

Response submitted online

ANON-YA6Q-S7W4-P

17th March 2021

Environment, Climate Change & Land reform Committee
Scottish Parliament
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Dear Sir/Madam,

Please find below our response to the Climate Change - Net Zero Nation: Draft Public Engagement Strategy - Consultation

Consultation: Climate Change – Net Zero Nation: Draft Public Engagement Strategy

EAUC-Scotland:

Response on behalf of our Members (Scotland)

About the EAUC

Our passion is to create a world with sustainability at its heart. That's our vision. We exist to lead and empower the post-16 education sector to make sustainability 'just good business'.

The membership of the EAUC comprises higher and further educational institutions, with a combined budget of some £25 billion, responsible for educating over 2 million students supported by half a million staff.

We have regional and country chapters, with member institutions connected deeply with business, industry, health and civic bodies at local levels, with reach internationally via their research, innovation and student mobility.

EAUC-Scotland's Approach to the Inquiry

EAUC-Scotland collected views with a public meeting of sector members through our Community Engagement Topic Support Network, and with additional input from our elected Office Bearers Group.

Response to the Consultation:

Q1a. What are your views on the three objectives underpinning our approach to engagement on climate change?

Whilst the objectives are positive they are also quite broad. It would be good to see the objectives linked together with other relevant initiatives, for example linking these with the wellbeing economy. EAUC-Scotland feel that linking the objectives into current work would also make them easier to understand and implement. In addition, the objectives could be strengthened by referencing specifically to the crucial role the education sector has in creating and supporting the skills needed for the net-zero future as outlined in the Climate Emergency Skills Action Plan, as well as normalising sustainable behaviours more broadly.

Q1b. Do you think that any of these objectives should be removed or changed?

Education could be added to objective 1 and 3 as mentioned above. It would also be good to see a stronger call to action with more urgency.

Q1c. Are there any objectives that you think should be included that are currently missing?

No comment.

Q2a. What are your views on our seven principles for public engagement set out in Box 1?

EAUC-Scotland are generally supportive of the seven principles. However, references to “Dialogue” and “Just” are vague and the latter term is particularly open to interpretation when embedded in policy and actions. Further explanation of what these look like in practice would be useful.

Q2b. Do you think that any of these principles should be removed or changed?

Public engagement should principally aim to be locally relevant rather than a once-size-fits-all approach as uptake and buy-in will be greater if messaging is targeted. The work of the Carbon Literacy Project shows the efficacy of this. EAUC-Scotland and the Scottish FHE sector are also being asked to focus increasingly on a place-based approach to responding to the climate emergency. At present this element does not come through strongly in this document.

Inclusive is a good principle but at present no method of action has been outlined. EAUC-Scotland recognise that this can be a challenging area and it would be good to see a plan detailing how the government plans to make this strategy and its implementation inclusive.

More widely, given the draft strategy is aimed at the general public we recommend to make it more accessible and relevant to people with things they care about. At present the draft strategy is quite

high level and if the aim is to engage public response with the document itself, then it could be more relevant and highlight issues that will affect them, for example increased flood risk.

Q2c: Are there any principles of good public engagement on climate change that you think are missing?

No. EAUC-Scotland broadly supports the principles that are presented with amendments as detailed above.

3. Other comments

a) Do you have any other comments on our overall approach?

No comment.

Q4: What are your views on the opportunities and challenges for public engagement in the Green Recovery?

EAUC-Scotland recognise that the Scottish Government and wider public bodies and business leaders have a good opportunity at present to address spending in relation to climate change. It is good to see the spending plans laid out in the draft strategy; however, we do have the opportunity to address all public spending through a climate change focus. For example, there are likely projects being funded that will increase emissions or will be obsolete in the near-future. This should be addressed as otherwise climate change spending is nullified.

The Heat Decarbonisation point is interesting as the draft strategy states that this is reserved for the UK Government. This presents confusion within the strategy as it also references “£1.6 billion will be spent on heat and energy efficiency”. As such, the framing on this issue is quite unclear - if the money being spent on heat is not spent on decarbonisation then where is it being spent? It is possible that the government is defining decarbonisation and efficiency differently to what the FHE sector think and as this is a public consultation it would be good to clarify what is meant here.

Building on this, heat decarbonisation is a crucial issue and there is consensus across all of Scotland’s colleges and universities that zero/low carbon heat is the biggest challenge public bodies have and Scotland more widely. Indeed, the latest SSN Public Bodies Climate Change Duty Reporting 2019/20 Analysis Report highlights public sector Scope 1 emissions have actually increased 2% compared to last year; conversely, Scope 2 and 3 emissions reduced by 11.5% and 13.6%, respectively. As such, the draft strategy does not adequately address this issue, despite recognising potential barriers through devolution powers. Heat decarbonisation needs greater investment and additional pressure put on housing authorities, landlords etc to insulate, retrofit and upgrade heating systems and would be an effective way to cut carbon emissions in Scotland. Therefore, it is disappointing to not see this addressed in the draft strategy.

Following on from the above, this is a good opportunity to reference the role of the education sector in creating new technologies and training people to have the skills deliver a net-zero Scotland, and for the strategy to result in proactively collaborating with our FE and HE institutions to engage with the public on climate change. Job creation should also be more prominent in this sector as many young people do not know what industry to go into, particularly in a post pandemic world, and the

government has the opportunity to address this issue here which may also help to engage young people.

Q5: What are your views on our approach to communicating climate change policy?

