

# Cross-Party Group on Renewable Energy and Energy efficiency

3 June 2025, 18:30 – 20:00

Minute

Present

MSPs

Sarah Boyack (Chair)  
Patrick Harvie  
Audrey Nichol (online)  
Liam McArthur (online)

Invited Guests

Dr Emily Nurse, Climate Change Committee

Non-MSP Group Members

Elaine Waterson  
Amanda Fairman  
Jack Norquoy  
Isobel Knibbs  
Amy Keast  
Ruxandra Carmina Cazan  
Doug McAdam  
Sam Airey  
Colin Campbell  
Keith Baker  
Pete Roche  
Carolyn Burch  
David Thomson  
Dan Jones  
David Somervell  
Fiona Riddoch  
Catherine Wales  
Colin Campbell  
Mark Winskel  
Maximilian Münch  
Tariq Muneer  
David Hogg  
Richard Raggett  
Io Hadjicosta

John Young  
Gary Donlin  
Aparna Bose  
Janette Webb  
Nigel Holmes  
Erin Robertson  
Simon Kerr  
Agnes Holmes  
Alice Tierbooman  
James Calder  
Neil Kermode

## Apologies

Brian Whittle

## Agenda item 1 – Introduction by chair

Sarah Boyack MSP welcomed everyone to the meeting which combined the group's AGM with a session from the Climate Change Committee's Dr Emily Nurse on their advice on the level of Scotland's carbon budgets.

Sarah Boyack and Patrick Harvey in attendance. Audrey Nicoll and Liam McArthur online.

## Agenda item 2 – Approval of minutes from the last meeting

The group confirmed that the minutes provided an accurate and comprehensive record of the previous meeting.

## Agenda item 3 – Topics for future meetings – discussion

Sarah Boyack suggested that it could be valuable for the group to explore the connections between renewable energy and heat

Keith Baker suggested that the group should focus a meeting on the upcoming Heat and Energy Efficiency Technical Suitability Assessment (HEETSA), and the development of district heat network projects in Scotland.

Neil Kermode suggested the group consider a session on decarbonising Scotland's Islands, with a particular focus on the forthcoming update to the Scottish Government's National Islands Plan and its implications for renewable energy and energy efficiency.

Simon Kerr suggested that the group consider integration of renewables with district heating, to make use of curtailed renewable energy. Simon also recommended that the group consider using waste heat from green hydrogen production as a heat source for district heating.

James Calder suggested that the group consider the role of emerging heat technologies in decarbonising homes that are off the gas network and therefore not easily connected to district heating networks.

Sarah Boyack MSP suggested that SPREEE should have around three meetings in the next year.

## Agenda item 4 – Election of Office Bearers

The nominations for the positions of Convener (x2) were circulated to the membership on 27 May, in advance of the meeting. No one else was nominated.

- Sarah Boyack MSP was moved for convener by Audrey Nicoll, and seconded by Ruxandra Cazan.
- Brian Whittle MSP was moved for convener by Sarah Boyack, seconded by Audrey Nicoll.
- Elaine Waterson of Energy Saving Trust was moved for the shared secretariat and treasurer position by Nigel Holmes, and seconded by Patrick Harvie.
- Jack Norquoy of Scottish Renewables was moved for the shared secretariat and treasurer position by Simon Kerr, and seconded by Sarah Boyack.

The group's office bearers are therefore:

Conveners:

- Sarah Boyack MSP
- Brian Whittle MSP

Secretaries:

- Jack Norquoy, Scottish Renewables - Secretary and Treasurer (Renewable Energy)
- Elaine Waterson, Energy Saving Trust – Secretary and Treasurer (Energy Efficiency)

## Agenda item 5 – Approval of the annual return

The annual return was circulated to the membership in advance of the meeting. No suggestions or corrections to the annual return were suggested. The group approved the annual return (proposed by Nigel Holmes, seconded by Simon Kerr).

## Agenda item 6 – Presentation from Dr Emily Nurse, Head of Net Zero, Climate Change Committee

Emily opened the session by expressing her enthusiasm to present at the meeting.

Emily explained that the Climate Change Committee's (CCC) advice to the Scottish Government on setting Carbon Budgets, which are legally binding caps on greenhouse gas emissions over five year periods. She explained that these five year Carbon Budgets will set interim targets that create a pathway for getting to the Scottish Government's overall target of becoming Net-Zero by 2045, which is also still legally binding. Emily also explained that the carbon budgets have been set at five year stages as apposed to annual targets in order to mitigate annual fluctuations.

Emily discussed the Scotland's historical greenhouse gas emissions, noting that Scotland's emissions have halved since 1990. However since 2016 progress has slowed. Emily also presented data on the six highest emitting sectors from 1990 to 2022. Energy supply was the highest emitter in 1990 but by 2022 it had dropped to tenth place, accounting for only 3% of emissions in Scotland. Whereas industrial activities are now the highest emitter of greenhouse gases in Scotland.

