

Debate Pack

Number CDP-0144 (2021)

By Dominic Carver,
Alex Adcock

15 September 2021

General debate on the Role and the response of the devolved administrations to COP26

1	Background	2
2	Devolved administrations	5
2.1	Scotland	5
2.2	Wales	6
2.3	Northern Ireland	7
3	Press	9
4	Parliamentary material	10
4.1	UK Parliament	10
4.2	Scottish Parliament	16
4.3	Welsh Parliament	17
4.4	Northern Ireland Assembly	18

1

Background

This autumn, the United Kingdom, in partnership with Italy, is hosting the 26th [Conference of the Parties](#) (COP26) in Glasgow. The event will run from 31 October to 12 November 2021. This is the international [United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change](#) (UNFCCC) conference on climate change held every year and attended by signatory countries and other parties, 196 in total.

COP26 will be the largest summit the UK has ever hosted, with over 30,000 delegates, including world leaders, experts, campaigners and government officials.¹

Further details on the event can be found on the [UKCOP26 website](#). The Commons Library briefing [COP26: the international climate change conference](#), published in July 2021, also contains further background information and details on the UK's presidency, COP26 priorities and progress. The Library's [Climate Change overview](#) page also provides further links to UK climate change policy and parliamentary material.

UK Climate Change Policy and Devolved Responsibilities

The UK as a whole is signatory and party to the UNFCCC and other international treaties. However, climate change mitigation and adaptation policy is devolved to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

The [Climate Change Act 2008](#) was introduced as “an Act to set a target for the year 2050 for the reduction of targeted greenhouse gas emissions.” The Act included a statutory target of an 80% reduction in UK greenhouse gas emissions (relative to 1990 levels) by 2050. The Act also led to the establishment of the Climate Change Committee (CCC), an independent, statutory body responsible for advising the UK and devolved governments on emissions targets. The CCC also reports to Parliament on progress made in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and preparing for and adapting to the impacts of climate change.

In May 2019, the CCC recommended that the UK as a whole should amend the Act's decarbonisation target to be net zero on all greenhouse gases by 2050. However, the Committee recommended different dates for different devolved nations; “Scotland should set a net zero Greenhous Gas target for 2045 and Wales should target a 95% reduction by 2050.”²

The [Climate Change Act 2008 \(2050 Target Amendment\) Order 2019](#) (the 2019 amendment Order) amends Section 1 of the Climate Change Act 2008 to

¹ United Nations Environment Programme, [UN Climate Change Conference \(COP26\)](#)

² Climate Change Committee, [Net Zero – The UK's contribution to stopping global warming](#), 2 May 2019

change the target for the net UK carbon account from at least 80% lower than the 1990 baseline to at least 100% lower. It came into force on 27 June 2019.

The [Sixth Carbon Budget](#), published by the Climate Change Committee (CCC) in December 2020, highlighted that “UK climate targets cannot be met without strong policy action across Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, tailored for national, regional and local needs.” The report also noted that “frameworks in Wales and Scotland are ahead of the rest of the UK.”³ The report stated that:

While some important policy levers are held in Westminster, powers are fully or partially devolved in most key areas, including encouraging shifts to walking, cycling and public transport; providing electric vehicle charging points; improvements to the efficiency and comfort of the building stock and heating in homes off the gas grid; agriculture and land use; waste; carbon trading; and public provision of education and training. Northern Ireland also has wider devolved powers over energy networks.

The frameworks in Wales and Scotland are ahead of the rest of the UK in emphasising the importance of the potential health and environment benefits, and the need for a just transition. Wales’ Wellbeing of Future Generations Act and Scotland’s Just Transition Commission will be important in ensuring this.

Even where the main policy levers are held by the UK Government, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland can take action through complementary measures at the devolved level (e.g. provision of additional incentives, public engagement, and supporting policies such as planning and consenting).⁴

The latest report from the CCC on [progress in reducing emissions](#), published in June 2021, highlights that Scotland has decarbonised faster than the rest of the UK largely due to decarbonisation in the power sector. However, the report emphasised the increasingly important role of the devolved administration in tackling change as efforts move beyond the power sector:

The governments of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland will have an increasingly important role to play in tackling climate change as progress extends beyond the power sector and into sectors where key powers are devolved.

