

Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee

19th Meeting, 2022 (Session 6), Tuesday 31
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 is here.](#)
- On 24 May, the Committee discussed local government’s role in sustaining and promoting renewables with industry and local government representatives. [The Official Report will be posted here when published.](#)

Key themes at 31 May meeting

4. On 31 May, the Committee will have a brief evidence session with a representative of Freiburg; a self-declared “green city” in Germany’s Black Forest region [widely considered a world leader](#) amongst local authorities in its approach to sustainable low-carbon living. The Committee will be asking what positive lessons Freiburg can offer local authorities in Scotland about crafting effective and popular net zero policies in areas such as transport, active travel and place-making.

Next steps

5. 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 this autumn, with recommendations addressed to the Scottish Government.