The Committee on Climate Change and “net zero” in the UK

Climate Recon 2050: Dialogues on Pathways and Policies

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Context: Widespread legislation on climate change

Over 1,500 climate laws and executive acts worldwide, including 140 strategic framework laws

- Climate Change Act (2008)
- General Law on Climate Change (2012)
- CO₂ Act (rev 2013)
- Energy Transition Law (2015)
- 12th and 13th Five Year Plan (2011 / 2016)
- Climate Change Act (2016)
- Climate Act (2017)
- Climate Change Act (2017)

Source: Climate Change Laws of the World, Grantham Research Institute, London School of Economics
### Long-term target to 2050

<table>
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<th>What and how?</th>
<th>Outcomes</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Reduce emissions by at least 80% on 1990 levels</td>
<td>Long-term direction of travel</td>
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<td>Covers the whole economy and all greenhouse gases</td>
<td>Defines the UK’s contribution to solving climate change</td>
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Scientifically informed, long-term approach to policymaking
Rolling set of medium-term targets
Continual adaptation planning

What and how?
5-year cycles of adaptation programmes and risk assessments
Scrutinised by CCC

Outcomes
Introduced climate change risk into public and private sector decision-making
Prepares for the now unavoidable impacts
Independent advisory body

What and how?

Committee on Climate Change: experts and secretariat

- Recommends carbon budgets
- Monitors progress on emissions reduction and climate resilience

Outcomes

- Independent, objective analysis
- Long-term consistency in approach across government
- Transparency and legitimacy
- More informed decision-making
Duties and powers to deliver

What and how?
- Government is accountable to Parliament to deliver
- Government obliged to produce plans to meet budgets
- CCC provides annual progress reports to Parliament
  Judicial review if non-compliant

Outcomes
- Assigns clear responsibilities
- Holds government accountable
- Enables public scrutiny
- Provides basis for policy implementation
Emissions are down by >40% while GDP is up by ~70% since 1990

Source: Expanded from Committee on Climate Change (2017)
Inside the Committee

- Independent expert members, supported by a secretariat
  - Members appointed by government
  - Annual budget of ca £3.7m
- High-profile chairman
- Clear statutory responsibilities
  - Advice on carbon targets and resilience
  - Annual progress report
  - Possibility of ad hoc advice
- Adaptation has its own (Sub)-Committee

Note: Includes members of both the mitigation and adaptation committee
The central role of the Committee on Climate Change

A tangible impact on objectives (carbon targets), process (climate debate) and substance (policy)

- Providing long-term credibility and outlook
- Ensuring evidence-based policy making
  - CCC analysis is used and trusted by all stakeholders
  - CCC is cited five times more in Parliament than the IPCC
- Monitoring government performance
  - No enforcement powers, but statutory obligation to assess and report on progress

Source: Averchenkova, Fankhauser, Finnegan. *The role and influence of the UK's Committee on Climate Change*, October 2018.
Number of times parliamentarians mention the CCC

- December 2008 to May 2018: the CCC referenced 5 times more than the IPCC
- Opposition politicians mentioned the CCC more often
**CCC mentions by political party in the House of Commons (2008–2018)**

Notes: *The Green Party has a score of 26 (right-hand axis). However, for presentation purposes the axis is scaled 0–2. UKIP MP Mark Reckless referred to the CCC once while still a Conservative MP. Source: Authors’ analysis of Hansard*
Mentions of CCC and ASC

Total mentions in the debates on bills (left)

Share of sittings where the CCC or ASC was mentioned (right)
The process to “net zero”

- In principle the Climate Change Act is consistent with “net zero”, but an explicit new target makes sense

- CCC must be consulted if the long-term target were to change
  - Government asked for advice in autumn 2018
  - CCC is due to report in May 2019
  - CCC must consider the science, international context, technological options, costs, wider socio-economic issues (e.g. fuel poverty, fiscal)
**KEY FACTORS OF SUCCESS OF THE INDEPENDENT CLIMATE CHANGE ADVISORY BODIES**

- **Clear mandate**
- **Government's accountability**
  - mandated to respond to input
- **Allocated predictable funding**
- **High level of technical expertise**
- **Independence from the Government**
  - financial and administrative
- **Parliamentary oversight**

Averchenkova (Forthcoming).
For more information see:

http://www.lse.ac.uk/GranthamInstitute/research-theme/governance-and-legislation/

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