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Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Official Report

RURAL AFFAIRS, CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Wednesday 25 September 2013

Session 4

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CONTENTS

RURAL AFFAIRS, CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
27th Meeting 2013, Session 4

CONVENER

*Rob Gibson (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP)

DEPUTY CONVENER

*Graeme Dey (Angus South) (SNP)

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

*Jayne Baxter (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
*Claudia Beamish (South Scotland) (Lab)
*Nigel Don (Angus North and Mearns) (SNP)
*Alex Fergusson (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con)
*Jim Hume (South Scotland) (LD)
*Richard Lyle (Central Scotland) (SNP)
Angus MacDonald (Falkirk East) (SNP)

*attended

THE FOLLOWING ALSO PARTICIPATED:

Alex Hilliam (Changeworks)
Louise Macdonald (Young Scot)
Pamela McLean (Surefoot Effect)
Ross Paton (Torr Farm)
Kerry Riddell (Conservation Volunteers)
Pete Ritchie (Nourish Scotland)
Morag Watson (Learning for Sustainability Scotland)

CLERK TO THE COMMITTEE

Lynn Tullis

LOCATION

Committee Room 2

Scottish Parliament

Rural Affairs, Climate Change and Environment Committee

Wednesday 25 September 2013

[The Convener *opened the meeting at 10:03*]

Decision on Taking Business in Private

The Convener (Rob Gibson): Welcome to the 27th meeting in 2013 of the Rural Affairs, Climate Change and Environment Committee. Members should have their BlackBerrys—if they still possess such things—and other phones switched off because they affect the sound system.

We have apologies from Angus MacDonald.

Do members agree to take in private agenda item 3, which is the committee's consideration of its approach to scrutiny of the Scottish Government's draft Scottish climate change adaptation programme?

Members *indicated agreement.*

Climate Change – Behaviour Change

10:04

The Convener: Agenda item 2 is a round-table evidence session with stakeholders on climate change and behaviour change. I think that it would serve us well to hear from each of our guests, who are all welcome, a couple of long sentences—but not too long—on what they do. Members have general ideas about areas of questioning, but that would help us to focus, given the panel that we have assembled.

We will go round the table and introduce ourselves. Good morning, all. I am the convener, Rob Gibson.

Alex Hilliam (Changeworks): I am a behaviour change specialist from Changeworks, which is an environmental charity based in Edinburgh, although we have a location in Inverness, too. We do a range of research and evaluation projects, which I support. I also support businesses and other organisations outwith Changeworks to engage in the behaviour change agenda. I should say that I am working with the Scottish Government team that has been developing the ISM—individual, social and material—tool in order to roll that out.

Jayne Baxter (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab): I am a member of the Scottish Parliament for Mid Scotland and Fife.

Morag Watson (Learning for Sustainability Scotland): I am the development manager for learning for sustainability Scotland, which is Scotland's newly established United Nations regional centre of expertise on education for sustainable development. We are headquartered next door to the Parliament, at Moray House school of education. We are a network organisation with more than 160 members and we bring together academia, Government, business and civil society to harness the power of education to help to drive sustainability.

Claudia Beamish (South Scotland) (Lab): I represent South Scotland and am shadow minister for environment and climate change.

Ross Paton (Torr Farm): I am here in a private capacity as a businessman and an organic dairy farmer and mixed farmer with 800 or so acres in south-west Scotland. I have been involved in the Scottish Government's focus farm project with Scotland's rural college, and I have also been involved in various sector bodies and organisations including Caledonian Organics and Scottish Organic Milk Producers. I am interested in local community land use issues and I have been

heavily involved in the community and the initiative group in my village.

Richard Lyle (Central Scotland) (SNP): I am an MSP for Central Scotland.

Pamela McLean (Surefoot Effect): I am part of a community interest company called Surefoot Effect, which aims to help people with values-based change primarily towards the environment but also, increasingly, towards social justice. We work with a number of approaches. Those include common cause, which the Scottish Government has incorporated into its go greener initiative, and carbon conversations, which involves psychologically based group work in a set of sessions that help communities and people in the workplace to move towards lower carbon living. We recently ran two courses with people in the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body.

Nigel Don (Angus North and Mearns) (SNP): I am the MSP for Angus North and Mearns.

Pete Ritchie (Nourish Scotland): I am director of Nourish Scotland, which is a non-governmental organisation. We have had about 1,500 people sign up on our website. We promote a more sustainable food system for Scotland. To give an example of what we do, at the moment we are working with partners in the city of Edinburgh on a project called edible Edinburgh, which brings together the council, the national health service, the university and bodies such as Zero Waste Scotland to try to drive a more sustainable food system at a city and city region level. In my other job, I am an organic farmer in the Borders.

Alex Fergusson (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con): I am the MSP for Galloway and West Dumfries.

Louise Macdonald (Young Scot): My day job is chief executive of Young Scot, the national youth information and citizenship charity for Scotland. We are an organisation for 11 to 26-year-olds across Scotland. However, I am also one of the newly appointed vice-chairs of Scotland's 2020 climate group, and I have behaviour change and public engagement as part of my remit.

Jim Hume (South Scotland) (LD): I am an MSP for South Scotland.

Kerry Riddell (Conservation Volunteers): I work for Conservation Volunteers, which is the United Kingdom's largest environmental volunteering charity. In Scotland, we have been doing quite a lot of work on behaviour change in recent years. Our focus is on engaging people with the environment and effecting change at a personal and social level. Over the past three years, we have run a number of programmes involving behavioural change and worked both externally in providing tools to help communities to change what happens within them, and internally in changing our whole organisation using a values approach.

Graeme Dey (Angus South) (SNP): I am the MSP for Angus South and deputy convener of the committee.

The Convener: Thank you all.

It would be a good idea at the start to think about the Government's approach and in particular the individual, social and material tool, which is offered as a measure. Perhaps we could start with a short comment or two on that tool from Alex Hilliam.

Alex Hilliam: The ISM tool has been developed by the Scottish Government over a number of years. A couple of years ago, the Government did an international review of a range of behaviour change initiatives across the world. That was the start of the development of what became the ISM tool.

ISM is an analytical framework that looks at behaviour change in three broad categories—the individual, the social and the material. The framework uses insights from a range of academic disciplines that have all been used to explore, examine and develop behaviour change interventions over the years. Its strength is that it takes a holistic approach to behaviour change. It does not just target the individual and changing that individual or the social setting and how it influences change, and nor does it just look at the material level of policies, infrastructure and so on. It is an all-encompassing holistic approach to behaviour change that I have found very useful in understanding, evaluating and designing behaviour change. It encapsulates all the elements of the different disciplines.

The Convener: Does anybody else want to talk about the ISM tool?

Morag Watson: I echo Alex Hilliam's comments. From the point of view of our research background, it is good to see that the Scottish Government has taken on board the research on which the ISM and the behaviour change framework are based. We are pleased to see the rhetoric shift from behaviour change and a focus on the individual to culture change and the context in which behaviour takes place. We broadly welcome the ISM tool.

Although the framework is good and has begun to influence policies across Government, we will look in the future to see that the framework is rolled out across Government policy, particularly in relation to the report on proposals and policies.

Alex Fergusson: Morag Watson has answered my query, but I wonder whether other panel

members are aware of the tool and, if so, how useful they find it and whether they believe that it forms the right basis as we take forward what is a complex policy area.

Louise Macdonald: Through work with the 2020 group and in other areas I can say that the tool is welcome in that it takes a new approach and because it does not take an isolated model. It takes a holistic view. I have participated in sessions and seen how the tool works. The 2020 group has begun to explore how we can use the tool with businesses across Scotland. Our transport group has an active piece of work under way with businesses in Scotland to consider employees and transport and how to use the ISM tool to help businesses to make the leap into the obvious traditional models and to take a deeper look at how to have an effect. We can see that the approach can be used in a wide variety of places.

