



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Conveners group

Minutes

6th Meeting, 2022 (Session 6) Wednesday 22 June 2022

Present:

Liam McArthur MSP, Convener

Clare Adamson MSP, Constitution, Europe, External Affairs and Culture Committee (virtual)

Claire Baker MSP, Economy and Fair Work Committee (virtual)

Siobhian Brown MSP, COVID-19 Recovery Committee

Ariane Burgess MSP, Local Government, Housing & Planning Committee (virtual)

Jackson Carlaw MSP, Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee

Finlay Carson MSP, Rural Affairs, Islands & Natural Environment Committee

Joe FitzPatrick MSP, Equalities, Human Rights & Civil Justice Committee (virtual)

Dean Lockhart MSP, Net Zero, Energy & Transport Committee

Gillian Martin MSP, Health, Social Care and Sport Committee

Audrey Nicoll MSP, Criminal Justice Committee

Sue Webber MSP, Education, Children and Young People Committee

Elena Whitham MSP, Social Justice and Social Security Committee

Apologies were received from:

Kenneth Gibson MSP, Richard Leonard MSP, Stuart McMillan MSP and Martin Whitfield MSP

1. **Minutes:** The Conveners Group agreed the minutes of the last meeting. The Group also agreed to hold an additional meeting on Wednesday 21 September to accommodate the next session with First Minister on 28 September. The Group agreed that the theme for this session with the First Minister would focus on the Programme for Government.
2. **Post-EU scrutiny Session 6 strategic priority for CG: update on progress:** The Group received an update from Clare Adamson MSP on the post-EU questions it asked at its meeting on 30 March. The Group agreed to receive a further progress update before the end of the year.
3. **Cross-committee scrutiny Session 6 strategic priority for CG: approach to scrutiny and role for CG:** The Group discussed recent examples of cross-

committee working undertaken by the Criminal Justice Committee, Health, Social Care and Sport Committee, Covid-19 Recovery Committee and the Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee. The Group noted the benefits of cross-committee working and highlighted the importance of early engagement with committees and the Scottish Government. The Group reiterated its commitment to drive forward this work. It was agreed that best practice guidance would be produced based on this experience to support committees in planning future cross-committee working.

- 4. Net zero and sustainable development Session 6 strategic priority for CG: approach to scrutiny:** The Group discussed a proposed package of support designed to help strengthen the scrutiny of NetZero and sustainable development. The Group agreed:

Leadership role for Conveners Group

The Group will encourage, facilitate, and support the work of individual committees, with the Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee taking a strategic leadership role ensuring a consistency of approach is being applied across all committees.

Role for Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee

The Committee will continue its conventional scrutiny role as lead Committee in the policy areas of transport, energy, and a number of environmental matters, which will include scrutinising the net zero implications of policy in these areas.

Package of Options to Strengthen Cross-Cutting Scrutiny

- Annual updates to the Conveners Group from the UK Climate Change Committee (UKCCC) – The Group will receive annual updates and advice from the UKCCC following the publication of the annual Scotland climate change progress report.
- Impacts on policy areas – The group noted that it can commission research, potentially through SPICe, to illustrate how climate change impacts on policy areas across subject committees. The information would be shared with committees in the form of SPICe briefings and oral committee briefings. To aid this piece of work, Conveners Group agreed to write to the Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero, Energy and Transport to ask for specific emissions data for each portfolio area to be provided on an annual basis.
- Strengthening parliamentary processes & procedure – To help strengthen the scrutiny of Net Zero, committees will look at their practices and the quality of information provided by the Scottish Government, and consider what other information or approaches might be required.

Support for committees

- Special advisor – The Group noted that a climate change/net zero advisor will be appointed to the NZET Committee, and that thought should be given to how support can be provided to other committees. The Group also noted that SPICe is exploring potential collaborations with Scottish universities.
- Roll-out of the Sustainable Development Impact Assessment tool (SDIA) – To help committees approach their work through the lens of sustainable development, they will be encouraged to use the SDIA tool more widely, such as during the approach to the scrutiny of Bills.

- Net Zero / Sustainable Development CPD for Members – The Group noted the training available to Members (such as SPICe seminars) and will continue to explore different ways in which committees can be supported in their scrutiny of Net Zero, such as external advisors and academic engagement.

Date of Next Meeting: 21 September 2022

Contact details for the clerk

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