House of Commons

Environmental Audit Committee

The Seventh Carbon Budget

Eighth Report of Session 2024–26

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Environmental Audit Committee

The Environmental Audit Committee is appointed by the House of Commons to consider to what extent the policies and programmes of government departments and non-departmental public bodies contribute to environmental protection and sustainable development; to audit their performance against such targets as may be set for them by His Majesty's Ministers; and to report thereon to the House.

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1. The Seventh Carbon Budget (CB7) will set legally binding limits on UK greenhouse gas emissions for the period 2038–2042 and is a critical checkpoint on the UK's statutory pathway to net zero by 2050. The Climate Change Committee (CCC) has advised that CB7 should be set at 535 $MtCO_2e$ and has characterised this level as ambitious but deliverable. We agree that the CCC's advised level is technically credible and represents a necessary continuation of the UK's long-term emissions reduction trajectory. However, CB7 comes at a pivotal point in the transition: the "low-hanging fruit" of decarbonisation has largely been exhausted, and delivery will now depend far more on complex system change across homes, transport, industry and everyday behaviour.

2. Delivery under CB7 will differ in nature from carbon budgets to date. Emissions reductions in the late 2030s will rely more on coordinated action across Government, infrastructure systems, markets and everyday decision making. The advised pathway underpinning CB7 assumes timely delivery of enabling infrastructure, sustained public and private investment, and widespread uptake of low-carbon options by households and businesses. These changes are achievable, but only where policy provides long-term certainty, delivery is well coordinated, and risks are actively managed. Legislating for CB7 must therefore be accompanied by strengthened action by Government to support delivery in practice, including robust cross-government coordination, credible delivery plans and explicit contingency planning.

3. Delivery of CB7 cannot be achieved by Government action alone. The transition to net zero will increasingly be experienced in everyday life, through changes in how homes are heated, how people travel, and how energy is used. Sustained public confidence is therefore a core delivery requirement. Behaviour change at the scale assumed in the CCC's pathway will occur where policies make low-carbon choices affordable, accessible and practical, and where households experience the direct benefits of decarbonisation in everyday life, including warmer homes, lower energy bills, cleaner air and improved health. The Government must ensure that fairness is central to its policies to secure public support. Where the costs of change fall early and unevenly, and the benefits of the transition are delayed or less visible, the Government must mitigate such inequalities. The current electricity to gas price ratio, shaped in part by how climate policies are reflected in energy bills, risks placing disproportionate burdens on those

with the fewest options and weakening incentives to switch to low-carbon heating and transport. Without a stronger focus on affordability, co-benefits, workforce capacity and high-quality delivery on the ground, public trust in the transition will be undermined.

4. Delivery of CB7 will depend on sustained public engagement and trusted, place-based delivery. As the transition becomes more visible in everyday life, the Government has a responsibility to provide clear information, practical support, and to instil confidence that change is being delivered fairly and competently. Local authorities and community organisations should lead this engagement; Government must ensure that they do so effectively with long-term funding, clear roles, and policy alignment from central Government. Without stronger public engagement and credible local delivery capacity, the Government risks weakening one of the most effective routes to building public confidence and enabling the scale of change assumed under CB7.

5. Parliament's role in approving and overseeing CB7 is of key importance. Carbon budgets set legally binding limits with far-reaching implications for public spending, infrastructure investment, industrial strategy and everyday life. Previous carbon budgets were approved in a context of broad cross-party consensus and a phase of decarbonisation that was less visible to the public. That context no longer applies. As delivery becomes more complex, more visible, and more contested, Parliament must be able to scrutinise not only the headline target, but the credibility of the plans intended to deliver it. Robust, informed scrutiny drives democratic accountability and reinforces public confidence in net zero delivery.

1 Introduction

The Paris Agreement

6. The 2015 Paris Agreement, a legally-binding international treaty, established a shared global framework for addressing climate change, committing Parties, including the United Kingdom, to hold the increase in global average temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit warming to 1.5°C.[1] The Agreement also requires countries to prepare and maintain Nationally Determined Contributions[2] (NDCs) to the response to climate change and to strengthen these over time in line with scientific understanding.[3]

7. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) provides the most comprehensive and authoritative assessment of the scientific evidence underpinning the Paris Agreement's temperature goals. Its most recent assessments conclude that human activity has already caused around 1.1°C of global warming above pre-industrial levels, contributing to increasingly frequent and severe extreme weather events. The IPCC warns that global temperatures are likely to exceed pre-industrial levels by 1.5°C in the early 2030s unless rapid, deep and sustained reductions in greenhouse gas emissions are achieved. On this basis, the IPCC has made clear that achieving net zero global emissions is essential to stabilising temperatures and limiting the most severe impacts of climate change.[4] Recent record-breaking global temperatures over the last three years underscore the urgency of action.[5]

The United Kingdom's pathway to net zero

8. In the UK, the Climate Change Act 2008 (CCA) established a long-term framework for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, including a statutory target to reduce emissions by at least 80% by 2050 compared with 1990