As UK-wide emissions reductions extend beyond the power sector, the next decade presents an opportunity for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland to match or exceed UK Government action in key devolved areas

³ Climate Change Committee, [Sixth Carbon Budget](#), December 2020

⁴ Climate Change Committee, [Sixth Carbon Budget](#), December 2020

such as agriculture, tree planting, waste management, buildings efficiency, and public transport.⁵

COP 26 Coordination

A [statement made by the COP26 President-Designate](#), Alok Sharma, in March 2021, provided an update on the work being done towards the summit and the objectives of the UK Presidency. On domestic and devolved administration engagement the statement provided the following information:

We are working with the Scottish Government, the Welsh Government and the Northern Ireland Executive to ensure an inclusive and ambitious summit for the whole of the UK. All parts of the UK will have important roles to play in ensuring the summit's success.

I have invited climate change Ministers from the Scottish Government, the Welsh Government and the Northern Ireland Executive to participate in a regular Devolved Administrations Group to ensure effective engagement and collaboration on COP26 in support of the delivery of an inclusive and welcoming COP26 representative of the whole of the UK.

I also chair the COP26 UK Mayors' and Regions Advisory Council with mayors and council leaders from across the UK, including Glasgow, Edinburgh, Cardiff and Belfast. In addition to ongoing engagement with stakeholders across the UK, to ensure an inclusive, whole of society COP26, that is representative of all of the UK in Glasgow.⁶

For further details please refer to the [full written statement](#).

⁵ Climate Change Committee, [2021 Progress Report to Parliament](#), 24 June 2021

⁶ [Statement UIN HCWS858](#), COP26 Update, 18 March 2021

2 Devolved administrations

The following sections of the debate pack provide links to briefings and reports on climate change mitigation and policy in the devolved administrations.

2.1 Scotland

A briefing paper on [COP26 - An Introduction to the UN Conference of the Parties](#), published by the Scottish Parliamentary Information Centre (SPICe) provides information on COP26 and includes a section on UK and Scottish policy on climate change. This sets out the following:

The [Climate Change \(Emissions Reduction Targets\) \(Scotland\) Act 2019](#) amends the [Climate Change \(Scotland\) Act 2009](#) and sets a GHG emissions reduction target (against a 1990 baseline) of net-zero emissions by 2045. This is in line with [advice from the CCC](#), is five years ahead of the UK target, and reflects Scotland's greater relative capacity to remove emissions than the UK as a whole, due to a larger land area per person and significant carbon dioxide (the main GHG) storage potential through trees and peatland. Interim targets have also been set for reductions of:

- 75% by 2030.
- 90% by 2040.

The 2009 Act also requires the Scottish Government to produce a plan setting out proposals and policies for meeting future emissions reduction targets. Known as the Climate Change Plan (CCP), it is published every five years and generally covers a 15 year timespan. The most recent CCP was published in 2018, and covers the period out to 2032. An update to the most recent CCP sets out Scotland's path, across eight key sectors, to achieving a 75% reduction in emissions by 2030, and ultimately net-zero emissions by 2045. The update is a crucial staging post in Scotland's trajectory to netzero, as it encompasses the interim 2030 target, which the CCC consider to be "extremely challenging".⁷

The final section of the [SPICe briefing paper](#) provides details of Scottish Parliament's involvement at COP26 which include hosting an international summit and a series of other events.

⁷ SPICe, [COP26 - An Introduction to the UN Conference of the Parties](#), 31 May 2021

Further information on climate change, the role of Scottish Parliament and achieving targets is available on the [Climate Change – Subject Profile](#) page on the Scottish Parliament website.

The [Scottish Government page on Climate Change](#) provides the latest news and information on policy which may be useful.

In March 2019, the Scottish Affairs Committee launched an inquiry into [renewable energy in Scotland](#). Information on the inquiry page states that it is likely to examine the following:

- how ‘net-zero’ targets can be met by development of renewable energy in Scotland;
- the technologies that would best serve Scotland and how challenges in their development can be overcome;
- employment potential of renewables in Scotland and how a ‘just transition’ for oil and gas workers can be achieved; and
- how the UK and Scottish Governments can work together to reach their green goals.⁸

2.2

Wales

The article [Climate change: the path to zero emissions](#) published by Senedd Research in May 2021 provides an overview of Welsh policy and legislation for achieving net zero and the progress to date. This states that:

In 2019 the CCC [advised the Welsh Government](#) to amend its 2050 target and reduce emissions by 95% by that date. The Welsh Government [accepted this advice](#) and declared its ambition to achieve net-zero by 2050. [Revised advice from the CCC in December 2020](#) recommended that Wales should set and pursue the more ambitious net-zero by 2050 target.

In February 2021 the Welsh Government laid [four further sets of regulations](#). These:

- amended the 2050 emissions target to net-zero;
- increased the 2030 target to 63% (from 45%) and the 2040 target to 89% (from 67%), and;
- set the third carbon budget (2026-2030).⁹

⁸ Scottish Affairs Committee, [Renewable energy in Scotland](#).

⁹ Senedd Research, [Climate change: the path to zero emissions](#), 18 May 2021

The article also provides an overview of the Welsh Government’s progress on working towards its emissions targets.

Emissions of greenhouse gases in Wales have fallen by 31% since 1990. The [most recent data](#) shows that Welsh emissions fell by 8% in 2018, and between 2016 and 2018 they reduced by close to 20%. As things stand, it looks like Wales is on track to meet its 2020 emissions target of a 27% reduction against the 1990 baseline, as long as emissions didn’t increase in 2019 and 2020. This won’t be confirmed until the data is available later this year.¹⁰

Further details on the emissions reductions across different sectors and an analysis of how effect current measures are is provide in the full article which can be read [here](#).

In Autumn 2021, the Welsh Government is set to publish its second statutory decarbonisation plan (LCDP2). A [report outlining the approach to engagement for delivering LCDP 2](#) contains further information. .

2.3 Northern Ireland

In May 2021, the Research and Information Service (RaISe) published a briefing paper on the [Climate Change \(Northern Ireland\) Bill 2021](#), a Private Members Bill introduced to the Northern Ireland Assembly on 22 March 2021 . This provides an overview of climate change legislation and policy in Northern Ireland (NI) and highlights that NI currently does not have specific climate change legislation and targets. However, the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs has conducted a consultation on possible proposals for a NI Climate Change Act (December 2020-February 2021).

The UK Climate Change Act 2008 (which sets the UK wide decarbonisation target of net zero by 2050) extends to Northern Ireland and whilst there are no specific targets for NI it is implicit that NI contributes to the UK effort under the Act. Under this Act, NI is also required to produce a Climate Change Adaptation Programme (NICCAP) “setting out the objectives, the proposals and policies for meeting those objectives including time scales for their introduction, so to address the relevant risks specific to NI identified in the most recent UK-wide Climate Change Risk Assessment (CCRA).”¹¹ The first NI CCAP was published in 2014. NICCAP2 covers 2019-2024, it focuses “on priority areas which have been identified in the NI Evidence Report as requiring urgent adaptation action over the next five years. Focus is also on those adaptation actions which will make the most impact” and “sets the

¹⁰ Senedd Research, [Climate change: the path to zero emissions](#), 18 May 2021

¹¹ DAERA, [Northern Ireland Climate Change Adaptation Programme 2019-2024](#), 20 September 2019

strategies, policies and actions by which government departments will deliver on the agreed outcome objectives.”¹²

Section 1.2 of the [RaISe briefing paper](#) provides a further overview of climate change policy in NI which includes links to the following documents:

- [The Draft Programme for Government Framework](#)
- [New Decade, New Approach](#)
- [NI Greenhouse Gas Reduction Strategy and Action Plan 2011](#)

A RaISe briefing on [Northern Ireland and Net Zero](#) published in March 2021 contains further information on net zero targets across the UK which may be useful.

¹² DAERA, [Northern Ireland Climate Change Adaptation Programme 2019-2024](#), 20 September 2019

3

Press

Belfastlive, 13 September 2021

[COP26 representation and Climate Bill Northern Ireland at risk if DUP collapse Stormont warns SDLP leader](#)

Northern Ireland is the only part of the UK and Ireland that doesn't have legislation on the climate crisis

Scotsman, 25 July 2021

[Climate change: How Scotland can play a key role at vital Cop26 summit – Stop Climate Chaos Scotland](#)

Scotsman, 7 July 2021

[Emails reveal tensions between Scottish and UK governments over COP26](#)

Scotsman, 18 June 2021

[UK's COP26 president Alok Sharma under fire over 'lax' attitude towards global climate talks in Glasgow](#)

Herald, 15 June 2021

[SNP minister admits missed emissions target 'wake-up call'](#)

BBC News, 3 February 2021

[Climate change: Wales 'must take advantage of COP26'](#)

4 Parliamentary material

4.1 UK Parliament

House of Commons Debate

[COP26 Conference Priorities](#)

Parliamentary proceedings | 699 cc496-473WH

Thursday 22 July 2021

PQs

[Ethics and Human Rights: Climate Change](#)

Asked by: Steven Bonnar (Coatbridge, Chryston and Bellshill) (SNP)
| **Party:** Scottish National Party

What preparations he has made for discussion at COP26 of (a) ethics and (b) human rights matters relating to climate change.

