

Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee

25th Meeting, 2022 (Session 6), Tuesday 27 September 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. [All submissions to the call for views are available here](#).
4. The Committee has taken evidence at twelve 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 is here.](#)
- On 31 May, the Committee heard from the “Green City” of Freiburg, to learn what steps it had taken to make itself a world leader amongst local authorities in its approach to sustainable low-carbon living. [The Official Report is here.](#)
- On 14 June the Committee discussed how housebuilding could contribute better to net zero goals. [The Official Report is here.](#)
- On 21 June, the Committee heard from a co-financing panel how local authorities can secure private investment in projects to deliver the transition to net zero. It also discussed with a panel of experts on the natural environment how councils use nature-based solutions to meet climate change and biodiversity targets, including consideration of best practice. [The Official Report is here.](#)
- On 20 September, the Committee heard from local government experts and leaders. Once published, [the Official Report will be available here.](#)

Evidence session on 27 September meeting

5. On 27 September, the Committee will conclude its formal evidence-taking by hearing from the Scottish Government. The Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero, Energy and Transport and the Minister for Social Security and Local Government will give evidence, alongside Scottish Government officials. This is an opportunity to question the Scottish Government on how it is supporting the local government sector on the journey to net zero, including in relation to specific challenges (e.g. decarbonising transport and the built environment).

Next steps

6. With formal evidence-taking concluded, the Committee will move on to consider its main conclusions and recommendations arising from this wide-ranging inquiry, seeking to report later in the year.