1 United Nations Treaty Collection, The Paris Agreement, 12 December 2015
2 Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) are the climate pledges that countries submit under the Paris Agreement, setting out their planned emissions reduction targets and actions for a given period, with periodic updates intended to increase ambition.
3 United Nations, The Paris Agreement, (Accessed 22 January 2025)
4 IPCC, Sixth Assessment Report, 20 March 2023
5 Met Office, 2025 is double-record breaker: UK's warmest and sunniest year on record, 2 January 2026

levels. It introduced a system of five-yearly carbon budgets and established the Climate Change Committee (CCC) as an independent statutory body to advise the Government and Parliament, assess progress, and report annually to Parliament.[6] In 2019, the Act was amended to strengthen the long-term target to require the United Kingdom to achieve net zero[7] greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. The Act therefore provides the domestic legal framework to the UK's international commitments under the Paris Agreement, including the statutory net zero target and legally binding carbon budgets.[8]

The United Kingdom's carbon budgets

9. Carbon budgets place a legally binding cap on the total amount of greenhouse gas emissions that the United Kingdom may emit over a five-year period. Under the CCA, the Government is required to set each carbon budget at least 12 years in advance, providing a predictable long-term trajectory intended to support policy development, investment decisions and the planning of the policies, funding and infrastructure required to meet each carbon budget. Once a carbon budget is set in law by Parliament, the Government must prepare and publish policies and proposals demonstrating how the budget will be met.[9] Failure to maintain credible delivery plans has previously resulted in successful judicial review, including legal challenges to the Government's previous Net Zero Strategy and subsequent Carbon Budget Delivery Plan, underlining the importance of clearly setting out how legally binding carbon budgets will be met and how delivery risks will be managed in practice.[10]

10. To date, six carbon budgets have been legislated for, collectively requiring a 77% reduction in UK greenhouse gas emissions by 2037 compared with 1990 levels. The CCC has advised on the appropriate level of each of the first six carbon budgets, and in every instance the Government has chosen to follow that advice. Before being set in law, the proposed level of each carbon budget is laid before Parliament in secondary legislation and must be approved by both Houses.[11] Carbon budgets apply to the United Kingdom as a whole, with emissions from England, Scotland, Wales and Northern

6 Climate Change Act 2008

7 Net zero greenhouse gas emissions are achieved when the amount of greenhouse gases released into the atmosphere is balanced by the amount removed, meaning that overall emissions are reduced to as close to zero as possible and any residual emissions are offset by removals. (House of Commons Library, *What is net zero?*, July 2024)

8 Climate Change Act 2008; as amended by The Climate Change Act 2008 (2050 Target Amendment) Order 2019

9 House of Commons Library, What are carbon budgets?, 4 February 2025

10 Friends of the Earth v BEIS [2022] EWHC 1841; Friends of the Earth v Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero [2024] EWHC 995

11 House of Commons Library, What are carbon budgets?, 4 February 2025

Ireland all contributing to the UK's overall budgets, notwithstanding different devolved legislative frameworks.[12] Delivery of CB7 will therefore depend on coordinated action across the UK Government and the devolved administrations. The UK has met the first three carbon budgets, cutting its emissions by 50% from 1990 to 2022. Had these budgets included aviation and shipping emissions, this fall in emissions would have been less.[13] The CCC will assess in 2029 whether the fourth carbon budget (up to 2027) has been met.[14]

Carbon budget	Year	Emissions	Percentage reduction
Carbon budget 1 (CB1)	2008 to 2012	3,018 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent ($MtCO_2e$)	26% reduction on 1990 levels
CB2	2013 to 2017	2,782 $MtCO_2e$	32% reduction on 1990 levels
CB3	2018 to 2022	2,544 $MtCO_2e$	38% reduction on 1990 levels
CB4	2023 to 2027	1,950 $MtCO_2e$	52% reduction on 1990 levels
CB5	2028 to 2032	1,725 $MtCO_2e$	58% reduction on 1990 levels
CB6	2033 to 2037	965 $MtCO_2e$	77% reduction on 1990 levels
CB7	2038 to 2042	To be confirmed	To be confirmed

Source: House of Commons Library, What are carbon budgets?, 4 February 2025

12 Senedd Cymru/Welsh Parliament, Environment (Wales) Act 2016, 2016; Scottish Parliament, Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act, 2024; Northern Ireland Assembly, The Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland), 2022; House of Commons Library, The UK's Plans and Progress to Reach Net Zero by 2050, 12 August 2025

13 Professor Kevin Anderson (Professor of Energy and Climate Change at Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, University of Manchester); Dr Gaurav Gharde (Research Associate at Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, University of Manchester); Professor Alice Larkin (Professor in Climate Science & Energy Policy at Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, University of Manchester); Dr Jingyi Li (Research Associate at Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, University of Manchester) (SCB0049)

14 Climate Change Committee, Progress in reducing emissions - 2025 report to Parliament, 25 June 2025

The Seventh Carbon Budget

11. In February 2025, the CCC published its statutory advice on the Seventh Carbon Budget (CB7). The CCC advised that CB7 should be set at 535 $MtCO_2e$ (million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent), inclusive of international aviation and shipping emissions, and characterised this level as "ambitious but deliverable", provided that significant policy gaps are closed and implementation accelerates across key sectors.[15] Under the CCA, the Government is required to legislate for CB7 by 30 June 2026.[16]

Our inquiry

12. We launched our inquiry into the Government's approach to setting CB7 on 23 September 2025,[17] following a request from the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero,[18] and in light of the Climate Change Committee's statutory advice.[19] Our inquiry examined the CCC's advice, the assumptions and risks underpinning the proposed emissions pathway, and the issues the Government will need to consider when bringing forward a proposed carbon budget level for Parliamentary approval.

