

Net Zero, Environment and Transport Committee

Determination of Committee priorities: evidence session on the Just Transition Commission

Note by the Clerk

Introduction

1. The remit of the new Net Zero, Environment and Transport (NZET) Committee is to consider and report on matters falling within the responsibility of the Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero, Energy and Transport. The Cabinet Secretary has diverse responsibilities in relation to transport, energy and environmental policy as well as for co-ordination of Net Zero policy across the Scottish Government.
2. The NZET Committee has agreed to spend initial meetings in autumn 2021 hearing from a cross-section of major stakeholders whose interests are relevant to the Cabinet Secretary's main responsibilities. Following this – and the Scottish Government's announcement later this month of its *Programme for Government* setting out legislation for 2021-22 – the Committee will discuss and agree its first work programme.
3. The Committee has also agreed that the UN Climate Change Conference (COP26), to be held in Glasgow on 1-12 November, its possible outcomes, and their likely impact on net zero policy in Scotland, should be a focus of these early evidence sessions.
4. On 31 August, the Committee heard from the [Climate Change Committee](#), which advises the UK and devolved Governments on emissions targets.¹

Just Transition Commission

5. On 7 September, the Committee will hear from two former members of the [Just Transition Commission](#): the Chair, Professor Jim Skea, and Dave Moxham of the Scottish Trades Union Congress.
6. The Just Transition concept features in the Paris Climate Agreement. In Scotland, a number of NGOs and unions have joined together in a [Just Transition Partnership](#). The concept is particularly associated with industrial sectors or areas transitioning away from heavy fossil fuel use or facing economic decline as a result of this transition.
7. [Section 35C](#) of the Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2009 sets out "just transition principles" as the importance of taking action to reduce net Scottish emissions of greenhouse gases in a way which:

¹ The Official Report of this meeting will be available at [Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee 2nd Meeting, 2021 | Scottish Parliament Website](#)

- Supports environmentally and socially sustainable jobs
 - Supports low-carbon investment and infrastructure
 - Develops and maintains social consensus through engagement with workers, trade unions, communities, non-governmental organisations, representatives of the interests of business and industry and such other persons as the Scottish Ministers consider appropriate
 - Creates decent, fair and high-value work in a way which does not negatively affect the current workforce and overall economy
 - Contributes to resource efficient and sustainable economic approaches which help to address inequality and poverty.
8. The 2009 Act (as amended) requires the Scottish Government to have regard to the principles when setting out plans to reduce emissions. In 2018, the Scottish Government established the Just Transition Commission. It was tasked with providing practical and independent advice on how to maximise the economic and social benefits of decarbonisation whilst managing the risks and challenges.
9. In March 2021, the Commission published their [final advice to Scottish Ministers: A National Mission for a fairer, greener Scotland](#), with into four key messages:
- Pursue an orderly, managed transition to net-zero that creates benefits and opportunities for people across Scotland
 - Equip people with the skills and education they need to benefit from the transition
 - Climate action needs to empower and invigorate communities and strengthen local economies
 - Share the benefits of climate action widely, while ensuring that the costs are distributed on the basis of ability to pay.
10. Key recommendations include that all public funding for climate action should be conditional on Fair Work terms, that the Scottish Government should develop detailed roadmaps in order to provide the public and business with certainty about the transition, that workers in carbon intensive industries will be supported in accessing skills and education to equip them for the transition.
11. The Scottish Government has not yet responded to the final advice.

Evidence session and next steps

12. The evidence session is the first opportunity for a Parliamentary Committee to explore the main findings of the Commission with former Members and seek their views on what the Scottish Government should do to implement their recommendations. After the session is concluded, the Committee will discuss the evidence and how it could contribute to the development of a work programme.
13. At future meetings in September, the Committee expects to take evidence from:
- The Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero, Energy and Transport;
 - Alok Sharma MP, President-Designate of COP 26;
 - The Scottish National Investment Bank; and
 - Representatives of Scotland’s enterprise agencies.