

CCC calls for Government to follow carbon budgets with real action to reduce emissions

Embargoed until: 13.30 on Wednesday 22 April 2009
--

Issue No: 007

The Committee on Climate Change (CCC) welcomed the Government's commitment today for the introduction of three legally binding carbon budgets which will, if met lead to a 34% reduction in emissions of greenhouse gases by 2020.

The Government was responding to and accepting the findings of the CCC's first report, *Building a low-carbon economy* which set out what the UK's carbon emissions reduction targets for the period to 2020 should be. It previously accepted the CCC's recommendation of an 80% emissions cut by 2050.

The Government also accepted the CCC's recommendations that offset credits should not be used in the non-traded sector in the absence of a new global emissions reduction deal. The CCC welcomed the Government's commitment to tighten the budget following a global deal in Copenhagen in December, reflecting the CCC's recommendation to move towards an intended budget with an emissions reduction target of around 42% by 2020.

Before December, it is vital that policies are put in place to ensure transformation in the way that we use energy in our homes, buildings, vehicles, in the generation of power and in agriculture. These policies should build on positive measures announced in today's budget to support energy efficiency improvement, investment in renewable energy projects and development of clean coal power generation.

Responding to the budget, Chair of the CCC, Lord Turner said:

"I am delighted that these targets have been accepted today. It is now important that this first step is followed by action. If the targets are to be met, we need to start reducing our emissions now and we need tough policies and strong leadership from Government to ensure that we can start building a low-carbon economy. We will

provide a detailed assessment of Government strategy and the set of actions required to deliver a low carbon economy in our September report to Parliament.”

“The carbon budgets provide the UK with the most ambitious climate change legislation in the world. They also put the UK in a strong position to show leadership at the Copenhagen summit in December, at which we hope a deal to reduce global emissions will be reached. At that point, we will be able to raise our targets to a 42% reduction: some purchase of credits would be appropriate to meet this more ambitious target.”

The Government announced proposals to fund at least 2 and up to 4 Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) demonstration projects through a new levy on the power system. New legislation required for the levy will be introduced during the next session of Parliament.

On CCS, Lord Turner said:

“The Committee strongly welcomes this commitment to at least 2 and up to 4 CCS demonstration projects. If CCS technology can be deployed it will play a very important role in our future energy mix, supporting efforts to completely decarbonise electricity generation in the UK. It will have an important role to play in reducing emissions in other countries, particularly China, India and the United States”.

“There can be no role for conventional coal fired generation in the UK beyond the early 2020s. Any investment in new coal should therefore be made with the full expectation that CCS is retrofitted in the early 2020s, with very limited running if CCS is not retrofitted”.

The Government announced a scrappage scheme that will provide motorists with vehicles older than 10 years with £2,000 towards the cost of buying a new car. The CCC’s report set out a vision for the development of a low-carbon transport system, including the use of more efficient conventional cars and electric cars.

Lord Turner commented on the scrappage scheme saying:

“It is vital that this policy is linked to the purchase of more fuel efficient cars. Any subsidy should be targeted at the purchase of cars with fuel efficiency of 50 miles per gallon or above (i.e. with emissions below 130 gCO₂ / km).”

The CCC also reiterated that the cost of meeting carbon budgets should be accepted given the risks of dangerous climate change and the need to start building a green economy.

Lord Turner commented on the cost saying:

“We have estimated the cost of meeting our carbon budgets to be 1% of GDP in 2020. This is a small price to pay as our contribution to offsetting the significant damage to human welfare that climate change could impose. The future of the economy has to be low-carbon and moving towards this now will create both jobs and prosperity. In our September report we will provide a full assessment of the actions required to meet the budgets announced today. This will include consideration of whether further support is needed to offset the impact of the credit crunch on investment in low carbon technologies.”

The Government accepted the CCC’s recommendations that international aviation should be part of the UK’s climate strategy.

On aviation, Lord Turner said:

“We are undertaking a detailed review of required emissions reduction in aviation to meet our 2050 target. This review will cover demand side measures, opportunities for greater carbon efficiency of planes, and the use of biofuels. We will report back to the Government on these issues in December.”

ENDS

Notes to Editors

Committee on Climate Change (CCC)

The CCC is an independent body established under the [Climate Change Act](#) to advise the Government on setting the first legally binding carbon budgets, and to report to Parliament on the progress made in reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The CCC also advises on what the UK's long-term climate change target should be as a fair contribution towards a global deal.

Web address: www.theccc.org.uk/

- **Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS)** is a technology which involves capturing the carbon dioxide emitted from burning fossil fuels, transporting it and storing it in secure spaces such as geological formations, including old oil and gas fields and aquifers under the seabed.
- Decarbonisation of the power sector is key to achieving emission reduction targets of 34% by 2020 and 80% by 2050.
- [Building a low-carbon economy](#), the CCC's first report, sets out the analysis underpinning the recommendation that the UK should reduce emissions of all greenhouse gases by at least 80% by 2050. It also proposes the level of the first three carbon budgets covering the periods 2008-12, 2013-17 and 2018-22.
- In September, the CCC will publish its first progress report which will set out a roadmap for building a low-carbon economy in the UK. This will look in more detail at the specific policies that are required to produce clean electricity, improve the energy efficiency of homes and promote more sustainable forms of transport.

For further information/ media bids please contact:

Emily Towers, 0207 270 1910, emily.towers@theccc.gsi.gov.uk, 07766 366 577

Mark Bainbridge, 0207 270 1916, mark.bainbridge@theccc.gsi.gov.uk