13. This report considers the CCC's advice on CB7 and makes recommendations intended to inform the Government's approach ahead of laying a draft Carbon Budget Order before the House. It is consistent with our remit to scrutinise how far Government policies and programmes contribute to statutory environmental protection and sustainable development targets. In considering CB7, we acknowledge that it is being debated in a changing political and public context, in contrast to earlier carbon budgets which were approved with broad cross-party support.[20] Our own committee reflects this changed political landscape, with some members enthusiastic supporters of net zero, and others not. However our recommendations and conclusions are based on our assessment of CB7 in the context of the Government's policies and not whether individual committee members agree that those priorities are the right ones.

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15 Climate Change Committee, The Seventh Carbon Budget, 26 February 2025

16 Climate Change Committee, The Seventh Carbon Budget, 26 February 2025

17 Environmental Audit Committee, The journey to net zero: How will it affect household budgets into the 2040s? MPs launch new inquiry, 23 September 2025

18 Letter from the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero relating to Outcomes of UNFCCC COP29, Electrification and Carbon Budget 7, 14 July 2025

19 Climate Change Committee, The Seventh Carbon Budget, 26 February 2025

20 The Conservative Party and Reform UK have formally declared their opposition to net zero by 2050: Conservative Home, Kemi Badenoch: Net zero by 2050 "is fantasy politics. Built on nothing. Promising the earth. And costing it too.", 18 March 2025; Reform UK, Policies, (accessed 11 February 2026)

14. Many Committees across Parliament have undertaken important scrutiny of the Government's policies intended to deliver net zero outcomes. We did not seek to replicate that work in this inquiry.

15. As part of our inquiry, we received 68 submissions of written evidence to our call for evidence, and held three public evidence sessions, hearing from 18 witnesses across seven panels. We heard from a wide range of experts, including academics and researchers, industry representatives, local government, civil society organisations, and the CCC. We also held roundtable discussions with representatives from industries across the economy, to inform our understanding of delivery challenges and opportunities. We are grateful to everyone who supported this inquiry.

16. Our report examines the Government's approach to setting CB7 and the implications for delivering the UK's statutory climate targets. It considers the level of the budget, governance and cross-government delivery, sectoral challenges, and the role of behaviour change, fairness and public consent. Finally, it examines Parliament's role in scrutinising, legislating for, and overseeing delivery of CB7.

2 Setting the Seventh Carbon Budget

17. This chapter sets out the context in which Seventh Carbon Budget (CB7) is being considered, including the advice provided by the Climate Change Committee (CCC), the UK's recent emissions reduction trajectory, and the implications for delivery in the period ahead.

Legislating for the carbon budget

18. The carbon budgeting framework has, to date, operated within a relatively stable political consensus. In a less settled political context, there is a risk that carbon budgets could increasingly be treated as discrete points of negotiation rather than successive steps within a fixed statutory framework, weakening continuity, long-term signals and delivery confidence.[21]

19. CB7 comes at a pivotal point in the UK's decarbonisation trajectory. Earlier emissions reductions were achieved primarily through changes to the power sector, particularly the rapid decline in coal generation.[22] By contrast, emissions reductions in the period covered by CB7, 2038–2042, will depend far more heavily on changes across the wider economy, including how homes are heated, how people travel, and how industry operates.[23] This marks a shift from largely structural change invisible to most of the public, to delivery that is more complex, more capital intensive and more closely connected to everyday economic activity.[24]

20. In practice, the first three carbon budgets (2008–2012, 2013–2017 and 2018–2022) were met largely through centrally delivered infrastructure and market reform in the electricity system, with limited direct impact on household behaviour or consumer choice.[25] As emissions reductions have moved beyond the power sector, progress has slowed and delivery has become more dependent on coordinated change across the wider

21 Friends of the Earth (SCB0004); ClientEarth (SCB0068)
22 Climate Change Committee, Progress in reducing emissions - 2025 report to Parliament, 25 June 2025
23 Qq34–36; Climate Change Committee, The Seventh Carbon Budget, 26 February 2025;
24 Q2; Qq34–36
25 Climate Change Committee, Progress in reducing emissions - 2025 report to Parliament, 25 June 2025

economy.[26] As delivery shifts into sectors such as heating and transport, it is increasingly exposed to risks relating to infrastructure readiness, skills capacity and system constraints, particularly in areas characterised by long asset lifetimes and slow turnover.[27]

21. In this context, the role of the CCC's statutory advice is central. The Climate Change Act (CCA) requires that carbon budgets are set on the basis of an independent, evidence-based assessment of the emissions reductions consistent with the UK's long-term climate objectives.[28] The CCC's statutory advice on the CB7 is grounded in detailed economy-wide analysis of emissions pathways, technological deployment rates, costs and delivery risks.[29]

22. The CCC's recommended budget reflects what is required to maintain a credible pathway to the UK's statutory net zero target, rather than an aspirational or politically contingent goal, consistent with its role as defined in the Climate Change Act.[30]

23. We heard broad support for the overall level of the budget advised by the CCC.[31] Professor Joeri Rogelj, Professor of Climate Science and Policy at Imperial College London, and Shaun Spiers, Executive Director at Green Alliance, both characterised the advised level of CB7 as technically credible and consistent with the UK's long-term climate objectives, while emphasising that its credibility ultimately depends on delivery, policy certainty and sustained implementation.[32]

24. This was emphasised in roundtable discussions we held, under the Chatham House rule, with representatives from major sectors across the economy. Participants emphasised that the advised level of CB7 reflects a demanding but feasible transition pathway, provided that delivery is supported by sustained policy certainty, timely infrastructure delivery, skills development and accessible finance. Participants highlighted the value of the long-term predictability provided by the carbon budget framework, providing a clearer sense of direction over the next decade and beyond, supporting long-term investment planning, workforce development and supply chain decisions.

