



Scottish Government – Just Transition Commission – Call For Evidence (Consultation Extended to 30 June)

To: All Chief Executives, Main Contacts and APSE Contacts in Scotland. For information only to England, Northern Ireland and Wales

Key Issues

The Just Transition Commission was established on “the need to take action to reduce emissions in a way which is fair and leaves no-one behind”. The Commission’s final recommendations on how to achieve this are due by January 2021. The consultation has been extended to Tuesday 30 June.

This briefing outlines the contents of the [consultation paper](#) and the questions asked in the consultation itself.

Responses to the consultation can be submitted [here](#), or can be submitted by visiting the Scottish Government consultations website directly at: www.consult.gov.scot

1.0 Introduction

About the Commission

The Just Transition Commission was established to produce practical recommendations within two years of how ‘just transition principles’ can be applied to climate change action in Scotland. These recommendations should support actions on these three aims:

1. Maximising economic and social opportunities that the move to a net-zero economy by 2045 offers
2. Building on Scotland’s existing strengths and assets

3. Understanding and mitigating risks that could arise in relation to a number of factors including: regional cohesion, equalities, poverty, fuel poverty, and a sustainable/inclusive labour market

So far the Commission have undertaken many evidence gathering meetings from their inception meeting in Edinburgh in January 2019 across Scotland, with future meetings planned on innovation and delivery at scale, and another on the skills and labour market. The Commission itself is chaired by an internationally recognised leading climate scientist, Professor Jim Skea, and is made up of representatives of WWF Scotland, Prospect Union, the 2050 Climate Group, Scottish Trade Union Congress and several others with significant academic and energy backgrounds.

Planning ahead – the need for clear transition plans to be developed

The Commission believes that clear transition plans need to be developed for individual sectors, and that the development of these plans will bring benefits such as certainty for those involved in the transition process. They will consider the exact form that transition plans might take in the year ahead, and they believe plans would benefit from joint development between Government and other stakeholders; currently these kinds of plans have not been undertaken rigorously. The Commission recognise that “we need to face up to the need to transform our infrastructure and economy to deliver in a net-zero world”, and that Government will need to play a key leadership role to achieve decarbonisation.

Engagement – society’s expectations

The Commission have identified the need for proactive and on-going dialogue with everyone who will be affected by the transition to a net-zero economy as an important part of their research. They recognise that the transition will affect different people and communities in a variety of ways and on different timescales, and that their buy-in will be required to deliver any significant level of change. They wish to invite as many different voices as possible into the creation of transition plans and hope to generate social consensus as part of the engagement process. They recognise that engagement is not a one-time process or exercise, and that continual engagement with communities, businesses and individuals is crucially important to the success of transition plans.

Bringing equity to the heart of climate change policies

The Commission understand that by taking action on climate change, there will be people and stakeholders who will be winners and losers in the process. They recognise the importance that “the costs do not unfairly burden those least able to pay, or whose livelihoods are directly or indirectly at risk as the economy shifts and changes”. Consideration needs to be given to how the costs of transitioning to a net-zero economy are split between individuals, the private sector and the state, and how actions taken could have unintended negative consequences for other governmental aims.

Opportunities and the need for immediate action

The Commission have established a list of opportunities in the near-term that they believe the Government should give close attention to over the next year. This list includes:

1. Ensure Fair Work is promoted across all climate change programmes receiving public money
2. Development of a Climate Emergency Skills Action Plan
3. Place equity at the heart of the Climate Change Plan update
4. Ensure the future of Agriculture support post-2024 reflects the importance of just transition for the sector
5. Establishment of a Citizens Assembly in Scotland on climate change
6. Promoting Scotland's approach to just transition at COP 26 and taking the opportunity to learn from others
7. Building on the success of energy efficiency initiatives and support them to expand
8. Managing the opportunities and challenges of the transition to low-carbon heating
9. Begin planning for and delivering inclusive low-carbon infrastructure now
10. Place the climate emergency at the heart of spending decisions
11. Improved modelling and research to help understand the transition
12. Support to enable the oil and gas industry to transition

2.0 Consultation questions

The consultation contains the following questions:

1. What do you see as the main economic opportunities and challenges associated with meeting Scotland's climate change targets?
2. What do you think are the wider social (health, community, etc.) opportunities and challenges associated with meeting Scotland's climate change targets?

3. What would a successful transition to net-zero emissions look like for your sector/community?
4. What actions do you think the Scottish Government should take to manage the opportunities and challenges referenced above?
5. Are there specific groups or communities that may be, or feel that they may be, adversely affected by a transition to a net-zero carbon economy? What steps can be taken to address their concerns?
6. Please provide here any other information, evidence, or research you consider relevant to the work of the Commission.

Responses to the consultation can be submitted [here](#) or can be submitted by visiting the Scottish Government consultations website – www.consult.gov.scot

3.0 APSE Comment

APSE encourages our members to respond to the Just Transition Commission's call for evidence so that the views of local authorities are well represented in the formulation of the Commission's final recommendations for Ministers. The transition towards a net-zero economy will greatly affect the day-to-day running of local authorities and residents in their various communities. Net zero carbon will not be achieved without significant input by local authorities across the country in terms of not only the actions they take but the leadership they give to their local communities and local businesses and how they engage them in helping tackle the climate emergency. We appreciate the long term nature of the work required to address climate change for all including local authorities. As local leaders, councils will have to consult and engage with differing sectors of their local communities on this topic over many years and the duration and nature of this engagement may be new territory for some. This is referred to in the paper and whilst a number of councils are taking a lead in this area, it may be a topic that local authorities wish to comment on.

APSE welcomes the extension of the consultation to 30 June to allow our members the opportunity to respond while also dealing with the impacts of COVID-19 on their day-to-day business.

Reminder: APSE has set up a COVID-19 Information Hub to deal with frontline service issues as they arise, ensuring greater resilience and learning between each other during this difficult time. You can access this hub by [clicking here](#) and you can also join our WhatsApp Support Network by [clicking here](#).

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