Pete Ritchie: We in Nourish Scotland are keen for people to eat more fruit and vegetables because they have a lower carbon footprint and are better for our health. We do not eat enough of them in Scotland. People on low incomes eat 15 to 20 per cent less fruit and vegetables than they did in 2007, and they did not eat enough then. People eat fewer vegetables because they are expensive compared with highly processed foods, which are not particularly good for health but are a source of calories. It makes no sense to have a framework of behaviour change that exhorts people on low incomes to eat more fruit and vegetables because, if they want to cook those vegetables, they have to turn on the cooker and if they live in fuel poverty they will not be able to do that.

We welcome the suggestion that we need to move away from the idea that all we need to do is to tell people. It is not the case that people on low incomes do not know that they should eat fruit and vegetables. We have got that message across, and we do not need to tell them again. What we need to do is change their material circumstances and provide the social networks and supports that allow them to do that. That applies not just to people on low incomes but to all of us.

10:15

The food system does not have the equivalent or even the beginnings of cycle lanes. Instead, we have an asocial food system in which people are expected to buy food as individuals for individuals and to cook it as individuals for an individual meal. We have taken the social nature out of the food system and we need to change that and get the social factors—and, indeed, material factors such as getting healthy food to people at affordable prices—back in. If a primary producer can get 25 per cent of the retail cost of vegetables and fruit, they are doing well, and that means that there is a huge margin to be made on getting fruit and vegetables that are grown sustainably and organically in Scotland to people at affordable prices. It would be helpful if we could look at the whole framework.

The Convener: Jim Hume indicated that he wanted to come in on this point.

Jim Hume: My question was about motivation. Will that move things on?

The Convener: It might well do. I will try to bring you in in a minute, Jim.

Pamela McLean: To pick up on what several people have said about the holistic approach that is fostered by the ISM tool, I think that we need to look beyond the individual, because collective action will help people. After all, if people feel that they are outliers and are doing things by themselves, they are less likely to take a step forward and make a change.

Equally, as far as the 10 behaviour areas are concerned, we have heard that the 2020 climate group is looking at transport and that Pete Ritchie's Nourish Scotland is looking at food, but we need to draw all those things together so that people can see that the issue is about a new lifestyle rather than about making one simple change. If we leave things there, we will simply fall into the same trap that we have fallen into with recycling. How many people out there think that, because they are recycling, everything will be okay? Again, we need a holistic approach.

The Convener: I will let Jim Hume develop his point.

Jim Hume: I think that it leads on from development. You are all at the coalface, but it would be interesting to hear from someone on the ground—from Ross Paton, say, in the Stewartry—on the motivation for behavioural change. What motivates you to change from normal farming practices to different ones? Is it the feel-good factor—you just want to do good for the earth—or are you hoping to make economic benefits? How can we spread that kind of cultural change outwards?

Ross Paton: Inevitably, there is an economic imperative to use less energy. For me, there is also a feel-good factor. I enjoy farming organically; it is challenging and supposedly better for the environment, although some people might argue with that. Community involvement is also important. I quite enjoy having close contact with the local community, and there have been various examples of people getting access to land and doing things on their own wee plots in the village or, in some cases, on a bigger scale.

However, for people in my industry, there is no doubt that the motivation has to be the benefits to

their businesses. We might have high ideals, but the fact is that farmers will change when they see a benefit. On the focus farm group, we learned all sorts of things that had nothing to do with windmills or solar panels and everything to do with greater efficiency. I say that as an organic farmer because the word "efficiency" makes people think, "Oh, God, are we talking about GMOs or using more fertiliser?" when it is all about making better use of resources by, for example, not damaging the soil structure or by using animal manures instead of artificial fertilisers. Misusing or wasting your resources has huge knock-on effects on the environment, because it takes more energy to do things badly, if you like. Of course, it can be tricky to watch your carbon footprint, because things such as bad weather tend to throw a spanner in the works all the time.

From what I have seen, the emphasis should be on greater efficiency and not wasting resources, which probably brings us back to Pete Ritchie's point about the wider context and issues such as not using such intensive farming systems and eating less meat. Of course, many farmers throw their hands up in horror at the vegetarian argument that we eat far too much meat, but I think that it is inarguable that, globally, we eat too much meat. We need to strike a better balance.

I am really interested in the notion of poverty causing people to eat badly. I think that what we are talking about is poverty of spirit—basically, people in poverty are depressed and do not care about their health. Everything feeds into everything else, and people simply will not listen to those who say that some things are better for their health if they have been totally floored and do not care one way or the other. That is, after all, why people smoke, drink too much and so on.

The Convener: I understand your strength of feeling. Indeed, the committee shares it and will try to explore it.

Graeme Dey: Picking up on Ross Paton's response to Jim Hume, I wonder what message would be most effective in bringing about individual behavioural and cultural change. Is it, "You should do this to save the planet", "If you do this, you'll save yourself money", or, "It will be better for your health and you'll help to save the planet"? What in your experience would be the best approach?

Ross Paton: It is very difficult to nail down, because everyone is different and motivated by different things. People who say that they do not care about climate change quite possibly do not care about it; after all, it is such a nebulous idea. People certainly feel things in their wallet, and the best incentive to reduce energy use is a big energy bill.

The Convener: Several people want to come in on this question.

Pete Ritchie: Backing up Ross Paton's point, I note that organic farming does not put reactive nitrogen on the ground but, although the cost of cleaning up that kind of nitrogen in Europe is higher than the economic benefit of using it, that is not reflected on the balance sheet. Similarly, although the use of biodiversity is higher on organic farms and although carbon sequestration in organic soils is something like 28 per cent higher than in non-organic soils, neither of those factors appears on anyone's balance sheet. Unless we have the natural capital accounting that Scottish Natural Heritage is starting to consider, it will be very hard to see what gains the kinds of private initiatives and investment in organic farming that people such as Ross Paton are making will have for society. There are gains to society, but the fact that they are not necessarily reflected in Mr Paton's bottom line is an economic problem.

We have to accompany messages about the good that this or that measure will do with two other things. The first is to bring about facilitative measures, such as the cycle lanes that I mentioned earlier and home insulation, that make things easier for people. We need to find ways of making it easier for people to do the right thing. However, we also need to rely very heavily on what Pamela McLean said about the need to create new social norms. We live in a herd: we are a herd animal and what our neighbours, communities and families do makes a difference to what we think is the right thing to do. We have to make low-carbon living normal, not the weird thing to do.

Morag Watson: Picking up on Jim Hume and Graeme Dey's questions about motivation and message, I know from our work in common cause and natural change, on which I worked with Louise Macdonald, that motivation is complicated. That is the simple answer. As they might discover if they start to unpick the issue, people's actual motivations for doing something can be quite different from what they say about why they have done it.

I am going to disagree slightly with Ross Paton and Pete Ritchie on the issue of money. As I have told the committee before, money is not a particularly big motivator as far as people are concerned. It is an important consideration in business, but I want to challenge my two farming friends with the suggestion that if they were truly motivated by money they would be merchant bankers rather than farmers. Farmers care about certain things a great deal—the soil they steward, the people who work for them or perhaps the fact that the farm has been in their family for a long

time—and those are all powerful motivators that keep them involved in what they are doing.

As for Graeme Dey's question whether there is one message that can be sent out, we are finding from the research that there is no such message. We have been searching for this elusive magic wand or the thing that you can say to change people's minds, and what we have found—Pamela McLean can expand on this—is that there needs to be a conversation. When people are given the time and space to talk through why they do certain things, all sorts of issues begin to come to the fore.

I will give you an example of how powerful that can be. I have a colleague who works with people in high finance in the City of London because most of the investment in environmentally damaging major infrastructure projects goes through the City of London. When given the space, even those people—who have salaries that would make your eyes water—reveal motivations to do with community, co-operation, family and so on. You might be led to believe that such people care about nothing but money and their own status, but that is not the way that human beings are wired. The whole agenda is about recognising those other motivations and considering how we can operationalise them, bringing together things that are much more powerful than people's commitment to money in order to make a big cultural shift.

