



Stop Climate Chaos Scotland

Evidence to RACCE Committee on priorities for Legacy Report
February 2016

Introduction

Stop Climate Chaos Scotland welcomes the opportunity to look back at the work of the RACCE Committee over the last Parliament and to contribute ideas regarding what any successor Committee should focus on in the next Parliament.

SCCS believes that the Committee must retain an *overview of progress* towards climate change targets, and make recommendations on policies which aim to achieve these. It must hold to account all sectors and Government Ministers for their role in delivering policies. We believe the successor Committee to RACCE must be the body in Parliament responsible for overseeing the Scottish Climate Change Act implementation in its entirety and considering overall progress.

Review

We welcome the work RACCE has done to scrutinise Scottish Government policies on climate change throughout this Parliament. The highlight has been the Committee's forthright work on scrutinising the draft RPP2 in 2013 and reviewing its progress in 2014. This recognised positive aspects of the plans for climate action, but also criticised and identified gaps in policy and made valuable recommendations, as the following quotes from RACCE's report on RPP2 show:

- *'As Scotland failed to meet the annual emissions abatement target for 2010, the final Second Report on Proposals and Policies must provide a framework that ensures future annual targets are met'.*
- *'...recommends the Scottish Government ensure all proposals and policies outlined in the draft RPP2 are implemented'.*¹
- *'The Committee encourages the Scottish Government to consider what more can be done to meet the targets, what measures can be prioritised, what actions can be expedited, and how the second Report on Proposals and Policies can be more effectively implemented.'*²

We welcome the RACCE Committee's successful championing of land use policies which can help Scotland meet its climate targets, e.g. RACCE welcomed *'the inclusion of peatlands in the draft RPP2 and believes this is an area in which the Scottish Government could provide a global lead.'* However, as recommended above, we seek that the successor Committee takes responsibility to champion and scrutinise all climate policies and takes an overview of all action on climate change by Government.

We also recognise the work of the Committee in scrutinising Budgets presented to Parliament and showing where funding of climate change mitigation is inadequate or opaque, e.g. *'One consistent area of concern has been the level of funding available for land use climate change measures and the effectiveness of some of those initiatives, including concern about relating RPP policy areas...'* and *'Tracking Scottish Government spending on climate change policies needs to be made clearer and more transparent'*³. The RACCE Committee's work encouraging other Committees to consider climate change in their Budget scrutiny has been most welcome.

Priorities

1. Annual emissions targets under Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009

In 2016, annual greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets for 2028-32 will be set by the Scottish Government, following advice from the UK Climate Change Committee. Any new targets should be viewed in the light of objectives set by the Paris Agreement at the end of 2015. The Paris Agreement set

¹ <http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/CurrentCommittees/61495.aspx>

² <http://bit.ly/1qZJe4x>

³ <http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/CurrentCommittees/96153.aspx#e>

a new course for global action to halting climate change and significantly agreed to aim to limit global temperature rise to below 1.5°C.

SCCS recommends that the successor committee scrutinises setting of new emissions annual targets and any review of annual targets in the life of the Parliament.

2. **Annual review of progress towards meeting annual targets**

The Scottish Government reports annually on actual progress in meeting emission targets. In the past, Government has addressed missed targets by introducing policies to bridge the gap and bring future emissions back onto target.

SCCS recommends that the successor Committee reviews the progress each year towards meeting the appropriate annual target, scrutinises Government policies introduced to ‘plug the gap’, and makes recommendations on additional policies needed to meet any shortfall.

3. **RPP3**

In 2016/17 the Scottish Government will consult on the proposals and policies it aims to use to meet the annual targets up to 2032 and existing targets to that point. This is a requirement of the Scottish Climate Change Act.

SCCS recommends that scrutiny of Government’s draft third Report on Proposals and Policies be a high priority for a successor committee. We also recommend that scrutiny includes an inquiry into potential for greater action on behavioural change in meeting Scotland’s climate change targets.

4. **Scottish Budget**

Action on climate change is a cross-governmental issue – all Ministers have a responsibility to deliver action through policies and spending which delivers emission reductions. However, Budgets laid before Parliament in the past have not thoroughly and transparently indicated how spending plans will deliver climate action or how they relate to policies in the RPP or RPP2.

SCCS recommends that a successor to the RACCE Committee sees it as a priority to scrutinise future Budgets and to call Cabinet Secretaries and Ministers across relevant portfolios to account on the spending towards meeting Scotland’s Climate Change targets.

5. **Land Use Strategy**

Clear leadership is essential if rural businesses and the food sector are to become low carbon, climate-proof and sustainable. In 2016, the next Scottish Government is due to publish a second Land Use Strategy (the LUS), a requirement of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009. This must influence a reduction in emissions from the way Scotland’s rural land is used and managed. As it did with the first LUS, Government will also develop an LUS Action Plan setting out activities to meet the strategy’s objectives. The RACCE Committee has a responsibility to use its expertise on rural affairs to scrutinise the LUS and how it is implemented at a regional level.

SCCS recommends that a successor Committee scrutinises Government’s LUS and Action Plan and makes links to the Land Reform Bill, the RPP3 and other rural land policies. The Committee should make recommendations towards better regional LUS plans and strong policies which deliver emissions reductions throughout the land use sector: agriculture, forestry and peatlands.

For more information, please contact:

Gail Wilson, Stop Climate Chaos Scotland
2nd Floor, Thorn House, 5 Rose Street, Edinburgh, EH2 2PR
Tel: 0131 243 2701 Email: info@stopclimatechaosscotland.org Twitter: @sccscot
Stop Climate Chaos Scotland (SCCS) is a coalition of organisations campaigning on climate change, including environment, faith and development organisations, trade and student unions and community groups.
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