

## Minutes of CCC Meeting, 15/3/2019

Present were Julia Brown, Nick Chater, Piers Forster, Rebecca Heaton, Paul Johnson (items 2-3), Corinne Le Quéré, Chris Stark; Observer – Keith Bell

### Conflicts of interest

Committee members were reminded of the need to declare any conflicts of interest (also recorded in the register of interest). No additional interests were reported.

## 1. Net-zero report – summary and update

This was a key meeting in decision-making for the Committee's net-zero report. The purpose of this session was to present key parts of the analysis prior to the Committee considering its recommendations. The Committee considered a presentation focusing on 3 key areas: how different options for a UK long-term target would translate into the UK's impact on warming; why some use of international carbon "credits" might be considered; how to judge the feasibility of the UK scenarios for emissions reduction towards net-zero considered at the last meeting.

The Committee considered the categorization of abatement options into the groupings that had been considered at the last meeting: Core, Stretch and Speculative (the Committee felt that the "stretch" terminology was inappropriate and asked for further consideration to be given to this naming). Some work was still ongoing, but the combination of core and stretch options was estimated to reach a 96% reduction in UK emissions in 2050. On current information, some speculative options, or use of credits, would be needed to go further to net-zero.

The Committee considered feasibility of options, in terms of technical achievability, provision of finance, societal change and policy requirements. It was acknowledged that achieving the emissions reduction attached to some stretch options would be challenging. There were different risks across the different sectors – in power, for example, there were alternative options if the suggested route to decarbonisation did not fully deliver. For surface transport, a switch towards electric vehicles would depend on international developments as well as UK.

It was also possible – but they could not be banked - that there were some options in the speculative category that might compensate for under-delivery elsewhere.

In most areas it was noted that Committee recommendations to date had been consistent with aiming to achieve 90% or more reductions in emissions by 2050. A big difference in considering a tighter target was that there would now be little room for flexibility – all sectors would need to deliver.

The Committee discussed the role of credits, either additional to a UK specific target or to provide flexibility in meeting a UK target.

## 2. Net-zero report – reports from expert groups

Three expert groups had been set up to help advise the Committee in relation to the impacts a new UK target can have internationally (chaired by Pete Betts); the feasibility of reaching net-zero in the UK (chaired by Prof Jim Watson); and the costs and benefits of action (chaired by Prof Paul Ekins).

Drafts of emerging conclusions from each of the groups had been circulated. Pete Betts, Jim Watson and the Committee secretariat (in the absence of Paul Ekins who could not be present), presented those conclusions, which were discussed with the Committee.

### **3. Net-zero report – overall recommendations**

The Committee returned to consideration of UK scenarios.

Estimates of overall costs to GDP in 2050 were considered. The Committee discussed what the costs might be in the transition to 2050 and asked that further consideration be given to this for the final report.

Potential to reach net-zero emissions earlier than 2050 was examined. The Committee agreed that the report would have to cover the possibility of a 2045 target, which had been recommended by some others. There were some sectors or sub-sectors where 2045 was possible, including power generation and light vehicles, though potentially at higher cost. There were other areas – including in industry, buildings and heavy vehicles - where it did not look practical, partly reflecting timescales for turning over the stock. Arguments for setting a later date than 2050 to reach net-zero, say 2055, were considered. This would provide greater flexibility, allow some of the options further time to develop, and potentially reduce costs.

The Committee discussed what its recommendation for reaching a net-zero target should be. Based on a range of arguments – ending the UK contribution to continued warming, the role for UK leadership and influencing others' decisions, UK historical responsibility, feasibility reflecting the assessment of UK abatement options, acceptability of estimated costs (similar to those previously accepted by Parliament for an 80% target) – the Committee agreed to recommend the UK should aim to achieve a 2050 net-zero target, and that this target should cover the basket of greenhouse gases.

The Committee discussed the role of international credits in contributing to this target. The Committee agreed that the recommendation should be for the UK to achieve the target through domestic actions. Limited use of credits might turn out to be an option if UK abatement turned out to be more costly or less feasible than expected, but should not be planned for.

The Committee discussed the role of speculative options in reaching net-zero, given that the combination of core and stretch options were currently estimated to get to around 96%. The Committee agreed that specific options from those in the speculative category should not be chosen as a means to get to net-zero. Rather, these options provided a menu of possibilities, which needed to be developed. For purposes of presenting an overall cost of reaching net-zero, the gap from 96% to 100% should be costed in line with an estimated removals cost.

### **4. Net-zero report – further recommendations**

The Committee discussed a range of further recommendations. It agreed to recommend that:

- the UK share of emissions from international aviation and shipping should be included in the target;
- the Government should aim to set a new target by the end of 2019, which would allow time for progressing analysis and advice to inform the sixth carbon budget (on which Committee advice is required by the end of 2020);
- the need for any further amendment to a new target could not be anticipated, but criteria for such consideration would remain in place as under the Climate Change Act;
- advice on any amendment to the existing carbon budgets would be for consideration alongside advice for the sixth carbon budget, but reaching a new tighter target for 2050

would require early actions and the need to out-perform the existing carbon budgets – as already emphasised by the Committee – would remain.

- Meeting a stronger target would require commitment and stronger policy across the whole of Government.

## **5. Net-zero report – advice to devolved administrations**

The Committee considered a presentation on long-term targets for the devolved administrations. The Committee agreed with the analytical approach that had been adopted to present scenarios and assess abatement potential in the devolved administrations. This provided estimates of abatement and any residual emissions for each of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

The Committee agreed that the same approach to a recommended long-term target for Scotland and Wales should be adopted as had been agreed for the UK assessment, making allowance for allocation of estimated removals potential across the countries of the UK.

The Committee provisionally agreed, subject to finalisation of the analysis, that it should recommend a net-zero target date of 2050 for Wales, and a net-zero target date of 2045 for Scotland.

Reflecting legislative requirements in Scotland, the Committee agreed that it should provide updated estimates of emissions targets on the pathway to 2045 net-zero. These would be tighter than the existing targets, but would not yet reflect a full analysis of the pathway.

### **AOB**

The timetable for sending draft chapters of the main report and of sectoral chapters to Committee members for comment was confirmed.