Pamela McLean: I will chip in on the subject of motivation. Just as Morag Watson mentioned time and space, I had started writing that down. We have found that the longest-lasting and most prolonged change comes from working toward the community good. Ross Paton said that he enjoyed working with his community. That is an example of the values that Morag Watson is talking about, which override people's need for money. In Carbon Conversations, we found that people start to reprioritise how they spend what money they have once they have considered the common good and once they realise that other people are willing to go in the same direction.

The Convener: So, it is not an individual thing; it is a collective thing in that sense.

Claudia Beamish: I am interested in pursuing the collective vision a little further, in view of the conversation that we are having.

In our initial report to the Scottish Government, the committee recommended that it provide further detail on

"how all sections of society, including people on low incomes, can play a vital part in creating the level of culture and behaviour change required".

That follows on from the point that Ross Paton and others have made.

Both Ross Paton and Pete Ritchie have either mentioned or are involved with community models. Richard Lochhead was at the opening of the first share option for the community buyout of a farm—I am sure that Pete Ritchie can talk about that better than I can. I wonder about the degree to which ownership matters to communities in relation to the issue that we are talking about today. Is it about ownership or involvement? If it is not about ownership, how can we involve people better? In urban as well as rural areas, there are many initiatives relating to empty land. I wonder whether we can put that issue into the mix.

The Convener: As with the earlier questions, you will need to try to incorporate answers to Claudia Beamish's questions into your answers if you can—you are all genii.

Kerry Riddell: I want to return to the question of the key thing that gets people to change their behaviour, building on Pam Duncan's and Morag Watson's comments.

In our experience, two things are needed. The first is the provision of tools for community leaders that make it easy for them to understand that they need to send an appropriate message and deal with certain people in a different way. The second thing is the provision of opportunities for citizenship. That is varied and something that the environmental sector does really well.

We have just had some interesting research done by the University of Edinburgh that shows that volunteers came to us with largely self-directional values as their motivation—they wanted to get a job or increase their prospects—but that, as a result of having volunteered with us, they ended up with universal values and were much keener to work to prevent climate change and deal with environmental damage.

We are in the process of doing some research in partnership with Scotland's environment web that is looking at citizen science. In that study, something like 60 per cent of people are saying that they are motivated to work more closely with their communities and that they have carried out more environmental action as a result of participating in citizen science.

All of this is about creating space and time for people to participate in citizenship, and watching the change that happens as a result. It is also about exemplification—exemplifying those intrinsic and positive values that will lead to such change in the long run.

10:30

The Convener: Answers will, no doubt, develop as we move along. We will hear from Alex Hilliam first, and then Louise Macdonald.

Alex Hilliam: I think that we have covered many of the things that I wanted to say.

The Convener: We can come back to you.

Alex Hilliam: No, no. [*Laughter*.]

Looking for the magic bullet, if that is the right phrase—the one way to get people to change their behaviour—is a huge challenge. Part of the work that Changeworks does is that we operate two of the energy saving Scotland advice centres—I am sorry; they are now known as home energy Scotland advice centres—that the Energy Saving Trust has in Scotland. That involves engaging with the public through community events, the telephone and the internet.

Many messages have attracted people to use the home energy Scotland centres. Some have been financial—people have been told how they could save money on their energy bills. Others have been focused on helping people to make their homes cosier and supporting families to have a warm environment—basically, those ones have been about getting people to install insulation. Different messages have attracted different people at different times. People have been encouraged to embrace change by installing insulation or making behavioural changes in the home.

I have undertaken some training for some of the advisers. This relates to what many people have said: when advisers have managed to engage householders with the topic, to talk to them a bit more and to share information about some of the wider greener behaviours that come under the greener Scotland banner, it has proved to be extremely effective to normalise those behaviours and demonstrate that other people do them.

Such engagement is not strong but light touch. A little bit of engagement can be highly effective. We can take people on the journey from an initial interest that relates to the prospect of a financial saving to a wider interest that relates to common values and so on. There are multiple routes, but there are multiple ways in.

The Convener: We move on to the final two witnesses in this little section.

Louise Macdonald: A couple of things spring to mind. If we try to look for a single answer, that will just frustrate us. The search for the rational man is a futile one—there is no such thing.

The Convener: Nor a rational woman.

Louise Macdonald: Absolutely. We must accept that we are complex beings. That is important.

When it comes to behaviour change, we know quite a lot—it is just a case of putting it into practice. That is where some of the issues seem to lie. For quite some time, organisations such as Futerra—which some members may have heard of; it is an agency that specialises in communications to do with climate change—have had a standard list of golden rules on communication. The issue is implementation. The ISM gives policy makers and others an implementation tool.

We should not underestimate the extent to which values are important. This all comes down to values. I will give a couple of quick examples. I am here because I was challenged on my own values on the issue four years ago through a WWF programme called natural change. It sought to get leaders and people with influence who were not involved in the climate change agenda to start to think about issues such as sustainability. Part of that was about giving them time and space to reflect on those things. I am happy to admit—I am on record as saying this—that, prior to taking part, my idea of the great outdoors was the space between the taxi cab and the front door of Harvey Nichols.

That process gave me time to think about my values and so on. I was doing recycling, but I was doing it because that is what good citizens do; I was not doing it because I cared. Now, I have made significant changes to my lifestyle and to my work. I am committed to such work because of having that time and space to consider it. I can vouch for the fact that values are powerful.

We have also found that to be the case in our work with young people. Recently, Young Scot surveyed nearly 500 young people between the ages of 12 and 22 on such issues. We looked specifically at common cause and values in the ISM tool. We found that, although young people might be expected to score highly on values to do with hedonism and stimulation, they do not; they score highly on security, family, benevolence, community and doing good.

That is what makes us human, and young people are saying that they recognise that those things are important. The values that they are talking about are education, family and poverty. That is what they are seeing day in, day out, and that is what they care about.

On Claudia Beamish's point about community, when I hear those views from young people it gives me a sense that we can build on those findings and work from them. That does not allow us to escape our responsibilities as adults—we need to take responsibility for what we have created—but it is possible to work with young people on building community.

I am on the grants panel for the climate challenge fund. The recent refresh of the fund to focus on community was important, and we are starting to see some interesting stuff coming

through from harder-to-reach and minority ethnic communities. More recently, there has been interest around fuel poverty issues. The fund is one to watch with interest as those programmes develop.

The Convener: There is quite a lot of food for thought there. I think that Ross Paton wanted to come back in.

Ross Paton: On the point about whether we are motivated by money, Morag Watson is right to say that we are not farming to make money, but we have to make money in order to continue farming. In any business, if you are making a sufficient profit you can step back and say that you would like to invest in something like renewables, whereas if you are up against it there is a tendency to have your nose down and your backside up all the time and not really think about it.

I have to disagree with Morag, therefore, as money helps a bit. The brutal sledgehammer approach of the feed-in tariff has resulted in an awful lot of windmills going up on farms locally, as Alex Hilliam will know. I am not saying that that is a bad thing at all, as it introduces farmers to the concept of renewables, and they are not as controversial as the giant wind farm projects. In that respect, feed-in tariffs have worked quite well, and the renewable heat incentive probably has the same effect, so the blunderbuss approach to grants—stuffing people's mouths with gold, to some extent—has an effect.

The Convener: We have a lot of other points to make. Richard Lyle wants to ask a question just now.

Richard Lyle: On that point, we should be honest: it is about generational change. The generation of people before me fought in the war—the second world war, not the Boer war—and they were not what they called "squander bugs". When the sixties came on, everything was getting better and people misused energy and so on. My point is that change is about bringing our children up right.