At present the communication approach appears fairly passive and a little unclear, for example it seems to suggest finding a main website and looking at that for information. It could do with more active, face-to-face engagement with localised workshops, webinars, infographics and dedicated campaigns for topics. Although recognising the challenges presented by covid-19, engagement for this consultation exercise could have been better advertised and supported. Going forward there could be a lot more done on a variety of social media platforms in order to be engaging to a variety of different groups. Whilst there is a focus on the arts, there is a huge opportunity here for media, workshops and creative approaches to tackling this communication challenge. Overall, the messaging needs to be a bit more “in your face”, relevant and pervasive.

Q6: Are you aware of any practical examples or case studies of good practice for communicating on climate change that could be useful for informing our approach?

Yes, University of Strathclyde have “[Guidelines for Communicating Climate Change](#)” which is a video and text document on the subject which is an excellent resource. University of Edinburgh also have done work and have [a presentation on this area](#).

Q7: What are your views on our approach to enabling participation in policy design?

Sometimes in this document it feels like the themes of engagement and communication are being interchanged which leads to confusion. For example, some of the engagement actions appear to be one way messaging of communicating what is being done rather than encouraging other people to join and actively engage. The inclusion of more radical voices and hard-hitting messaging could help as strong opinions tend to encourage engagement and spark discussion.

At present, it is also difficult when reading this section to actually see what the government approach to enabling participation actually is. As the approach is not clearly explained it is difficult to clearly answer this question. The inclusion of a pathway, even a simple flowchart would make it easier to understand what the government intends to do. Overall, EAUC-Scotland feel this section needs more explanation.

Q8: Are you aware of any practical examples or case studies of good practice for enabling participation in decision-making that could be useful for informing our approach?

No comment.

Q9: What are your views on our approach to encouraging action?

EAUC-Scotland feel from the outset that this section should be reframed as “Supporting and Encouraging Action”. This would recognise the significant work a large number of individuals, communities and organisation are already doing to support Scotland’s net-zero ambitions, and also

recognise the Scottish Government's crucial role in supporting these leaders further as well as creating new individual and community leaders.

This section should also include an emphasis of both the role of education and of institutions/wider public bodies as community leaders in encouraging and supporting climate action. Climate change education needs to be strongly embedded in the curriculum and taught clearly to all as this will lead to more action ultimately. A focus on the relative impact of different personal actions is recommended – this framing has again been shown to be successful in encouraging impactful personal behaviour changes as shown through the Carbon Literacy Project. Colleges and universities are well placed to be leaders and knowledge hubs in this area. It is important that “non-environmental” students are taught climate change through interdisciplinary learning methods. We need to see this taught in business and economics for example and if this was done the actions taken would increase exponentially.

At present action tends to come from engaged individuals rather than being driven by a system which is something that needs to change.

It would be good to see the co-benefits of cost saving and health benefits in this section as well.

It was good to see the section on Supporting Key Messengers but it needs more depth and more information about how this would be done. It was a good example but needs to be more ambitious and explain how this will be tackled.

Q10: Are you aware of any practical examples or case studies of good practice for encouraging climate change action that could be useful for informing our approach?

Please see the Carbon Literacy Project and 2050 Climate Group.

Q11: How do you think COP26 can help deliver a positive legacy for people of Scotland and climate action?

Whilst COP26 is a huge opportunity in its own right, the legacy aspect is crucial for short to long-term positive change in Scotland. This cannot be a one-off event and then disappear – the Scottish Government should use it as a springboard for strengthening ongoing support, events and knowledge sharing. The education sector could work to develop this to celebrate and share the work they are doing if given support from the government. EAUC-Scotland also note that whilst ‘legacy’ is mentioned in this consultation question, the appropriate strategy section does not talk about any collaboration or future plans beyond COP26. It would be good to see what the government intends to do and how institutions can link in with those rather than suggesting future plans without knowing what is planned already. COP26 cannot be a two-week event that stands alone, it needs to have a framework established for post-COP26 work in order to create a following positive legacy.

Q12: How can we work with stakeholders and actors across Scotland to deliver our “people” theme for COP26.

Again, this section doesn't explain at this stage who is being worked with or what projects are planned. It would be good to see how the government plans to highlight people's voices and what they are planning. In our EAUC-Scotland Community Engagement TSN group meeting no-one was

aware of what the Scottish Government was planning in regards to COP. In addition, engaging young people would be a key issue to explore as awareness amongst students is very low.

Q13: Are there other initiatives that the Scottish Government should consider joining or supporting ahead of COP26?

It would be good to get the Scottish Government involved in the Education Zone that is planned for COP26 as the Scottish Education sector is world leading in terms of Climate Action and having that recognised and supported would be very welcome. Support of the Creative Carbon Beacons project would be good as well, particularly given the project's localised approach to supporting and promoting discussions around climate change.

Q14: What are your views on how our progress towards our objectives could be most effectively monitored and evaluated?

This would depend on what objectives the Scottish Government are monitoring. The Annex B data shows that understanding of actions is not increasing. Social media metrics should be included as seeing how many people you reach is absolutely key in understanding the reach that any engagement campaign is having. From the annex we can also see that a lot of the data is quite old and would need to be kept up to date. Some of the data seems to be in the 3-5 year range and given the scale of the response needed to meet Scotland's climate targets the Scottish Government and its communities do not have time to wait 5 years to see if this strategy is effective. EAUC-Scotland suggests 2 years would be the longest time frame between any reporting period with things like social media engagement being reported much more regularly as this is calculated automatically.

Q15: How regularly – and in what format – should we report on progress on the strategy?

This really depends on what the Scottish Government is reporting on. If it is on the progress of this strategy then annually would work. In terms of formatting, multimedia is key. This is a public engagement strategy and needs to be engaging. Be creative – we recommend using videos, infographics, podcasts etc in order to cover a variety of different platforms.

Yours sincerely,



Matt Woodthorpe, Scotland Programme Manager, EAUC-Scotland