Answered by: The Minister for Business, Energy and Clean Growth (Anne-Marie Trevelyan) | **Party:** Conservative Party | **Department:** COP26

The UK recognises the serious and unequivocal threat that climate change poses to our planet, and that it can indeed undermine the enjoyment of human rights. The Paris agreement preamble states that respecting and promoting our human rights is fundamental to effective climate implementation. Therefore, human rights are a cross-cutting consideration in all climate action, so we will be working with all countries this year to achieve an ambitious, inclusive and shared outcome from COP26 to help safeguard human rights.

14 Jul 2021 | Oral questions - Lead | Answered | House of Commons | House of Commons chamber | 902689 | 699 cc354-5

Asked by: Steven Bonnar | **Party:** Scottish National Party

I thank the Minister for that answer. Scotland was not only the first country in the world to declare a climate emergency, but the first in the world to establish a dedicated climate justice fund—a fund that was recently doubled by the SNP Scottish Government in Edinburgh. Will the UK Government, ahead of COP Glasgow, match Scotland's ambitions? Will this Government create such a fund, and will the Minister and the COP26 President ensure that the focus of COP26 is placed squarely on the rights of those who will be affected first and foremost by the climate emergency?

Answered by: Anne-Marie Trevelyan | **Party:** Conservative Party
| **Department:** COP26

As my right hon. Friend the COP26 President set out, the UK remains one of the largest donors in supporting a number of areas, including, obviously, humanitarian assistance and humanitarian rights. I would be interested to hear more on the details of the climate justice fund to understand the premise of it, but the UK continues to have an absolutely clear commitment to that.

14 Jul 2021 | Oral questions - 1st Supplementary | Answered | House of Commons | House of Commons chamber | 699 c354

[Environment Protection: Wales](#)

Asked by: Jones, Ruth | **Party:** Labour Party

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, what discussions he has had with the COP29 President on promoting a green recovery from the covid-19 outbreak in (a) Newport West constituency and (b) Wales.

Answering member: Simon Hart | **Party:** Conservative Party
| **Department:** Wales Office

I have had a number of discussions with the COP26 President Designate about the opportunities that exist in Wales to support the drive to net zero, including as part of the COP26 Devolved Administrations Ministerial Group, which I last attended on 10 June.

The UK Government is actively progressing plans to deliver a Green Industrial Revolution that drives the transition to net zero and levels up across the UK. The Prime Minister set out his ambitious 10 Point Plan back in November, which will mobilise £12 billion of UK Government investment to create and support up to 250,000 highly-skilled green jobs across the UK, and spur over three times as much private sector investment by 2030.

As I set out in the UK Government's Plan for Wales, Wales is at the heart of this agenda. We have backed the South Wales Industrial Cluster with £21.5 million to develop detailed plans to support the region's net zero transition. We are supporting floating offshore wind, which has the potential to deliver significant supply chain benefits to South Wales and beyond, with a range of policy measures. In addition, we have committed £15.9 million to pioneer low-carbon transport technologies in Cwmbran.

We recognise there is more to do and will bring forward a Net Zero Strategy and plans to decarbonise buildings and transport later this year, which will present further opportunities to the people of Newport West, wider South East Wales and beyond.

28 Jun 2021 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 20525

[Air Pollution: Northern Ireland Executive](#)

Asked by: Jones, Ruth | **Party:** Labour Party

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, when he last had discussions with the Northern Ireland Executive on tackling toxic air.

Answering member: Mr Robin Walker | **Party:** Conservative Party
| **Department:** Northern Ireland Office

Air quality in Northern Ireland is a matter for the Northern Ireland Executive.

