

Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee

5th Meeting, 2021 (session 6), Thursday, 16 September 2021

COP26 - Evidence session with UK Government

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. These include transport, energy and aspects of environmental policy as well as the 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, to help inform the agreement of its first work programme of this Parliamentary session. This includes hearing from the Cabinet Secretary himself on 14 September about the Scottish Government's [Programme for Government](#) and its long and short term priorities for a Net Zero Nation.
3. The Committee has also agreed that the UN Convention on Climate Change Conference of the Parties in Glasgow ([COP26](#)), its possible outcomes, and their likely impact on net zero policy in Scotland, should be a focus of early evidence sessions.
4. On 16 September 2021, the Committee will hear from the Right Honourable Alok Sharma MP, President-Designate of COP26 and Lee McDonough, Director General, Net Zero Strategy and International at the UK Government's Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS).

26th United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26)

5. COP26 will take place in Glasgow in from 31 October to 12 November 2021.
6. The Conference has four overall aims:
 - Secure global net zero by mid-century and keep 1.5 degrees within reach
 - Adapt to protect communities and natural habitats
 - Mobilise finance
 - Work together to deliver

Evidence session and next steps

7. The evidence session has two main purposes:
 - To get an update on the UK Government’s preparations and objectives for COP26, and its views at this stage on likely outcomes of COP26;
 - To hear evidence on the policy and practical alignment of the UK and Scottish Governments in relation to the achievement of net-zero goals where, in practice, the policy area consists of a mixture of devolved and reserved competencies.

8. The Right Honourable Hon Alok Sharma MP was appointed full-time President for COP 26 in January 2021. His main responsibilities are to lead the preparations for the conference and chair the Climate Action Implementation Cabinet Committee to coordinate The UK Government’s action towards net zero by 2050.

9. Lee McDonough became Director General, Net Zero Strategy and International at the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) on 7 June 2021. She is responsible for implementing UK Government policy on clean growth, EU energy and climate change, international energy and climate change and science and innovation for energy and climate change.

10. At future meetings in September and early October, the Committee expects to take evidence from:
 - The Scottish National Investment Bank;
 - Representatives of Scotland’s enterprise agencies;
 - Zero Waste Scotland, SEPA, and NatureScot;
 - Former members of Scotland’s Climate Assembly;
 - Other witnesses to be announced.

11. Once these initial evidence sessions are concluded, the Committee expects to consider and agree a work programme in October. This will be published on the Committee’s website.