• Confirmation that the Scottish targets for emissions abatements are compliant with both EU and UK requirements

There are no specific requirements at UK or EU levels for Scotland to have greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets. The Scottish target to reduce emissions below 1990 levels by 80% by 2050 is in line with the similar target set in the UK Climate Change Act 2008 and the level suggested in the European Commission’s Roadmap for moving to a competitive low carbon economy in 2050.

Scotland’s short to medium-term emissions targets are more ambitious than those of either the UK or EU. The UK’s statutory carbon budgets require an emissions reduction equivalent to 34% in 2020. The EU has committed to a 2020 target of cutting its emissions to 20% below 1990 levels. It has also offered to increase its emissions reduction to 30% by 2020 if other major emitting countries in the developed and developing worlds commit to undertake their fair share of a global emissions reduction effort. There has so far been no international agreement that has prompted the EU to strengthen its target to 30%.

• Examples of local authority actions that have contributed to meeting the targets.

An extensive list of low-carbon activity by local authorities was provided in the Scottish Government’s written response to the Local Government and Regeneration Committee’s questions following the briefing and evidence taken on 20th February (submission sent by email 22nd February and published as part of the papers for the LGR Committee’s meeting on 27th February).

Many more examples are contained in the annual reports made by each local authority on their activity in respect of Scotland’s Climate Change Declaration. The full set of annual reports is available online here: http://climatechange.sustainable-scotland.net/index.asp?pg=3; and the Sustainable Scotland Network’s review of the latest set of reports (Year 4) is available here: http://www.sustainable-scotland.net/news.asp?id=2570.

• Details of any EQIA’s undertaken in support of the local authority street lighting initiatives (see last week’s OR for further specification here (e.g. col. 1727-28)

All public bodies must comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty in the Equality Act 2010. This requires individual authorities to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations through tackling prejudice. Responsibility for complying with the Act rests with individual authorities. The Scottish Government does not hold local authority Equality Impact Assessments and it would be for the an individual local authority to determine what
constitutes appropriate action in respect of particular policy, for example street lighting.

- The Minister for Climate Change’s views on whether the timetable for Scottish Parliament scrutiny of the draft is adequate and appropriate.

I am awaiting a response from the Minister for Climate Change and Environment’s office in relation to this request. I will forward it to you once I have it. The Minister’s office is aware that you have asked for a prompt reply.

- In private session Stewart Stevenson was discussing a joint COSLA/Government Climate Change group that he chaired when he was a Minister. Is that group still in existence and is there any access available to their activities (papers/minutes)?

The Public Sector Climate Action Group, (PSCAG), co-chaired by the Minister for Environment and Climate Change and the COSLA Spokesperson for Regeneration and Sustainable Development (Councillor Stephen Hagan), and comprising representatives from leading public bodies, was established in February 2010 to provide leadership and direction to ensure the public sector plays its part in delivering the challenging targets in the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009

Following discussions on the effectiveness of the overall PSCAG approach at the Sustainable Scotland Network Annual Conference in November 2012, and a follow-up meeting in December 2012, the joint chairs agreed in January 2013 to dissolve the main Group and wrote to those involved to advise them of this.

Officials are currently developing detailed proposals for consideration to ensure that the public sector’s contribution to climate change is appropriately aligned and that climate change considerations are fully embedded and mainstreamed in decision-making structures across Government and the wider public sector. This is an issue we take very seriously and will be addressing as a priority.

PSCAG meeting papers are available here: http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Environment/climatechange/howyoucanhelp/publicbodies/pscag

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