The UK Government is committed to delivering action on climate change at a global scale through its leadership at COP26. The UK Government has committed to reduce emissions by 78% by 2035 compared to 1990 levels, ahead of achieving Net Zero by 2050. This will deliver cleaner air, as well as jobs, prosperity, and a brighter future.

We will deliver this action across the whole United Kingdom and Northern Ireland has an important role to play in that. Northern Ireland has great potential to become a leader in hydrogen technology, and the UK Government has supported this including providing £11.2m to Wrightbus to develop and manufacture low-cost hydrogen fuel cell technology for buses and create a hydrogen centre of excellence. In addition, through the New Decade, New Approach agreement the UK Government has provided £50m over two years to support the rollout of ultra-low emission public transport.

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland regularly meets with stakeholders across Northern Ireland, including Executive Ministers, and discusses climate change in Northern Ireland. In addition, the COP26 President chairs the COP26 Devolved Administrations Ministerial Group, which meets quarterly.

24 Jun 2021 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 16953

[UN Climate Conference 2021](#)

Asked by: Maskell, Rachael | **Party:** Labour Party · Cooperative Party

To ask the President of COP26, what steps he will take to involve all the regions of the UK in the COP26 summit.

Answering member: Alok Sharma | **Party:** Conservative Party
| **Department:** COP26

We are committed to ensuring an inclusive, whole of society COP26, representative of all of the UK. This will be a key objective as we select organisations to be represented in the Green Zone and on the UK Pavilion. Through our domestic 'Together for our Planet' campaign we are building awareness and understanding of COP26 across the UK, giving people the chance to get involved in the run-up to the Summit. For example, we recently ran our Creative Earth art competition inviting young people from around the UK to design artwork setting out their vision for the planet, and the winners will be showcased at COP26 in November. We have also encouraged stakeholders who would like to be involved in events or showcasing in UKG managed spaces at COP26 to submit bids through an Expression of Interest

process, and we have received proposals from stakeholders from across the UK.

We are working with the Scottish Government, Welsh Government and Northern Ireland Executive to ensure an inclusive and ambitious summit for the whole of the UK. All parts of the UK will have important roles to play in ensuring the summit's success. I have invited climate change Ministers from the Scottish Government, Welsh Government and Northern Ireland Executive to participate in a regular devolved administrations Group to ensure effective engagement and collaboration on COP26 in support of the delivery of an inclusive and welcoming COP26. The third meeting was held last week.

I also chair the COP26 UK Mayors and Regions Advisory Council with mayors and local leaders from across the UK. The most recent meeting was on 15 March. Additionally, we work closely with several Non-State Actor organisations such as UK100 to further engage with local leaders.

21 Jun 2021 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 13141

[UN Climate Conference 2021: Third Sector](#)

Asked by: Crosbie, Virginia | **Party:** Conservative Party

To ask the President of COP26, what steps he is taking to work with the Welsh Government to ensure there are opportunities for civil society to engage with COP26.

Answering member: Alok Sharma | **Party:** Conservative Party
| Department: COP26

Civil society, with their links to on-the-ground communities and practitioners, are key partners to achieve the goals we have set for COP26. This is why I have set up an International COP26 Civil Society and Youth Advisory Council so that we can hear and act on the knowledge of civil society groups. My officials run regular, open-invite calls with a large network of civil society organisations to share updates on our planning for COP26, which are regularly attended by Welsh groups.

We are working with the Welsh Government, alongside the other devolved administrations, to ensure an inclusive and ambitious COP26 for the whole of the UK. As part of this, I chair the COP26 Devolved Administrations (DAs) Ministerial meeting with climate change ministers from the DAs. The COP26 Unit also worked with the Welsh Government and other DAs to encourage proposals from stakeholders across the UK via the Expression of Interest process for events or showcasing in UK Government managed spaces at COP26.

09 Jun 2021 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 10714

[COP26](#)

Asked by: Angela Crawley (Lanark and Hamilton East) (SNP) [V]
| Party: Scottish National Party

The SNP Scottish Government have committed to doubling their climate change justice fund if re-elected next week. This £21 million fund is used to help combat the effects of climate change in the global south while we tackle carbon emissions at home. In the year of COP26, will the UK Government follow Scotland's lead and commit to a comparable climate justice fund to help those affected by climate change?

