

Quarterly Policy Briefing: Environmental Sustainability

March 2022

This document outlines the main policy changes seen in the last quarter that will impact Scottish institutions and related EAUC-Scotland activity as a result.

Scottish Policy Updates

- In March 2022, Circular Economy Minister Lorna Slater [announced](#) that proposals for a ban on the destruction of unsold, durable goods would be put forward in a consultation on the new Circular Economy Bill to be published in May.
- The Scottish Government launched development funding to support the [Heat in Buildings Strategy](#). Grants of up to £50,000 are available per project to help complete an Investment Grade Business Case and progress to capital readiness. [Further details on project criteria and how institutions can apply available here](#). Applications for development support must be completed and submitted to heatnetworkfund@gov.scot no later than 5pm on 31 May 2022.
- The Scottish Government welcomed consultation responses to its publication [Investing in Scotland's Future: resource spending review framework](#). EAUC Scotland submitted a consultation response supporting the position that the Resource Spending Review focuses on the three identified priorities of:
 - a) supporting progress towards meeting child poverty targets;
 - b) addressing climate change;
 - c) and securing a stronger, fairer, greener economy.EAUC Scotland's full response can be found [here](#).

UK Policy Updates

- The second reading of the [Climate Education Bill](#), sponsored by Nadia Whittome MP, in Parliament was pushed back from 28th January to 18th March and is now scheduled for 6th May 2022.
- Northern Ireland, previously the only part of the UK without climate legislation, passed its [Climate Change Bill](#) in March 2022. The bill includes a target for Net Zero by 2050 and a 46% reduction in methane emissions.
- The Department of Education launched a draft [Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy](#) with a survey to provide feedback. The EAUC is involved in focus and working groups shaping the strategy.

Other Updates

- The [IPCC Sixth Assessment Report](#) was published assessing the impacts of climate change, looking at ecosystems, biodiversity, and human communities, and reviewing vulnerabilities, capacities and limits of the natural world and human societies to adapt to climate change. The report warns that it is “now or never” if we are to avoid the worst effects of climate breakdown. For a quality summary of the IPCC’s Sixth Assessment Report, see Carbon Brief’s [In-depth Q&A: The IPCC’s sixth assessment on how to tackle climate change](#). The key conclusions pulled out by Carbon Brief (2022) are:
 - “Global net anthropogenic [greenhouse gas] GHG emissions during the decade (2010-19) were higher than any previous time in human history (*high confidence*).”
 - Although at least 90% of global GHG emissions are covered by climate targets, only 53% are covered by “direct” climate laws.
 - Following current climate pledges to 2030 would make it “impossible” to limit warming to 1.5C with “no or limited overshoot” – and “strongly increas[e] the challenge” for 2C.
 - “The global economic benefit of limiting warming to 2C is reported to exceed the cost of mitigation in most of the assessed literature (*medium confidence*).”
 - In pathways limiting warming to 1.5C with no or limited overshoot, global CO2 emissions peak “at the latest before 2025” and then fall to 48% below 2019 levels in 2030, reaching net-zero by the “early 2050s”. Global GHGs fall 43% by 2030 and 84% by 2050.
 - All scenarios limiting warming to 2C or below include “greatly reduced” fossil fuel use, with unabated coal being “completely” phased out by 2050.
 - “The deployment of carbon dioxide removal (CDR) to counterbalance hard-to-abate residual emissions is unavoidable if net-zero CO2 or GHG emissions are to be achieved.”
 - Accelerated climate action is “critical” to achieving sustainable development.