pay and the pressure on vital public services, the STUC does not think this level of revenue-raising goes nearly far enough.

It is time for the Parliament to be bold.

The STUC's own tax analysis reveals that proposals which are more than twice as ambitious as those within the Scottish Government paper – raising closer to £800 million per year – could be brought forward without any additional cost to any worker earning £22,000 per year or less. Such a proposal would affect the income of a worker on £30,000 per year by around £2 per week. However, someone earning £100,000 per year (£2000 per week) would pay an additional £80 per week. We believe that they can afford it.

The STUC urges political parties of all colours to consider their own position on tax and bring forward meaningful proposals to the budget debate.

The proposals should meet the principles of being

- **Deliverable**. The Scottish Parliament must have the power to levy the tax in question;
- **Sufficient**. It must raise sufficient funds to meet the spending commitments it supports
- **Redistributive**. The overall effect of the tax and associated spending should be to positively redistribute towards those in greater need.

The STUC calls on all parties in the Scottish Parliament to support a budget only if it delivers a tax proposal consistent with the principles above, as well as delivering a pay policy and the funding necessary for an increase in public sector pay for all public service workers.

Yours sincerely,

[redacted]

Grahame Smith
STUC General Secretary

The Budget

On 22 November, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Philip Hammond presented his budget to the House of Commons. In many ways, this budget was characterised by its hold steady approach, but it also served to highlight the issues at the heart of the UK economy.

In this budget, the Chancellor chose to continue with austerity, ignoring the pressures on living standards, the signs of weakness in the economy and the need to address the increasing economic fragility as the effects of Brexit take hold. Each budget offers the Chancellor an opportunity to change course and to consider a new path for the economy, one built on investment and growth rather than austerity and cuts. Yet once again the UK has decided to stick with unfair policies that push down on living standards, squeeze public services and contribute to the cycle of low growth that is now a feature of our economic model.

The impact that this approach has on Scotland is clear. Continual cuts in spending have, in previous years, been passed on by the Scottish Government and while effort has been made to limit the worst excesses of Tory austerity, the fundamentals of a cuts agenda prevail. This budget, however, has the potential to mark a turning point in Scotland. The powers of the Parliament have been extended offering a range of new tax and borrowing options to the Scottish Government. While it is unrealistic to expect the Scottish Government to completely undo all of the damage caused by austerity in the wider UK, there is the opportunity to chart a different course.

The powers, while limited, do allow the Scottish Government to invest in the economy and raise living standards. The next period is crucial for Scotland and with Brexit on the horizon, the need has never been greater to take a different path and create a more sustainable and inclusive economy based on investment and fair work principles.

Economic Context

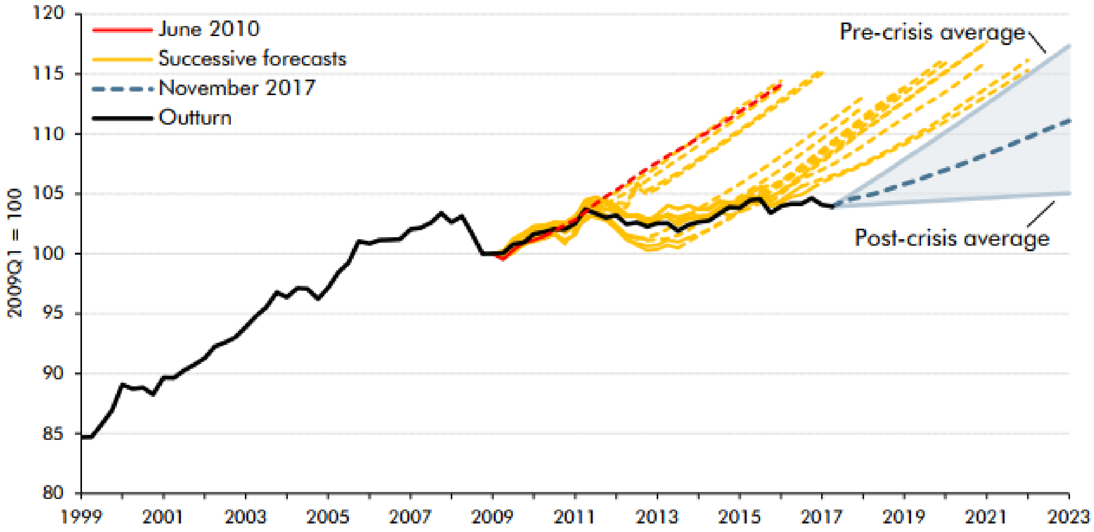
To accompany the UK's budget, the Office of Budget Responsibility (OBR) set out a series of worrying economic forecasts. These negative forecasts were a response to weak growth, weak business investment and increasing Brexit uncertainty. The forecasts mean that the UK economy is now expected to be £42 billion smaller by 2022 than was expected in the OBR's last forecast in March.