My children never threw litter in the street because I abhorred people who drove by in cars and threw their litter out of the window. Every time my kids were eating a sweetie or whatever, they would give me the paper to put in my pocket to dispose of it in a litter bin. It is about training—not to an extreme degree, but by showing people that they can do better and that, if they put the light out, they can save energy and reduce their costs. At present, we have a lot of kids in school who are into the eco-warrior thing and want to get a green flag award for their school. If we teach our children and grandchildren not to misuse energy, and how to cook and feed themselves properly, that can make a difference.

We have seen a tremendous increase in the amount of recycling in the past five to 10 years. That is not down to one particular advert; it is the result of schools and parents bringing children up right, which ensures that they will make that change and buy into all the different things that all of us sitting round the table today are talking about.

The Convener: Louise Macdonald mentioned people being confronted about their behaviour—in a non-confrontational and inclusive way—and we can probably take the same message from what Richard Lyle has just said.

Alex Hilliam can go next.

Alex Hilliam: I want to pick up on Ross Paton's comments about the introduction of feed-in tariffs to encourage people to install renewables. I am currently working on a project in relation to the provision of solar panels for households in social housing settings. It highlights the use of the ISM tool, but it encapsulates why we need to take a holistic approach to behaviour change.

A range of housing associations have installed solar panels, and there are a variety of material drivers such as feed-in tariffs, the Scottish housing quality standards and the fuel poverty agenda that is trying to assist people to get out of fuel poverty. Fundamentally, the housing associations wanted to put solar panels on people's homes so that they could save money—they are giving people free electricity. The FIT was an added incentive.

The research is not finished, but we have found that people—as others have highlighted—do not have the knowledge or the skills to understand how the panels work and how to use them. They do not know what the best behaviours are. The settings have lacked a bit of social norming: there has not been much focus on the social factors, such as getting people to talk about how they use their solar panels and to engage with the renewable energy. There has not been enough individually targeted upskilling to give people the relevant know-how.

That is a classic example that shows that, while the Government can introduce things such as FITs, the housing quality standards and the fuel poverty agenda, change will not happen if it does not take a holistic view of how to deliver behaviour change.

I do not know whether that pulls everything together or not, but it is an important perspective. We cannot rely on policies by themselves.

The Convener: You make a major point about capacity building, which I have been stressing the importance of in many areas. People have quite a

bit of money in individual and community settings from renewable energy and community benefit schemes, and even from community ownership, and I agree that we should bear in mind the need to bring about behaviour change.

We asked with regard to land reform how communities would cope with community ownership, and the capacity building aspects in that respect are exactly the same. That is perhaps the most important element, certainly from my point of view, if we want to see change happening.

Interestingly, successful community land activities in places such as in north Harris—which has been well written up by Fiona Mackenzie in her book, "Places of Possibility"—show people rebalancing their lives with nature and using resources in a more carbon-sensitive way. There are good examples of people who are relatively poor but have a collective ability to call on those bits of advice to help them to make a change.

That is a big statement, but I thought that I would throw it in now in case people want to comment on it. As the only Highland member here, I think that it is an important point to make.

Alex Fergusson: It is an important point to say that I cannot help feeling that the conversation is starting to focus on one of the difficulties that I see in the agenda. What we are discussing is radical and innovative, but not that difficult to roll out in a small rural area. If all the policies and intentions are to have the necessary effect, initiatives need to be rolled out in the middle of Glasgow, Edinburgh and Dumfries—the places to which Pete Ritchie referred—where people cannot afford to turn on the cooker to eat better, and where all the social problems come into effect.

Money does come into it, on an individual basis. Everybody lives in their own economic environment, and although we would probably all love the income of a merchant banker, I am not sure that I fancy the lifestyle very much—as a former farmer, I will stick with Ross Paton on that one—and so money has a huge role to play. If people can afford to do all those things, it is quite easy.

I am sorry about that rambling introduction. My question is this: how do we translate such initiatives into the surroundings and environments where they will have most effect, which is necessary if the schemes are to benefit not only those of us who can afford them?

10:45

Morag Watson: I should make it clear that although I say that money is, for most people, not the most important motivator, I know that it is important; we all have to live within our means.

To pick up on the points that were made by Richard Lyle, Claudia Beamish and Alex Fergusson—and to make a sweeping statement—when it comes to educating young people in sustainability, I can safely say that Scotland leads the world. I am currently working with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization on what is happening in this regard around the world. I recently met a group of international colleagues in Beijing, and I can say quite honestly that their jaws hit the floor when they heard what we have done in Scotland. Some of what we have done can be attributed to the natural change initiative.

We have changed the professional standards for teachers in Scotland, and the new ones will come into effect in August. They now clearly say that teachers in Scotland have three responsibilities: one is to the professional values of caring for children, social justice and so on; one is on learning for sustainability, which teachers must push forward in everything that they do in discharging their professional duties; and one is on leadership within the profession, in respect of how the profession can develop to do those things.

Last year, an advisory group to Dr Alasdair Allan made 31 recommendations about how to re-orient our school system to put sustainability at the heart of education. Dr Allan accepted those recommendations in March this year and in October an implementation group will be set up. Learning for Sustainability Scotland will be involved in the secretariat, and we are working with the General Teaching Council to roll out training across teacher training institutions and to Scotland's 53,000 teachers. We are doing really well on this.

However, as Louise Macdonald can tell you, young people have a mental category, which is, "What adults say, and the stupid things they do." Every young person is told about drinking and drugs, and then, on a Friday and a Saturday night, they look at what is happening around them and say, "This is a stupid thing that adults do but tell us not to do." Climate change action fits into that category—"You tell us one thing but you don't do it. We are eight years old and have no power and no money, and you are in the Scottish Parliament. Why aren't you doing it, when you are the people in charge?" It is an interesting dynamic. It is a double-edged sword. As someone who has committed her life to the education of young people, I am with you when you say that educating young people is important. However, I would insist on the caveat that you should not put on eight-year-olds the responsibility for solving the world's problems.

Alex Fergusson asked about how we can take this into an urban environment. One of the key things that we have put into the changes in education is the idea that a school is not doing work on sustainability properly if it is not working in partnership with its community. We have seen powerful change happen that way, particularly around the issue of ownership, to pick up on Claudia Beamish's comment. Many young people, particularly in urban environments, feel entirely rejected by their own communities; they are the unwelcome youth who gather on street corners. They feel that their communities want rid of them and they do not feel part of their communities. A core part of learning for sustainability is encouraging the feeling of belonging, of being part of the community, of co-operating and of working in partnership with others. I am sure that Kathy Riddell can give examples.

When young people feel that they belong, that they are part of the community and that their views are respected and taken on board—when they are doing intergenerational learning and hear people saying, "Listen to young people; they know cool stuff" and "Listen to old people; they know cool stuff"—we see some powerful changes. Education is not the only way we should take action in this regard. Other measures can be taken around urban farming, community ownership and so on. However, education is one of the levers that we have at our disposal as a society. We are starting to use it well, and I look forward to seeing it being used much more effectively in the coming years.

Pete Ritchie: Young people do not have cheque books yet, but we do not have 20 years to wait until they have them. We have to make it easy for people to do the right thing

The Convener: Poor people do not have cheque books.

Pete Ritchie: Everyone has some spending power. However much spending power they have, we have to make it easier for them to do the right thing. Young people have the least spending power of all.

The gap between what we say we want to do and what we do is significant. That is why this is a three-part framework. It is about social and material things. We need to not focus on the individual stuff. It is great that people make individual changes, and we need to make it easier for more people to do so. Around 30 per cent of people in Scotland say that they would like to buy local food, but the local food market is less than 1 per cent of the total food market. People in Scotland love birds—loads of people join RSPB Scotland. We should have more birds on organic farmland. Farmland birds are a key performance indicator for the Scottish Government. However, people who love birds do not necessarily buy organic food because we are not getting that organic food to market—the organic-food supply chains are not working.

