

Màiri McAllan MSP
E: internal

31 May 2023

Dear Ms McAllan,

Sectoral Just Transition Plans – scope and approach

The purpose of this letter is to share high-level views that are material to the work currently in hand to support engagement and co-design over the coming months as part of the development of sectoral Just Transition Plans.

Officials have discussed drafts of “discussion papers” with the Commission over recent months. This has been helpful to us in developing our own work plan and programme of engagement, on Transport in Dundee in April, on Land Use and Agriculture in Grantown-on-Spey in May as well as for our forthcoming June session on Built Environment and Construction. More detailed findings from these sessions will be published in due course.

My letter of February 15, “Initial advice on Draft Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan”, detailed a number of considerations regarding the approach and format of such plans. These included inequalities, equity, fair work, engagement, accessibility, scale/quantification, road maps, finance and investment and mainstreaming. We hope to see our advice on these issues applied right across the planning and engagement work underway, including each of the respective discussion papers.

On Land Use and Agriculture, for example, a ‘state of the sector’ appraisal of existing inequalities within the discussion paper would (notwithstanding further work is being undertaken to strengthen the evidence base) greatly help to support effective engagement over the coming months as well as preparing the strategic basis for the plan itself.

We met earlier this month with farmers and land managers in Grantown-on-Spey and these discussions underlined the need for the Scottish Government to communicate robustly the case for change. It cannot be assumed that a sector’s role in addressing the climate challenge, and the actions required, are already understood and accepted by those whose livelihoods are likely to be impacted.

This will be important in order to support meaningful engagement regarding the delivery of Scotland's climate ambitions for this and other sectors in a fair way.

The Commission's view is that the Scottish Government should include the heat decarbonisation of buildings within the scope of the Just Transition Plan for Buildings and Construction. The interplay between heat decarbonisation and energy efficiency is significant, and to separate heat and energy efficiency components into separate plans (the Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan and the upcoming Buildings and Construction plan) poses a risk to effective strategic planning on this critical area.

On Buildings and Construction, we suggest the plan be renamed Built Environment and Construction. The broader context denoted by "built environment" as opposed to "buildings" will ensure a more inclusive just transition context is considered and avoid critical aspects of infrastructure falling out of focus.

Finally, we encourage the Scottish Government to identify the critical role of housing in the context of this and other Just Transition Plans (for example in the context of the agriculture and land use transition). Affordable, sustainable, comfortable housing provision in the right location is a fundamental component in unlocking the transition to net zero for many sectors given the underpinning role it plays in society, and should be highlighted as a key theme for wider engagement and discussion.

Sincerely,



Professor Jim Skea
Chair, Just Transition Commission