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26 Climate Change Committee, Progress in reducing emissions - 2025 report to Parliament, 25 June 2025

27 Q34

28 Climate Change Act 2008, section 4

29 Climate Change Committee, The Seventh Carbon Budget, 26 February 2025

30 Qq127–129; Climate Change Act 2008 ss 32–43

31 See for example: WWF-UK (SCB0048); The Centre for Energy Policy, University of Strathclyde (SCB0037).

32 Q1; Q2

25. Participants also emphasised that the core challenge to decarbonisation is no longer technological innovation, but scaling delivery at pace, including rapid expansion of skills pipelines, supply chains, grid and charging infrastructure, retrofit delivery capacity and planning processes. Across sectors, the need for stable policy signals, accessible finance and timely infrastructure delivery was repeatedly identified as critical to making the pathway deliverable in practice.

26. Maintaining ambition on net zero is therefore critical. Professor Michael Grubb, Professor of Energy and Climate Change at University College London, warned that weakening ambition or delaying emissions reductions would defer action into later periods, increasing reliance on higher-cost or less mature options, raising overall costs and delivery risks, and narrowing the flexibility available as the UK enters the phase of the transition in which emissions reductions become harder to achieve.[33] Consumer uptake and public consent is becoming more important, and affordability and fairness will increasingly shape the pace of emissions reductions in later carbon budget periods.[34] CB7 therefore represents not only a continuation of the UK's long-term trajectory, but a test of whether existing governance, policy frameworks and delivery mechanisms are capable of operating at the scale now required, given rising delivery and effectiveness risks across the system.[35]

27. The eradication of the political consensus and the increasingly partisan discourse on net zero, compounded by the UK's cost of living crisis and successive shocks like the Covid-19 pandemic, and effects of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, could also affect some sectors of society's willingness and/or ability to take the necessary steps required to achieve these carbon reductions.[36]

28. We explored the CCC's decision to present a single 'balanced' pathway for CB7, rather than the multiple illustrative pathways provided for earlier budgets. This reflects increasing convergence in the emissions reductions required by the late 2030s, as delivery becomes more constrained by system-wide factors including infrastructure availability, feasible deployment rates and the scale of emissions removals required. For many sectors, the core decarbonisation technologies are now well established, with the primary challenge shifting from technological uncertainty to scaling, deployment and effective delivery. While the CCC emphasised

33 Qq30–33
34 Q28 [Mike Childs]
35 Qq9–11 [Shaun Spiers/Professor Rogelj]; Qq34–35 [Sam Hunter Jones]
36 King's College London, Declining urgency, enduring support - Public attitudes to net zero and climate policy, February 2026

that the pathway is not intended to be prescriptive, it acknowledged that the reduced presentation of alternatives reflects the diminishing flexibility available as the UK moves closer to the statutory net zero target.[37]

29. Progress towards the UK's 2030 Nationally Determined Contribution under the Paris Agreement, and towards meeting Carbon Budget 4 (in the period to 2027) and Carbon Budget 5 (up to 2032), will provide early indicators of whether existing policies and delivery mechanisms are sufficient to support the emissions reductions required in the lead up to the Seventh Carbon Budget. Delivery of emissions reductions in the late 2020s and early 2030s will determine whether the UK remains on a credible trajectory towards the emissions reductions required in subsequent carbon budget periods.[38]

30. **CONCLUSION**
The Climate Change Committee's advised level for the Seventh Carbon Budget is technically credible, but will require tough political decisions, and represents a necessary checkpoint in the UK's statutory pathway to net zero by 2050.

31. **CONCLUSION**
As the 'low hanging fruit' of decarbonisation has largely been achieved, delivery risk increases materially under the Seventh Carbon Budget, at the same time as delivery options are reduced (as represented by the CCC's decision to produce a single balanced pathway rather than multiple pathways). Emissions reductions become more complex, more capital-intensive and more dependent on coordinated action across infrastructure, markets and behaviour. Without clear planning, sustained policy signals, transparency over delivery assumptions and credible contingency arrangements, the risk of under-delivery and unequal impacts will rise.

32. **RECOMMENDATION**
The Government should legislate for the Climate Change Committee's recommended level of 535 $MtCO_2e$ for the Seventh Carbon Budget period. However, legislation must be accompanied by strengthened action to address the delivery risks identified in this report.

37 Q153 [Nigel Topping]
38 Q27 [Professor Grubb]; Qq29–35 [Sam Hunter Jones]; Q16 [Professor Rojeli]; Q34 [Professor Grubb]

33. **RECOMMENDATION**
The Government should consider additional measures that offer an opportunity to provide resilience and headroom against delivery risk, without damaging public consent for the measures.