Emily explained the CCC's recommended Scottish carbon budgets, based on the average annual reductions below 1990 levels:

- Carbon Budget 1 (2026-2030): 57%
- Carbon Budget 2 (2031-2035): 69%
- Carbon Budget 3 (2036-2040): 80%
- Carbon Budget 4 (2041-2045): 94%

Emily highlighted that historically green house gas emissions in Scotland have reduced due to the decarbonisation of Scotland's energy supply. However, within the timeframes of future carbon budgets further reductions will need to come from other sectors including industry, surface transport, buildings, agriculture and land. The CCC recommends that in order for Scotland to meet its net-zero targets, it must broaden decarbonisation across all sectors of the economy.

Emily then explained the CCC's balanced pathway predictions by sector, explaining the predicted emissions of agriculture, surface transport, residential buildings, industry and energy mix.

Emily then discussed the CCC's Balanced Pathway projections, which model sector-specific emissions reductions. In agriculture, emissions are expected to fall by 34% by 2035, although the sector becomes the highest emitter from 2030 through to 2050. Agriculture and land use are considered together due to their close interlinkages.

Surface transport emissions are projected to decline by 66% between 2022 and 2035, and by 97% by 2045. This reduction is driven primarily by the uptake of electric vehicles (EVs), supported by falling upfront costs, improved public charging infrastructure, and increased public awareness. By 2035, 60% of cars in Scotland are expected to be electric, with vans following suit by 2045. EVs are not only more efficient but also cheaper to run than petrol or diesel vehicles, with price parity anticipated between 2026 and 2028.

For residential buildings, emissions are expected to fall by 33% by 2035 and by 92% by 2045. However, the CCC's pathway does not align with current Scottish Government proposals. Key measures include the rollout of heat pumps and heat networks, with insulation playing a significant role in the early budget periods. By 2035, 40% of Scottish homes are expected to have low-carbon heating, and 23% will have a heat pump. Emily referenced international examples, such as the Netherlands and Ireland, to illustrate successful scale-up strategies.

Industrial emissions are projected to fall by 51% by 2035 and by 85% by 2045. Hydrogen is expected to play a major role post-2030, alongside rapid decarbonisation through electrification. Meanwhile, electricity supply is forecast to be fully decarbonised by 2030, with wind and solar capacity and generation more than tripling by 2035. Scotland's electricity demand is expected to more than double by 2050, with additional capacity needed for export. Electrification and low-carbon supply will contribute nearly half of the required emissions reductions.

Emily also addressed the financial implications of the transition. A chart presented showed that while upfront investment is necessary, it leads to significant savings, resulting in a net financial benefit by the early 2040s. Electrified systems are generally cheaper to operate, and continued savings are expected beyond 2050. Households will play a crucial role in emissions reductions, contributing around one-third of the total reduction by 2040. Notably, 72% of this contribution will come from just two actions: switching to an EV and installing a heat pump. Low-carbon heating alone will account for 30% of the reduction.

Finally, Emily discussed the 18 priority recommendations to legislate and deliver these carbon budgets, with priorities including:

- Support households to install low-carbon heating
- Support households to install home insulation measures
- Expanding EV charging and travel infrastructure
- Long-term certainty and incentives for farming and nature
- Public and business engagement
- Jobs and industry

## Agenda item 7 – Q&A and Discussion

- Circular Economy – Colin Pritchard expressed concern about the amount of technology that could go to waste with decarbonisation targets, for example second hand petrol cars, and asked how the balanced pathway will impact on using technology to the end of its lifespan.
- Electric Vehicles – Patrick Harvey MSP asked if the CCC had made assumptions about the sizes and types of electric vehicles that are likely to come forward in the future.
- Renewable Technology Modelling - Neil Kermode asked if the CCC had considered the value of modelling specific types of renewable energy technologies in the balanced pathway, for instance if one technology was more expensive than another to develop how would this be tested in the model.
- Hydrogen and Heat – Simon Kerr asked how industrial waste heat could be used in hydrogen production to decarbonise industry emissions.
- Heat Networks – David Somerville asked if the CCC had further opinions on the Scottish Heat and Buildings Bill and the progress of supporting Heat Network connections in Scotland.
- Energy Constraints – Nigel Holmes asked if the balanced pathway considers the loss of energy inputs when renewable energy is constrained due to a lack of grid network infrastructure.
- Net-zero and political opinion – Patrick Harvie asked if the CCC has had pushback on its recommendations and how is it handling the fracturing of political opinion on net-zero.
- Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategies (LHES) – Ruxandra Cazan highlighted the work of local authorities to guide the decarbonisation of heat and improvement of energy efficiency in buildings within their specific region, and how many of these strategies could be aligned together.
- Consumer Behaviour Change - Aparna Bose asked how the CCC has anticipated the ability to change consumer behaviour changes, for example to enhance energy efficiency and how actions of the public will impact the balanced pathway.

## Agenda item 8 – AOB & Meeting Close

Sarah Boyack MSP thanked the Emily for speaking.

She also thanked group members for their attendance, parliamentary staff for their support, and the secretariat for their ongoing work. Thanks were also extended to Isobel, a work experience student, for her assistance in organising the meeting. Finally, Sarah thanked MSP colleagues for their attendance and joined up thinking.