The role of independent bodies in climate governance

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Overview

• The main components of the UK Climate Change Act
• Background on the CCC
• The role in the parliamentary debates
• Lessons learnt
Scientifically informed, long-term approach to policymaking

Long-term target to 2050

What and how?
Reduce emissions by at least 80% on 1990 levels
Covers the whole economy and all greenhouse gases

Outcomes
Long-term direction of travel
Defines the UK’s contribution to solving climate change
Rolling set of medium-term targets
Continual adaptation planning

What and how?
5-year cycles of adaptation programmes and risk assessments
Scrutinised by CCC

Outcomes
Introduced climate change risk into public and private sector decision-making
Prepares for the now unavoidable impacts
Duties and powers to deliver

**What and how?**

- Government is accountable to Parliament to deliver
- Government obliged to produce plans to meet budgets
- CCC provides annual progress reports to Parliament
- Judicial review if non-compliant

**Outcomes**

- Assigns clear responsibilities
- Holds government accountable
- Enables public scrutiny
- Provides basis for policy implementation
Independent advisory body

What and how?
- Committee on Climate Change: experts and secretariat
- Recommends carbon budgets
- Monitors progress on emissions reduction and climate resilience

Outcomes
- Independent, objective analysis
- Long-term consistency in approach across government
- Transparency and legitimacy
- More informed decision-making
Roles and responsibilities

- **Recommend to Parliament** appropriate emissions reduction targets (carbon budgets levels).
- **Advise the Government** on the risks and opportunities from climate change and evaluate its National Adaptation Programme (through the ASC).
- **Monitor and assess progress on reducing emissions and on climate resilience.** Annual progress report to Parliament, to which the Government has a statutory obligation to respond.
- **Provide on-demand advice to the UK Government and the devolved administrations** of Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales on specific questions of climate policy (e.g. aviation emissions, renewable energy, the climate impact of shale gas extraction and devolved climate policy).
Background of CCC and ASC members (no. of members)

- CCC: 8 members
- ASC: 6 members
- Some have expertise across several areas
The CCC’s statutory advice on carbon targets has generally been followed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>CCC recommendation</th>
<th>Parliamentary decision</th>
<th>Advice implemented…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2050 target (2008)</td>
<td>Reduce all greenhouse gas emissions by 80% from 1990 level by 2050</td>
<td>Legislated the 2050 target as recommended</td>
<td>Fully</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st, 2nd, carbon budgets (2009)</td>
<td>Set <em>interim budgets</em> that result in a emissions by 2020. Replace them with <em>budgets</em> equivalent to a 42% cut deal</td>
<td>Legislated the interim recommended level. The global deal did not</td>
<td>Fully</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th carbon budget</td>
<td>Set a <em>domestic action</em> budget equivalent by 2025. Change the earlier budgets to previously recommended <em>intended</em> level. tighter <em>global offer</em> budget after a</td>
<td>Legislated the <em>domestic</em> subject to a review in the evolving circumstances. were not changed</td>
<td>Partially</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th carbon budget (2014)</td>
<td>There is no legal or economic basis for the 4th carbon budget</td>
<td>Confirmed the 4th carbon originally set</td>
<td>Fully</td>
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<tr>
<td>5th carbon budget</td>
<td>Set a budget that is equivalent to a emissions by 2030, including emissions international shipping</td>
<td>Legislated a budget requiring cut, but without bringing shipping into the framework</td>
<td>Partially</td>
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</table>

Number of times parliamentarians mention the CCC

- December 2008 to May 2018: the CCC referenced 5 times more than the IPCC
- Opposition politicians mentioned the CCC more often

Source: Averchenkova A, Fankhauser S, and Finnegan J (2018) The role of independent bodies in climate governance: the UK’s Committee on Climate Change, GRI.
Mention of CCC and ASC

In the debates on bills (left)

Share of sittings where the CCC or ASC was mentioned (right)

CCC analysis is used in Parliament to push for greater ambition

The debates on carbon budgets

- Stance towards the CCC
- Political statements towards the Government
- Statements towards ambition

The debates on the Energy Bill 2015-2016

- Stance towards the CCC
- Political statements towards the Government
- Statements towards ambition

References to the CCC:
(i) whether speakers are critical or supportive of the CCC/its analysis;
(ii) where speakers adopt a stance towards Government policy whether CCC evidence is used to support or criticise Government policy;
(iii) where speakers call for action whether CCC evidence is used to advocate increased action (labelled ‘supportive’) or reduced action (labelled ‘critical’).

Key Learnings

- **CCC has had a strong influence on UK climate policy.** Its analysis is used and trusted by stakeholders on all sides of the debate, its statutory advice has generally been followed.

- **The CCC has made a material difference to climate policy** in terms of objectives (the statutory carbon targets), process (impact on parliamentary debate) and substance (e.g. influencing new laws on energy, infrastructure, housing and water).

- **CCC analysis is used in Parliament to push for greater ambition.**

- CCC analysis often provides a technical **justification to political arguments** for greater accountability and more ambitious action.

- **The CCC has gained a reputation as an authoritative advisor** not only on matters of climate policy, but on climate-smart public policy more generally.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key elements of the legal framework</th>
<th>Qualitative assessment</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Institutional system</strong></td>
<td>Level of complexity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Coordination of implementation</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Independent advice</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Devolution</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Stakeholder engagement</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Targets</strong></td>
<td>Coverage of key governance functions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Long term-target</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Near and mid-term targets</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Sectoral targets</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Ratchet mechanism</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Consistency with the NDC targets</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Policy instruments</strong></td>
<td>Clarity of institutional mandates</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Processes for developing and adopting policies</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Concrete instruments embedded in laws</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Finance</strong></td>
<td>Level of flexibility vs. prescription</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Clarification of budgets</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Financial instruments</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Monitoring, accountability and enforcement</strong></td>
<td>Overall consistency with the Paris agreement</td>
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For more information see:

The Governance and Legislation research programme:
http://www.lse.ac.uk/GranthamInstitute/research-theme/governance-and-legislation/

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Thank you!