We need to think about the social and material aspects. As I said, we need cycle lanes and we need building standards. Insulation standards have gone up because of building standards, not because individual builders made the decision to build better houses. Also, people will not buy electric vehicles if there are no charging points. We are saying to people, "Be committed and buy an electric vehicle. Sorry—there are no charging points."

On the need for collective action that Claudia Beamish mentioned, we have a number of collective structures that we could use much more effectively; credit unions are a good well-established example, and a means through which individuals on low incomes can pool their resources to buy things at a scale that would otherwise not be possible. Such structures can drive collective action.

In order to unpack the electricity market—which we have been hearing a lot about lately—if cities got into retailing electricity, city councils could be much more creative about how electricity is used. Instead of penalising people for their first few units of electricity, as we do at the moment, city councils could make the first few units cheaper and penalise people for greater use of electricity. City councils could change how people use electricity in order to drive change, but it would mean city councils taking on retailing of electricity. That is not impossible—they have done it before.

We need to think at that sort of scale. Nourish Scotland is working with the Scottish Community Alliance and a number of other community sector organisations to examine community-scale infrastructure as the missing link in driving change. We are drawing up a proposal for the Government on how we might use structural funds for things such as providing decentralised grids and promoting community buying groups at scale in order to link communities to farmers. There are lots of possibilities, but we need to upscale our thinking.

The Convener: That is a big checklist.

Kerry Riddell: On Alex Fergusson's question about how we develop community capacity in the urban context, it occurs to me that we are already effecting change in communities throughout Scotland, although it is not necessarily behaviour change. Given that the statutory community learning and development sector and the non-governmental organisations that work within the community context are already making change happen on personal and social levels, it is

important to think about how we might integrate that into what we want to do with carbon reduction.

The beauty of the values approach is that it hits all sorts of targets and enables us to change outputs in relation to learning, young people, older people, security and community capacity building, as well as achieving carbon reduction. To my mind, there is a need to facilitate and upskill all those people in the community sector and the environmental volunteering sector who are already achieving change, so that we can ensure that they facilitate the effective collective action that will achieve bigger carbon-reduction behaviour change.

The Convener: I think that Jayne Baxter wants to pitch in on this issue.

Jayne Baxter: I want to make a wee bit of a contribution as well as to ask a question.

One of our most significant collective mechanisms for implementing any kind of change is local government—I should say that I am also a Fife councillor. Fife Council is developing and supporting credit unions and turbine development, which Pete Ritchie referred to. A big thing that Fife Council has done is the move to introduce doorstep recycling, which will save the council landfill tax and a lot of money on operating lorries.

That is a big carbon-footprint issue for the council, but it is difficult to roll that out—to come back to Alex Fergusson's point about doing things on a mass scale—to hundreds of thousands of doorsteps. People do not like having four bins. We try to engage with them, we spend hours and hours at community councils and we provide information leaflets as part of a huge communication and engagement exercise, as other councils are probably also doing.

Therefore, my question to people around the table is about what their experience is of being involved with and working with local government. Does local government have a role to play in taking matters forward?

The Convener: Before we hear from Louise Macdonald, we will hear from Alex Hilliam and Pamela McLean.

Alex Hilliam: Jayne Baxter and I are obviously in tune because, to respond to Alex Fergusson's question about how we translate the approach to Glasgow, I was going to use the example of domestic recycling. If we compare the situation maybe 30 years ago with the situation in 2013, we find that there has been a massive change. We now have food waste, cardboard, plastic and garden waste recycling and two-weekly general waste collections—I do not know what happens in Fife, but in Edinburgh the collections are every two weeks. Most people have accepted that—although not everybody has, and there have been tensions along the way.

Using the ISM framework—I am going to talk about it again—we can understand why that has worked. It is not just about legislation and taxation, although obviously the obligation on local government to pay landfill tax has been a driver for it to implement measures. Individual messaging has happened over the years in relation to people contributing to recycling and not wasting. There has been community-based engagement—certainly, Changeworks has been on doorsteps to encourage people to reduce their waste.

There are norms; people see others changing their behaviour and putting their nice red bins out on a Thursday morning, or whatever. When they see that, they then do it automatically. They think of it as part of their civic duty—something that you just do. There have been infrastructure changes and different collection routes and schedules. People have been given information on schedules of recycling and what to do. The weekly collection of general waste has been changed to a two-weekly collection. A huge and complicated mix of things has made change possible. Those things probably could not have been introduced overnight in 1975, or whenever the agenda started—I do not know exactly when it was.

That shows that it is not easy to translate ideas to any setting. However, if we look at the situation in the round—the ISM is a good tool to do that—we can start to explore the avenues, barriers and opportunities to delivering change. There is no one solution, but a tool such as the ISM for analysing a particular behaviour at a particular time enables us to highlight the range of things that we need, including legislation, information for householders and changes in schedules, and how to present the right norm of behaviour to show that, in Fife, Edinburgh or the Outer Hebrides, we should recycle. It is not easy to answer Alex Fergusson's point, but we have a tool that the Government is pushing forward to enable us to understand all the steps that are required to make that happen. Values, legislation and presenting norms and other communications are key parts.

Pamela McLean: To pick up on that point, I totally agree that we need an holistic view. I am proud to live in Stirling, where we now recycle food waste weekly. It is exciting that, as Alex Hilliam says, the normal thing to do is to put your bin out. There are places where people do not do that, but social pressure is increasingly taking over.

I want to pick up on how local authorities and local governance are important to longer-term lasting change. This also addresses the point that Claudia Beamish raised about community ownership and whether people need to physically own something. I am not sure about that, but if

people become citizens in their local authority area and feel that they have a say in the policies that the local authority takes forward, they start to gain ownership. That helps people. I am proud to be in Stirling, because we are doing something together.

The Convener: Some of us would like to think that we have local government, but that is a big subject for another day. As far as I am concerned, we have regional government that is abnormal in the extreme, which leads to problems with people associating with such large councils. That whole issue has to be addressed.

Louise Macdonald: I note that point, convener, as I was going to reflect on the role of local government and its fundamental purpose. A lot of work is being done on the role of public bodies, including local government. It is worth noting that, this morning, the sustainable Scotland network has published a report on that agenda in local government, which shows that the picture overall is improving. I am sure that you will be delighted to know, convener, that the Highland Environmental Network is one of the case studies that are highlighted in the report as involving good practice of partnership working and community working. For me, the local dimension and the fact that things are happening on doorsteps and in communities cannot be overlooked. Local government and other public bodies have an important role.

11:00

The Convener: I am pleased to hear that. There are many different conditions and situations that need to be taken into account in very large council areas but, unfortunately, some one-size-fits-all arrangements are made by councils. Graeme Dey has a point that follows on from that.

Graeme Dey: It is heartening to hear how effectively we are educating our young people. That chimes with my experience as a constituency MSP. In communicating the appropriate messages to the older generations, are the traditional media of television, radio and newspapers a force for good or a hindrance as we try to secure behavioural change?

I will follow Jayne Baxter's lead and declare an interest: I was a journalist. Jayne talked about recycling, and I recall the media coverage of the introduction of that process being focused on people complaining about having four bins instead of explaining the need for having four bins. What has been your experience of using the media to communicate your messages?

The Convener: Morag Watson wants to start on that one.

Morag Watson: I am sorry. I thought that Jim Hume was going to ask a question.

Jim Hume: It is just a small comment on what people have said rather than a direct question, so it might be useful to throw this in. Marketers use Maslow's hierarchy of needs—I see that some people understand what I am talking about.

The Convener: Every farmer understands it.

Jim Hume: The hierarchy applies very much to farming. It is expressed as a triangle with five levels, and the second-bottom level, above basic needs, is safety. That is perhaps what motivates farmers—I declare an interest in that I am a farmer in the Borders, as everybody here knows. The motivation could be funds to ensure that the farmer can pay the banker what he is due and keep the farm in his ownership and do what he has been brought up to do. It is about keeping the roof over his head.

