

Concise Minutes – Climate Change Expert Reference Group

Meeting Venue:

Conference Room C – Tŷ Hywel

Meeting date: Tuesday, 28 February
2017

Meeting time: 14.45 – 17.00

Attendance

Category	Names
Group Members:	Paul Allen Mari Arthur Martin Bishop Steve Brooks James Byrne Haf Elgar Professor Nick Jenkins Chris Jofeh Professor Calvin Jones Shea Jones Professor Ian Knight Jess McQuade Professor Nick Pidgeon David Reilly Neville Rookes Professor James Scourse Jeremy Smith



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	Emma Thomas David Weatherall Dr Lorraine Whitmarsh Matthew Williams Sean O'Neill
Others in attendance:	Vikki Howells AM David Melding AM Mark Reckless AM
Committee Staff:	Marc Wyn Jones (Secretariat) Chloe Corbyn (Researcher)
Apologies:	Professor Stuart Irvine Keith Jones

1 Introduction from the Chair of the Climate Change, Environment and Rural Affairs Committee (CCERA)

Mark Reckless AM set out the background to the establishment of the Expert Reference Group on Climate Change ('the group') and its purpose.

Feedback from stakeholders had indicated that a gap had been left by the winding down of the Climate Change Commission for Wales. The purpose of the group was to: harness external expertise and inform the annual scrutiny session on climate change by the CCERA Committee and subsequent Plenary debate.

Mark Reckless agreed to write to Assembly Committee Chairs before the scrutiny session to emphasise that Climate Change spans across all of their Committees' remits.

Members of the group endorsed the plan for CCERA to scrutinise Cabinet Secretaries, in particular the Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Infrastructure on the plans for the M4 Relief Road.

The importance of community involvement, and trying to make issues understandable and relevant to the people of Wales was highlighted. However, the group felt that given the resources available the outreach and education role of the previous Commission

was no longer possible and the expertise of the group would be better directed towards holding the Welsh Government to account.

2 Introduction from Peter Davies, former Chair of the Climate Change Commission for Wales

Peter Davies gave a recap of the work of the Commission:

- Its remit had been to provide advice, build consensus and mobilise action.
- The strength of the Commission was that it was independent but also had cross party political representation.
- Outreach work had been valuable. The close working relationship with the UKCCC was important. The Commission had made an important contribution to legislation e.g. the targets in the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.

Elements that people felt could have been improved, included:

- The scrutiny of the Welsh Government may have been compromised because some representatives received funding from WG;
- The Commission were often not engaged early enough in policy development to have sufficient influence;
- It was clear to the Commission that the climate change team in the WG were under-resourced.

Suggested areas of work for the expert reference group included:

- Clearer accountability across the public sector and consistency of decision-making.
- The need a consistent approach across government e.g. spending grants and procurements – needs to be embedded across policy areas.

3 Comments from Jenny Rathbone AM

Jenny Rathbone AM highlighted the need to continue to build consensus on climate change mitigation, both at a community level and at an international level. There is also a need to build consensus as the UK leaves the EU. Jenny stressed the importance of leadership across government and the public sector. A joined-up approach across Welsh Government is needed because the Cabinet Secretary for Environment and Rural Affairs cannot deliver the climate change obligations without others, this is 'everybody's business'.

4 Discussion session – chaired by Marc Wyn Jones, Clerk to the CCERA Committee

The group agreed the following:

- The group will meet 3 times a year – once in each Assembly term.
- The group will meet privately, by invitation only but the minutes of each meeting will be published on the CCERA web page.
- The group may use smaller, task and finish groups to undertake tasks where specific expertise is needed;
- In advance of the next meeting a paper will be prepared which summarises:
 - 1) The relevant legislation from the UK and Welsh Governments which set out action for the Welsh Government on climate change, e.g. Environment (Wales) Act 2016 and the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act;
 - 2) The commitments made by the Welsh Government on climate change action, for instance in the Programme for Government; and
 - 3) The metrics by which the Welsh Government will measure their success in tackling climate change.

The Terms of Reference were discussed and members agreed that, given the resources within the group, the focus should be on holding the Welsh Government to account.

The proposed terms of reference were amended and agreed as:

To provide the Climate Change, Environment and Rural Affairs Committee with expert advice in support of its scrutiny of Welsh Government progress towards meeting climate change policy commitments, statutory targets and duties. This includes climate change mitigation and adaptation measures.

This will include:

- providing advice in support of an annual scrutiny round;
- supporting the Committee with its post-legislative scrutiny of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

The group agreed to invite a representative from the Future Generations Commissioner's Office to attend the next meeting to discuss the Commissioner's priorities and action in relation to climate change.

During the session the group also discussed

- The need to investigate climate change and land use in Wales;
- The food chain in Wales and climate change impacts ;
- It was noted that a large percentage of GHG emissions are under the Welsh Government control.
- The scrutiny of the Welsh Government should examine if they have set the right targets, as well as whether or not they are meeting them. It was suggested the group invite expertise from the Tyndall group.

- It was suggested that the group carry out an assessment of progress on adaptation.
- One line of inquiry could be to assess the Welsh Government's statement on energy to see if it is at the scale and pace needed to meet GHG emission reduction targets.
- The group could investigate what the Welsh Government are using for performance targets / metrics in this area. For instance, are they using the number of houses which have installed insulation under the Arbed scheme as a measure of success?
- It was suggested that the work of the Climate Change Commission for Wales is evaluated with a view to trying to understand the extent to which its recommendations were implemented.
- It was suggested that the group could identify possible areas where the CCERA Committee could undertake further work.

Membership of the group

There was a discussion on the membership of the group, in particular, whether the Future Generations Commissioner/a representative from her office should be a member.

Some members felt that given 3 of the 7 wellbeing goals related to climate change it was vital that her office is represented. Some members commented that it would be difficult to hold her office to account if they are members of the group. It was suggested that the Commissioner's office could have observer status for specific items in certain meetings.

It was suggested that representatives from pension funds, the insurance industry, the financial sector and Energy UK should be invited to be part of the group.

It was agreed that the Chair of the group will be elected at the next meeting.

5 Date of next meeting

22 May 2017

Tŷ Hywel, Cardiff Bay