

# Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee

## 25<sup>th</sup> Meeting, 2023 (Session 6)

Tuesday, 12 September 2023

### Scottish Government priorities relevant to the Committee's remit: evidence session with the Cabinet Secretary for Wellbeing Economy, Fair Work and Energy

#### Introduction

1. At its meeting on 27 June, the Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee agreed to hold an evidence session with the Cabinet Secretary for Wellbeing Economy, Fair Work and Energy, Neil Gray MSP, to discuss his policy prospectus on issues falling within his responsibility that also relate to the Committee's remit. A full list of issues within the Cabinet Secretary's portfolio [can be found here](#).

#### Background

2. On 28 March, the Scottish Parliament [approved the appointment](#) of a new First Minister, Humza Yousaf MSP.

3. In his [statement to Parliament](#) on 18 April, the First Minister set out his priorities for the Scottish Government over the rest of the Parliamentary Session. The Scottish Government also published [Equality, opportunity, community: New leadership - A fresh start](#), providing future details of its new policy prospectus.

4. The First Minister also reshuffled his Cabinet and created new portfolios. The Cabinet Secretary for Wellbeing Economy, Fair Work and Energy was appointed to his role in March. The two main areas in which the Cabinet Secretary's responsibilities intersect with the Committee's remit are on matters of energy policy and government investments. View a full list of [issues within the Cabinet Secretary's portfolio](#).

5. On 5 September, the Scottish Government published its [Programme for Government \(PfG\) 2023-24](#). The document sets out the Scottish Government's policy and legislative agenda for the forthcoming year. With regards to the Cabinet Secretary's portfolio, key commitments from the PfG include—

- Publish a Solar Vision for Scotland, setting out our ambition for solar and how we will facilitate its growth.
- Continue to implement the Hydrogen Action Plan and use the Hydrogen Innovation Scheme and the Hydrogen Investment Programme, via the upcoming launch of the Green Hydrogen Fund, to develop Scotland’s potential to become a leading nation in the production of reliable, competitive and sustainable hydrogen.
- Establish a sector deal with the onshore wind industry to help deliver our onshore wind ambition, maximising the benefits for Scotland’s economy and communities and accelerating our consenting processes – underpinned by an ambition to halve the average determination time for section 36 applications to 12 months where there is no public inquiry.
- Continue to enhance Scotland’s place as a world-leading destination for offshore wind investment, including updating guidance to further streamline offshore wind consenting processes and ensure the most efficient management of both pre-application and post-consent processes to shorten timeframes where possible.
- Develop a Green Industrial Strategy, setting out how the Scottish Government intends to help businesses and investors realise the enormous economic opportunities of the global transition to net zero and of creating good, well-paid jobs in sectors such as offshore wind and hydrogen, while also supporting the development of sectoral Just Transition Plans.

## Meeting on 12 September

6. At its meeting on 12 September, the Committee will hear from the Cabinet Secretary and supporting officials, as listed on the agenda.

7. This will be a wide-ranging session covering all aspects of the Cabinet Secretary’s portfolio that relate to the Committee’s remit. It is likely discussion will be based around commitments made by the Scottish Government in the PfG. The Committee is also likely to take this opportunity to bring up relevant themes arising from its inquiries into [Scotland’s electricity infrastructure: inhibitor or enabler of our energy ambitions?](#) and [a modern and sustainable ferry service for Scotland](#).

8. Evidence provided by the Cabinet Secretary on his policy and legislative programme will help the Committee to identify key areas of focus for future inquiry work and its pre-budget scrutiny.

Clerks  
Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee