



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

By email only

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Dear Convener,

PARLIAMENTARY ENGAGEMENT ON GREEN RECOVERY

Following on from the letters sent in [June 2020](#), I am writing with an update on the recent work of the ECCLR Committee on green recovery, in particular to highlight the Committee's recent report and to outline how the evidence gathered could help inform future scrutiny across a number of committee remits, including collaborative scrutiny of the updated Climate Change Plan.

The Committee's report does not provide a comprehensive overview of all the sectoral issues associated with a green recovery. Several Parliamentary Committees are exploring recovery and green recovery across the sectors within their remits and this report is designed to sit alongside that work. This should support collaborative engagement in green recovery scrutiny across the Parliament and parliamentary consideration of how a sustainable recovery can deliver economic, environmental and social priorities and build resilience across all sectors and all parts of society.

Background

In June 2020 the Committee launched a short inquiry into 'green recovery' to establish the principles that could underpin a green recovery, to identify key actions of change, immediate priorities, potential barriers to implementation and the governance arrangements needed to deliver this. The Committee received over 100 responses to our call for views, many of which explore issues across a broad range of remits (see [Submissions](#)). The Committee held oral evidence sessions with experts and stakeholders ([8 September](#); [15 September](#); and [22 September 2020](#)) and heard from the Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform and the Cabinet Secretary for Finance on [6 October 2020](#).

Green Recovery Report – key findings and recommendations

On 8 November, the Committee published its [green recovery report](#), alongside its [Pre-Budget scrutiny 2021/22 report](#), both of which make substantive recommendations for action. Based on the evidence, it is clear that we need an integrated, bold approach to recovery that is founded on community cohesion, wellbeing and equality and which transcends sectoral boundaries.

We heard from a wide range of stakeholders about the need to tackle the implementation gap, where solutions have already been identified but not applied. We identified the need to capture and lock in positive behaviours, front-load investment in low-carbon solutions and build resilience through valuing nature more. We considered that financial support for a green recovery must be significantly increased, accelerated and be conditional on delivering national outcomes around the climate and biodiversity emergencies. Underpinning this, we must focus on people, innovation, skills and jobs.

The Committee recommended that the Scottish Government develop a green recovery route-map to signpost the way: with clear timelines, clear responsibilities for delivery across all parts of the public sector and clear delivery plans for each sector. Budgetary alignment with the responsibilities is vital, as is regular reporting (to the Parliament, and to the people) and the route-map should enable a shared understanding of where we want to be – the vision. The Committee also recommended that new policies, proposals and public spend must meet certain tests to ensure that they are aligned to the delivery of strategic goals. We note that to date there has been a lack of policy coherence, which has undermined objectives and the delivery of outcomes.

The Committee's recommendations provide a solid springboard for the swift action needed to deliver a truly green recovery for Scotland, with a just transition where no-one is left behind. The Committee notes that this report does not sit in isolation – it is part of a larger suite of recent reports from bodies such as the Just Transition Commission, UK Committee on Climate Change, Infrastructure Commission for Scotland and Advisory Group on Economic Recovery and it complements the work of other parliamentary committees.

A summary of some of the Committee's key recommendations is included in the Annexe to this letter. The Committee recognises that a truly green recovery will require cross-policy portfolio action. We would welcome your view on the relevant recommendations and the scope to reflect the value and opportunities of a green recovery, and of collaborative scrutiny, in your Session 5 Legacy report.

I would be happy to respond to any questions you may have.

Yours sincerely,



Gillian Martin MSP
Convener
Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform Committee

CC'd:

COVID-19 Committee

Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Affairs Committee

Education and Skills Committee

Economy, Energy and Fair Work Committee

Equalities and Human Rights Committee

Health and Sport Committee

Justice Committee

Local Government and Communities Committee

Public Audit and Post-legislative Scrutiny Committee

Public Petitions Committee

Rural Economy and Connectivity Committee

Social Security Committee

Key Recommendations

The Committee has called on the Scottish Government to:

- Repurpose the Inter-Ministerial Group on Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development and the Cabinet Sub-Committee on Climate Change, as a green recovery group to drive the Green Recovery across the public and private sector - to be chaired by the First Minister.
- Create a green recovery route-map to signpost the way: with clear timelines, clear responsibilities for delivery across all parts of the public sector and clear delivery plans for each sector. Budgetary alignment with the responsibilities is vital, as is regular reporting (to the Parliament, and to the people) and the route-map should enable a shared understanding of where we want to be – the vision.
- Implement a communication and reporting plan to include regular addresses on roles, expectations, progress and next steps (to Parliament and the Nation) by the First Minister, Cabinet colleagues and those providing the evidence and advice.
- Review the founding legislation for all public bodies to ensure that responding to the climate and ecological crises is at the centre of statutory requirements placed on all those receiving public sector funding.
- Carry out a skills audit and produce a skills action plan which offers upskilling and reskilling to those who need it, so people transition into low carbon, green jobs with no gap in employment.
- Work with the UK Government to co-ordinate and finance a sufficiently large investment stimulus.
- Ensure low carbon capital investments are delivered through green jobs to support recovery – by front-loading spend in the Budget 2021-22 and through multi-year spending plans such as the Infrastructure Investment Plan and Capital Spending Review.
- Bring forward a Natural Capital Plan for Scotland, establish a natural capital baseline with monitoring reports to check progress and align plans for job creation with the need for nature-based solutions/natural capital enhancement.
- Set out a green investment strategy and increase the level of assets available to the Scottish National Investment Bank for lending.
- Establish an enterprise fund to provide financial support including grants and low-cost loans, to support business models that have emerged as a result of innovation during lock-down.
- Support capacity building in communities and prioritise and fund the creation of community work hubs attached to childcare facilities and community spaces.

In Agriculture and Land Use:

- The Committee recommends, that as part of the green recovery route-map, detailed plans for future land management support are brought forward, which demonstrate the principle of conditionality in support, and allocate a credible level of resources towards reaching net-zero targets and reversing biodiversity loss, while learning lessons from Covid-19 to build resilience in the sector and deliver a green recovery.

- The Committee recommends the role of land use in a green recovery is embedded in the policies and proposals of the third Land Use Strategy, and in the roll out and funding of the regional land use partnerships.
- The Committee recommends additional resources be provided for enhancing advisory services to support a green recovery and transition to net-zero, including the provision of free advice for farmers, crofters and other land managers.
- The Committee requests the work under the Strategic Research Programme should better align directly to this advice – for example, the innovative work on soil structure and association with climate mitigation and adaptation should automatically be part of the advice offered to land managers. The Committee recommends the requirement for improved alignment is built into the ongoing recommissioning of the Strategic Research Programme.
- The Committee recommends regional land use partnerships and frameworks be developed into regional delivery mechanisms for new land use policies.
- The Committee recommends the Scottish Government set out new policies and support mechanisms for agriculture, forestry and other land uses, consistent with a green recovery.
- The 2021-22 Budget is the second budget to fund the full value of Pillar 1 agricultural payments under the Common Agricultural Policy, expected to be worth around £500m. The Committee considers there is a significant opportunity in redesigning these payments to be consistent with the objectives of supporting a green, just and resilient recovery, and reward existing good practice.
- The Committee recognises the pandemic has brought about changes in food practices and has emphasised the importance of local food provision – and in some cases a direct, and positive relationship between food producers and consumers (e.g. local milk and egg deliveries). The Committee recommends the Scottish Government provide further information on its plans to lock-in these positive changes to increase community resilience.

Fisheries:

- The Committee recommends the Scottish Government publish lessons learned from the Covid-19 pandemic for the fisheries and aquaculture sectors and identify actions that build resilience in the sectors and resolve ongoing issues whilst contributing to enhancing the marine environment and addressing emissions from fisheries to ensure a green recovery from Covid-19.

Transport:

- The Committee recognises public transport has provided an essential lifeline through Covid-19 and, recognising the vulnerability of the sector due to the pandemic, seeks reassurance that the Scottish Government will include active promotion of public transport as part of the green recovery.
- The Committee also recognises the need to support public transport manufacturers in Scotland, such as those developing and building hybrid, electric and hydrogen buses, and seeks reassurance from the

Scottish Government on this point. The Committee supports the related recommendations of the Just Transition Commission.

- The Committee recommends transport budgets and fiscal incentives are targeted at reducing demand for travel by car and encouraging the use of active and sustainable modes, e.g. prioritising investment in active and sustainable travel infrastructure rather than additional road capacity.
- The Committee further recommends the Scottish Government:
 - Develop and implement comprehensive, uninterrupted networks of safe walking and cycling routes in cities, towns and villages,
 - Better integrate land-use and transport planning to reduce and ultimately eliminate high emission travel, facilitate travel by active and sustainable modes, with the ultimate goal of creating '20-minute neighbourhoods' where people can access work, leisure and essential services on foot, bike or public transport in no more than 20 minutes as set out in the recent Programme for Government.

Housing/Planning:

- The Committee recommends:
 - The Scottish Government, develop, fund and mandate a comprehensive programme to bring Scotland's existing housing stock, particularly pre-1919 tenements and other hard to treat homes, up to an improved and sustainable level of energy efficiency, in line with the recommendations of the CCC. A fresh approach is required to ensure that those living in conservation areas and listed buildings have access to the best performing technologies, and that their decarbonisation efforts are not hampered by historic designations.
 - The Scottish Government, Local Authorities and wider public sector ensure place, greenspace and wellbeing are at the heart of decision making.
 - There should be a focus on the reuse of buildings making it easier to change the use of existing long-vacant buildings so they can have a viable future, and the reuse of building materials – particularly traditional building materials such as stone and slate.
 - New building design is whole life carbon neutral and planning and building control policy and regulation must ensure this is a requirement.
 - The Scottish Government and Local Authorities front-load spend on housing retrofits / energy efficiency schemes - and the skills and training needed for this - as a priority, delivering job creation stimulus and numerous social, health, and economic co-benefits as part of the green recovery.

Energy:

- The Committee recognises that Ofgem, whilst a UK non-ministerial government department, operates independently of government in setting price controls, and in influencing investment and profit levels across gas and electricity markets.
- The Committee urges the Scottish Government to continue to press both the UK Government and Ofgem to invest in, and enable, the swift development of infrastructure and the energy network to effectively

deliver a low carbon transition. Enabling much of this investment relies on action at UK Government level, but is critical to the green recovery, and Scotland's response to the climate emergency. The Committee recognises that these matters are of interest to both Governments, and asks the Scottish Government to provide assurance that communication and partnership between the Scottish and UK Governments is robust enough to deliver against these challenges.

- The Committee recommends, that as part of the green recovery route-map, the Scottish Government revise Scotland's Manufacturing Action Plan to set out how Scotland's manufacturing sector will contribute to delivering a net-zero future and secure the related economic and social opportunities, informed by the Strategic Research Programme, and work with industry to show clear leadership on pathways to decarbonising this sector.
- The Committee recommends the Scottish Government work with the UK Government to set a minimum carbon price, to drive decarbonisation commensurate with achieving the net-zero goal, as part of the new Emissions Trading Scheme.
- The Committee recommends the Scottish Government continue to work with the oil and gas sector, Local Authorities and public agencies to deliver a transition to a green economy.