

Quarterly Policy Briefing: Environmental Sustainability

March 2023

This document outlines the main policy changes seen in the last quarter that will impact Scottish institutions and related EAUC-Scotland activity as a result.

Scottish Policy Updates

- In January, The Scottish Parliament's Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee published its [report on the role of local government and its cross-sectoral partners in financing and delivering a net-zero Scotland](#). The report calls for additional financial support for councils to support the net zero transition.
- In February, the Scottish Government published updated guidance for public bodies on offsetting and insetting. [Public Bodies and Climate Change Duties – Guidance on nature-based carbon reduction projects \(insetting and offsetting\) and annual public bodies duties reporting](#) supplements the [guidance previously published in October 2021](#).
- Teach the Future Scotland presented their [policy asks for former Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills Shirley-Anne Somerville](#) at a Parliamentary Reception for MSPs, Councillors, students and stakeholders on 22nd March. These asks include:
 - ASK 1: Mainstream inclusion of climate justice education across the curriculum
 - ASK 2: Inclusion of the climate emergency and ecological crisis in teacher education and a new professional teaching qualification
 - ASK 3: Increased priority for sustainability in school inspections
 - ASK 4: Educational buildings put at the front of the queue to be retrofitted to net-zero standards
- Consultation on the [Proposed Wellbeing and Sustainable Development \(Scotland\) Bill](#) ran from 14th December to 24th March. This draft proposal for a Member's Bill aims to ensure that policy for public bodies follows the principles of sustainable development and would establish a commissioner for sustainable development and wellbeing.

UK Policy Updates

- In January, Rt Hon Chris Skidmore MP, former Energy Minister, published [Mission Zero, Independent Review of Net Zero](#) outlining the economic opportunities offered by net zero.
- In March, the [Department for Education published its Response to the Accelerating Towards Net-Zero Report](#) published in 2022 as part of the Jubilee Challenge. Baroness Barran's letter to the sector states the DfE's full support for the priorities in this report for the sector, to decarbonise the built environment, travel and transport and to create a sustainable supply chain.

Other Updates

- In March 2023, the IPCC published the [Synthesis Report of its sixth assessment cycle](#) drawing together the key findings of the previous three working groups. These include a warning that global warming is reaching “irreversible” levels and catastrophe near inevitable, as well as a “now or never” plea for action.