Global fairness and the United Kingdom's contribution to emissions reductions

34. Alongside its domestic statutory framework, the United Kingdom's emissions reduction pathway sits within a wider international context shaped by the Paris Agreement and global carbon budgets. The UK's Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC), which sets out its near-term emissions reduction commitment under the Paris Agreement, represents the UK's primary statement of its contribution to global mitigation efforts.[39] The most recent NDC places the UK among the more ambitious countries internationally in terms of legislated targets and governance.[40] However, we heard concerns that the emissions reductions proposed for the Seventh Carbon Budget (CB7) should also be assessed against principles of global fairness, including the Paris Agreement's recognition of "common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities".[41] Given the UK's high income level and historical emissions profile, domestic carbon budgets should be considered in the context of remaining global carbon budgets and equity considerations.[42]

35. These concerns were reinforced by developments in international climate governance and law, including the International Court of Justice Advisory Opinion on states' obligations in respect of climate change.[43] Witnesses suggested that the Opinion strengthens expectations that national mitigation pathways should reflect not only domestic feasibility, but also

39 Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland's 2035 Nationally Determined Contribution, 30 January 2025

40 Q154 [Nigel Topping]; Imperial College London, COP30: Study reveals "highest possible ambition" for countries' climate pledges, 6 November 2025

41 UNFCC, The Explainer: The Paris Agreement, (accessed 11 February 2026)

42 See, for example, Friends of the Earth (SCB0004); Climate Emergency Science Law (CESL) (SCB0024); Dr Kate McKenzie (CEO/Founding Director at The Climate Change Legal Initiative - a Community Interest Company); Dr Lennart Wegener (Senior Associate at The Climate Change Legal Initiative - a Community Interest Company); Dr Rebecca Williams (Lecturer in Environmental Law at University of Glasgow); Dr Francesco Sindico (Professor of International Environmental Law at University of Strathclyde) (SCB0039)

43 International Court of Justice, Obligations of States in respect of climate change, 23 July 2025

fairness, historical responsibility and capacity to act. On this basis, some questioned whether the emissions limits proposed for CB7 represent a sufficient UK contribution to global efforts to limit temperature rise to 1.5°C.[44]

36. We heard that concepts of national "fair share" are best understood as ranges rather than precise thresholds, reflecting uncertainty in global carbon budgets and differing ethical perspectives.[45] The CCC acknowledged that assessments of fairness are inherently contested and depend on the weighting given to different ethical and methodological assumptions. It explained that its statutory role is to advise on the emissions pathway required to meet the UK's legally binding net zero target, rather than to determine the UK's global fair share as a matter of international equity. Within that remit, the CCC considers that the pathway underpinning CB7, which also forms the analytical basis of the UK's NDC, represents a fair and ambitious contribution when assessed against international benchmarks.[46]

37. At the same time, international comparisons continue to suggest that the UK remains a leader on climate governance.[47] The CCA, the statutory net zero target, and the UK's leadership role at COP26[48] have all contributed to its reputation as a country willing to embed climate ambition in domestic law.[49] However, we heard that assessments of international leadership should not be confined to domestic emissions targets alone, but should also take account of wider international engagement, including climate and nature finance.[50] In that context, the UK's decision not to make a public financial commitment to the Tropical Forests Forever Facility at COP30 was cited by some observers as a missed opportunity to reinforce its leadership credentials.[51] The UK also has yet to commit to the next round of International Climate Finance (ICF), as the current funding expires in March

44 Climate Emergency Science Law (CESL) (SCB0024); Dr Kate McKenzie (CEO/Founding Director at The Climate Change Legal Initiative - a Community Interest Company); Dr Lennart Wegener (Senior Associate at The Climate Change Legal Initiative - a Community Interest Company); Dr Rebecca Williams (Lecturer in Environmental Law at University of Glasgow); Dr Francesco Sindico (Professor of International Environmental Law at University of Strathclyde) (SCB0039)

45 Qq1–7 [Shaun Spiers/Professor Rogelj]

46 Q154 [Nigel Topping]

47 Qq6–7 [Professor Rogelj]

48 The UK hosted the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) in Glasgow in 2021, at which Parties adopted the Glasgow Climate Pact and reached further agreements on implementation of the Paris Agreement, including on mitigation ambition, adaptation, climate finance and carbon markets under Article 6.

49 Q6 [professor Rogelj]; Q154 [Nigel Topping]

50 WWF-UK (SCB0048)

51 The Guardian, UK opts out of flagship fund to protect Amazon and other threatened tropical forests | Cop30, 5 November 2025

2026. Renewing the UK's ICF commitment for another five years is essential to delivering the UK's international climate obligations and retaining the UK's position as a leader in climate diplomacy.[52]

38. **CONCLUSION**
In legislating for the Seventh Carbon Budget, the Government should consider the United Kingdom's contribution to global efforts to limit warming, alongside its domestic statutory framework. While the UK has exercised international leadership through the Climate Change Act 2008, the statutory net zero target and its 2035 Nationally Determined Contribution, continued leadership cannot be assumed. The credibility of the UK's climate framework depends on domestic emissions limits being consistent with its obligations under the Paris Agreement and its commitment to a just transition, as well as the coherence of its overall contribution to global climate action.

39. **RECOMMENDATION**
The Government should set out clearly in the impact assessment that will accompany the draft Carbon Budget Order, how the proposed legislative level of the Seventh Carbon Budget aligns with the United Kingdom's legally binding obligations under the Paris Agreement, including how CB7 enables the UK to meet its status as an Annex I Party, with heightened responsibilities under the UNFCCC.