Answered by: David Duguid | **Party:** Conservative Party
| **Department:** Scotland

Not only will we commit to a comparable financial commitment, but the recent spending review committed to spending £12 billion on green measures to support the 10-point plan and boost the UK's global leadership on green infrastructure and technologies, not just ahead of COP26 this year, but beyond as well.

28 Apr 2021 | Oral questions - Supplementary | Answered | House of Commons
| House of Commons chamber | 693 c362

[Climate Change Convention: Northern Ireland](#)

Asked by: Young, Jacob | **Party:** Conservative Party

What discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on the opportunities for Northern Ireland in COP26.

Answering member: Mr Robin Walker | **Party:** Conservative Party
| **Department:** Northern Ireland Office

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and I have attended cross-government meetings with the COP President, most recently on 22 March. I also recently met with the Chair of the Expert Panel on the Future of Energy to discuss the NI Executive's Energy Strategy and how the UK Government can help in developing this. We continue to press for engagement with the Executive and Northern Ireland businesses in order to promote Northern Ireland's interests.

Recent announcements of New Deal funding to support green technology in Northern Ireland and support for the production of hydrogen buses in Ballymena reflect the priority which this Government has given to decarbonisation. We all want to see Northern Ireland play a big role in the Green Industrial Revolution, and COP26 will provide us an opportunity to showcase Northern Ireland's many advances in green technologies.

21 Apr 2021 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 914373

[UN Climate Conference 2021](#)

Asked by: Jones, Ruth | **Party:** Labour Party

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, what discussions he has had with (a) Cabinet colleagues and (b) the Welsh Government on preparations for COP26.

Answering member: Simon Hart | **Party:** Conservative Party
| **Department:** Wales Office

I have regular discussions with the Welsh Government and Cabinet colleagues on a wide range of climate change matters, including the preparations for COP26 to ensure an inclusive and ambitious COP26 for the whole of the UK. This includes when I recently met the Welsh Government Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs at the COP26 Devolved Administrations Ministerial Group on 22 March 2021.

The COP26 Devolved Administrations Ministerial Group brings together the COP26 President Designate, Territorial Secretaries of State and climate change ministers from the devolved administrations to ensure effective engagement and collaboration on COP26 and will meet quarterly in the run up to the summit. There is also ongoing official-level engagement with the Welsh Government on COP26.

21 Apr 2021 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 181435

[Climate Change Convention: Northern Ireland](#)

Asked by: Jupp, Simon | **Party:** Conservative Party

What discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on potential opportunities for Northern Ireland at COP26.

Answering member: Mr Robin Walker | **Party:** Conservative Party
| **Department:** Northern Ireland Office

We are working closely with colleagues across Government and the NI Executive to support opportunities for Northern Ireland at this important event. This Government has announced a number of initiatives to promote Northern Ireland's potential as a leader in innovative technology, especially in green and clean technologies. This includes the £400 million investment through the New Deal for Northern Ireland.

I recently attended a meeting with the COP President and pressed for continued engagement with the Executive and NI businesses in order to promote Northern Ireland's interests. I also met with Laura Sandys, our former Hon. Friend, to discuss her work as an adviser to NI's energy strategy.

20 Jan 2021 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 910937

[Climate Change Convention](#)

Asked by: Griffith, Andrew | **Party:** Conservative Party

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, what recent discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on the business opportunities for Scotland arising from COP26.

Answering member: Mr Alister Jack | **Party:** Conservative Party
| **Department:** Scotland Office

I have frequent discussions with Cabinet colleagues on the opportunities which COP26 offers for businesses in Scotland and the whole of the UK. The Government is committed to delivering an 'all of UK' COP26 in Glasgow. All parts of the UK will have important roles to play in ensuring the summit's success. We are working with the Scottish Government, Welsh Government and Northern Ireland Executive to ensure an inclusive and ambitious summit for the whole of the UK.

The UK Government is committed to leading the way in tackling climate change working with all countries and with civil society, companies and people on the frontline of climate change, in the UK and globally, to inspire action ahead of COP26. The COP26 Business Leaders group brings together key internationally focused businesses across a broad range of sectors who are taking positive climate action. We are inviting businesses from every corner of the UK to join us in the Race to Zero. Race To Zero is a global initiative, backed by science-based targets, to commit businesses, cities, regions, investors and universities to achieve net zero emissions by 2050 at the very latest.

I am encouraged by the engagement that we have seen so far and look forward to continuing to work with businesses to maximise the opportunities which the summit brings.