The next level up is social needs, which are important when the farmer already has their home secured and looks to the community and to be part of something. The next level up is esteem needs, which is perhaps why people go to Harvey Nichols—I have never quite understood that. The very top level is self-actualisation, which is Morag Watson's example of the bankers who have their home, social circle and esteem—their fancy cars and holidays—and are looking to do a greater good because they do not have to worry about money. In the context of behavioural change, we could look at those levels—as marketers do—and use them to hone messages for people.

The Convener: On messages, Graeme Dey's question about the response of the public media addresses an interesting area for us in reflecting on whether the different sectors in society are being catered for.

Morag Watson: Maslow's hierarchy of needs features a lot in the work that we do. It is an interesting model in that it is linear, whereas research shows that there is no straightforward linear progression—we move about a bit.

On Graeme Dey's question about the media, as others have said, values and attitudes are very important in people's behaviours and how they react. The work that we have done shows that there seem to be six major determinants of our values and attitudes, one of which is the media. The others include our family—as one might expect—our peer group and our education, which we have already touched on. The economic model that our Government pursues is quite a powerful determinant, as is the policy context of the country in which we live.

As I have said, we are doing a lot around the education of our young people, and we have

heard about the various things that are happening within peer groups and so on. There is a great debate to be had about the economic model that we have and the prominence that is given to gross domestic product, but you have had Nobel prize-winners at Parliament to talk about that, so I will not do so today.

On the media, we know that messages to do with fear and threat tend to cause people to reorient towards money; if people feel threatened, they worry about their security. Such messages have been found to be unhelpful. As some of you will know, I moved only recently to Learning for Sustainability Scotland, having previously been with the WWF. We started work in this area by questioning the media messages that we were being given. A lot of questions around climate change are inherently threatening; it seems that we are undermining people's willingness to work on sustainability by continually giving such messages.

A large body of work is being done around media and the role of advertising. As was said, values are very important, and people have talked about extrinsic and intrinsic messages. Many of the extrinsic messages to do with our status, image and wealth come to us from advertising. There is a growing movement of people who are questioning the ubiquity of advertising in our society and the fact that, even as free citizens, we cannot opt out of it. We cannot go anywhere to avoid it, other than to the remote Highlands. However, if we do so, we are probably wearing outfits in order to survive that will have advertising logos on them somewhere.

If I was asked what one thing we could do about the media—although we have said that there is never one answer—I suggest that we look to the examples of Sweden, Norway and, I believe, Ontario, which have banned advertising to under-12s. Our young people grow up in an environment in which we are constantly encouraged to want more. However, as Louise Macdonald pointed out, when young people are asked what they want, they say that they do not want things, but time to be with people and to have relationships and connections.

I defer to the knowledge of Professor Tim Kasser and his excellent work in "The High Price of Materialism", which discusses the terrible impact of materialism on young people. The European Union has put in place framework legislation around advertising to young people but, sadly, that has not been taken up widely in the agenda of how we will begin to make a cultural shift, or in terms of young people's wellbeing generally.

The Convener: But do the media reflect the projects that you have been talking about? Do the media reflect any of this?

Morag Watson: Do you want me to pick up on that topic first?

The Convener: Yes, as we are talking about it.

Morag Watson: It is an interesting one. The prominence in the media of the issues that we are discussing has increased over time. Through common cause we did a very interesting piece of work that compared how often in the media people are referred to as citizens with how often they are referred to as consumers. We found that the frequency of references to us as citizens has remained steady but that the frequency of references to us as consumers has increased. Therefore, we have a cultural norm in which you are encouraged to think of yourself as someone who buys stuff—that is the description of an individual.

As has been pointed out, if a Government wants the public to be interested in politics, it should not describe them as consumers. As consumers, people go into shops and expect a service but do not expect a say in how the shop should be run. However, as citizens, we expect a say in how our country is run. It sounds subtle, but a lot of the linguistic work that has been done shows that words are not just words but have a very powerful psychological effect. We have done a big body of work around that and the concept of framing: the way in which arguments are framed has a very profound impact on how people react to them. Words matter, and there is a big difference between referring to someone as a citizen and referring to them as a consumer.

The Convener: Dick Lyle wants to make a wee point about that.

Richard Lyle: It is about the media. A headline in the *Daily Express* of 21 September stated:

"Global warming lobby has got it completely wrong".

The article goes on to say that climate change is not happening. People are getting mixed messages because of such stories. A *Daily Express* reader might think after seeing that article, "Oh, I'll just leave the lights on, because the Arctic ice is not melting and polar bears are not falling off the edge of icebergs."

Another classic example is a film called "The Day After Tomorrow", which I saw a couple of months ago—I always refer to films in this committee—and which showed the way that the world would go because of climate change.

My point—Graeme Dey made it earlier—is that the media have a lot of responsibility to help all of

us to educate people, but they are failing in that because they give out mixed messages.

I will not read out the whole article.

The Convener: It is too depressing.

Richard Lyle: There are some damning statements in it with which I do not agree.

The media have also to help us. How do we get the media to help us to improve the message that we want to get out to the local citizen—or consumer?

The Convener: Can I just comment on that so that we can put the question aside and bear it in mind? Will Hutton in *The Observer* on Saturday writes that for our planet's sake

"we must trust scientific truth and collective action".

The subheading is:

"Sceptics will rubbish a new report on climate change, dismissing calls for governmental action."

He says that we should ignore those people, but most people find it very difficult to do that with the media.

We may want to hear other points of view on that in due course, and on whether people have the tools to ignore the nonsense that Richard Lyle so aptly expressed.

Alex Hilliam: I would like to build on that point, in response to Graeme's Dey's comment that the media are also good—at least, I think that that is what he said. I keep talking about the ISM, and one of the key elements within the social part of the ISM is the opinion leader. We should examine what the opinion leaders say and ask how we can influence them. The media, in some respects, are no different from any other key opinion leaders. They are on everybody's doorsteps—everybody gets the newspaper in the morning these days—and on their televisions every night. If the media send out a message that is harmful to our agenda, that is clearly a problem. We need to engage with the media around that problem.

Someone commented that there would always be a problem because it is quite easy to write negative stories on these issues. It is up to all of us—local authorities, stakeholders, community groups, organisations, businesses and politicians—to make sure that we are intelligent enough to send the right messages and put out the right values. For example, in the context of recycling, waste and refuse collection, there were many bad media stories when the waste collections went down to one collection every two weeks. Everybody said, "Oh my bin's full of stuff—it's overflowing. I need to complain." There is always some complaint, and the media are always ready to sell bad-news stories. However, we can push the positive side of things. There is always a positive message. If you recycle your food waste in your food waste bin you never have a smelly general waste bin because all the smelly stuff is in your food waste bin. It is a simple, great story. We need to get such discussions or stories into the soap operas. I do not know how we can work with the media to do that.

Those are the messages that we need to get out. There is always a positive story. How can there not be a positive story when we talk about this agenda? There has to be one. It has to be relevant to the individual and to the global perspective. There is always a way. The media are a source of information. The way to view them is to make sure that they give the right information that is framed in the right way.

Louise Macdonald: To build on that point about the media, like Graeme Dey, I have to admit that I am a former tabloid journalist and I probably wrote headlines like the one Richard Lyle quoted.

I want to make a couple of points. First, we need to recognise that the media is more than just a source of information; the media is a powerful social norming tool. It is incredibly important to recognise and harness the value of that tool. Secondly, how do we define media? No doubt many other committees are considering the changing face of media, so we do not need to rehearse that here. However, the changing face of media includes some of the ways that people access information, news and other content and get involved in things, whether online, offline or in their communities. We have talked about citizen science. We need to recognise that the way people connect with information is changing. Is there an opportunity to look at that change and ask how we can influence it?

