



Conveners Group

Michael Matheson MSP
Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero, Energy
and Transport
Scottish Government

Liam McArthur MSP
Chair of Conveners Group
The Scottish Parliament

By email only

ConvenersGroup@Parliament.Scot

6 October 2022

Dear Cabinet Secretary

At its meeting on 22 June 2022, the Scottish Parliament Conveners Group agreed a number of actions as part of the Group's strategic priorities this session. These are designed to enhance cross-committee scrutiny of climate change and net zero issues, in the wider context of sustainable development. This followed a wide-ranging discussion on these issues at its meeting in April 2022.

The Group recognises the challenges involved in scrutinising these complex issues and has identified this as a matter of high priority for the Parliament to ensure that effective scrutiny of net zero issues can be carried out. This clearly impacts across all portfolios and so the Group explored ways to facilitate this important work.

The Group has agreed a number of measures which aim to embed the scrutiny of net zero and climate change policy within the work of committees. These are—

1. Invite the UK Climate Change Committee to Conveners Group on an annual basis
2. Commission research on climate change and net zero related to committee remits (mix of SPICe, commissioned, adviser)
3. Request, from Scottish Government, emissions data by committee portfolio
4. Consider ways to strengthen parliamentary processes
5. Appoint a climate change / net zero adviser as shared committee resource (appointed through NZET Committee)
6. The continued rollout of the Scottish Parliament [Sustainable Development Impact Assessment Tool](#)
7. Capacity building for MSPs, their staff and staff of the Parliament

Many of these actions are about increasing understanding and capacity building across all committees – and to identify and resolve any scrutiny gaps.

In that context I am writing in particular to take forward action number 3 above – to ask if the Scottish Government can provide greenhouse gas emissions data broken down by committee portfolios.

It is recognised that emissions are normally reported using categorisations reflecting international and national reporting – categories which also form the structure of the Scottish Climate Change Plan. However these do not support parliamentary committees when they are seeking to understand the impact of the portfolios they scrutinise.

The provision of specific emissions data for each portfolio area would help committees understand impact and trends in their remit or help them to identify data gaps. To be of most value it would be helpful if this data could be provided on an annual basis.

In order to progress this, can I suggest that it might be helpful in the first instance if Parliament officials discuss with your officials the technical details about the information which is being sought.

As further context, I attach the paper for the Conveners Group meeting on 22 June which sets out these measures.

I hope you are able to support us in seeking this information.

Yours sincerely

Liam McArthur MSP
Chair, Conveners Group