20 Jan 2021 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 137358

4.2

Scottish Parliament

[Question ref. S6W-01317](#)

Asked by: Lennon, Monica, Central Scotland

To ask the Scottish Government for what matters it will have responsibility for at COP 26, and what areas of responsibility it will share with the UK Government.

Answered by Michael Matheson on 9 August 2021

From the moment it was announced that COP26 would be coming to Glasgow, the Scottish Government have been fully committed to playing our role in ensuring a safe and secure event. The Government of the United Kingdom hold the presidency of COP26 and are therefore responsible for working alongside the United Nations to organise the main summit and its attached "Green Zone". A joint COP26 delivery framework has been agreed between the Government of the United Kingdom and the Scottish Government, which includes Glasgow City Council and Scottish Agencies. This outlines the plans,

organisation, structure, systems and methodology that will be used to manage delivery of COP26 including appropriate mitigation of impact on business as usual. As the Scottish Government have devolved powers around Safety and Resilience, our colleagues and organisations such as Police Scotland, and Transport Scotland, who are responsible for the COP26 transport plan, have been engaged through the COP26 planning process. With a separate Legal landscape in Scotland, we are responsible for ensuring the correct legislative mechanisms are put in place that will allow the event to happen. The Scottish Government is proactively leading a Scottish response to COP26, ensuring that our communities, businesses and organisations have the opportunities to engage and benefit from COP26 coming to Glasgow. Part of our offering will be to host a Scotland Zone, showcasing the talents, skills and innovative approach that Scotland is taking to addressing the climate emergency.

[Question ref. S6W-01623](#)

Asked by: Liam Kerr, North East Scotland, Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party

To ask the Scottish Government, as of 20 July 2021, how many meetings in relation to COP26 Scottish Ministers have (a) organised and (b) attended.

Answered by Michael Matheson on 16 August 2021

The Scottish Government looks forward to a successful COP26 in November that delivers increased global ambition to net zero in a way that is fair and just. Scottish Ministers have engaged widely on COP26, and will continue to do so in the run up to, during and after the conference.

Between 1 January 2020 and 20 July 2021, all Scottish Ministers (excluding the First Minister) attended a total of 36 meetings in relation to COP26. Between 1 January 2020 and 28 July 2021, the First Minister attended 4 meetings in relation to COP26. The majority of meetings included in these figures are external engagements, including meetings between the previous Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change And Land Reform Ms. Cunningham and the UK Government. Whilst meetings referenced here include those with COP26 as a specified focus of the engagement, a significant amount of climate-related Ministerial meetings since Glasgow was announced as the COP26 host city are likely to have included discussions of COP26 to some extent.

4.3

Welsh Parliament

[WQ83184 \(e\) Tabled on 11/08/2021](#)

Janet Finch-Saunders MS

Will the Minister confirm what plans, events and activities the Welsh Government has scheduled for COP26 later this year?

Answered by Minister for Health and Social Services | Answered on 19/08/2021

We plan to attend COP26 as part of the UK Delegation, as well as joining events with key international networks such as the Under2Coalition and Regions4.

In addition to participating in the events in Glasgow, the Welsh Government will organise a programme of ‘COP Cymru’ activity here in Wales in the lead up to, during and after the UN conference. These events will give opportunities for our stakeholders across Wales to get involved in delivery of our forthcoming Net Zero Plan.

4.4

Northern Ireland Assembly

[AQW 19542/17-22](#)

Mr John Blair

(APNI - South Antrim)

To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs what action his Department is taking, ahead of the UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) in November, to accelerate Northern Ireland's contribution towards the goals of the Paris Agreement.

Answered on 11/06/2021

Following the June 2019 amendment to the UK Climate Change Act 2008, which introduced a UK Net Zero by 2050 target in line with the Paris Agreement, I wrote to Lord Deben, the Chair of the UK Climate Change Committee (CCC), the Statutory Advisors to Government on climate change, to seek their expert advice on what would be Northern Ireland's fair and equitable contribution to the UK Net Zero target.

The CCC advised that Northern Ireland's fair and equitable contribution to UK Net Zero by 2050 should be to achieve at least an 82% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from the 1990 baseline year.

The commitment in New Decade New Approach (NDNA) was for the Executive to tackle climate change head on with a strategy to address the immediate and longer term impacts of climate disruption and to introduce legislation and targets for reducing carbon emissions in line with the Paris Climate Change Accord.