The OBR now also predicts that workers across the UK will face another decade of low wages and falling living standards, with earnings only returning to their pre-recession level in 2025.

The OBR's forecasts for productivity were characterised by many economic commentators as a new acceptance of the economic problems facing the UK economy. The OBR is now no longer expecting productivity to return to pre-crisis levels, instead it has revised trend productivity growth down by 0.7 percentage points a year. Productivity now rises from 0.9 per cent this year to 1.2 per cent in 2022. This reduces potential output in 2021-22 by 3.0 per cent. The ONS estimates that output per hour is currently 21 per cent below where it should be if the pre-crisis trend had continued. By the beginning of 2023, the OBR now expects this gap to have risen to 27 per cent[1].

The graph below sets out how productivity forecasts have changed over time. The graph shows that since June 2010, the OBR has repeatedly revised downwards its forecasts for productivity[2]. The November 2017 forecast, however, represents a step-change. It should also be noted that the post-crisis average is significantly lower than the forecast, suggesting that there will still need to be an increase in productivity growth for the forecast to be realised in practice.

Chart 1: Productivity growth (output per hour) – forecasts and outturns



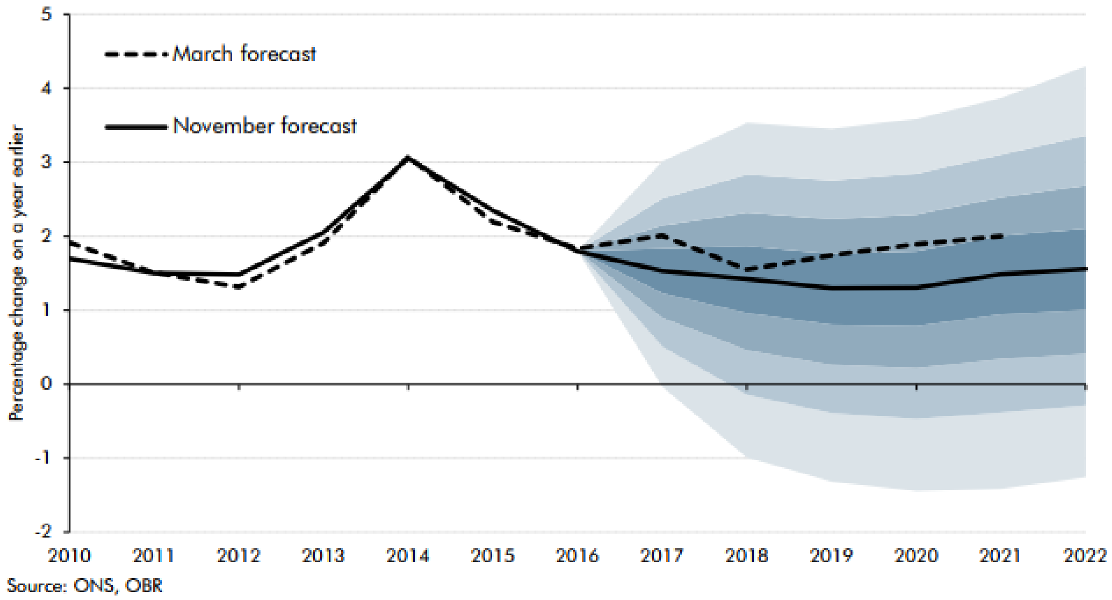
Note: Solid lines represent the outturn data that underpinned the forecast.
Source: ONS, OBR

[1] http://cdn.budgetresponsibility.org.uk/Nov2017EFOwebversion-2.pdf, p9
[2] http://cdn.budgetresponsibility.org.uk/Nov2017EFOwebversion-2.pdf p9

