

# Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee

## 18<sup>th</sup> Meeting, 2022 (Session 6), Tuesday 24th May 2022

### Evidence session on the role of local government and its cross-sectoral partners in financing and delivering a net-zero Scotland

#### Note by the clerk

#### Introduction

1. In November 2021, the Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee launched [an inquiry into the role of local government and its cross-sectoral partners in financing and delivering a net-zero Scotland](#).
2. This inquiry aims to seek out the main barriers at a local level to Scotland reaching its target of being net zero in emissions by 2045. It will consider what practical steps councils are taking to break them down, in partnership with business, the voluntary sector, and local communities. It is also considering—
  - what role the Scottish Government and its agencies can play in both supporting and, where necessary, challenging local government to work well with its partners to deliver net zero
  - how local government can play its part in ensuring a “just transition” to net zero, i.e. one that is economically and socially fair.
3. The Committee launched this inquiry with an open [Call for Views](#), posing 12 questions. It has taken evidence at seven Committee meetings so far—
  - On 11 January, the Committee heard from representatives of five different local authorities with different net zero policies and priorities. [The Official Report for this meeting is here](#).
  - On 18 January, the Committee heard from the Sustainable Scotland Network, and community groups on the local route to net zero. [The Official Report is here](#).
  - On 25 January, the Committee heard from representatives of the business and private investment sectors. [The Official Report is here](#).
  - On 22 March, the Committee heard from a panel on the role of the planning system in helping reaching net zero and a panel on skills and vocational training. [The Official Report is here](#).
  - On 29 March, the Committee heard more evidence on the theme of vocational skills and workforce readiness. [The Official Report is here](#).

- On 3 May, the Committee heard from a panel of transport experts on the role of local authorities in helping to decarbonise transport. [The Official Report is here.](#)
- On 17 May, the Committee heard from an expert panel discussing the decarbonisation of heat in buildings. [The Official Report will be posted here when published.](#)

## Key themes at 24 May meeting

4. Following the closure of the Call for Views in late January, the Committee took stock of the evidence gathered so far and agreed key themes for the remainder of the inquiry. One of these was the role of local government in the transition from our current energy mix to one where renewables play a far greater role.
5. The Scottish Government policy document, [The future of energy in Scotland: Scottish energy strategy](#) was published in 2017 and is expected to be updated before the end of 2022 to reflect the net zero 2045 target, and to include a Just Transition Plan for the sector. The strategy sets out a 2050 vision of:
 

“A flourishing, competitive local and national energy sector, delivering secure, affordable, clean energy for Scotland's households, communities and businesses.”
6. Renewable energy generation and greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets set by the Scottish Government include a 75% reduction in emissions by 2030 and net zero emissions by 2045; as well as an all energy (heat, transport and electricity) renewables target of 50% by 2030. More information can be found in this September 2021 paper from the Scottish Parliament Information Centre: [Briefing on Energy Policy](#)
7. One of the main areas in which local government has direct influence over renewable energy is via the planning system. Councils’ role in helping spearhead or promote initiatives in their area and in building partnerships with the public, private and voluntary sectors to promote green energy projects is another relevant issue. Councils themselves are also significant consumers of energy through their building estates and the services they provide, and all are pledged to reduce their own carbon footprint. These are amongst issues the Committee is likely to discuss with witnesses at the 24 May meeting.
8. Of the five organisations represented at the meeting (as listed on the agenda), one – Scottish Renewables – provided a [response to the Call for Views](#).

## Next steps

9. The Committee will take evidence at further meetings over the coming weeks, as well as undertaking inquiry-related fact-finding visits across Scotland. It expects to report to the Parliament in autumn 2022.