After consideration of the outcome of my consultation on the matter, and the expert advice and evidence I received from the independent UK Climate Change Committee in Dec 2020, I have brought before my Executive

Colleagues for their agreement, my policy proposals for a Climate Change Bill for Northern Ireland. My Department along with the Office of Legislative Council are also well advanced in the drafting of a Climate Change Bill based on my proposals, a Bill which if enacted will set legally binding net greenhouse gas emissions reductions targets in Northern Ireland in line with the CCC's advice. I intend to seek agreement on my draft Bill and accompanying Explanatory and Financial Memorandum from my Executive colleagues in the coming weeks. Once Executive agreement is secured to proceed, I intend to move quickly to introduce my Bill to the Assembly, as I want to see my Bill complete its legislative passage within the lifetime of the current Assembly mandate so as to deliver on NDNA.

In June last year I announced ambitious plans for my Department to lead on the development of a Green Growth Strategy for Northern Ireland. The Strategy operates under the oversight of the Executive through an Inter-Ministerial Group (IMG), which I chair, and will require all Departments to work together collaboratively to deliver our objectives. The Strategy and associated Climate Action Plan will be our route map to accelerate delivery on climate action, green jobs and a clean environment. The Strategy will look out to 2050, in line with the Paris Agreement, and provide a pathway for delivery of sector-specific greenhouse gas emission targets. The Climate Action Plan will focus on the shorter term actions we must take across all sectors to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in Northern Ireland.

A Green Growth Strategy Framework has been drafted by my Department, with input other Departments. You will have had sight of the draft Green Growth Strategy Framework, as it was shared with the AERA Committee members for their consideration. Once all feedback is received and taken into account I will seek the Executive's endorsement prior to publication. My intention is that the draft strategy will be published for consultation in advance of COP26 in November 2021 with delivery of a final strategy by the end of March 2022. The Green Growth Strategy and Climate Action Plan will provide a strong foundation to drive forward action.

Ahead of COP26 my Department is also leading on the development of a number of important areas of policy including an NI Peatlands Strategy, an NI Environment Strategy and ongoing programmes such as 'Forests for Our Future' which I launched in March 2020.

[AQW 19541/17-22](#)

Mr John Blair

(APNI - South Antrim)

To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs when he last discussed the climate emergency with his counterparts in the UK government.

Answered on 16/06/2021

I have regular discussions with my counterparts in the UK Government and

the other Devolved Administrations, on a range of matters relating to climate change, through a number of working groups. These include through the Net Zero, Energy and Climate Change Inter-Ministerial Group (IMG) which last met on 12 April 2021 and is due to meet again on 30 June 2021.

Additionally I am also in regular discussions with my Ministerial counterparts in the other Devolved Administrations, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and Alok Sharma MP, the COP26 President elect, through the COP 26 Devolved Administrations Ministerial Group which recently met on 10 June 2021.

Disclaimer

The Commons Library does not intend the information in our research publications and briefings to address the specific circumstances of any particular individual. We have published it to support the work of MPs. You should not rely upon it as legal or professional advice, or as a substitute for it. We do not accept any liability whatsoever for any errors, omissions or misstatements contained herein. You should consult a suitably qualified professional if you require specific advice or information. Read our briefing '[Legal help: where to go and how to pay](#)' for further information about sources of legal advice and help. This information is provided subject to the conditions of the Open Parliament Licence.

Feedback

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in these publicly available briefings is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware however that briefings are not necessarily updated to reflect subsequent changes.

If you have any comments on our briefings please email papers@parliament.uk. Please note that authors are not always able to engage in discussions with members of the public who express opinions about the content of our research, although we will carefully consider and correct any factual errors.

You can read our feedback and complaints policy and our editorial policy at commonslibrary.parliament.uk. If you have general questions about the work of the House of Commons email hcenquiries@parliament.uk.

The House of Commons Library is a research and information service based in the UK Parliament. Our impartial analysis, statistical research and resources help MPs and their staff scrutinise legislation, develop policy, and support constituents.

Our published material is available to everyone on commonslibrary.parliament.uk.

Get our latest research delivered straight to your inbox. Subscribe at commonslibrary.parliament.uk/subscribe or scan the code below:



 commonslibrary.parliament.uk

 [@commonslibrary](https://twitter.com/commonslibrary)