52 Letter from the Environmental Audit Committee, the Foreign Affairs Committee and International Development Committee relating to findings from COP 30, 29 January 2026

3 Government delivery of the Seventh Carbon Budget

40. Delivering the Seventh Carbon Budget (CB7) will require coordinated action across Government. While statutory responsibility sits with the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ), many emissions-critical policies fall within the remit of other departments. Effective cross-government coordination and consistent policy direction are essential. This chapter assesses whether current governance arrangements are sufficient to support delivery of CB7, and whether some government departments are providing mixed signals that undermine DESNZ's commitment to achieving CB7.

Delivery responsibilities across Government

41. Delivery of CB7 now depends on coordinated action across multiple departments whose primary mandates are not climate focused and whose objectives, budgets and delivery cultures differ.[53] Emissions reductions span transport, housing, planning, agriculture, industry and fiscal policy.[54] The effectiveness of the carbon budgeting framework is therefore inseparable from cross-government coordination.[55]

42. Earlier carbon budgets were met largely through firm and final policies, particularly the rapid phase out of coal from the power sector. By contrast, delivery plans in the Government's 2023 Carbon Budget Delivery Plan, which was ruled unlawful by the High Court, initially covered only around 40% of the Sixth Carbon Budget.[56] While the coverage of policy has improved to 75% in the latest Carbon Budget Delivery and Growth Plan, delivery now relies

53 Q11 [Professor Rogelj]; Environmental Audit Committee, Sixth Report of Session 2024–26, Environmental sustainability and housing growth, HC 439, para 5
54 Q11[Professor Rogelj]; Environmental Audit Committee, Sixth Report of Session 2024–26, Environmental sustainability and housing growth, HC 439, para 5
55 Q29 [Sam Hunter Jones]
56 Politico, UK's climate plan ruled unlawful, 3 May 2024

much more on future policy development and effective implementation than in earlier periods. As the UK moves beyond the lowest-hanging fruit, this materially increases delivery risk for CB7.[57]

43. In recent years, policy uncertainty has been shaped by a wider political and economic context, including policy reversals under previous Governments, global volatility in energy markets and supply chains, and the erosion of cross-party consensus on net zero.[58] This has weakened the long-term predictability that delivery of carbon budgets depends upon.[59] DESNZ has articulated a clear commitment to net zero,[60] but delivery risks arise where policies and incentives set by other departments are not consistently aligned with this direction.[61]

44. Some departmental policies risk pulling against carbon budget objectives altogether. Continued Government support for high-carbon infrastructure, including airport expansion without accompanying demand management, was given to us as an example of decisions that increase delivery pressure elsewhere in the system and risk placing additional strain on later carbon budgets.[62]

45. The Government has stated that it will prioritise implementation of its Carbon Budget and Growth Delivery Plan, published in October 2025, to accelerate decarbonisation across key sectors including transport, buildings and industry.[63] However, we heard concerns that some departments create barriers to delivery. Mike Childs, Head of Science, Policy and Research, Friends of the Earth, cited the Department for Transport as an example of a department "going rogue" when decisions are taken without adequate regard to carbon impacts, and told us that the Treasury "does not hold climate action … close to its heart".[64]

57 Q29 [Sam Hunter Jones]
58 Prime Minister's Office, PM speech on Net Zero, 23 September 2023
59 Bennett Institute for Innovation & Policy Acceleration, University of Sussex (SCB0007); Logistics UK (SCB0009); Dr Tariq Umar (Senior Lecturer at University of the West of England, UK) (SCB0010); Brian Drummond (SCB0015)
60 Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, Carbon budget and growth delivery plan, 29 October 2025
61 Q28 [Mike Childs]; Friends of the Earth (SCB0004); Community Planning Alliance (SCB0002)
62 Community Planning Alliance (SCB0002); Bennett Institute for Innovation & Policy Acceleration, University of Sussex (SCB0007); Logistics UK (SCB0009); Professor Greg Marsden (Professor of Transport Governance at Institute for Transport Studies, University of Leeds) (SCB0014)
63 Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, Carbon budget and growth delivery plan, 29 October 2025
64 Q49

46. Conflicting policy choices were also raised as a delivery risk. Transport policy was cited as an example where the emphasis on electric vehicles has at times been prioritised over measures to support modal shift, demand reduction and public and active transport. Witnesses cautioned that focusing narrowly on vehicle technology, without parallel action on how people travel, risks higher overall energy demand, increased pressure on electricity networks and missed opportunities for faster emissions reductions.[65]

47. These tensions are compounded where policies pull in different directions or are poorly sequenced. The recent Budget combined increased funding for electric vehicle grants and charging infrastructure with the proposal of a new per-mile charge for electric vehicles. Witnesses cautioned that, regardless of policy intent or the long term need to reform motoring taxation as fuel duty declines, the sequencing and communication of these measures created mixed incentives for switching to EVs in the near term, with implications for consumer confidence and investor certainty.[66]

48. Our predecessor Committee found that delivery plans for earlier carbon budgets lacked clarity on departmental responsibilities and mechanisms for resolving policy conflicts, resulting in weak cross-government accountability and climate objectives being subordinated to short-term sectoral priorities.[67]

49. The Government has established cross-government arrangements intended to support coordination on net zero, including the 'Make Britain a Clean Energy Superpower' Mission Board.[68] Professor Joeri Rogelj emphasised that delivery now depends on effective join-up between Government missions, including clean energy, growth and public health. Whether existing cross-government mechanisms can deliver that level of alignment will be material to delivery of the Seventh Carbon Budget.[69]

