

Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee

13th Meeting, 2021 (Session 6)

Tuesday 30 November 2021

Retrofitting homes for net-zero

Background

1. To meet the Scottish Government's net zero target by 2045, all homes and in Scotland must have significantly reduced their energy use. This will require continued progress on energy efficiency by, for example, installing measures such as loft, floor and wall insulation or double/triple glazing.
2. In addition to these 'fabric first' improvements, almost all homes will also need to be using zero emissions heating systems such as direct electric heating, heat pumps, biomass boilers or connecting a house to a heat network supplied by a renewable heat source.
3. The Scottish Government's Heat in Building Strategy ('HiB strategy'), published in October 2021, is clear about the scale of the challenge for Scotland's approximate 2.5m homes. For example:
 - Only around 11% of households have a renewable or very low emissions heating system. This does not include those currently connected to a heat network, as these are predominately fuelled by gas. An estimated 34,000 homes are connected to heat networks.
 - By 2030 over 1 million homes will need to have converted to zero emissions heat.
 - The Scottish Government proposes that all homes must meet Energy Performance Certificate rating C in the future (see more detail below). Although there have been long term improvements in energy efficiency, in 2019 less than half (45%) of Scotland's homes were rated EPC C or better (in general social housing is the most energy efficient).
4. In addition to the benefits to the environment of transforming Scotland's housing stock a range of other benefits could include a reduction in fuel poverty, positive economic impacts and wider social and health outcomes.

5. The Committee recognises that this is a very significant issue and one it could not possibly do justice to in one meeting. The Committee expects to come back to this issue next year.
6. At this meeting, however, the Committee intends to explore issues around the:
 - costs and funding of retrofitting;
 - just transition;
 - public engagement on retrofitting; and
 - the skills, supply chain and infrastructure necessary for retrofitting

Make-up of the panels

7. The Committee will be hearing from three panels of witnesses—
 - Panel 1
 - Professor Ken Gibb, Director, UK Collaborative Centre for Housing Evidence, University of Glasgow;
 - Chris Morgan, Architect and Director, John Gilbert Architects;
 - Patrick McGrath, Director, Southside Housing Association;
 - Panel 2
 - Bruce Cuthbertson, Chairperson, East Ayrshire Federation (of tenants and residents) ;
 - Aaron Hill, Director of Policy and Membership, Scottish Federation of Housing Associations ;
 - Bryan Leask, Chief Executive, Hjalmland Housing Association Ltd ;
 - Derek Logie, Chief Executive, Rural Housing Scotland;
 - Panel 3
 - Stephen Good, Chief Executive, Construction Scotland Innovation Centre ;
 - Elizabeth Leighton, Director, Existing Homes Alliance Scotland;
 - Professor Lori McElroy, Retrofit Scotland

Clerk to the Committee
Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee