



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for Agriculture, Environment and
Rural Affairs

OFFICIAL REPORT (Hansard)

Climate Change Bill: Climate Northern
Ireland

16 June 2021

NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY

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Members present for all or part of the proceedings:

Mr Declan McAleer (Chairperson)
Mr Philip McGuigan (Deputy Chairperson)
Ms Clare Bailey
Mrs Rosemary Barton
Mr Maurice Bradley
Mr William Irwin

Witnesses:

Dr Jade Berman	Climate Northern Ireland
Mr Ciarán Fox	Climate Northern Ireland
Mr Stephen Jones	Climate Northern Ireland

The Chairperson (Mr McAleer): I welcome, via StarLeaf, Dr Jade Berman, the acting Climate NI manager; Stephen Jones, the acting Climate NI resilience coordinator; and Ciarán Fox, the chair of the Climate NI partnership. Thank you very much for attending the Committee. I am sorry that we are running a wee bit over time. There is a lot of enthusiasm about the topic. I invite you to brief the Committee, and Committee members will ask some questions thereafter. Hopefully, the sound interference will disappear once the briefing commences.

Mr Ciarán Fox (Climate Northern Ireland): Chair, thank you very much for the welcome this afternoon. I am the chair of Climate NI. My day job is director of the Royal Society of Ulster Architects (RSUA). Thank you for the opportunity to provide evidence today. Climate NI is a cross-sectoral network that focuses on increasing the understanding of climate change impacts and risks in Northern Ireland and on promoting the actions necessary to address those. As you mentioned, I am joined today by two staff from the organisation, Dr Jade Berman and Stephen Jones.

Climate NI is led by a steering group that represents organisations from across business, councils, academia, the voluntary sector and government. It works with stakeholders to help develop policy, practice and implementation of climate adaptation and, more recently, mitigation across all sectors. The focus over the past number of years has been on adaptation, however.

An important characteristic of a diverse network made up of government and civil society actors is to have a variety of viewpoints and, where possible, to seek common ground on issues of importance. I should state for the record, however, that neither our written brief nor our oral evidence is made on behalf of our funding Department or any other Department on the steering group. Climate NI retains a degree of independence in that respect. We are here to share our expertise.

As there *[Inaudible owing to poor sound quality]* mitigation, as in actions to reduce the severity of climate change, including emissions targets, we will focus our evidence mainly on adaptation, which is preparing for the impacts of climate change, with its risks and opportunities. It is about thinking, "Climate change is coming. We need to be ready", and, for the purposes of the meeting, focusing on how that can be strengthened in the Bill. We are happy to give you brief answers on all areas of the Committee's work.

An overall message to the Committee is this: the best time for us to take climate action was, of course, in the past, but the next best time is now. The DAERA greenhouse gas emissions stats were released yesterday. There has been only a 1% decrease between 2018-19, and agriculture, land use and residential emissions all increased, when they should be decreasing. Northern Ireland needs to act now by front-loading cutting carbon and preparing for the climate change that is already locked in. Delays will cost money, lead to lost opportunities and cause damage, including loss of life, property and nature, locally and further afield.

I will give you a sense of scale. In April 2021, the insurance firm Swiss Re stated that the economies of G7 nations had contracted by about 4-2% on average in the coronavirus pandemic and that the economic losses from the climate crisis by 2050 will be roughly on the scale of suffering a similar crisis twice every year. The UK's economy will lose 6-5% a year by 2050 based on current policies and projections. That is why strengthening adaptation and cutting carbon as soon as possible must be priorities in the Bill. I will now pass over to Jade.

Dr Jade Berman (Climate Northern Ireland): Thank you, Ciarán. We have provided the Committee with a written brief. I will now provide a summary of some of the key points that have been raised. As Ciarán iterated, even if we stop all emissions immediately, we have already, as was said this morning, baked in the risk of climate change. Even if we stop now, we have locked in a certain amount of climate change. It is therefore essential that the Bill include explicit references to and actions on adaptation.

Climate change adaptation is the process of adjusting to current or expected climate change and its effects, as well as mitigation, which are the actions that limit global warming and its related effects. Adaptation should be given equal importance in the opening text and the rest of the Climate Change Bill, in addition to the use of Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) definitions of key phrases, such as "resilience".

In 'The Sixth Carbon Budget' report, the Climate Change Committee (CCC) stated:

"Even if the Paris goals are delivered in full and global temperature rise is limited to 1.5°C, there will be further impacts from climate change beyond those already occurring today. If the Paris goals are missed, the global and UK impacts will become much more severe. The UK needs to increase its ambition" —

that means us as well —

"on climate change adaptation, as it is not prepared even for the 1.5-2°C world."

For Northern Ireland, climate change means that we will experience warmer, wetter winters, with more intense rainfall, and hotter, drier summers. Cold snaps, drier winters and wet summers will still occur, however. We therefore need to be prepared for a much greater range of extremes. The Met Office projections are that Belfast will see at least 11 centimetres of sea-level rise under the lowest emissions scenario, and we are currently on projection for 94 centimetres of sea-level rise by the end of the century under the current emissions scenario. All of that will affect how people live, work and play, and we will have to deal with a range of opportunities and challenges on issues such as the food that we can grow locally and what we can import.

The 'Independent Assessment of UK Climate Risk' from the Climate Change Committee was published today. It was supported by over 450 experts, including Climate NI. The assessment identified 61 risks and opportunities for the UK, on which more action is needed for Northern Ireland to address 31 of them and further investigation — that means that the data is lacking — urgently required for 19. Although many of the risks and opportunities are similar in urgency and magnitude across each UK nation, in Northern Ireland, the lower level of available quality evidence and the relatively limited climate-related policy in force increase the uncertainty about future climate change impacts. Changing climate change conditions and extreme weather event impacts may also be exacerbated in future

owing to the degraded state of the natural environment and interactions with external factors, such as pollution, overfishing and land use.

According to the 'Northern Ireland Flood Risk Assessment (NIFRA) 2018', approximately 45,000 properties — about 5% of the properties in Northern Ireland — are already at risk of significant flooding. Social disadvantage, as measured through the metric of relative economic pain, which is the ratio of uninsured loss:income, is greater on average in Northern Ireland than it is anywhere else in the UK under all the climate scenarios. Belfast is one of the 10 UK local authority areas that account for 50% of the socially vulnerable people who are living in areas of flood risk and is the third highest in the UK. The Derry and Strabane local authority area is the eighth highest on the social flood risk index. In part, that is the reason that it is essential to have a just transition as part of the Climate Change Bill and to use Scottish principles of a just transition, which take into account regional economies and societies. I will now hand over to Stephen for another part of our briefing.

Mr Stephen Jones (Climate Northern Ireland): Thank you very much. We need statutory reporting mechanisms for mitigation and adaptation, including clear reporting and communication to the public on those issues.

Adaptation seeks to prepare for climate impacts while accounting for uncertainties. It is a process of continuous improvement and building resilience that matures over time. The introduction of a flexible and positive reporting [*Inaudible owing to poor sound quality*] for government, major public bodies, corporate actors and smaller sectoral bodies will help government understand our progress in building resilience and some of the huge and pressing issues that Jade covered. It will allow us to build adaptive capacity, which, in turn, plays a key role in building resilience across society. That will be really important as we move forward. We propose that adaptation reporting should be strengthened in the climate action plans in the Bill. That can use a three-point approach to ensure that it delivers the best outcome for Northern Ireland. All of this is covered in the written brief.

First, in short, we need a mandatory adaptation reporting power for major public bodies here. There is no adaptation reporting power for public bodies in Northern Ireland, but there is in both the UK and the Scottish Acts, whereby they are able to direct major players to prepare a report. Those could be, for example, councils, significant infrastructure operators and regulators. They must state how they are progressing resilience to climate impacts. That process is currently voluntary in England and Wales, although the Climate Change Commission has strongly recommended that it should be mandatory, as is the case in Scotland. Of course, the definition of major players can be amended to the thresholds, unique characteristics and scale of Northern Ireland.

Adaptation reporting has made a significant contribution in the UK to increasing action, particularly in sectors where there has been limited previous work. The 2017 review of the UK power concluded that it:

"had raised adaptation to board level and embedded climate change risks within organisations' corporate risk management procedures".

That ensures that public bodies work towards understanding their climate risk and preparing their staff, assets and services. This systematic approach to climate change risk management across the region will help to safeguard public services and infrastructure so that they are resilient to climate change. It will also help to monitor how prepared key sectors are, as well as enabling government to track progress towards adaptation targets outside the Department reporting that is required under section 60 of the UK Climate Change Act 2008.

Secondly, monitoring and evaluation under the UK Act are currently undertaken internally by Departments rather than by an independent external review. In comparison, adaptation programmes in England and Scotland are subject to rigorous independent review by the Climate Change Committee. We therefore feel that there should be a stronger duty in the Bill on all NI Departments to report on their adaptation and mitigation progress and to provide transparency by requiring independent reviews of Northern Ireland adaptation programmes by an independent NI climate office or a UK climate change expert committee.

Thirdly and finally on the point of reporting, as mentioned in our written brief, we strongly recommend that there should be a programme of voluntary adaptation and mitigation reporting for civil society as well, so that is the private sector, academia and the community and voluntary sector. This again comes back to the capacity issue across society. There is a need for greater support to enable organisations outside the public sector to report and act on climate risk. That reporting has begun in a

limited way through the civil society and local government adapts chapter that we developed for the most recent NI climate change adaptation programme. To effectively plan and implement action at all levels, that work should be expanded to further provide support and collate progress from that important section of society. That would also link in with other initiatives such as the UK Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures (TCFD), which I am sure you have heard quite a lot about.

Dr Berman: I want to provide brief feedback on the net zero question, because I know that you as a Committee have been focusing on that. The greenhouse gas emissions target for Northern Ireland should be ambitious and contribute to a legally binding net zero UK target. Things to consider are that the UK is hosting COP26, and there is significant momentum in signing up all sectors of society to the race to zero and the race to resilience. A total of 59% of the actions under the CCC's 'The Sixth Carbon Budget' balanced pathway require some degree of societal or behavioural change. Clear and effective communication is therefore of the utmost importance, and action needs to be front-loaded to cut carbon now.

The CCC advisory group on the costs and benefits of net zero noted that one advantage of net zero versus another target is that it removes uncertainty and the temptation of sectors to lobby for the larger share of the remaining emissions. The clarity of a net zero goal, coupled with good policy design, could help to stimulate innovation across all sectors and cut the cost of capital, therefore bringing down the overall cost of mitigation. However, we recognise that the CCC has provided guidance on a target of at least 82% for all greenhouse gases, with the potential for almost reaching net zero for CO₂ by 2050. However, the clarity of communication on a net zero target is something to be considered, even if Wales and Scotland are not currently hitting their targets. If the Government choose an alternative to an overall net zero target, they must ensure that there is a clear Government vision for what share of the remaining greenhouse gas capacity is shared, and by which sector. That could include net zero targets by sector, where important. It is vital to consider the role of a new climate office and commission in the context of other existing and emerging governance structures and advisory bodies, such as the UK's Climate Change Committee, Ireland's Climate Change Advisory Council, the Office for Environmental Protection and the potential independent environment agency called for in New Decade, New Approach, to enable joined-up decision-making and address issues where jurisdictions meet at border regions. It is important that the differing bodies do not duplicate effort or undermine each other but ensure that we build locally relevant expertise.

Climate NI proposes the requirement that the Executive draft an emergency action plan if targets in a five-year climate action plan are in danger of being missed. There is precedent for that to happen annually in the latest German federal climate change Act. Climate action plans must also consider climate adaptation measures; lock-in of climate risk from mitigation strategies; issues of biodiversity; water, soil and air quality; and a just transition, including reducing inequality, poverty and social deprivation. There may be other measures, such as active travel infrastructure and investment targets, that might be included.

The non-regression clause in the Climate Bill is to ensure no retreat or weakening of climate and environmental protections contained in EU law as it applied before the end of the Brexit transition period. In other words, the environmental laws that applied at the end of December 2020 will continue to apply in Northern Ireland and cannot be weakened. One of the main reasons for the inclusion of that clause is the general decline in biodiversity in Northern Ireland. The non-regression clause is similar to the UK provision for a non-regression statement under the Environment Bill to apply to all new environmental Bills. There is still a need to ensure that climate action plans do not lead to maladaptation or significant impacts on biodiversity. It is important that the law is compatible with existing laws and that the right expertise is in place to review any potential transgressions.

I will hand over to Stephen.

Mr Jones: I will make two final but extremely important points before Ciarán ends the statement. The first is on the role of local government. 'The Sixth Carbon Budget' report from the Climate Change Committee was crystal clear: this Bill must make clear provision for how local authorities are included in delivery and ensure a cohesive regional approach. Many councils are surging ahead with developing adaptation planning, but they need policy and delivery support to drive that and to empower communities. They are not listed as requiring sectoral climate action plans in the current Bill. Perhaps that is the place for them to be included. That would be in line with the provisions in clause 15 of the current draft of the Republic of Ireland's climate Bill.

Secondly, on finance, the scale of the shift on deciding acceptable levels of risk for Northern Ireland — whole-life costing, public-private partnerships, green bonds and a range of other financial issues — is

so great that some elements may need to be considered within the scope of the legislation and not just in delivery. Extreme events are already having significant cost implications. One single flood event in Derry City and Strabane District Council area in August 2017 cost central government more than £12 million. However, the full extent of damages to the council was never fully assessed, due to gaps in data. That has an impact on the ability to form a business case for climate action in the years ahead, which perhaps leads to a lack of investment, and so the cycle goes on.

Here are a few finance actions that you might consider. First, it is crucial that those responsible for climate change within government are able to scrutinise budgets, targets and action across Departments. The development of NI climate adaptation programmes must have suitable resource and capacity within government and budgets available to support the development of new actions and indicators.

Secondly, there is a need for central pots of money which are slow finance for the development of projects on clean energy, retrofitting, recycling and things like that. Interest-free loans from bodies such as Salix Finance, which is a non-departmental public body, provide a ready source of capital and are available right across Great Britain but not in Northern Ireland. For example, Salix has funded some 18,000 projects, spending £971 million in order to create a return in savings of £203 million while saving some 867,000 tons of CO₂ annually. Is there an existing home for that kind of activity in Northern Ireland, or should it be legislated for?

Finally, there could be screening of all government policies and capital projects for consideration of mitigation and adaptation, with the caveat that any screening must be supported with training, resource, evidence and monitoring in order to avoid becoming a tick-box exercise. All of that is not to mention that, by demonstrating a clear direction and investing in climate action, the private sector will have a solid base and clear vision for what investments and innovations will build the Northern Ireland of the 21st century and will be able to react and drive investment accordingly.

I will hand back to Ciarán for a final word.

Mr Fox: Chair, I realise that that has been quite a bombardment, and I want to finish by saying that our focus is on adaptation. If all else from today's presentation drifts away, there are three things that we ask you to keep in mind. First, adaptation needs equal weight and scrutiny with mitigation in the Bill to prepare for impacts that we cannot now avoid. Secondly, the adaptation and mitigation duty for reporting on all Departments and major public bodies must be mandatory and independently reviewed. Thirdly, the role of local government as a sector needs to be considered in the legislation, both in developing climate action plans but also perhaps in considering what legislative drivers are required in terms of finance for implementation of this plan. Thanks again for your time this afternoon. We are happy to take questions.

The Chairperson (Mr McAleer): Thank you. That was very helpful and very detailed. Thanks for summarising those points at the end, Ciarán. They were also very helpful.

Clare, you are first on the list to speak. Can you hear me? Clare, you might be on mute.

Ms Bailey: No, I am not on mute.

The Chairperson (Mr McAleer): We hear you now.

Ms Bailey: I am never muted; you know that.

The Chairperson (Mr McAleer): I am going to hit the mute button now.

Ms Bailey: Thanks very much, Chair. Thanks very much to Climate NI. You sent in a really comprehensive written briefing, and there was loads in the oral evidence too. I want to say a special thank you for the suggested amendments that you sent through, because I found those really helpful. As lead sponsor of the Bill — declaring an interest as well — I am really keen to follow up with you outside the Committee, if you are willing, for a more in-depth look at those amendments. If it is OK, I will give you a shout afterwards.

For now, how do you feel that the amendments that you are suggesting differ from what is laid out under section 60 of the UK Climate Change Act, which deals with all the programmes for climate change adaptations in Northern Ireland? In case I do not get back in again and get timed out by the

Chair, I will sneak in a second one, if possible. Ciarán, thanks for highlighting the really pretty shocking statistics that were identified in the 'Independent Assessment of UK Climate Risk' report that was launched today. Stephen, you went into a lot of detail about local government in particular. The stats that we saw this morning are shocking, even in the context of our track record in Northern Ireland, which has been consistently poor. Do you have any thoughts on what kind of capacity-building or development of expertise needs to happen across Northern Ireland in central and local government, Departments and public bodies?

Dr Berman: Your first point, Clare, was about our having a meeting with you to go through some of our points in more detail. That is no problem. We will sort that out.

The next question was about section 60 of the UK Climate Change Act, which is the part that deals with adaptation in Northern Ireland. It is a bit limited in scope, but it is what we have at the moment. It states:

"It is the duty of the relevant Northern Ireland department to lay programmes before the Northern Ireland Assembly setting out—

- (a) the objectives of the department in relation to adaptation to climate change,*
- (b) the department's proposals and policies for meeting those objectives, and*
- (c) the time-scales for introducing those proposals and policies".*

It also talks about:

"an assessment of the progress made towards implementing the objectives, proposals and policies set out in earlier programmes."

There are a couple of things that are absent from that. The duty sits only with the "relevant Northern Ireland department", and we recommend that it should cover all Departments, because climate change is not just a "your Department" part. It covers all of them and is relevant to all of them, and they should all be on top of this and finding out what is happening. That is important, and that is why we suggest the adaptation reporting power. That emanates from the Act from England but sits with the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland rather than with the Assembly at the moment. That is something to think about. The assessment of this reporting is not currently required to be independent, which is not something that Northern Ireland is missing in comparison with the other regions or countries of the UK. That is important, because the Climate Change Committee has provided good, rigorous feedback on how the actions that are being planned or have been taken actually impact on that risk. As you have seen from the report this morning, there is significant risk and less data for Northern Ireland. Without that assessment, reporting can remain quite loose with regard to iterative adaptation processes and budget requirements. It might not respond to all the risks — it is important to respond across all the risks — and there is no assessment of the linkages between adaptation and mitigation. Quite often, there is an interplay between the two.

For example, in Scotland, section 53 of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 requires Scottish Ministers to lay a programme before the Scottish Parliament that sets out their objectives and proposals, but also:

"the arrangements for involving employers, trade unions and other stakeholders in meeting those objectives"

and

"the mechanisms for ensuring public engagement in meeting those objectives",

and also the period — it gives a time frame — within which they have to be introduced. Then they have to report on a similar scale to ours to the UK Government. That has been built upon. They have then got the Climate Change (Duties of Public Bodies: Reporting Requirements) (Scotland) Order 2015, and they amended that order in 2020. That can also be looked at for the range of public bodies that they include when you consider who the major bodies are here.

Mr Fox: Do you want to pick up on capacity-building, Stephen?

Mr Jones: Yes, I will pick up briefly on the second point. I have thrown a lot of information at you today; hopefully, it was clear enough. I am happy to follow up, of course.

As I have said, pretty transformative action is required. With regard to capacity in government, there is obviously a really important role for that independent body going forward, whether it is the CCC or the climate commissioner, as listed in the Bill. Whatever role that might take, it is really important that the folks who are responsible for climate change in government can also have oversight of budgets and targets in action across other Departments. That links to the point that Jade just made. It is about building the capacity in government to do that.

There is probably also a need for a coordinated network of practitioners and experts on this more generally in Northern Ireland. Time and resource within government is also an extremely important piece of the puzzle. That may include, for example, expanding a central programme of technical climate expertise, which could be accessed by public bodies, such as local authorities. It is also extremely important that there is a communications element to that, both within Departments and for the general public. There is a real need to build capacity right across society to ensure that the 59% of behavioural change actions are more likely to take place, essentially.

Finally, there is a range of capacity-building actions across other jurisdictions. In the Republic of Ireland, every single person in a local authorities is currently being trained on climate change. The Future Generations Commissioner for Wales has produced a 10-point plan on funding the climate emergency through the public sector. There is a programme of climate literacy across the full Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) in England. There is lots of training. The finance and evidence base are also notable absences in many respects. Again, that was a lot of information. Hopefully, it answers some of your questions.

Ms Bailey: *[Inaudible owing to poor sound quality.]*

Mr Fox: I will just finish off on that one, Chair. Data and evidence is also a really important piece of the jigsaw. If we are trying to guess where we are, we will always face challenges as to whether we are doing the right thing and being successful. We need to invest in getting the data and evidence in place. It is not one of those things —. In the past, up until now, it was as though the loose change that was down the back of the sofa had been thrown at this stuff. That just does not cut it. If we are going to address these things seriously, there has to be a budget line to it.

I will just pick up on Clare's point about the shockingly bad figures: they are no surprise. We had a three-year period of no government, when policies that might have made a difference were effectively put on the shelf. We are being bombarded with consultations at the moment because suddenly that backlog is starting to come through. That is great to see, but it means that little has happened. Even in my own world of building regulations being worse in Northern Ireland than across most of Europe, a retrofit programme does not really exist in any shape or form at the moment; certainly, it has not. What have we done to transform things in transport in the past 10 years? The answer is almost nothing. Those figures are just the outworking of those failures across a number of years.

Mr McGuigan: Thanks very much for the presentation. We say this all the time, but that was really informative. It is the kind of presentation that you probably have to watch back again to absorb all that was said. As Clare said, there were very useful suggestions for amendments.

On the costs and benefits of net zero, the CCC advisory group stated that a net zero target provided clarity to sectors and could stimulate innovation and cut the cost of capital as well as the overall cost of mitigation. However, the CCC recommended in 'The Sixth Carbon Budget' report an 82% reduction for the North by 2050. You might not want to answer this, but I will ask regardless: do you believe that a net zero target is achievable, and, on balance, do you believe that this Bill or another one would do more good if it pursued net zero rather than 82%?

Secondly, you stated time and time again in your written submission and your verbal presentation that front-loading is important — that cuts made later are more expensive and that actions need to be front-loaded. Do you consider this private Member's Bill to be a good example of being able to achieve early front-loading?

Mr Fox: Jade, do you want to tackle that one first?

Dr Berman: I was going to pass it to Stephen for the net zero part [*Inaudible owing to poor sound quality.*] Yes, front-loading is essential. Whatever target happens, we really want to emphasise the fact that you need to get on with it. The whole point is that there are seven years left of the carbon budget. We need to get on with it and start cutting carbon now. The fact is that only 1% was cut between 2018 and 2019. The front-loading and all the hard work needs to happen now so that you have the option of other opportunities later if you want. We need legislation to underpin everything else. We really want the climate Bill in as soon as possible.

I will pass over to Stephen to discuss briefly —.

Mr Jones: I know from some of the discussion that I have heard around the Bill in the Republic of Ireland that they have not specified a trajectory for emissions impact. I think that a few folks are concerned that that could be pushed right back and that, by the time that you quickly dip in emissions at the end, the cumulative emissions over the years in which you have not been doing as much mean that you pretty much cancel out any positive benefit. There are some of those aspects to consider.

The Climate Change Committee is the recognised experts in the UK. With the current levels of evidence, its scenario predictions are the best ones that we have. That is an uncomfortable truth, looking at some of this. It is worth thinking about the clarity of sectoral net zero targets either way, or at least a clear vision on exactly where some of that remaining budget will be spent to avoid folks maybe not meeting the full targets. As Jade said, look at the figures that came out yesterday. They are going in completely the wrong direction. Doing nothing now is the wrong move. Whatever we do, we need to start cutting carbon and building resilience now.

Mr Fox: The key thing is whether the target is the most important thing. Is a target that is 30 years away going to be the be-all and end-all? Ultimately, no, because action needs to be taken in this five-, seven- or 10-year period to dramatically change things. That is number one.

Secondly, Climate NI is a very broad church. The three of us here today need to be careful and not try to represent everybody's view. We have not had the chance to go back after the most recent round of evidence on this to check in with everybody about what their views are. I find it very interesting that it is often stated that Northern Ireland is very heavily reliant on agriculture and that, therefore, it needs to be treated a bit differently. It is important that we look at the Republic of Ireland's reliance on agriculture: 33% of greenhouse gas emissions come from the agriculture sector, but it has been deemed possible to set a net zero carbon target by 2050. Perhaps that is more about messaging than anything else. Jade touched on this in her oral briefing: sometimes you need to have that clarity of purpose and a goal that we can all rally around. Having some clarity around 2050 and net zero is a very clear, clean message.

The Chairperson (Mr McAleer): That was very good, Jade, Ciarán and Stephen. It was very informative and helpful, and you raised some great ideas with us. I look forward to engaging with you again. It was extremely helpful. Thank you very much. We will be in contact with you as the legislative process unfolds. Thank you. Take care.

Mr Fox: All the best.