



Climate Change Plan Advisory Group meeting: 23 February 2023: input to Vision and CCP background paper questions

Context:

Three out of the past four annual climate targets have been missed - with the one that was met in 2020 because of lockdown impacts on transport use. The latest [CCC progress report](#) gives a clear summary of the context and the challenges the new CCP must meet.

What do members consider as priorities to be included within the next climate change plan?

- **Nature-based solutions** help deliver across a huge range of Government objectives (i.e. the SDGs): Examples on what these solutions are include peatland and grassland restoration, woodland creation, deer management, natural flood management, marine habitat protection and restoration, establishing nature networks and farming with nature and climate in mind. More detail in the LINK paper [here](#).
- **Marine:** there is a good argument for recognising importance of marine and going over and above statute requirements because of the contributions it can make to net zero, particularly in relation to blue carbon and sustainable fisheries. See LINK's ocean recovery plan [here](#). Marine is currently conspicuous by its absence in the CCP. Rebuilding fish populations and protecting seabed habitats from disturbance, allowing recovery will be key nature-based solutions to meeting Scotland's net-zero target.
- **Circular economy measures** need to be embedded both to reduce our energy demand and Scotland's carbon footprint. This applies to the energy infrastructure where (a) sources of materials is a crunch issue and (b) re-powering / decommissioning will need to deal with the materials/structures (eg turbine blades). Energy infrastructure needs to be designed to minimise demand for virgin materials, to keep materials in use and to reduce carbon impact over the lifecycle of the infrastructure. CE thinking also needs to be applied to reducing energy demand across the economy. If assets and products were designed and manufactured using circular principles, it would reduce their life cycle carbon impact. Also, if we optimised the use of existing assets and products through more sharing, better use of built space and fewer cars for example, it would also reduce energy demand. Detail is available in LINK's [Circular economy proposals for Scotland's Climate Change Plan](#) (2020).
- **International and reserved / shared issues**, including for example oil and gas (more detail from SCCS is [here](#)) and aviation (more detail from SCCS is [here](#)). For reserved matters, the new CCP should set out the actions the UK Government should take, in the way that the draft ESJTP does for example. Moreover, it should be explicit (rather than implicit) that the Scottish Government would take such actions if it had the powers, either via independence or further devolution. Secondly, the need for UK action does not reduce the need for greater action within devolved powers. There is more detail in the SCCS scope paper ([here](#)).
- Sectors covered in the last CCP that will require significantly more effective measures to meet net zero are **buildings, transport and agriculture:**
 - On agriculture, the big opportunity is the forthcoming Agriculture Bill, which must include a requirement that future agriculture policy must drive change consistent with meeting climate



and nature targets (the former exist, the latter to be defined in the NEB). LINK is working up briefings on this issue.

- On buildings the big challenges are retrofitting carbon-free heating and improved efficiency/insulation measures. While there have been some big steps, including for example the adoption of Passivhaus standards for new domestic building, similar building standards are required for public sector and commercial premises for example. This will all require more government investment.
- On transport, aviation is important while intra-UK flights and intra-UK railway issues need fixing. This includes price differentials between eg flights to London vs rail.
- On cars/roads, the 20% reduction target is a strong/positive aim, but the plan to deliver it is weak: Transform and Sustrans have published good responses [here](#) and [here](#) respectively. On active/public travel, recent increases in funding are welcome, but much more is needed, especially in driving “on the ground” delivery. The next CCP also offers the opportunity for boldness: this might include consideration of free buses for all; £2 max fare (as in parts of England); gradual increase in 22 age limit for young people and/or gradual lowering of 60 for older people - with aim that they meet to achieve free for all by 2040?

· **What actions should we take to ensure that the priorities of the climate change plan are cross cutting, supporting just transition outcomes?**

- The Natural Environment Bill will need to help drive a holistic approach to nature and climate crisis, including targets to meet the Global Nature Targets agreed at COP15 and tackling wide scale issues that currently limit the scale of action needed to meet both nature and climate targets. Remembering that we cannot meet net zero, without restoring nature.
- Scotland needs proper implementation of landscape scale planning to make sure we actually get a just transition: this means ensuring the Land Use Strategy delivers and the gaps between national and regional and local priorities are filled. This is especially important given that the RLUP process has been unsuccessful so far
- Protection/recovery of blue carbon in HPMAs should be considered in relation to existing MPAs and wider spatial measures
- Blue Economy Vision doesn't necessarily link across to climate change and duty on public authorities to consider CC impacts - CCP may be able to support this
- The new CCP will need to build on the status quo outlined in the first edition of the Blue Economy Vision delivery document.
- To maximise progress towards the Just Transition outcomes, a system thinking approach is required to move beyond just thinking about net zero to include nature positive. This means considering carbon footprints, with a focus on supply chains and other upstream and downstream opportunities as well a nature based solutions to climate change (see above).

· **Are there any subject areas, in addition to those covered in this paper, that would be valuable for discussion by the group?**



- Consideration of the contribution of **Nature based solutions to net zero and nature positive** would be helpful. Financing those solutions is a key consideration too.
- **A Just Transition in marine sectors** are also important – what do climate and nature friendly fisheries look like within a circular economy? This includes what gear is used or what is phased out, where fish is landed and processed and more sustainable supply chains for example. Aquaculture should also be considered, including the footprint of feed and export markets for example. The CCP needs to recognise the holistic links across these sectors and the complexities within the system.
- **Footprints:** In the list of criteria in the accompanying paper it would be useful to add footprints - especially carbon, ecological and material.
- **NETs (Negative emissions Technologies)** will need a good discussion; the last CCP/CCPu placed considerable reliance on the development and application of technologies, such as CCUS, that have not been developed or funded as fast as predicted and remain uncertain. Both CCC and ECCLR highlighted this weakness and called for a “Plan B”. The new CCP needs (a) less reliance, (b) later ‘delivery dates’ and (c) a Plan B. Consideration should also be given to the likelihood of these technologies actually working and/or their effect of “locking in” fossil fuel use, and whether they should be avoided in principle.
- **Finances/Fiscal measures:** many policies/proposals will need financing (e.g. funding for active/public travel; nature restoration/NbS). In addition, fiscal measures might be policies/proposals in themselves (e.g. congestion charges, taxes on fossil fuels/cars, tax relief on insulation, micro-renewables). The CCP should consider and propose policies that ensure adequate financing and/or introduce policies/proposals for fiscal measures (incentives/disincentives or revenue generation) that drive changes in consumer trends or behaviour. For more on Fiscal measures, see [SCCS briefing](#) for the most important short-term actions.
- **Emissions envelopes:** clarity and transparency on emissions reduction via proposed policies needs adding in to assess likely effectiveness of proposed policies. This is especially relevant for agriculture.

These comments have been contributed by members of LINK’s Wildlife, Marine, Planning and Governance Groups.

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