This drop in productivity has a knock on effect on GDP and the OBR has revised down its forecast for actual GDP growth by 0.4 percentage points a year relative to the forecasts it made in March. It now expects real GDP to grow by 5.7 per cent between 2017-18 and 2021-22 – down from 7.5 per cent in March.[3]

The Chart produced by the OBR below, however, highlights that there is still significant uncertainty around the levels of growth that can be expected and the level of difference between November's forecast and that of March is significant[4]. The solid black line shows the OBR's median forecast, with successive pairs of lighter shaded areas around it representing 20 per cent probability bands. These confidence intervals are greater than in the past, and highlight the general uncertainty that exists around the economy at present. Much of this uncertainty is driven by Brexit and the loss of confidence that both businesses and consumers are starting to demonstrate. It is, therefore, by no means certain that the bleak picture painted in these forecasts will be realised, and while the true picture may be much better, there is also significant risk that the economic outlook facing the UK, and consequently Scotland, may turn out to be worse.

Chart 2 Real GDP growth fan chart



The UK Budget

[3] http://cdn.budgetresponsibility.org.uk/Nov2017EFOwebversion-2.pdf, p9
[4] http://cdn.budgetresponsibility.org.uk/Nov2017EFOwebversion-2.pdf p12

The change in forecast from the OBR is significant as it affected the options available to the Chancellor. The Chancellor has constrained himself by setting out a fiscal target for cyclically adjusted borrowing to be below 2 per cent of GDP in 2020-21. This, coupled with manifesto pledges which committed the Chancellor to raising the personal allowance, raising the higher rate threshold and freezing the VAT threshold for the next 2 years, mean that there was little room to manoeuvre for the Chancellor in this budget. To meet his fiscal target, his manifesto commitments and to avoid tax rises, which are unlikely to be supported by his party, further austerity may have seemed like his only option.

It should be remembered, however, that this is a cage of the Chancellor's own making. There is clear economic evidence to suggest that austerity is not working. Poverty is rising and living standards are falling, growth levels are low and business and consumer confidence are weak. Austerity is failing and extracting an increasingly heavy price on the economy and on people across Britain. Continuing with such a course in the face of Brexit uncertainty, is only likely to exacerbate these issues, and it is clear that the Chancellor needs to do more to shore up the economy and support living standards. Despite this, the Chancellor has categorically failed to act, or chosen the wrong course in a whole variety of areas.

On public sector pay, having raised expectations, the Chancellor failed to take meaningful action. Statements around abolishing the public sector pay cap made before the budget mean little in practice, when departments are struggling with further austerity and there is no additional money available for increased wages. The increased funding for the NHS in England is welcome, but only a fraction of what is needed to plug the holes and provide the support the health service so desperately needs. Correcting the VAT rules for the Police and Fire Services in Scotland is also welcome and long overdue.

While explicit support for NHS workers around pay is a positive step, selecting some uniformed services for support while others continue to struggle, fails to recognise the damage that low pay and falling living standards are doing to the economy.

Raising public sector pay is not only good for the individual worker receiving a boost to pay – and who prior to this has seen their pay rise by 4.4 per cent while costs have risen by 22 per cent[5] – it also acts as a stimulus for the economy.

Consumption is a key driver of economic growth, and the fall in living standards is contributing to the cooling of growth rates. A pay rise for public sector workers would serve as a contribution to support living standards, easing the growing dependence on debt and supporting the economy.

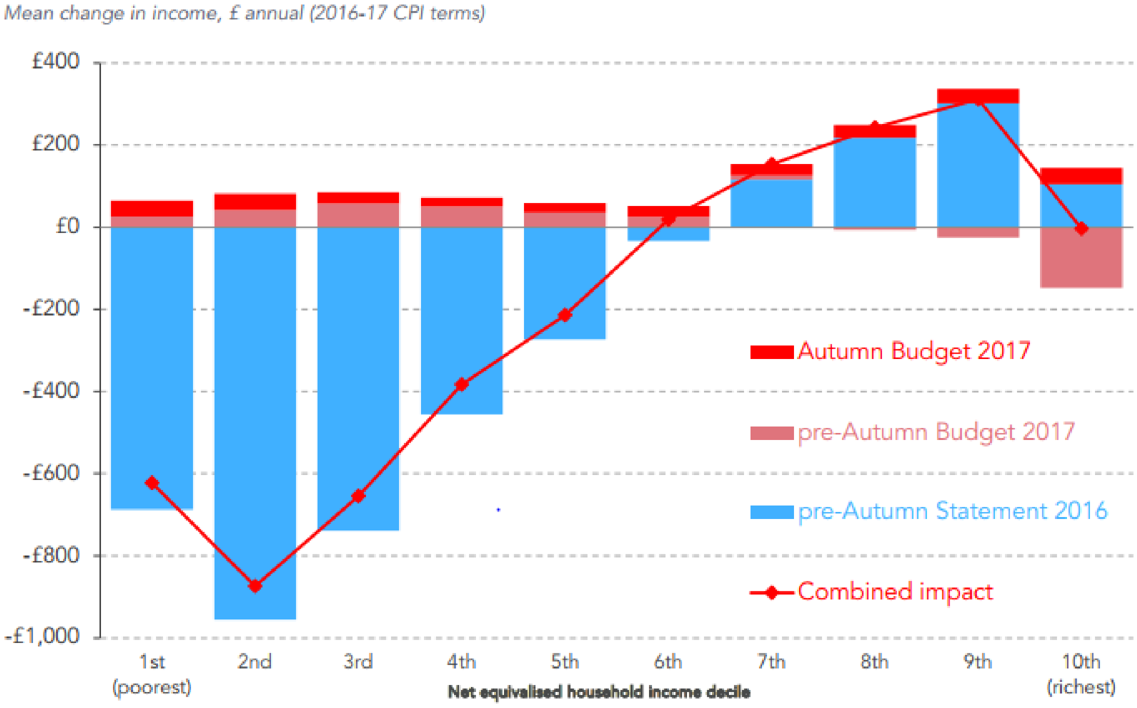
The Chancellor, however, not only failed to seize the opportunity for stimulus, but is continuing to push down on living standards, particularly for the poorest households. In their 'Freshly Squeezed' report, the Resolution Foundation highlights that it expects the combined impact of policies announced from the Summer Budget 2015 onwards to leave each of the bottom five deciles as net losers. The poorest third of households will be an average £715 a year worse off by 2022-23, while the richest third of households will be an average of £185 a year better off.[6] Different household types are also set to experience different impacts from changes to policy and the economy.

Impacts from the range of measures applied suggests that low earning couples, earning around the minimum wage, with three children are likely to be most negatively affected.[7]

The Resolution Foundation produced the chart below to illustrate how the overall impact of measures announced in 2015 are set to be far greater than the impact of those announced since.[8] The cumulative impact on households across the income deciles is clear and those in the lowest income deciles are most negatively affected. In this respect the tax changes made in the budget this year are simply not enough to change course, or undo the real and lasting impact on living standards that George Osbourne's austerity politics continue to have on the UK, regardless of how the Chancellor may paint his current budget.

[5] http://www.unison-scotland.org/2017/10/07/public-service-workers-march-holyrood-fair-pay/
[6] http://www.resolutionfoundation.org/app/uploads/2017/11/Budget-response.pdf p3
[7] http://www.resolutionfoundation.org/app/uploads/2017/11/Budget-response.pdf p34
[8] http://www.resolutionfoundation.org/app/uploads/2017/11/Budget-response.pdf p32

Chart 3: Cumulative impact of tax and benefit policies announced since March 2015: 2022-23



Notes: Includes the introduction of the National Living Wage, announced income tax cuts, additional hours of free childcare for working parents, removal of family element, fuel and alcohol duty freezes, limiting support to two children, a reduced benefit cap, work allowance cuts, pension tax relief cuts, Class 2 NICs abolition, benefit freeze, reducing UC taper to 63%, capital gains tax, reducing the Dividend Allowance and in the most recent period removing the 7 day wait for new claims to UC. Assumes full entitlement take-up with UC fully in place and the gradual impact of measures affecting new claims/births in Universal Credit.

Source: RF analysis using the IPPR tax-benefit model & OBR, *Economic and Fiscal Outlook*, November 2017

The Scottish Budget

Over the period 2017-18 to 2020-21, the Scottish budget will be boosted by around £2bn in total.