11:15

A further point relates to the powerful role of local media. Local newspapers and local media outlets are often overlooked in this conversation, because we immediately look to the likes of the *Daily Express* and the *Daily Mail*. However, most people read their local newspapers and get their information from the local news.

My final point goes back to some of the messaging that we know works. Leadership, leaders—however we define them—and consistent public messages are extremely important. People need to identify an example at the local level, which everyone needs to say is a good thing. It is about people saying, "The answer is this." Such consistency and repetition help to get the message across.

I would say that it is a question of working with the media rather than against them. We must

recognise that the media are going through a sea change. We need to see how we can work together and find places and spaces for different voices to be heard, and different examples to be showcased. Again, local is key.

Ross Paton: I have a short point to make about the media. Apocalyptic stories about climate change do not help, either, because they just make everyone ask, "What is the point?" People think, "Oh, bloody hell! The methane is coming out of the Arctic soon, so we might as well enjoy ourselves."

We must emphasise the positive aspects of what we are doing. I am talking about social measures. Having fewer cars in cities is a good thing, regardless of whether it helps with climate change. It avoids people sitting in traffic jams. A wind farm is quite a cool thing to have on a farm and it is great to be able to generate electricity. I am in no way a sceptic, by the way, but apocalyptic stories do not help.

Alex Fergusson: I will continue on this theme. Louise Macdonald made a good point about local papers, which are what most local people read to get their local knowledge. We could do a lot more to help ourselves get a positive message across.

I will give a couple of brief local examples. Several years ago, Dumfries and Galloway Council tied their council tax payers into paying for, over many years, an Ecodeco recycling plant, which put the area at the top of the recycling performance figures. A reinterpretation of some of the rules and regulations put the recycling performance of that extremely expensive plant right at the bottom of the figures, and doorstep recycling will now have to be introduced. It is very hard to create a good-news story out of what has become an extremely expensive exercise, albeit that it was the right thing to do at the time.

I note that one of the 10 key behaviour areas mentions the installation of more energy efficient heating that uses a condensing boiler. I am not sure what the current situation is, but the original Scottish Government central heating scheme did not include condensing boilers. I think that we need to have more joined-up thinking if we are to create the good-news stories that it goes against the natural instincts of every journalist—with two notable exceptions—to write.

Pamela McLean: I agree broadly with what everyone says about the media. *The Daily Telegraph* also had a pretty damning article that did not help things. When we work with the media, we need to think beyond the creation of good-news stories. It is true that we need to create good-news stories, but we must work towards the cultural shift that we need to make. That speaks to the other sorts of stories that are reported in the newspapers—in other words, not just the ones that relate to climate change, recycling or transport. We need to look at what the media laud as good. Quite often, the media laud all those things that promote the extrinsic values of wealth, such as skinniness, which is perhaps not the best way to promote good community living.

Alongside that, we need to co-ordinate the actions that are taken to implement policies. That relates to what Rob Gibson said about truly local governance. We need to ensure that truly local governance is happening, which might not be the case with local authorities that are too large to connect with individuals.

What does an individual small community want to do? How does that get reported, and what weight is that given compared with a big, splashy story about Wall Street or the City of London?

The Convener: I could comment on the appalling debates in local newspapers on renewable energy projects and the so-called community that is ignored in those debates, but that might be straying too far into the negative and depressing.

However, it is true that local newspapers are a major focus and from what people have said, local newspapers certainly need to be looking at citizen issues a good deal more than they do. I do not think that local newspapers like being introduced to such things. Too many of the editors do not think about citizens—they think more about consumers. We often see that from the syndicated columns that papers have. We will explore that issue with other panels because how we spread the message and the media's approach to it will be quite important psychologically.

Graeme Dey wanted to move on to engagement.

Graeme Dey: Alex Fergusson referred to joined-up thinking and joined-up working, both of which are obviously really important. What is the panel's experience of areas of the public sector such as local authorities and the NHS as regards how high up in their thought processes the carbon footprint is when it comes to making both minor and major decisions?

Pete Ritchie: To go back to Nourish Scotland's experience of working with the City of Edinburgh Council, the NHS and the university—three pretty big organisations, each with tens of thousands of employees and big budgets—it has been a slow process but it has been very heartening to see those organisations working together.

The driver for sustainable food work largely came from the City of Edinburgh Council's work on its sustainable Edinburgh 2020 vision. A lot of citizens responded to its consultation by pointing

out that food was not mentioned, saying that they wanted to see something about food in there. That responsiveness was a good example of a local authority thinking, "All right, we are doing something about our carbon footprint—we are keen on that—but as part of that we are listening to what people are saying about what is important." It has been doing similar work in its consultation on 20mph speed limits in Edinburgh.

I have certainly seen a significant change in local authorities in the past 15 or 20 years as regards their awareness of the issues and their willingness to engage at scale with those issues. On Jayne Baxter's point, Fife Council made a huge transformation about 10 years ago in its recycling achievements. That was phenomenal—it was a combination of political will, a really good recycling manager and then getting the infrastructure in place to make it work well. Our experience in that regard is very encouraging.

However, I echo Rob Gibson's point that we need civic action at different scales, and some of the very big local authorities also need to have subsidiary community action at scale, with budgets attached so that changes can be made. The example of Dundee applying to put solar panels on all the roofs in the city is a great idea. I note Alex Hilliam's point that we have to take people with us. However, we do not always need to know what is insulating our homes; we just need to know that they are a lot warmer than they were. If we can have those at-scale actions by local authorities, it would be really helpful.

My point about local authorities is that this is not just about them building turbines but about them buying wholesale electricity and becoming the retailer of choice for people in their local areas.

The Convener: The issue of competition in the energy market is certainly topical. It would be interesting to see local authorities taking on that energy supply role.

Kerry Riddell: We do quite a lot of work across Scotland with local authorities and health authorities. We find that it is relatively easy to engage both those sectors with carbon reduction if other outcomes are also achieved by our proposed projects. For example, if a carbon reduction project is able to achieve community development outcomes or health, learning or skills development outcomes, it is quite an easy sell.

The Convener: Do we need to measure that? Are you measuring it?

Kerry Riddell: We do not measure what we achieve in terms of carbon reduction. It may well be that climate challenge fund participants measure that—I imagine that they do—as they achieve other outcomes in relation to community capacity building and increasing engagement.

Jayne Baxter: I think that it was Pete Ritchie who talked about the value that is attributed to some of these things. I am very aware of that. In Fife, there are lots of community gardens, some of which are run by mental health organisations and some by local community groups. People are growing food and getting time and space to reflect on their experiences. Those are very good projects, but they cannot get funding because they are seen as just a garden—it seems that the value of what these projects are doing cannot be factored in by funding organisations or the local authority. There is some work to do about what we value. It has been said before, but we are not very good at considering the broader values, particularly in the local government context, when we look at what we want to do.

The Convener: That is a fair point.

Pete Ritchie: Jayne Baxter is absolutely right. We are still at an early stage with that. For example, the Carbon Disclosure Project is trying to get cities globally to benchmark their emissions. We could develop better ways of measuring in Scotland that include not just carbon but natural capital and food sustainability. If we do not measure those things, it will be hard for local authorities to place a value on them. If we worked with our universities to find ways of measuring those things so that we can benchmark what we are doing, we would see progress over time much more clearly. That would really help to scale up the process.

Louise Macdonald: Reflecting on the role of local authorities and public bodies, I note that work has been going on between the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, the Scottish Government and others to refresh their approach. The focus on that is to be very much welcomed.

It is clear from conversations that we have been part of that there are moves to take the issue beyond the public duty on sustainability and so on into innovation, looking at priority areas and thinking about different ways in which these issues can be tackled. Some of the obvious things—the front-line things—have been done or looked at. The question is what else can be done.

