

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

Climate Recon 2050: Dialogues on Pathways and Policies

Copenhagen 28 February 2019

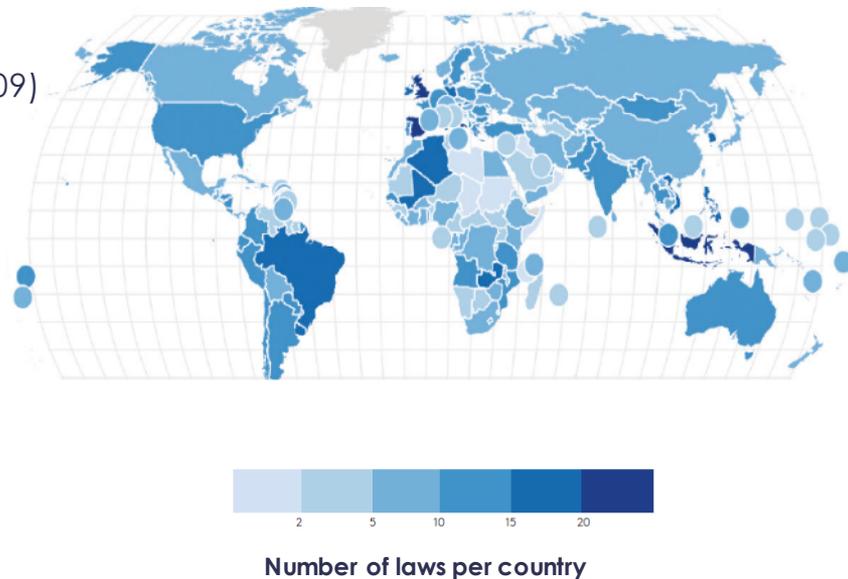
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Context: Widespread legislation on climate change

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

-  Climate Change Act (2008)
-  Framework Act on Low Carbon Green Growth (2009)
-  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)
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Long-term target to 2050

What and how?

Reduce emissions by at least 80% on 1990 levels

Covers the whole economy and all greenhouse gases

Outcomes

Long-term direction of travel

Defines the UK's contribution to solving climate change



Scientifically informed, long-term approach to policymaking

Carbon budgets

What and how?

Sequence of 5-year targets

Recommended by Committee on Climate Change (CCC)

