
Report To:	Environment and Regeneration Committee	Date:	26 October 2017
Report By:	Corporate Director Environment, Regeneration and Resources	Report No:	E+R/17/10/04/ SJ/AW
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Subject:	Scottish Government Consultation on the Proposed New Climate Change Bill		

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform the Committee of the Scottish Government consultation on a proposed new Climate Change Bill and to seek approval of the response submitted on behalf of the Council.

2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Scottish Government is proposing a new Climate Change Bill which sets new national targets for greenhouse gas emissions reduction. The new reduction target proposed is at least 90% by 2050. The Scottish Government further proposes interim targets of at least 56% by 2020, 66% by 2030 and 78% by 2040. The Scottish Government published a public consultation on the proposed Climate Change Bill with a closing date for response of 22 September. In order to meet consultation deadlines, a response to the consultation has been submitted (see Appendix 1), with the caveat that it is subject to this Committee's approval.

APPENDIX

3.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 It is recommended the Environment and Regeneration Committee approve the Council's responses to the Climate Change Bill consultation set out in Appendix 1.

Stuart W. Jamieson
Head of Regeneration and Planning

4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 In 2009, The Climate Change (Scotland) Act was passed which set a target to reduce Scotland's greenhouse gas emissions by at least 80% by 2050 from a 1990 baseline. The Act further set an interim reduction target of 42% by 2020. The target was based on evidence that global greenhouse gas emissions reductions of between 50% and 85% by 2050 would be required to minimise the chances of a global temperature rise in excess of 2°C.
- 4.2 In December 2015, the United Nations Climate Change Conference was held in Paris. At the conference, a global agreement was made to limit the global temperature rise to 2°C by the end of the century and pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase even further to 1.5°C. This was termed the UN Paris Agreement and came into force on 4 November 2016. Furthermore, the most recent Scottish Greenhouse Gas Emissions Data covering the year 2015 showed that Scotland had reduced emissions by 37.6%, thereby on course to achieving the interim reduction target of 42% by 2020.
- 4.3 In light of this, the Scottish Government proposes a new Climate Change Bill setting new targets for greenhouse gas emissions reduction. The new 2050 target is 90% and is based on advice provided by the UK Committee on Climate Change which states this would be more consistent with limiting temperature rise to 1.5°C. With regard to the interim 2020 target, the UK Committee on Climate Change advises this to be increased to least 56%. The UK Committee on Climate Change also proposes subsequent interim targets of at least 66% by 2030 and 78% by 2040. In line with this advice, the Scottish Government has proposed these targets.
- 4.4 The UK Committee on Climate Change state that 90% reduction by 2050 is at the very limit of feasibility and the Scottish Government recognises that meeting this target will be very challenging. The Scottish Government also regards the opportunities from pursuing the target through the creation of a low carbon economy as considerable. Future Climate Change Plans detailing policies and proposals on climate change covering a period of around 16 years will be developed following the passage through Parliament of the proposed Climate Change Bill.

5.0 PROPOSALS

- 5.1 The response to the consultation (see Appendix 1) is that the Council agrees with the overall target proposed by the Scottish Government but does not agree with two of the proposed interim targets. It is felt the target of 56% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2020 is too high to be achieved in such a short timeframe. Achieving the overall target of 90% reduction by 2050 will require transformational change with respect to energy, transport, waste etc. This will require careful consideration, and pressure to achieve too high a target in such a short space of time may result in rash decision making that affects long-term progress. It is further viewed that the 2040 target of 78% should be higher, since by this time progress as regards transformational change should be approaching completion.
- 5.2 With regard to setting and updating greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets, the response is that there should be a degree of flexibility. The Scottish Government should consult with the UK Committee on Climate Change and ensure when making decisions that environmental and social implications are placed at the forefront. Moreover, the Scottish Government should consider economic and fiscal circumstances. The transformational change required to meet the targets presents potential significant opportunities for business and education.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

Finance

- 6.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

Financial implications

One off costs

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Year	Proposed Spend this Report	Virement From	Other Comments
n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Annually Recurring Costs/Savings

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	With Effect from	Annual Net Impact	Virement From	Other Comments
n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Legal

6.2 There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

Human Resources

6.3 There are no direct human resource implications arising from this report.

Equalities

6.4 There are no direct equalities implications arising from this report.

Repopulation

6.5 There are no direct repopulation implications arising from this report.

7.0 CONSULTATIONS

7.1 None

7.2 **Chief Financial Officer:** no requirement to comment.