The majority of this funding (over 80 per cent) however will come in the form of capital spending. While an increase in funding for capital projects is welcome – particularly given the pressure that the construction sector has been under over the recent period, facing its sixth consecutive quarter of contraction – the increase falling primarily in this budget line does create a challenge for the Scottish Government. Resource spending is what is used to deliver increases in funding for things like childcare, the NHS and pay for public sector workers. These areas of spend have seen little support from the Chancellor and will barely rise between 2017-18 and 2019-20, with a cumulative increase in this period of only around £350 million.

This, therefore, places pressure on the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and the Constitution to use the powers at his disposal to support the Scottish economy and increase resource spending. Faced with an increasingly fragile economy in Scotland, it is incumbent on the Finance Secretary to take action. Growth in Scotland has been 0.1 per cent or less in six of the last eight quarters, productivity continues to be low and wages are falling. Arguably the issues in the Scottish economy are even more acute than in the UK and, while the challenges for the Scottish Government should not be underestimated, it is essential that it uses every tool in its tax and borrowing armoury in order to place the Scottish economy on the most sustainable basis and prepare for Brexit.

In recent weeks, the Scottish Government released a tax paper which considers various options for increasing income tax in Scotland. It is in many ways a thoughtful paper and a positive start to a conversation about tax which also encourages other political parties to engage in the process. However, none of the illustrative tax options are sufficiently ambitious to protect public services or public sector workers' pay. It is also important that the Scottish Government looks at the range of tax options available and does not narrowly focus on income tax alone.

The paper also contains a very broad spectrum of assumptions on behavioural impacts of tax changes with a broad range of predictions on the final taxes collected.

While the Scottish Fiscal Commission will ultimately need to model any concrete options taken by the Finance Secretary, reducing the variability of expected outcomes would have provided a more helpful foundation for this debate.

The debate on tax to date has been narrowly drawn around a concept of progressivity rather than redistribution. Much focus has been concentrated on preventing tax increases for the lowest earners, rather than considering how the lowest earners can see their overall income rise, if tax is used to support public services and economic growth.

There has been a distortion in the debate around this issue which leads to modest proposals which avoid tax rises, particularly for the basic rate and ultimately fail to raise sufficient levels of tax to offer the support necessary to the economy.

It should be noted that a tax plan which was twice as ambitious as that of the Scottish Government is likely to have modest impacts on the majority of households.

Ultimately, increasing public spending supports the economy and is a form of redistribution of wealth. A family of two adults on the median wage with two dependants could, therefore, pay £100 extra per year as a result of tax changes, but could see £800 a year invested in their public services.

The Scottish Government should therefore be using its tax powers to support investment. It should also be noted that the Government now has a range of borrowing powers at its disposal and because growth is so low within the Scottish economy and the divergence between Scotland and the wider UK economy is sufficient, the emergency borrowing powers in the Fiscal Framework have been triggered. As the Fiscal Framework sets out, where the provision is triggered, the Scottish Government is able to borrow up to the agreed limits for the year in which the trigger applies plus the following two financial years.

These additional powers may allow the Scottish Government to consider more investments in infrastructure which could be used to support the transition to a low carbon economy, to support the development of new technologies and the Scottish manufacturing base, while also improving infrastructure and ultimately raising productivity. Many of the issues in the economy at present are driven by low investment, low confidence, falling wages and living standards. In this context a focus on stimulus, changing the mood music of the economy, seems appropriate and justified.

Conclusion

The UK Government is continuing to follow a failing economic model and has simply not recognised the challenge posed to the economy by Brexit. With growth weak, living standards falling and public services across the country in desperate need of investment, the time seems right to take a different course.

Yet choices from the UK Government continue to place an increasing burden on the poorest households, while richer families are supported.

This only exacerbates issues of inequality and the inefficiency of such skewed wealth distribution continues to weigh heavily on the system, creating an ever increasing debt bubble.

The Scottish Government must take action, using the powers of the Parliament to the full to chart a different course, placing the economy on a stronger footing, tackling inequality and raising the living standards of people in Scotland.

Cabinet Secretary for Finance and the Constitution
Derek Mackay MSP

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Mr Grahame Smith
General Secretary
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14 December 2017

Dear Grahame,

Draft Budget 2018-19

Thank you for your letters to the First Minister and I on 12 December 2017. We welcome this opportunity to continue the open and constructive dialogue with the Scottish Trade Unions Congress on the Scottish Budget.

