

# Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee 7th Meeting, 2022 (session 6), Tuesday, 01 March 2022

## Evidence session - Scotland's Climate Assembly's views on the Scottish Government's response to their recommendations

### Note by the clerk

#### Introduction

1. Scotland's Climate Assembly is made up of over 100 citizens from all walks of life. They were tasked with examining expert evidence and agreeing recommendations for tackling the climate emergency in a fair and effective way over 8 weekends between November 2020 and February 2022. [Their report was published on 23 June 2021.](#)
2. On 28 September 2021, as part of an evidence session aimed at determining its priorities for Session 6, the Committee heard from members of the Climate Assembly to explore community perspectives and public attitudes towards achieving net zero targets. [Read the Official report for the meeting on 28 September 2021.](#)
3. [The Scottish Government published its response to the Climate Assembly report on 16 December 2021](#) and addressed all 81 recommendations made by Climate Assembly members as well as recommendations made by members of the Children's Parliament.
4. The Climate Assembly came back together for a weekend in February to consider the Scottish Government response to their recommendations. [The evidence and conclusions from their meetings are available on their website.](#)
5. At the end of the weekend, members published a statement of response, thereby bringing the formal work of the Assembly to an end. [Read the full statement of response.](#) They also provided a summary of their final meeting. It is available at Annexe A.

#### Scotland's Climate Assembly's views on the Scottish Government's response to their recommendations

6. On 01 March 2022, the Committee will hear from members of the Climate Assembly on their views of the Scottish Government's response to their recommendations. It will take evidence from:

- Ellie Clarke, Member;
- Lewis Elliot, Member;
- Joan Lawson, Member; and
- Susie Townend, Secretariat.

## ANNEXE A

### Scotland's Climate Assembly - Summary of Final Meeting

Paper for the Scottish Parliament's Net Zero Committee

Weekend 8

- Scotland's Climate Assembly met for a final weekend between 4-6 February to consider the [Scottish Government's response](#) to their [81 Recommendations for Action](#) and the Children's Parliament's 42 Calls for Action.
- After hearing evidence from experts, [raising questions](#) directly with Patrick Harvie MSP, Minister for Zero Carbon Buildings, Active Travel and Tenants' Rights, and Richard Lochhead MSP, Minister for Just Transition, Employment and Fair Work, as well as partaking in much deliberation, members agreed a collective Statement of Response.

#### Statement of Response

- The Assembly's Statement commends the Scottish Parliament for establishing the Assembly and the Scottish Government for providing a considered response. It also recognises that the Scottish Government has taken some positive steps to tackle the climate emergency, however, overall the Assembly was disappointed with the level of ambition and urgency in the response to their recommendations.
- The Assembly felt that some impactful quick wins were rejected. For example, the Government could have committed to leading by example in public catering procurement and to a public education campaign about sustainable diets.
- The Assembly is disappointed in the Scottish Government's response to their recommendations to reduce the impacts of flying in Scotland, and particularly their lack of engagement with the aim to eliminate frequent flyer and air mile bonuses.
- The Assembly believes there is a need to raise air departure tax, especially for more frequent flyers, and that the Government must work with airline companies to put pressure on them to label, at point of purchase, the emissions from flights to encourage people to reconsider unnecessary travel.
- Although Assembly members agreed that implementing free public transport for under 22s is a positive step, the Government has not gone far enough to reduce the cost and increase the use of public transport.
- The Assembly would still like to see the development of an 'oyster card' (recommendation 28) in Scotland to enable low income families to access discounted transport. The Assembly feels it is important that transport services are more integrated, provide services that better reflect local needs, and that the standard of the fleet being used (especially buses) is improved to reduce carbon emissions.

- On land use, the Assembly were expecting more ambition and maintained that to address the climate emergency, communities need to be given more control over Scotland's underused land.
- The Assembly acknowledged that the Government is making good progress on work and volunteering, in particular the green training and apprenticeship scheme.
- However, the Assembly were concerned that the Government's response to their goal of retrofitting homes across Scotland to reduce carbon emissions will push more people into fuel poverty.
- The Assembly believes that greater ambition and sustainable investment from Government into circular economy activity will engage local communities, contribute significantly to education and behavioural change in regard to the climate crisis, and build healthier and happier communities.
- The Assembly also called for legislation to ban single use plastic and non recyclable packaging to be introduced faster and to consider further measures to reduce plastic use in Scotland.
- The Assembly thinks that there needs to be more urgency and creative thinking in introducing new sources of public funding through existing taxation powers at a local level. For example, by increasing taxes on power companies through a land tax on energy installations and further taxing high carbon emitters.
- The Assembly called for a joined-up approach across different levels of Government to make the best use of time and resources to maximise efficiency, reducing duplication.
- In their Statement of Response, the Assembly has called for the Government to create a Scorecard for Scotland with 10 Key Performance Indicators (decided by independent experts) with clear numerical and measurable targets based on areas of greatest impact on climate change. This information should be updated bi-annually in an easily accessible and understandable format and published in a one-pager.
- The report should indicate for each target where there has been positive change and areas where targets have not been met. The Scorecard should contain annual projected outcomes showing progressive improvement until the target has been reached and then maintained.
- The Assembly also called for an annual review to allow them to continue dialogue with the Scottish Government and hold it to account.