I hope that, in the refresh of that approach between COSLA, the Scottish Government and public bodies, conversations like the one that we are having now can happen. It is about people getting the time to talk about what else can be done. There is brilliant commitment and enthusiasm in local authorities and public bodies. As a result of our growing knowledge and understanding of these issues, we are in a position to start to harness that. The ambition around Scotland in what we are seeking to achieve is what is driving people. They are seeing how they can be part of that and drive it even further. That

has huge potential. We should all do everything we can to support that work.

The Convener: That leads me on helpfully to my next question.

This conversation needs to be shared with each of the other committees in Parliament because it impinges on everything that they do. It is up to the committee to think about how we could do that. My question for panel members is whether there is one thing that you are promoting that would help the country as a whole to be in a better place in a couple of years' time. It could even be a summary of what you have said during the meeting. It would be useful for us to draw the discussion to a conclusion in that way. I see Alex Hilliam scribbling beautifully.

Alex Hilliam: You have prompted me, so I will go for it. Is this the one thing that we need to do? I do not know. The ISM model is stuck there in section 3.5 and so on of RPP2. It is in the revised version and the latest version—it is there quite clearly and it is very powerful. It should be clear from what I have said that I very much buy into that approach. The Scottish Government is doing that to some extent, but the whole approach to RPP2 should have the ISM model out in front. RPP2 is inherently focused on the material, the policies and so on, but the next time we revisit it—or from tomorrow onwards—let us look at every single policy through the ISM lens and understand what we need to do apart from just doing the policy. What do we need to do on the material level, the social level and the individual level to achieve the policy objective?

11:30

The Convener: That is one thing that we can possibly all buy into. Are there other things that you think are the one thing, above all, that needs to be done?

Morag Watson: As several people have pointed out, it is the opening up of time and space to have such conversations. I am glad that you think that this conversation should be happening with your parliamentary colleagues. There are mechanisms through the sustainable Scotland network and through the work that a lot of us have been doing with the Scottish Government's climate change team—Pam has been doing work here with the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body.

People have the expertise to lead such conversations, but we are looking for a cultural shift so that people give the issue priority. As Lou could tell you, when we spoke to people about the national change process and said, "Can we have 16 days of your time in one year to talk about probably the biggest challenge that humanity will ever face?" a lot of people said, "Well, I'm not sure that I've got that much time." We do not give the issue priority. The Government, the Parliament, local authorities and the leaders that Lou and others work with can take a leading role by being a leader, not by being an expert but by opening a door and saying, "I will make the space, I will make the time and I will use my authority to get my team here to begin to have these conversations."

When people are looking for a hard policy recommendation and we say that they should get everyone together for something that sounds like a nice chat, I can understand that, culturally, that is a rather different task from what people are used to being given. However, in my experience—I can see that some of my colleagues round the table are nodding—getting people together for that conversation can be the key leverage point at which the culture begins to change.

Ross Paton: I will try not to get too philosophical about things. In my industry, it is important to share information and, as Alex Hilliam said, to get good, reliable technical information. For example, a lot of people come round selling renewables and, if you jumped in with both feet, you could make some big mistakes. There is a lot of contradictory stuff. For example, you can put solar panels and heat exchangers on a milk cooling system but, when you speak to somebody else, you find out that that is a waste of time, as they are fighting one another. Farmers need to get good, reliable information, because otherwise they can make mistakes. One reason why I have not done very much with renewables yet is that the sector is evolving so rapidly. It is not in terms of climate change that renewables are so important for farmers, but in terms of saving money, energy and carbon they need a lot more information.

Pamela McLean: I will pick up on that point and on what Morag Watson said. The convener referred earlier to the unsuitability of a one-size-fits-all approach. We need to take note of that and to work towards developing a new cultural view of ourselves, which will come from the ground up. We need to be participative in defining the issue and in that way we will address the point that one size does not fit all.

A lot of information is out there, but sometimes it is not accessible. We need to know what people need and so on. Lots of infrastructure work is going on, but I echo Morag Watson's comment that we need to establish time and space for such conversations, not only for communities but for people in working environments, because those become micro-communities.

As Morag Watson mentioned, a number of people can lead such discussions, but we need more of them because, as Pete Ritchie said, we do not have that much time, so the more people who can lead such discussions and conduct their

work in a participative way, the quicker we can move towards the development of a new cultural view of ourselves.

The Convener: At a philosophical level, I quite agree—that stacks up.

Pete Ritchie: I agree entirely that we need more and better conversations. A conversation needs to be held between farmers, who need people to buy their food, communities who eat the food and local authorities that need to enable that process to take place. There should definitely be more and better conversations.

At the risk of upsetting Morag Watson, I add one technical comment on what might be a useful starting point. Nourish recommends that we start to integrate food procurement horizontally—in other words, across public bodies within a region. At the moment, we integrate it vertically, so the NHS has one contract for bread, one contract for milk, and so on. If we can integrate food procurement horizontally, that will start to create a dialogue for change because public bodies in an area will come together in looking at what food they are buying for the public plate. They will start to work strategically with farmers and the sector, perhaps upskilling the people who are cooking the food, to get low-carbon food on to the public plate. If we can benchmark the carbon footprint of public food and help the procurement people to work together to reduce that, we will get healthier and more sustainable food and we will hit a lot of wins. Through the forthcoming procurement bill, there will be an opportunity to get that into public policy.

Louise Macdonald: What Pete Ritchie has just said goes back to Alex Hilliam's point at the beginning of the session that we can use the ISM model to look at all the individual issues in the material context, the social context and the individual context. That is an illustration of where practical use of the tool in forming policy would be fantastic. It might be interesting for the committee to take part in an ISM workshop.

The point that has been made about leadership is incredibly important. One of the key tasks of the 2020 climate group is to work out how we can pull leaders from across the sectors together. We also need more bold leadership from the Parliament, from local government and from across all sectors. That is what we have heard from young people in the research that we have done. We have been telling them for years that climate change is a problem and they wonder why we have not fixed it. They want us to be bold, and that must be recognised.

A lot of these discussions are technical and, because of where we are, they are about policy and what instruments we can use. We are also hearing a lot about who we are as people and as human beings and how complex that relationship is. When I participated in the natural change programme, I noticed that a fundamental problem is our disconnect with nature. A friend of mine says, "If you don't think that's true, try holding your breath for 20 minutes." In thinking about all these issues, we need to go back to source and explore in more detail—rather than just talking about it in technical terms to do with infrastructure and so on—our disconnect with nature and how we can start to rebalance that relationship. That speaks to issues about the soil and understanding that good soil makes for a good life.

Kerry Riddell: I thank Louise Macdonald for making the connection with nature. Quite a lot of research has been done, and across the environmental sector we know that connectedness with nature is really important because it effects behavioural change.

Before Louise mentioned that, I was thinking how important it is to carry on facilitating local community values-based action that achieves carbon reduction alongside other social outcomes. The climate challenge fund already does that, but there are quite a lot of communities of interest, of experience and of location that cannot participate in the climate challenge fund. Therefore, there is a need both to keep the climate challenge fund going and to find other ways in which communities can take part in such activity.

Those activities mean that we are creating space at a local level for people to think about their values. As Pamela McLean said, it is about developing a ground-up view of ourselves and the things that we hold valuable in our communities. It is also positive because it is about achieving carbon reductions at the same time as doing things that are good for us locally and things that we believe in. Sharing good practice and continuing to build that community-based practice is really important.

The Convener: I thank you all for your participation. We will read your evidence with interest and reflect on it. Next week, we will have an evidence session with Walter Stahel on resource use and circular economy issues, and we will have further evidence sessions with stakeholders on the budget, on rural broadband and on flood protection and alleviation, which follow on from our own work. We will continue with the trains of thought that you have helped us to establish, for which I thank you very much.

11:40

Meeting continued in private until 12:08.

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