7.3 **Head of Legal and Property Services:** no requirement to comment.

7.4 **Head of Organisational Development, HR and Communications:** no requirement to comment.

8.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

8.1 The consultation document can be viewed on the Scottish Government web site as follows:

https://consult.scotland.gov.uk/energy-and-climate-change-directorate/climate-change-bill/user_uploads/sct06174436221.pdf

8.2 Appendix 1 – Inverclyde Council response to the Scottish Government’s proposed new Climate Change Bill.

Question 1:

Do you agree that the 2050 target should be made more ambitious by increasing it to 90% greenhouse gas emission reduction from baseline levels?

Yes. Inverclyde Council agrees with the advice given by the UK Committee on Climate Change that this target is more consistent with limiting temperatures to 1.5°C. This is the commitment given by the UK under the Paris Climate Change Agreement so the Scottish Government should set targets accordingly.

Inverclyde Council would welcome continuous Scottish Government funding support to assist it and others to contribute to achieving the target.

Question 2:

Do you agree that the Climate Change Bill should contain provisions that allow for a net-zero greenhouse gas emission target to be set at a later date?

Yes. Inverclyde Council ultimately wishes net-zero greenhouse gas emissions but if the UK Committee on Climate Change states there is insufficient evidence with which to set a target at this time, then provision should be made in the Bill for this in order that targets can be set when more evidence becomes available.

Question 3:

a) Do you agree that the 2020 target should be for greenhouse gas emissions to be at least 56% lower than baseline levels?

No. The most recent greenhouse gas reduction figures, for 2015, state actual emissions as reducing by 37.6% from the 1990 baseline. The new proposed target means an almost 20% reduction to be achieved over only 5 years. Inverclyde Council welcomes the level of ambition and appreciates that greenhouse gas emissions must be reduced as quickly as possible but feels this target is unachievable. The pressure to achieve such a high target in such a short space of time might result in rash decision making which can affect long-term progress. Achieving the 2050 target will require transformational change and therefore careful consideration. A suggested alternative target could be 48%.

b) Do you agree that a target should be set for greenhouse gas emissions to be at least 66% lower than baseline levels by 2030?

Yes. Inverclyde Council feels this is reasonable since during the target period the transformational change required should begin to be implemented in earnest.

c) Do you agree that a target should be set for greenhouse gas emissions to be at least 78% lower than baseline levels by 2040?

No. Inverclyde Council takes the view that the target period should cover the significant upscaling of the transformational change and, therefore, the target could be more ambitious. A suggested alternative is 85%. In the final 10 years to 2050, there will likely be diminishing returns so a much lower target during this period would be preferred.

Question 4:

Do you agree that annual emission reduction targets should be in the form of percentage reductions from baseline levels?

Yes. Inverclyde Council takes the view that a consistent approach is better for communication purposes. Less sensitivity to changes in the greenhouse gas inventory is also preferred.

Question 5:

Do you agree that annual targets should be set as a direct consequence of interim and 2050 targets?

Yes. Inverclyde Council feels the consistency and transparency this would bring is preferred. Note, however, that the changes required to meet the longer terms targets will be undertaken over long periods. The changes, therefore, may not yield much in terms of greenhouse gas emissions reduction in their initial stages but over the longer term result in significant reductions. In this regard, comparing against annual targets should be caveated accordingly.

Question 6:

Do you agree that all emission reduction targets should be set on the basis of actual emissions, removing the accounting adjustment for the EU ETS?

Yes. Inverclyde Council agrees with the advice by the UK Committee on Climate Change that this would improve transparency with respect to measurement of progress against targets.

Question 7:

a) What are your views on allowing the interim and 2050 emission reduction targets to be updated, with due regard to advice from the CCC, through secondary legislation?

Inverclyde Council takes the view that a level of flexibility is sensible with respect to the interim and 2050 targets. Inverclyde Council wishes to emphasise, however, that in making any decisions, the protection of the environment along with social implications are paramount.

b) What do you think are the most important criteria to be considered when setting or updating emission reduction targets?

