

Climate Change Committee Meeting

Present: Lord Deben, Corinne Le Quéré, Keith Bell, Michael Davies, Piers Forster, Paul Johnson

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

Date: 11th March 2022, 09:30 – 15:00

Held: 1 Victoria Street (hybrid)

Climate Change Committee

1 Victoria Street,
Westminster, London,
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Committee members were reminded of the need to declare any conflicts of interest. Piers Forster highlighted a new consultancy which he had taken on in his role as an academic at the University of Leeds with Transport for the North which had previously been submitted to the secretariat.

No comments were received on the draft minutes circulated for approval. Committee members were asked to share any further comments by email.

1. Workers and Skills

The secretariat provided an update on the workers and skills theme of analysis. This included a revised plan for 2022 to put together two reports instead of one - one analytical report to be published in May/June to set out the issue at hand and a policy report focused on skills to develop specific policy recommendations and a monitoring framework in the autumn. The Committee agreed with this approach.

The Committee discussed the objectives of the analytical report. It was agreed that it should focus on presenting the evidence on the labour impacts of Net Zero, highlighting both opportunities and risks, and setting out evidence gaps. Committee members pointed out that we should further prioritise defining the labour market context within which the Net Zero transition will take place.

The secretariat received more specific feedback on the presentation of charts and key emerging messages. This notably included bringing out the timeline of our analysis for each sector. The Committee will have an opportunity to further comment on these in April when we circulate a draft of the analytical report.

2. Northern Ireland update and discussion of other target increases

The secretariat provided an update on climate legislation in Northern Ireland. The Committee then discussed the implications of the extremely ambitious target for Northern Ireland and highlighted the risk of creating a credibility gap through setting targets that are not based on currently available evidence. The Committee decided to respond to the passing of the Northern Irish Climate Bill with a letter setting out the necessary actions that will put Northern Ireland in a position to start reducing emissions at a sufficient pace over the next decade.

The Committee also heard about the issues arising from the work on the upcoming target advice to Scotland. The Committee decided to look at how

decarbonisation could be accelerated to allow Scotland to reach its 2030 target.

It was also noted that as part of an agreement with Plaid Cymru, the Welsh Government committed to exploring whether Net Zero might be feasible by 2035. The Committee has not been asked to advise on this.

3. International update: Progress Report and Glasgow Climate Pact actions inc. UK NDC

The secretariat presented the workplan and draft materials for the international section of the forthcoming Progress Report for Committee feedback and input. This covered revisiting and updating the assessment of COP26 outcomes in terms of global pathways; discussion of the UK's NDC in the global context and of technical approaches to update the NDC to reflect among other things the UK's Net Zero strategy while retaining the headline reduction (which the Committee confirmed remained appropriate considering the Glasgow Climate Pact); and initial assessment of the UK's roles and responsibilities with respect to the COP26 sector pledges. The Committee then considered the international recommendations from last year's 2021 Progress Report and suggested recommendations for the 2022 Report. There was insufficient time to update the Committee during the meeting on the international team's external engagement – the Committee was provided with slides covering this work.

4. UK energy supply introduction

The Secretariat introduced the following session through an overview of recent developments on energy supply.

5. External speaker: Emma Pinchbeck

Emma Pinchbeck, Chief Executive at Energy UK, spoke to the Committee about Energy UK's view on delivering the Government's commitment for a fully decarbonised power sector by 2035, as well as the implications of the current energy crisis. A range of topics were covered including renewables and low-carbon roll-out, investment models, and electricity market design. The Committee expressed its thanks to Ms Pinchbeck.

6. O&G letter reaction and wider situation/outlook discussion

The Secretariat presented a short overview of press and stakeholder reaction to publication of the CCC's letter on the Climate Compatibility of New Oil and Gas fields. The Committee welcomed the secretariat's assessment and expressed their view that the media coverage and wider response was fair, balanced and broadly in line with the CCC's key messages to Government. The Committee then discussed the impact of the invasion of Ukraine on climate and energy. The Committee noted the expected revised UK Energy Strategy and welcomed initial HMG messages around commitment to Net Zero and the strengthened overall case for accelerated transition. The Committee discussed that, in particular, the increased gas price would impact scenario assumptions in certain sectors and considered how to approach this in its 2022 Progress Report, including for example identifying places where the UK could go further and/or faster, and where there might be constraints to faster progress. The potential impact on other planned CCC outputs through 2022 was also discussed, as well as possible effects on wider international climate action. The Committee agreed to continue to monitor the situation and assess and respond to the UK's revised strategy once published.