

Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee
Tuesday 23 April 2024
14th Meeting, 2024 (Session 6)

Evidence session on the Climate Change Committee's Progress Report 2023

Introduction

1. The Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee will hear from the Climate Change Committee (CCC) on its [2023 Report to the Scottish Parliament](#) on progress towards Scotland's emissions reductions targets.
2. Scotland's statutory emissions reduction targets were first established in the [Climate Change \(Scotland\) Act 2009](#) ('the 2009 Act') and were amended by the [Climate Change \(Emissions Reduction Targets\) \(Scotland\) Act 2019](#). The current targets are:
 - 75% reduction in emissions by 2030 (against a 1990 baseline);
 - 90% reduction in emissions by 2040; and
 - 100% reduction in emissions by 2045 (net zero).
3. Under the 2009 Act, the Scottish Government is required to ask the CCC to produce annual reports setting out progress towards achieving Scotland's emissions reduction targets.

Headlines from the 2023 Progress Report

4. The CCC's progress report for 2023 was published in March 2024. This is the twelfth annual progress report to the Scottish Parliament as required by the 2009 Act. The five key messages the CCC set out in its report are—
 - **“Scotland's annual target was missed again.** Scottish emissions in 2021 increased by 2.4% from 2020 as the economy rebounded from the pandemic, and were 49.2% below 1990 levels*. Scotland missed its 2021 annual legal target. This is the eighth target in the past 12 years that has been missed.
 - **The acceleration required in emissions reduction to meet the 2030 target is now beyond what is credible.** The recent rate of emissions reduction outside the electricity supply, aviation and shipping sectors needs to increase by a factor of nine in the nine years from 2021 to 2030, compared to the preceding nine years, if Scotland is to achieve its 2030 target of a 75% reduction compared to 1990 levels. This rate of reduction is nearly two times higher than that in the CCC's ambitious pathway for Scotland, which we updated in 2022. Given the pace at which supply chains and investment would need to develop, this rate of reduction is not credible. However, the Scottish Government should build on its high ambition and implement policies that enable the 75% emissions reduction target to be achieved at the earliest date possible.
 - **Current overall policies and plans in Scotland fall far short of what is needed to achieve the legal targets under the Scottish Climate Change Act.**

There are risks in all areas with significant policy powers devolved to the Scottish Government (transport, buildings, agriculture, land use and waste).

- **The Scottish Government has delayed its draft Climate Change Plan.** The 2030 target is only six years away. The Scottish Government did not publish its draft Climate Change Plan in late 2023 as planned. This progress report had been delayed to assess it. At the time of writing, it is still unclear when a draft Plan will be published. Scotland is therefore lacking a comprehensive strategy that outlines the actions and policies required to achieve the 2030 target. The Scottish Government must publish the Plan urgently, with sufficient time to allow for consultation, setting out detail of how policies will work together to deliver the required levels of emissions reduction.
- **Most key indicators of delivery progress are off track**, with tree planting and peatland restoration rates, heat pump installations, electric van sales and recycling rates significantly so. There has been better progress in renewable electricity generation, with a ramp-up of offshore wind capacity in 2022.”

Ministerial Statement – 18 April 2024

5. In a Ministerial Statement to Parliament on 18 April, the Cabinet Secretary for Wellbeing Economy, Net Zero and Energy announced legislation to reflect a revised timetable for achieving net zero by 2045, with a revised approach based on carbon budgeting.¹

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6. On 23 April, the Committee will hold an evidence session with representatives of the CCC to examine its progress report, and how Scotland can get back on track to meet its statutory emissions targets. The Committee will hear from:
 - Professor Keith Bell, Scotland Champion, Climate Change Committee; and
 - Chris Stark, Chief Executive, Climate Change Committee.
7. This session is also an opportunity to ask questions on themes arising from some recent work by the Committee, such as on climate change governance in Scotland. The Committee will discuss this topic with the Scottish Government at a future meeting. It took evidence on it from Audit Scotland on 12 March:
 - [Read the Official Report from this meeting.](#)
8. Evidence gathered will also help to inform the Committee’s future work. This includes the draft Climate Change Plan. The Scottish Government is required to lay a draft Plan before the Scottish Parliament every five years setting out how it proposes to meet its statutory emissions targets. The Scottish Parliament has a period of 120 days to consider the draft Plan. The Scottish Government must publish the next Climate Change Plan by March 2025.

Clerks to the Committee April 2024

¹ The Official Report will be available via this link: [Official Report | Scottish Parliament Website](#)