

COVID-19 Recovery Committee

11th Meeting, 2023 (Session 6), Thursday 4 May 2023

Standing Committee on Pandemic Preparedness

Introduction

1. At this meeting, the Committee will take evidence on the work of the [Standing Committee on Pandemic Preparedness](#) and hear from the following witnesses—

- Professor Andrew Morris, Chair, Standing Committee on Pandemic Preparedness, Director/CEO HDR-UK and Vice-Principal Data Science, University of Edinburgh;
- Professor Tom Evans, Professor of Molecular Microbiology and Consultant in Infectious Diseases, University of Glasgow.

2. The Committee previously heard from the Standing Committee on Pandemic Preparedness in September 2022 as part of its pre-budget scrutiny which considered Scottish Government funding of its COVID Recovery Strategy and the ongoing costs associated with the pandemic, as set out in the COVID-19 Strategic Framework. The latter included policy measures such as the booster vaccination programme, provision of procured personal protective equipment (PPE), surveillance and work on future pandemic preparedness. The paper and transcript from that meeting can be found at the following link—

- [Agenda for COVID-19 Recovery Committee 21st Meeting, 2022 Thursday, September 29, 2022 | Scottish Parliament Website](#)

Background

3. The Standing Committee on Pandemic Preparedness is a permanent advisory group to the Scottish Government. It was established to bring together scientists and technical experts in order to advise on future pandemic risks and how to prepare for them.

4. Membership of the Standing Committee is drawn from academia, public health and the Scottish Government. The Committee's remit extends to—
 - advice on preparedness for and response to future pandemics, but not to management of the response to future pandemics,
 - all aspects of preparedness in relation to public health and connected issues, but not to economic or wider aspects of preparedness not connected to public health.
5. Professor Andrew Morris was appointed as the Chair of the Standing Committee by the then First Minister.
6. On 30 August 2022, [the Standing Committee published an interim report](#) in response to the Commission issued by the First Minister to the Committee. The report detailed what it called four 'big tick' recommendations. These were—
 1. To work with Public Health Scotland to develop proposals for a Centre of Pandemic Preparedness with the purpose of anticipating, preparing for and responding to pandemics.
 2. Data and analysis as basic infrastructure is required to understand and respond to emerging threats. Support proposals as to how Scotland can enhance data collection and analysis in a trustworthy way as a matter of urgency.
 3. Formalise the connection of swift and independent scientific advice specific to Scotland with UK decision-making structures and reinforce international networks.
 4. Work across public health, research and industry to create a triple helix partnership that supports innovation while also boosting Scottish life sciences and research competitiveness.
7. The interim report is intended to set out recommendations that the Standing Committee felt would be beneficial to publish in advance of the final report. The final report is expected to be published later this year.

Next steps

8. The Committee will consider the evidence heard earlier in the meeting.

Committee Clerks
April 2023