Inverclyde regards the following criteria as most important:

- scientific knowledge about climate change;
- environmental considerations and, in particular, the likely impact of the targets on biodiversity;
- social circumstances, in particular the likely impact of the target on those living in poorer or deprived communities;
- economic circumstances;
- fiscal circumstances.

Question 8:

a) What are your views on the frequency of future Climate Change Plans?

Inverclyde Council takes the view that aligning Climate Change Plans with interim targets and Paris Stocktakes seems sensible. It is preferred that plans are produced after the Paris Stocktake Processes if this will incorporate advice by the UK Committee on Climate Change.

b) What are your views on the length of time each Climate Change Plan should cover?

Inverclyde Council takes the view that each Climate Change Plan should be coordinated with the interim targets. This is for reasons of consistency and 10 years seems a reasonable length of time with which to plan future climate change action.

c) What are your views on how development of future Climate Change Plans could be aligned with Paris Stocktake Processes?

Please see a). Inverclyde Council takes the view that Climate Change Plans are developed following Paris Stocktake Processes if the UK Committee on Climate Change will base their advice on these. The Scottish Government should seek the advice of the UK Committee on Climate Change when devising Climate Change Plans.

d) How many days do you think the period for Parliamentary consideration of draft Climate Change Plans should be?

Inverclyde Councils feels 120 days is a reasonable length of time for Parliamentary scrutiny.

Question 9:

What are your views on the proposal that any shortfall against previous targets should be made up through subsequent Climate Change Plans?

Inverclyde Council agrees with this proposal. It is likely that climate change initiatives will yield limited greenhouse gas reductions in the early stages but this should improve as they become established.

Question 10:

What are your views on these initial considerations of the impact of the Bill proposals on Scotland's people, both now and in future generations?

Inverclyde Council agrees with the proposed assessments and that any other suitable assessment should be undertaken to ensure the social well-being of the people of Scotland is given the highest level of consideration. Inverclyde Council further believes in climate justice and that Scotland should also make this a high priority. The Scottish Government when devising the Bill should include climate justice in order that the global impact of its greenhouse gas emissions be considered and to influence the Governments of other countries to do the same.

Question 11:

What are your views on the opportunities and challenges that the Bill proposals could present for businesses?

The greenhouse gas emissions targets require a transformational change in the areas of energy, transport, agriculture, waste and so many other facets of society. Moreover, large strides must be made with regards climate change adaptation. The transition to a low carbon, climate resilient and circular economy presents a large number of opportunities for current businesses in Scotland and for new types of business to develop. Current low carbon technologies require to be up-scaled thereby presenting opportunities in high skilled manufacturing. New technologies and ways of working will require development meaning opportunities for the higher education and consultancy sectors and for apprenticeships.

Educational institutions and businesses should be informed about these opportunities in order that they can be effectively explored and taken advantage of. This will help with the challenges in diversifying the economy to one which moves to zero carbon and waste and is climate resilient.

Question 12:

a) What are your views on the evidence set out in the Environmental Report that has been used to inform the assessment process? (Please give details of additional relevant sources).

Inverclyde Council considers the evidence to be comprehensive, covering all related environmental aspects and impacts with respect to climate change.

b) What are your views on the predicted environmental effects as set out in the Environmental Report?

Inverclyde Council considers the predicted environmental effects to be accurate and in line with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change 2014 Synthesis Report.

c) Are there any other environmental effects that have not been considered?

Inverclyde Council considers the environmental effects stated in the Environmental Report to be comprehensive but there are likely to be other effects that cannot be predicted at this stage.

d) Do you agree with the conclusions and recommendations set out in the Environmental Report?

Yes, Inverclyde Council agrees with the conclusions and recommendations stated in the Environmental Report. Inverclyde Council is pleased that adaptation is given due consideration in the Report.

e) Please provide any other comments you have on the Environmental Report.

Inverclyde Council has no further comments on the Environmental Report at this stage.

Question 13:

Please use this space to tell us any other thoughts you have about the proposed Climate Change Bill not covered in your earlier answers.

Inverclyde Council has no further comments on the proposed Climate Change Bill at this stage.

PLEASE NOTE THE ABOVE ANSWERS ARE SUBJECT TO COMMITTEE APPROVAL.