65 Professor Greg Marsden (Professor of Transport Governance at Institute for Transport Studies, University of Leeds) (SCB0014)

66 Q113 [Tanya Sinclair]

67 Letter to the Prime Minister on net zero policies 29 September 2023; Letter to the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, 6 February 2024

68 Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, First Mission Board focuses on immediate action to make Britain a clean energy superpower, 31 July 2024

69 Q16 [Professor Rogelj]

50. **CONCLUSION**
The Government must make sure its cross-departmental arrangements offer the clarity, authority and consistency required to deliver the Seventh Carbon Budget. As emissions reductions must accelerate sharply in the 2030s, delivery will depend on sustained, coordinated action across multiple departments and policy areas. Strong central leadership and clear mechanisms for collective responsibility are needed to avoid departmental priorities and policy signals diverging, undermining confidence in delivery of the carbon budget.

51. **RECOMMENDATION**
Alongside the draft Carbon Budget Order for the Seventh Carbon Budget, the Government should publish a clear, indicative, cross-governmental delivery framework. The framework should demonstrate how departmental policies will be aligned, mutually reinforcing and consistent with the emissions limits set by Parliament. This framework should:

- set out the respective roles and responsibilities of relevant departments in delivering the carbon budget pathway;
- be explicitly endorsed by the Prime Minister's Office and HM Treasury to demonstrate collective ownership;
- provide transparency on how cross-government governance arrangements will operate in practice to resolve policy conflicts and oversee delivery; and
- set out clearly how delivery shortfalls will be identified, addressed and allocated across departments, including where responsibility lies for corrective action within the overall carbon budget framework.

Policy coherence and confidence in delivery

52. Delivering CB7 will depend not only on formal policy frameworks, but on the clarity, consistency and durability of the signals Government sends to households, investors and delivery bodies. As emissions reductions increasingly rely on decisions taken by individuals, businesses and local institutions, consistent policy direction is a critical enabling condition.[70]

70 Oral Evidence taken on 7 April 2025, Q2; Q125; Qq137–139 [Professor Forster/Emma Pinchbeck]; Grantham Institute and Imperial Policy Forum (SCB0017); Dr Tariq Umar (Senior Lecturer at University of the West of England, UK) (SCB0010)

53. Under successive Governments, policy signals have at times appeared inconsistent. While Ministers continue to restate their commitment to net zero,[71] decisions in specific policy areas have created uncertainty about the priority accorded to emissions reduction. Such inconsistency risks weakening public buy-in and slowing investment at precisely the point where momentum must accelerate.[72] In transport, mixed and shifting policy signals on the transition to electric vehicles and charging infrastructure have contributed to uncertainty about long-term regulatory expectations.[73] Similar misalignment arises from the continued price differential between electricity and gas, with higher emissions gas remaining cheaper in practice and shaping household and business decisions in ways that run counter to decarbonisation objectives.[74]

54. Continued support for high-carbon infrastructure risks sending contradictory signals about long-term priorities.[75] In our previous report on airport expansion, we concluded that while expansion may be technically compatible with climate targets, it would make those targets significantly harder and more costly to achieve, and that the Government had not demonstrated that the economic benefits outweighed the climate impacts.[76]

55. Policy coherence must also extend across sectors and across the shared resources on which decarbonisation depends. Our evidence highlighted growing competition for limited low-carbon electricity, sustainable feedstocks and land, with delivery of CB7 reliant on multiple sectors drawing on the same constrained systems. We were warned that assumptions about the availability of sustainable aviation fuels, hydrogen, bioenergy and engineered removals are closely interlinked with wider energy system capacity and land-use choices, and that misalignment between policies on aviation, energy, agriculture and industrial decarbonisation risks placing competing demands on the same resources. Without clearer prioritisation and sequencing of infrastructure, generation and end-use demand, policies

71 Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, Energy Secretary speech to Energy UK conference 2025, 14 October 2025

72 Friends of the Earth (SCB0004); Oral Evidence taken on 7 April 2025, Qq1–2; Qq125–130; Chemical Industries Association (CIA) (SCB0063); Nuclear Industry Association (SCB0022);

73 Q28 [Mike Childs];Q123 [Tanya Sinclair]; Community Planning Alliance (SCB0002)

74 Community Planning Alliance (SCB0002)

75 Friends of the Earth (SCB0004)

76 Environmental Audit Committee, Fifth Report of Session 2024–26, Airport expansion and climate and nature targets, HC 831, Para 114

in different sectors risk working at cross-purposes, weakening delivery confidence and increasing the risk that progress in one area displaces or constrains decarbonisation elsewhere.[77]

56. **CONCLUSION**

Public perceptions are shaped not by ministerial statements alone, but by the cumulative impact of decisions taken across Government. Where policy choices in areas such as transport, buildings and infrastructure cut across climate objectives and are not aligned, they signal that net zero is a conditional ambition rather than a binding national obligation. This inconsistency has practical consequences and would slow the uptake of low-carbon technologies and deter long-term private investment, undermining confidence in the delivery of net zero and the Seventh Carbon Budget. The erosion of cross-party consensus on net zero further compounds this uncertainty at precisely the point when clarity, stability and sustained political commitment are most needed.

57. **RECOMMENDATION**

DESNZ should provide clear, consistent and sustained cross-government leadership on communication of net zero policy. Policy announcements and public messaging should reinforce, rather than dilute, the urgency of emissions reductions and the long-term direction of travel required to deliver the Seventh Carbon Budget.

