

PARLIAMENTARY BUREAU

APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEE ADVISERS

Background

1. At its meeting on 3 May 2022, the Parliamentary Bureau approved the Net Zero, Energy and Transport (NZET) Committee's request to appoint an adviser on climate change and net zero issues. Following a recruitment process, the Committee appointed Dr. Dan Barlow. Dr. Barlow has provided advisory services to the Committee, as well as other committees and the Conveners Group.
2. In early October he indicated his intention to accept a full-time position and it was agreed he would stand down from his role as adviser. The Committee wrote to Dr. Barlow providing him with the 30 days notice required to conclude the contract.
3. Recognising the ongoing need for advice and support of the type provided by Dr. Barlow, the Committee agreed at its meeting on 24 October 2023 to seek approval to appoint a new adviser to support its scrutiny of climate change and net zero issues, as well as wider parliamentary scrutiny of these matters.
4. This paper sets out details of the proposed remit for the adviser and invites the Bureau to agree to the NZET Committee's request to appoint an adviser.

Climate change and net zero

5. Climate change and net-zero are complex scientific, socio-economic and environmental issues, and so require whole-society solutions. This is reflected in the challenges faced by Parliament, and parliamentary committees, in delivering effective scrutiny of the Scottish Government on these issues.
6. The scale of this task was recognised by the Committee's part-predecessor, the Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform Committee, which appointed an adviser on climate change related issues. It recommended in its [legacy report](#) that its successor consider doing the same.
7. Effective scrutiny will engage all parliamentary committees. The Conveners Group in this session has identified climate change and net zero scrutiny as requiring a cross committee approach. This framing was also reflected in the Session 5 Conveners Group [Legacy Report](#), which concluded that climate change cannot be tackled alone by a climate change, or net zero committee – there is a role to be played by many other committees. The Conveners Group is having ongoing discussion on these issues - and an adviser to the NZET Committee has played a key role, alongside SPICe and clerking, in supporting those conversations. Initial discussions have taken place on cross committee collaboration on scrutiny of the Scottish Government's draft Climate Change Plan, supported by the existing adviser.
8. For the NZET Committee, such effective scrutiny requires consideration of climate governance within Scotland, the UK and internationally, consideration of policy,

legislation and the Scottish Government's Budget. It will involve scrutiny of the Scottish Government and of public bodies, engaging with subject experts in the development of briefing materials, drawing on international best practice and the development of scrutiny tools.

9. The Committee has agreed, therefore, that an expert adviser would continue to assist significantly in the continued development of the focus and approach to scrutiny. Such an appointment would also help the Parliament meet its own statutory public duties on climate change and sustainable development – as detailed in the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009, and the Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019 – and which can encompass how the Parliament considers climate change and sustainable development in how it carries out its functions (including scrutiny).

Appointment of adviser on climate change policy, science and law

10. The Committee agreed the specification set out below.

Adviser remit

11. "To support the Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee, and Scottish Parliament as required, in scrutinising policy through the lens of net zero targets."

Adviser duties

12. It is expected the main adviser duties would be—

- Work alongside SPICe and clerking to provide strategic advice about committee's approach to scrutiny of governance, policy, legislation and impacts of climate change;
- Provide advice and briefing about the impact of, and science related to, climate change – and how it relates to any and all devolved policy areas;
- Provide advice about how climate change and net zero policy, and associated effective governance should be embedded in Scottish policy legislation; and delivery through Scottish Government, agencies and public bodies;
- Alongside SPICe, provide advice about calls for evidence, possible witnesses, draft lines of questioning and analyse evidence in relation to the Committee's scrutiny of climate change;
- Attend committee meetings to provide background briefings, especially ahead of evidence sessions or consideration of reports;
- Assist in the drafting of any reports published in relation to the Committee's scrutiny of climate change;
- Be available to work with SPICe and clerking to support Conveners Group discussions on cross-committee scrutiny – and if required, to chair a panel of advisers operating on a cross-committee basis; and
- Contribute to SPICe Briefings or blog posts on related issues.

Skills/abilities

13. Detailed knowledge of climate change science, policy and law in Scotland and internationally. Keen understanding of the interlinkages between climate change and the wider sustainable development context. A high level of analytical skills, good written and oral communication skills, ability to work to tight deadlines, and an awareness of how to work effectively and appropriately in the political environment of the Parliament, are also required.

Experience

14. Experience of working in climate change and net zero policy in Scotland is essential. Experience of working with politicians is highly desirable.

Knowledge

15. Climate change science, policy and legislation; UK and Scottish political and parliamentary systems.

Conditions of Appointment

16. As an expert in the field (and given the size of the remit) the adviser may well have had an involvement with the main agencies involved in providing services. Any such interests will be declared in the interests of transparency and accountability.

Time commitment

17. It is anticipated that the commitment will vary over the period of appointment, with greater involvement around key policy developments, with likely extended periods where the advisers' services would not be required. It is anticipated the adviser will be required, on average, four days per month.

18. The Contract will expire after two years, with the option to extend to the end of Session 6 by mutual agreement.

Decision

19. The Bureau is invited to approve the appointment of an adviser on climate change science, policy and law in Scotland to assist with the scrutiny of these subject areas throughout the session.

**Clerk to the NZET Committee
October 2023**