Today, I had the privilege of delivering my second Scottish Draft Budget Statement to the Scottish Parliament. The budget demonstrates the Scottish Government's priorities of investing in public services, unlocking economic potential and delivering fairness and does so by taking bold decisions on the revenue raising levers at our disposal.

In the face of the continued budget cuts by the UK Government, a government who have repeatedly ignored our calls for investment in our public services and will have cut our discretionary block grant allocation by £2.6 billion in real terms by 2019-20, we have chosen a distinctive and progressive pay policy.

2018-19 Pay Policy

In fulfilling our programme for government commitment to lift the 1% pay cap, we have developed a pay policy which is fair, recognises the cost of living, supports those on lower incomes and protects public sector jobs and services, while delivering value for money for the people of Scotland - underlining our distinctive approach.

I welcome the STUC view's that restoring public sector wages will take a number of years but that the process must start now. That is why today, we have announced a 3% increase for those earning up to £30,000 and a 2% increase on the paybill for those public sector workers earning between £30,000 and £80,000. We are also capping pay uplifts at £1,600 for those on £80,000 or more, supporting our commitment to reduce the overall pay gap. The 2018-19 pay policy is underpinned by our commitment to pay the real Living Wage and re-affirms our unique position on no compulsory redundancies and protects public sector jobs.

This sets an important direction of travel and I hope, subject to available resources, to continue to deliver a pay policy that strikes a balance between affordability and offering a fair deal for staff in future years.

A Bold Approach to Income Tax

The income tax policy announced today means that, by introducing the Starter Rate and freezing the Basic Rate, we have protected those on low incomes. The addition of the Intermediate Rate, and increases to the Higher and Top rates helps to make the Scottish income tax system more progressive overall, while raising additional revenue to support the public services that the people of Scotland rely on. I also welcomed the opportunity to engage with all parts of civic Scotland, including the STUC and individual trade unions, as part of the roundtables on the income tax discussion document.

The First Minister and I did not take income tax and pay policy decisions in isolation. Both policies are progressive delivered in a fiscally responsible way, balancing cost of living pressures with affordability to the public purse. An approach that both public sector workers and wider society would expect from a responsible government.

This governments budget positions Scotland to grasp the opportunities presented by a rapidly changing global economy, crucially it takes measures to protect households from the worst effects of UK budget cuts through investment in public services and seeks to mitigate against Brexit uncertainty.

This government’s budget for 2018-19, is about doing the right thing for Scotland’s public services and ensuring that Scotland will be the fairest taxed part of the UK providing the best deal for taxpayers.

The First Minister and I look forward to continuing to work with the STUC, as we progress our shared ambition for the people of Scotland.

Yours

DEREK MACKAY

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GMB
SCOTLAND

Mr Derek Mackay MSP
Cabinet Secretary for Finance and the Constitution
The Scottish Government
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12 December, 2017

Dear Mr Mackay

The Scottish Budget and Public Sector Pay

You will have seen the inflation figures released today, confirming that the need for GMB Scotland members across the public sector to receive a proper pay rise has never been greater.

All summer GMB Scotland spoke with, and listened to, our public sector members about their experience delivering Scotland's public services. Those workers are telling me, and you, that they have worse living standards now than they did 5 years ago.

Your government has made the commitment to end austerity, well it is time to prove that.

GMB Scotland members have had enough of political point scoring, they need pounds in their pockets and that is within your powers. There will be no sympathy from GMB Scotland members for any politician that makes them worse off, privatised or redundant.

Our members are working harder than ever, covering extra shifts due to lack of staff, longer hours because otherwise service users will be left without, under more and more pressure from cost-stripping of vital services. It's a miracle that some services still function at all. But where they do - it's down to the hard work every single day of public sector workers.

I've seen the pay offer been offered to local government workers outside of Scotland, with an offer of 9.191% for the lowest paid, and I expect Scotland to be bolder.

I will wait to see what happens on Thursday but be assured GMB Scotland members will be watching to see what you do. They will not accept anything that makes them poorer.

Yours sincerely,

[redacted]

Drew Duffy
GMB Scotland Senior Organiser

GMB SCOTLAND – PROTECTING YOU AT WORK

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