26 November 2015

Dear Rob

During the Committee evidence session on climate change on 11 November, I undertook to provide further information on a number of issues. I have provided this additional information below, which I hope the Committee will find useful:

**Budget/RPP3**

In response to a request from Claudia Beamish, I said I would be happy to keep the committee up-to-date on the budget and the on-going work on RPP3. Graeme Dey was interested in the impact of the UK Spending Review on spending plans for Scotland.

On the budget, under the current devolution settlement around 80% of the Scottish budget is directly determined by decisions taken in Westminster and the application of the Barnett formula. The UK Spending Review was published on 25 November and the Deputy First Minister has written to the Finance Committee proposing that the Scottish Government publish the Scottish Draft Budget 2016-17 on 16 December.

In relation to RPP3, as advised in my statement to Parliament in October, it is planned to lay a draft setting out proposals and policies for meeting targets to 2032 in the Parliament towards the end of 2016. RPP3 will also set out proposals and policies to compensate in future years for the excess emissions from previous annual targets.

The draft RPP3 will be published after the next batch of annual targets, covering the period for 2028 to 2032, are set in legislation no later than 31 October 2016. Advice on the next set of greenhouse gas annual targets is expected from the Committee on Climate Change in March 2016 and, to inform this advice, the Committee have recently issued a call for evidence.

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The production of RPP3 is intended to be a wide participative process that builds collective ownership and responsibility. With engagement focused on two key workstreams, climate conversations and engagement on potential scenarios, and engaging across a wide range of audiences, including the public, community groups, climate change stakeholders, businesses, the public sector and Scottish Parliament (including MSP's and parliamentary Committees).

A key element of RPP3 engagement is having a conversation with people across Scotland on their views on climate change and the actions we can take. These conversations will explore public knowledge of, attitudes toward, and engagement with, climate change.

A framework for holding conversations on climate change is in development, and will deliver a clear narrative for communicating climate change, materials to aid hosting a conversation, and a series of test conversations. The framework will enable the Scottish Government, and partners, to initiate constructive conversations with the public across Scotland and engage with them on climate change in 2016 and beyond. Findings from these conversations will inform and feed into the development and communication of RPP3.

Initial focus groups will be running up to March, with plans already in place for conversations with the general public, and in development for some specific audiences including young leaders, communities affected by adaptation and black and ethnic minority communities.

To support the delivery of RPP3, a Whole Systems Energy Model is being developed that will enable analysts to model pathways towards decarbonisation of the Scottish economy out to 2050; whilst servicing demands for energy and maintaining energy security. Using a public facing version of the model, a series of facilitated discussions will be taken forward over summer 2016. These discussions will be an opportunity to delve deeper into potential proposals and policies to address climate change and the future transition to a sustainable low carbon society in Scotland.

With a wide range of activities planned over the next year through the climate conversations and engagement on potential scenarios to achieve the climate change targets, the next phase of engagement will draw this insight and experience together to offer opportunities for further reflection and input into the RPP3 process. One option being explored for delivering this is to host a Citizens’ Forum in autumn 2016.

With a strong outline for engagement in development, our first step is to describe and communicate the process being put in place to engage on RPP3. This will be shared with key audiences and via social media, and will be available in due course.

**International Climate Change Leaflet**

In response to your request to receive a copy of our international climate change leaflet, the leaflet is expected to be available shortly and my officials will send a copy separately.
Greenhouse Gas Emissions Data

On the question on revisions to the greenhouse gas emissions data, the uncertainty inherent in the emission estimates recorded in the greenhouse gas inventory was recognised ahead of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 being passed and was highlighted in the Scottish Government consultation on proposals for a Scottish Climate Change Bill\(^2\) published in January 2008, and the Scottish Government Climate Change Delivery Plan\(^3\) published in June 2009 which said:

“Work is ongoing, with the UK Government and other Devolved Administrations, to improve the content of the Inventory, the current focus being on the energy and land use sectors, where the aim is to increase the resolution of the basic data upon which estimates of emissions are based. While some improvements can be made in the short term it is inevitable that others will take place over a longer time-scale.”

However, while some revisions to the greenhouse gas inventory were anticipated, the scale of recent revisions have been far greater than revisions in the years directly after the Act was passed. Between the 1990-2008 inventory and 1990-2011 inventory, the average annual upward revision to the baseline was 0.9 MtCO\(_2\)e, compared with an average upward revision of 3.9 MtCO\(_2\)e in the two years between the 1990-2011 inventory and 1990-2013 inventory.


Non-Domestic Rates

Regarding Sarah Boyack’s question about whether councils could reduce non-domestic rates on the grounds of energy efficiency measures, I can confirm that this is now possible following the recent commencement of Part 11 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015. The Act gives councils the power to reduce or remit non-domestic rates in their area, which they could use to support businesses on the grounds of energy efficiency.

Oceans

Claudia Beamish was interested in how marine issues and climate change will be dealt with globally. At the international climate change talks in Paris there will be a side event called Oceans Day which aims to advance the oceans and climate change agenda at COP 21 and beyond.

Much of the global action on protecting marine biodiversity is a response in part to climate change. Action is being taken under the Convention on Biological Diversity, the OSPAR convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic, and under various EU Directives. The Scottish Government leads UK input on three OSPAR committees enabling our experience to influence future policy at a North-East Atlantic level.

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Electric Vehicles

Dave Thompson asked questions on rapid charge points for electric vehicles and Graeme Dey requested information on electric vehicle uptake in local authorities. I have asked the Minister for Transport and Islands to respond directly to the Committee on these issues.

Community Energy Projects

Finally, Sarah Boyack asked about community energy projects and I have asked the Minister for Business, Energy and Tourism to respond directly to the Committee on this.

Kind regards

AILEEN MCLEOD