Debated and legislated by Parliament

Set 12 years ahead

Outcomes

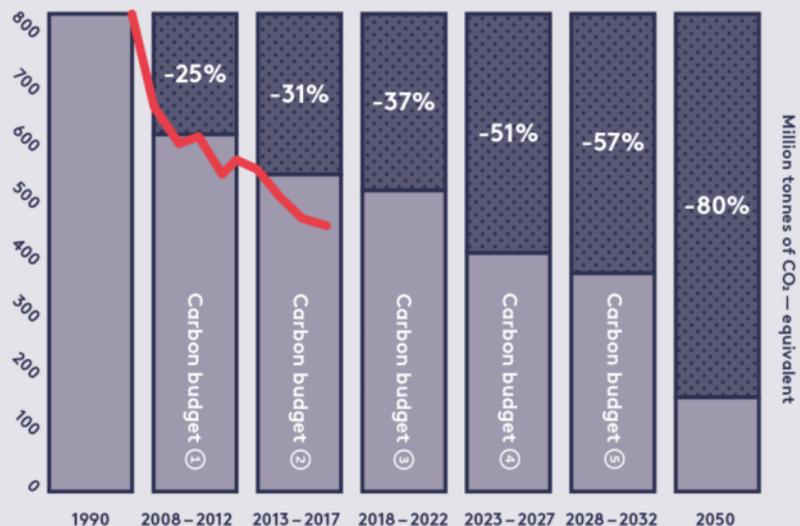
Basis for concrete policy

Long-term target translated into near-term actions

Flexibility built in

Progressive, ratcheted emissions cuts

Actual emissions



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



Year 1



Year 5



Year 10



Year 15



Year 20

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

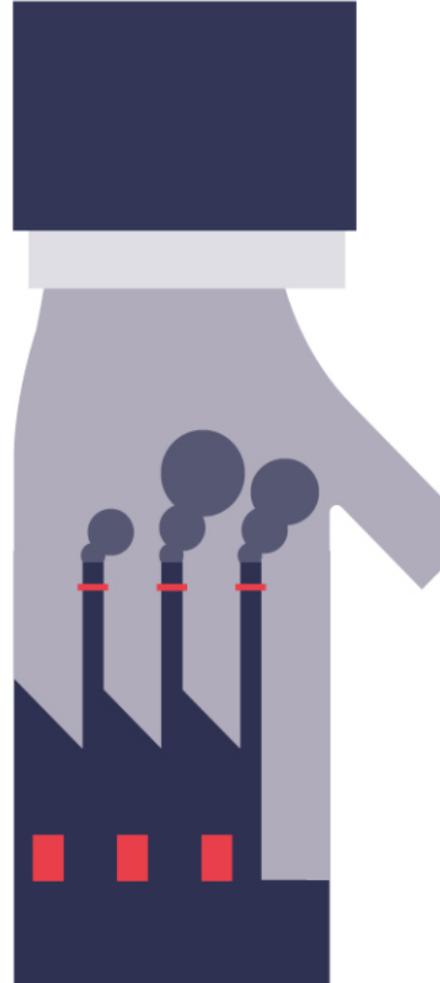
Outcomes

Assigns clear responsibilities

Holds government accountable

Enables public scrutiny

Provides basis for policy implementation



Differences made by the Act



1 A better political debate on climate change



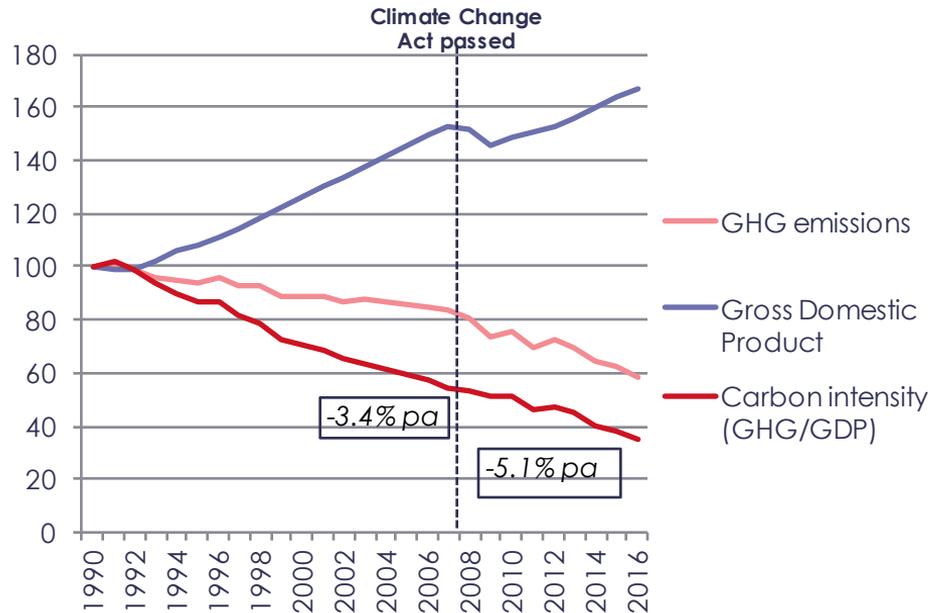
2 The climate consensus has held



3 International leadership, inspiring others to act



4 Share of low-carbon power up from 20-45% by 2016



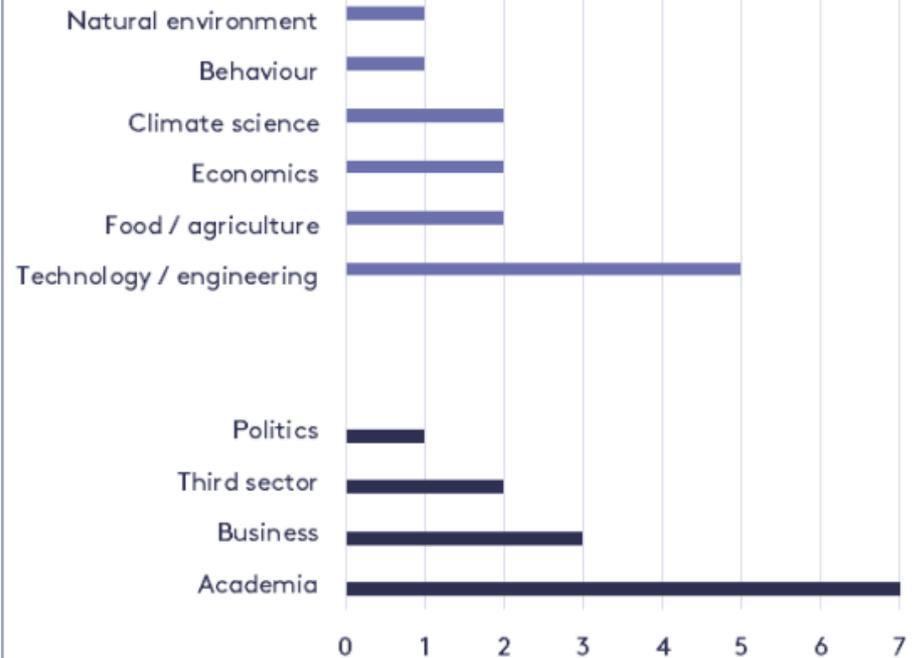
Emissions are down by >40% while GDP is up by ~70% since 1990

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

CCC members by background (number of people)



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



David Cameron
September 2005

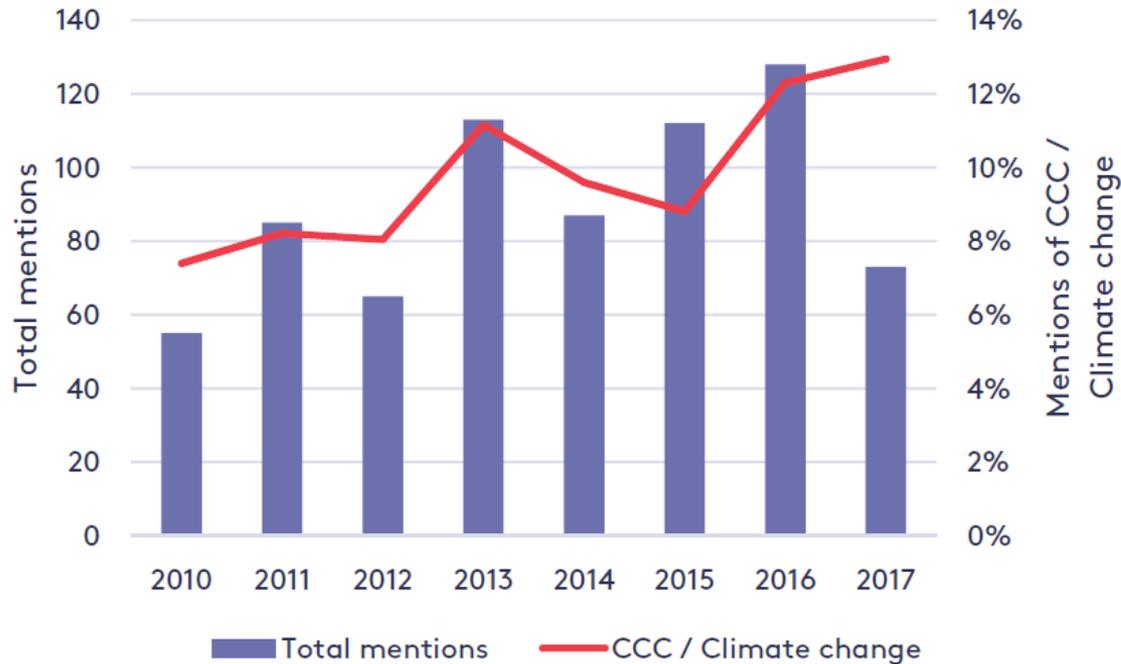
“Vote blue go green”



David Cameron
November 2013

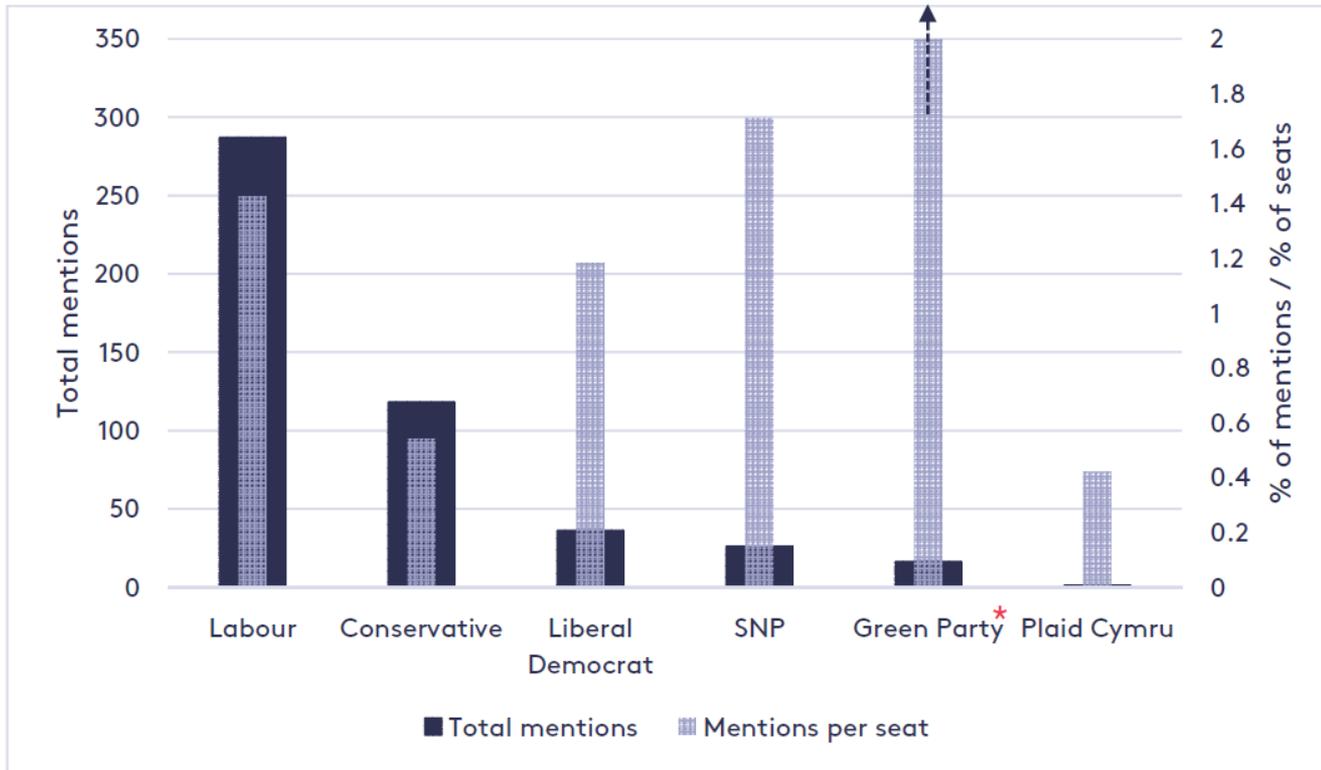
“We’ve got to get rid of all the green crap”

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

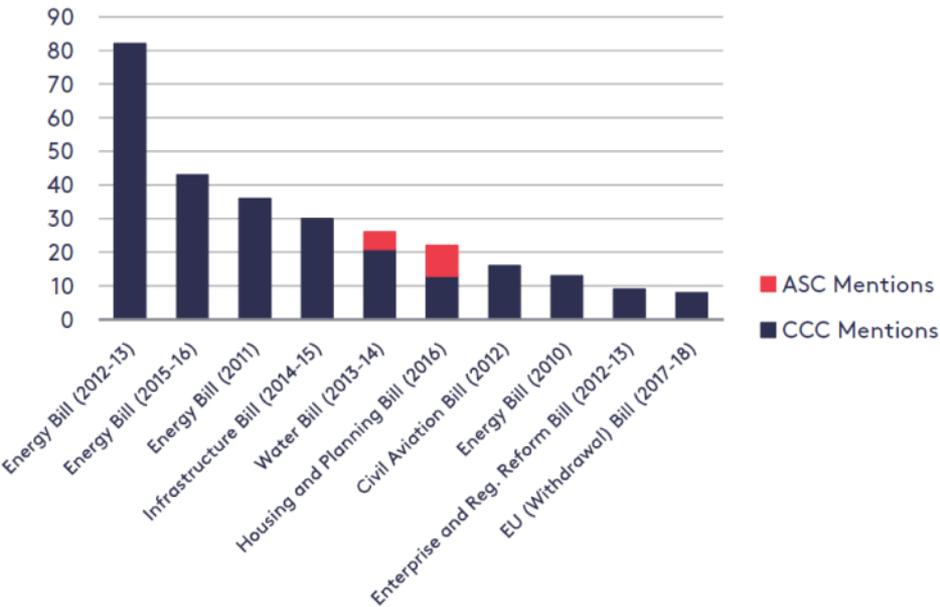
CCC mentions by political party in the House of Commons (2008–2018)



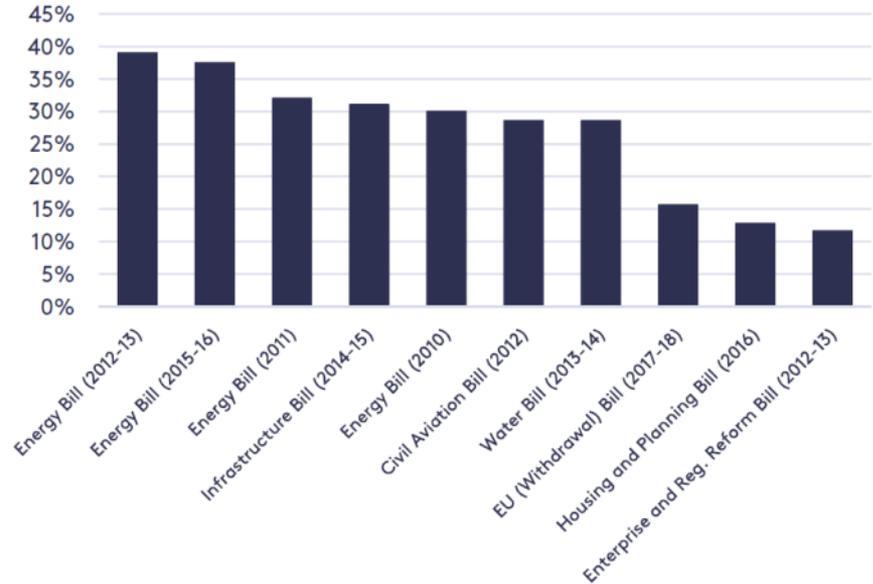
Notes: *The Green Party has a score of 26 (right-hand axis). However, for presentation purposes the axis is scaled 0–2. UKIP MP Mark Reckless referred to the CCC once while still a Conservative MP.
Source: Authors' analysis of Hansard

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)





Clear mandate



Government's accountability

- mandated to respond to input



Allocated predictable
funding

KEY FACTORS OF SUCCESS OF THE INDEPENDENT CLIMATE CHANGE ADVISORY BODIES



High level of technical
expertise



Independence from the
Government

- financial and administrative



Parliamentary oversight

For more information see:



Policy brief
February 2016



The Governance and Legislation research programme:

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