

# Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee

## 10<sup>th</sup> Meeting, 2022 (Session 6), Tuesday, 22 March 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 net zero targets. It will consider what practical steps councils are taking to break them down, in partnership with business, the voluntary sector, and local communities. It will also consider areas where change will be needed if councils are to play a full role in achieving the Scottish Government's goal of a net zero Scotland by 2045
3. The inquiry 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.
4. The Committee launched this inquiry with an open [Call for Views](#), posing 12 questions. It has taken evidence at three 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 two panels of cross-sectoral delivery partners on the route to net zero. [The Official Report for this meeting is here](#).
  - On 25 January, the Committee heard from representatives of the business sector and bodies working in community development. [The Official Report for this meeting is here](#).

## Key themes at 22 March meeting

5. Following the closure of the Call for Views in late January, the Committee has taken stock of the evidence gathered so far and agreed key themes for the remainder of the inquiry. Two emerging and related issues are:
  - the role of the local government planning system in relation to net zero. This can be positive: as a driver and enabler of transformational change in areas such as active travel, reduced car use, better insulated homes, meeting national renewable energy goals, etc. The Committee heard it can sometimes be negative. For instance, it heard of concerns about resourcing, recruitment and succession challenges in town planning departments, and the knock-on consequences this has, and also about the speed of decision-taking under the planning system. The Committee recently raised some of these concerns in [correspondence following its scrutiny of aspects of the new national planning framework](#) (NPF4);
  - The importance of having a workforce with the right training, skills and capacity to help make the 2045 goal a reality, with policy areas such as decarbonising heat in buildings identified as posing steep challenges in the coming years, given the scale of the goals in this area.
6. The Committee will be hearing from panels of experts (as listed on the agenda) on both issues on 22 March. Of these, the following provided responses to the call for views (click on link for the response):
  - [Heads of Planning Scotland](#) (Panel 1)
  - [Royal Town Planning Institute Scotland](#) (Panel 1)
  - [Colleges Scotland](#) (Panel 2)

## Next steps

7. On 29 March, the Committee expects to hear from two more stakeholder panels in an continuation of the skills, training and workforce capacity theme, with decarbonising heat in buildings likely to be a particular focus.
8. The Committee will take evidence at further meetings in Spring and early Summer 2022 and also expects to make inquiry-related fact-finding visits during this time. It expects to report to the Parliament in autumn 2022.

**Clerks**  
**Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee**