

Climate Change Committee Meeting

Present: Lord Deben, Keith Bell, Michael Davies, Piers Forster, Corinne Le Quéré and Pete Betts.

Member interests: www.theccc.org.uk/about/transparency

Date: 26th November 2021, 09:30 – 15:00

Held: Hybrid meeting by Zoom and in-person

Climate Change Committee

1 Victoria Street,
Westminster, London,
SW1H 0ET

w theccc.org.uk

1. Scottish Progress Report

The Committee discussed, and suggested amendments to, the draft Executive Summary for the Scottish Progress Report. The summary is very focused on meeting future targets, rather than progress in meeting existing targets, partly due to the most recent emissions data available being for 2019, before the pandemic – this needed to be made clearer, and the future focus justified.

Given the gap to meeting the target in 2019, combined with the rapid rate of annual emissions reduction required by the targets for the 2020s, the Committee was concerned that annual targets might be missed consistently, undermining the credibility of the legislated targets – the Committee wanted to send a clear message that concerted immediate action is required to correct course, and that most of the levers are in Scottish Government hands.

The report should give the Scottish Government due credit where appropriate but be very clear on the shortcomings on progress and policy.

2. Blue carbon

The secretariat gave a presentation on the carbon stored in marine and coastal ecosystems, and any implications of this for emissions targets, wider environmental impacts and policy.

The committee recognised the value of assessing the carbon stores and flux in these ecosystems, and the uncertainty over measurement and the science.

The Committee agreed that a briefing note should be published on this issue in the new year covering key evidence and uncertainties, co-benefits, current management activities and practices, and future protection as well as inventory inclusion.

Lord Deben repeated his already-declared interest as a trustee of the charity Blue Marine.

3. Progress dashboard

The secretariat presented ideas for an online dashboard that would provide an ongoing picture of progress in tackling climate change that would be updated

more frequently than the annual cycle of formal progress reporting to Parliament.

The Committee discussed the appropriate balance of detail versus accessibility, and on which areas it is most important to focus to provide a clear picture of progress.

The Committee asked to come back to the dashboard in the first half of 2022, once it is further developed and in the context of the annual progress report and further development of the indicator framework.

4. Post-COP briefing

The Committee had bilateral discussion sessions with each of Saleemul Huq, Director of the International Centre for Climate Change and Development in Bangladesh, and Charles Ogilvie, Director of Strategy in the Government's COP unit, on their reflections from COP26 in Glasgow.

The Committee then discussed the circulated draft of the Post-COP briefing. The importance of countries such as the UK with ambitious targets delivering on these was highlighted as an important area for international leadership.

While the Committee saw little scope to increase ambition for UK domestic emissions reductions through its own Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC), options discussed for strengthening the NDC beyond that headline reduction figure included making the existing 2030 emissions target legally binding, clarifying that it will be met without offsets and with a limited role for CO₂ removal, and including the sector targets set out in the Net Zero Strategy.

Given that the Treasury's Net Zero Review stopped short of providing a clear picture of how the transition to Net Zero is to be funded and the costs allocated across society, the Committee also agreed to recommend that the Treasury undertake a further review of the role of tax policy in delivering Net Zero.