

Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee

4th Meeting, 2021 (session 6), Tuesday, 14 September 2021

Key Scottish Government priorities: evidence session with Michael Matheson MSP - Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero, Energy and Transport

Note by the Clerk

Introduction

1. The remit of the new Net Zero, Energy 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.
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. So far, the Committee has heard from the Climate Change Committee (the Official report for this meeting can be accessed [here](#)) and former members of the Just Transition Commission (Official Report available [here](#)).
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 14 September 2021, the Committee will hear evidence from Michael Matheson, 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.

Evidence session and next steps

5. The evidence session is an opportunity for the Committee to hear more about the Scottish Government's priorities, to inform its own work programme for the first part of this 5-year session. It is also an opportunity to clarify the exact parameters of the Cabinet Secretary's diverse and extensive remit and how he intends to carry out his cross-cutting governmental role in relation to achieving net zero.

6. On 7 September 2021, the Scottish Government published its Programme for Government, [*A Fairer, Greener Scotland: Programme for Government 2021-22.*](#) Becoming a Net Zero Nation is long-term priority number 3. It states that its overarching aims are to 'end Scotland's contribution to climate change, restore nature and enhance our climate resilience, in a just and fair way'.

7. Short-term priorities (next 12 months) set out in the Programme are:
 - Support a world-changing agreement at COP26 – having already published an indicative Nationally Determined Contribution, setting out how Scotland will become a net zero nation by 2045.
 - Increase funding for home energy and green heating systems installations; provide £50 million for Warmer Homes Scotland to support those in fuel poverty through the heat transition; and investing £30 million in green heating and energy efficiency projects in social housing.
 - Implement the first Just Transition Plan, for the energy sector, alongside a refreshed Energy Strategy.
 - Invest £240 million in an Energy Transition Programme – funding industry to play a leading role in the development and deployment of new, low carbon technologies, and support the development of hydrogen and carbon capture and storage.
 - Work with the Bus Decarbonisation Taskforce to shape the journey to a greener, more efficient public sector bus fleet – backed by £50 million this year through the new Scottish Zero Emission Bus Challenge Fund.
 - Publish a new biodiversity strategy underpinned by a 5-year delivery plan, including changes in the way we use and manage land and our approach to protecting habitats and ecosystems.
 - Provide £22 million for the restoration of degraded peatlands in 2021-22 as part of our £250 million commitment to restore 250,000 hectares by 2030, and £150 million to accelerate progress towards our commitment for 18,000 hectares of tree planting a year by 2024.

8. At future meetings in September, the Committee expects to take evidence from:
 - Alok Sharma MP, President-Designate of COP 26 and Lee McDonough, Director General, Net Zero Strategy and International at the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS);
 - The Scottish National Investment Bank; and
 - Representatives of Scotland's enterprise agencies.

9. The Committee expects to agree a work programme in October, which will be published on its website.