

Minutes of CCC Meeting, 26/10/2018

Present were John Deben (items 1-3), Julia Brown, Nick Chater, Piers Forster, Rebecca Heaton (items 1-2), Corinne Le Quéré, Jim Skea, Chris Stark

Conflicts of interest

Committee members were reminded of the need to declare any conflicts of interest (also recorded in the register of interest: <https://www.theccc.org.uk/about/transparency/>) Rebecca Heaton noted that her employer, Drax, had agreed to acquire a UK portfolio of pumped storage, hydro and gas-fired generation assets.

1. Hydrogen Review

The Committee considered key messages for the hydrogen review, for publication in November, and draft of the executive summary.

The Committee agreed on important “myth busting” role for the report. Hydrogen could have a valuable role to play, complementing opportunities for electrification and helping to decarbonise some of the current users of fossil fuels for which electrification looks challenging. But there are limits to deployment and significant production costs. So achieving a sensible balance – developing the option, but not overplaying its potential – was an important message for the report.

Subject to this general point, the messages as to the potential role of hydrogen in different sectors were agreed. In relation to heat decarbonisation, a change to the previous timeline for strategic decisions was agreed – this would emphasise the short-term roll-out of hybrid heat pumps in on-gas buildings. Such progress could allow a slightly later decision in the 2nd half of the 2020s (rather than 1st half) on how to fully decarbonise on-gas buildings.

The sequencing has the advantage of allowing an incremental approach to heat decarbonisation, as well as making greater contributions to required emission reductions in the 4th and 5th carbon budget periods. The requirements for energy efficiency improvements to progress alongside should not be forgotten.

Heat decarbonisation remains a difficult area, with costs. But the costs have been included within our previous assessments and signed-up to in Government acceptance of those targets.

Subject to a number of detailed comments the executive summary was agreed. A reused version would be circulated for final agreement.

2. Land use.

The executive summary of the land use report, for publication in November, was considered.

The Committee agreed that the way past policy has supported food production should be brought further up-front. Other services provided by the natural environment have been degraded. This was important context for the consistency how land use decisions can be improved.

Re-framed in this way, the highlighted summary statements in the executive summary should present the overall story of the report.

The Committee provided further specific comments on the draft. A revised version, for mitigation and adaptation committees, would be circulated for final comment.

3. Biomass

The executive summary of the biomass report, for publication in November, was considered. Data on what was happening to global carbon stocks in forests was hard to interpret. It was agreed that the wording on this would be checked further with champions. The Committee provided further specific comments on the draft. A revised version would be circulated for final comment.

4. Communications plan for the 3 reports being published in November.

The Committee considered and agreed launch plans.

Revised drafts of the biomass and land use reports would be circulated for final comment next week. The hydrogen report would follow later next week.

It was agreed that headline messages for the reports, to feed into communications, would also be circulated for comment.

5. Long-term targets.

It was agreed that the call for evidence, subject to amendment for comments received, could be published.

The Committee considered a presentation on climate risks associated with 1.5 °C consistent emissions pathways. It was apparent that evidence on the difference between 2 and 1.5 °C consistent pathways had developed significantly since the Committee's previous consideration in 2016.

It was agreed that discussion of differences in targets as between CO₂ and all GGE would be postponed to the next meeting.

AOB

The publication of the Government's response to the Committee's June progress report was noted.