

Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee

31st Meeting, 2023 (Session 6)

Tuesday, 7 November 2023

Evidence session with Water Industry Commission for Scotland and Consumer Scotland

Introduction

1. At its meeting on 27 June, the Committee agreed to hear from Water Industry Commission for Scotland (WICS) and Consumer Scotland to discuss their statutory roles and functions in Scotland's water industry. It was also seen as an opportunity to discuss WICS [Annual Report and Accounts for 2021/22](#) and relevant parts of Consumer Scotland's [Work Programme 2023/24](#).

- [Read the minutes of the meeting on 27 June 2023](#)

2. This follows a series of sessions the Committee has held so far with Scotland's environmental regulators. The first of which was an evidence session with Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) and NatureScot on 3 October. [Read the Official Report from 3 October meeting](#).

3. The Committee also explored the issue of water policy with representatives of Scottish Water and Business Stream [on 31 October](#).

Scotland's water industry

4. In Scotland, drinking water and sewerage services are provided by Scottish Water: a publicly owned company operating within a regulatory framework. Business Stream is a subsidiary of Scottish Water and provides non-domestic customers with water and wastewater services. Scottish Water and its subsidiaries are accountable to the Scottish Ministers who are in turn accountable to the Scottish Parliament.

5. Oversight of Scottish Water is provided by WICS, which is a public body, independent of the Scottish Government, with statutory powers to monitor Scottish Water's performance. WICS was established by the [Water Services etc. \(Scotland\) Act 2005](#) with powers to cap the prices Scottish Water can charge customers. It can

also, under certain circumstances, place limitations on how much Scottish Water can borrow from the Scottish Government.

6. Consumer Scotland is another independent statutory body with a key oversight function in the water industry in Scotland. The organisation was established in the [Consumer Scotland Act 2020](#) with statutory powers to undertake investigations into practices and services which it deems to be potentially detrimental to consumers. The organisation has a role in ensuring Scottish Water gives Scottish consumers an affordable deal for their water services.

Meeting on 7 November

7. On 7 November, the Committee will discuss water policy with representatives of WICS and Consumer Scotland, as listed on the agenda.

Clerks
Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee