



# Climate Change Bill

The Climate Change Bill has UK wide implications and provides a framework for the reduction of carbon emissions and adaptation to the impact of climate change. However, the Scottish Government has declared a target of 80% reduction by 2050, compared to the 60% in the Bill. The Bill entered Parliament on 15<sup>th</sup> November 2007 following extensive consultation on the draft bill.

## Key issues

The Bill will establish a credible emissions reduction pathway to 2050, by putting medium and long-term targets into statute.

A series of five year carbon budgets will run through to 2050 to provide a clear framework of expected emissions reductions over time.

The Bill allows five local authorities to pilot incentive schemes to encourage residents to reduce waste.

Local Government is responsible for a quarter of all public spending and has a crucial role in many areas in responding to the challenge.

## 1. Introduction

The Climate Change Bill sets out the response to public consultation on the draft bill published in March 2007.

The Bill entered Parliament on 15<sup>th</sup> November 2007 and introduces “a clear, credible, long-term framework for the UK to achieve its goals of reducing emissions and taking steps to adapt to the impact of climate change.

## 2. Background

The Climate Change Bill acknowledges that both the scientific and economic cases for action on climate change are compelling. The Stern Review (October 2006), and subsequent work by the United Nations, prove that the costs of doing nothing about

climate change are significantly greater than the expected costs of global action. The EU is committed to a 20% reduction of greenhouse gas emissions between 1990 and 2020 and is prepared to extend this to a 30% reduction. The UK has made progress in reducing domestic emissions and there is a commitment to move to a low-carbon economy.

Almost 17,000 responses were received during the consultation period on the draft bill and recommendations were also made by an ad hoc joint committee representing MPs, Peers, the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Select Committee, and the Environmental Audit Committee.

### **3. Key Elements of the Bill**

**3.1 Targets** – The main thrust of the Bill is to set legally binding targets to reduce UK domestic carbon dioxide emissions. The targets are set against a 1990 baseline and are a reduction of between 26 and 32% by 2020 and at least 60% by 2050. These reductions are a duty of the Secretary of State and could be amended on the advice of a Committee on Climate Change (see below).

The targets are broken down into 5 year carbon budgets from 2008 which will be set by the Secretary of State, taking into account defined areas which include technology, scientific knowledge and social circumstances. Budget transfers to the following 5 year period will be possible if not met, but the transfer is restricted to no more than 1% of the later budget and will therefore reduce the 5 year budget for the later period.

The primary target for these budgets is carbon dioxide but other greenhouse gases can be included by the Secretary of State in the future, including aviation and shipping emissions.

The Secretary of State has the following reporting duties:-

- To set out proposals and policies to meet carbon budget targets
- An annual UK emission statement
- A 5 year budget statement
- A final statement in 2050.

### **3.2 Committee on Climate Change**

A committee will be established whose members will be appointed by national authorities (including large local authorities). Members will be selected on their knowledge/experience of areas such as business competitiveness, climate change policy, science and technology. This committee will provide advice on carbon budgeting and suggest methods and actions to meet the budget. It will also provide budget progress reports and review the effectiveness of emission reduction actions.

### **3.3 Trading Schemes**

National Authorities will be able to set up trading schemes relating to greenhouse gases. The operation, administration and enforcement of these schemes will have to be regulated.

### **3.4 Waste Reduction Schemes**

The Bill allows five local authorities to pilot incentive schemes to encourage residents to reduce waste. The schemes must meet the “framework for waste pilot schemes” and the following requirements:-

- Revenue collected must be given back to the residents through rebates
- The schemes must not encourage fly-tipping
- Residents must have plenty of opportunity to recycle through good kerbside schemes
- The needs of residents disadvantaged by the scheme must be considered.

A sum of £1.5million has been committed by DEFRA to these pilot schemes over a 3 year period. It is not yet clear how to apply to be a pilot but the Bill does state that a comprehensive review at the end of the pilot schemes may result in recommendations to roll-out incentive schemes to all local authorities.

### **3.5 Impact and Adaptation to Climate Change**

The Bill sets out a reporting procedure for the Secretary of State on the risks of current and predicted impact of climate change and on the development and implementation of measures to adapt to these risks.

## **6. APSE Comment**

APSE welcomes the increasing importance given to the effects of climate change by the Government. The provision of a clear framework with strong targets indicates the seriousness attached to the issue and local authorities have a crucial role to play in rising to the challenge set. APSE sees local authorities being public sector champions, leading by example. Their role is key in the way services are operated and managed and also as leaders of communities.

Local authorities will have to take part in the Carbon Reduction Commitment (CRC) by measuring, monitoring and trading carbon emissions which will be a new way of working, therefore local authorities should be raising the profile of climate change now rather than waiting for the Bill to pass into legislation.

There are many ways for local authorities to influence the level of carbon emissions in their community from sustainable community strategies and procurement strategies, waste minimisation and recycling, local transport, housing, fuel poverty, planning and enforcement of building regulations. Additionally, waste management strategies will need to reflect the carbon management element of the service in terms issues such as zero waste policies and the amount of methane emitted to the atmosphere from landfill. All these will allow local government to fulfil its role as a community leader and place shaper in managing Climate Change. It is essential that climate change is acknowledged as a collective responsibility and not just relevant to someone else.

This Bill recognises that energy measures are not the only way to tackle climate change by the inclusion of the financial incentives pilot project. APSE hopes that local authorities will be allowed to introduce measures that achieve pressing waste targets but also meet local requirements.

Local authorities need to take a lead and be aware of the wider climate change issues when specifying working patterns, products and services to further cut emissions. APSE through its performance networks model is developing indicators that measure the carbon footprint of the impact of specific local authority services to allow valid comparisons to be made.

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