77 Dr Lois Pennington (Research Associate at Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, University of Manchester); Professor Maria Sharmina (Professor of Energy and Sustainability at Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, University of Manchester); Dr Diarmaid Clery (Lecturer in Engineering for Net Zero at Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, University of Manchester); Dr Clair Gough (Senior Research Fellow at Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, University of Manchester); Dr Chris Jones (Research Associate at Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, University of Manchester); Dr Jingyi Li (Research Associate at Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, University of Manchester); Dr Sarah Mander (Reader at Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, University of Manchester) (SCB0020); Institution of Engineering and Technology (SCB0030); Future Energy Networks (SCB0043); Airlines UK (SCB0062); Friends of the Earth (SCB0004)

58. **RECOMMENDATION**
DESNZ should set out a clear cross-sector prioritisation framework within the Seventh Carbon Budget Delivery Plan, explaining how limited low-carbon resources, including clean electricity, network capacity, sustainable feedstocks and land, will be allocated between competing demands. This framework should set out how priorities will be managed where policies across sectors draw on the same constrained resources, and how trade-offs will be handled to ensure that progress in one part of the economy does not displace or constrain decarbonisation elsewhere.

59. **RECOMMENDATION**
DESNZ Ministers should provide visible cross-government leadership by setting out, in a single, authoritative statement within our recommended indicative delivery framework, how departmental policies collectively support delivery of the Seventh Carbon Budget. This should include clear objectives, indicative timelines and an explanation of how policies that risk increasing emissions or delaying progress will be mitigated, so that Parliament and the public can assess the coherence and credibility of the Government's overall approach. However, DESNZ will only have the credibility, capacity and capability to do this if it is explicitly backed by the Prime Minister and the Chancellor of the Exchequer. This includes public statements, clear steers across government and the resources to ensure departments meet their agreed net zero commitments and work together when delivery requires it.

4 Sectoral pathways to delivering the Seventh Carbon Budget

60. The Seventh Carbon Budget (CB7) will be delivered, or missed, sector by sector across the UK economy. This chapter assesses whether current policy frameworks provide a clear and credible basis for delivering these emissions reductions and managing delivery risks during the CB7 period.

Sectoral delivery pathways

61. CB7 requires emissions reductions to be delivered across every major sector of the economy during the 2038–2042 period. In practice, much of the change required during the budget window depends on decisions taken well in advance, reflecting long asset lifetimes, infrastructure lead times and the pace at which technologies, skills and supply chains can be scaled. The skills shortages in these sectors offer a significant barrier to achieving the emissions reductions envisaged by CB7.[78] Achieving sectoral emissions reductions depends on regulatory, fiscal and infrastructure measures operating together.[79]

62. Delivery of CB7 will also be shaped by increasing competition between sectors for the same constrained resources, including low-carbon power and grid capacity, public funding, skilled workers, sustainable biomass and land. Evidence highlighted tensions between competing policy priorities managed by different departments, including the use of limited biomass and waste feedstocks for sustainable aviation fuel versus biomethane for industrial and freight decarbonisation; the expansion of electricity demand

78 Climate Change Committee, The Seventh Carbon Budget, 26 February 2025
79 Q11 [Professor Rogelj]; Qq68–70 [Victoria Whitehouse]; Q32 [Professor Grubb]

for aviation fuels, hydrogen and data centres alongside electrification of heat and transport; and trade-offs between land for food production, nature restoration, energy crops and energy infrastructure.[80]

63. Without clearer cross-government prioritisation and explicit management of these trade-offs, progress in one sector risks constraining or displacing decarbonisation elsewhere. This now represents a material delivery risk for CB7, given the scale of competition for limited low-carbon resources and the absence of a joined-up framework for allocating them in line with carbon budget priorities.[81]

Energy

64. Delivery of CB7 in the power and energy system depends on rapid grid expansion, planning reform and connection reform keeping pace with the scale and timing of electrification assumed in the pathway. Electricity demand is expected to rise sharply as transport, buildings and parts of industry electrify, yet connection queues, planning delays and community consent processes remain binding constraints on bringing new low-carbon generation and network reinforcement online at the pace required.[82] While reforms to grid connections and strategic system planning are underway,

80 Future Energy Networks (SCB0043); Institution of Engineering and Technology (SCB0030); Dr Lois Pennington (Research Associate at Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, University of Manchester); Professor Maria Sharmina (Professor of Energy and Sustainability at Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, University of Manchester); Dr Diarmaid Clery (Lecturer in Engineering for Net Zero at Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, University of Manchester); Dr Clair Gough (Senior Research Fellow at Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, University of Manchester); Dr Chris Jones (Research Associate at Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, University of Manchester); Dr Jingyi Li (Research Associate at Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, University of Manchester); Dr Sarah Mander (Reader at Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, University of Manchester) (SCB0020); Friends of the Earth (SCB0004)

81 Dr Lois Pennington (Research Associate at Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, University of Manchester); Professor Maria Sharmina (Professor of Energy and Sustainability at Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, University of Manchester); Dr Diarmaid Clery (Lecturer in Engineering for Net Zero at Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, University of Manchester); Dr Clair Gough (Senior Research Fellow at Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, University of Manchester); Dr Chris Jones (Research Associate at Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, University of Manchester); Dr Jingyi Li (Research Associate at Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, University of Manchester); Dr Sarah Mander (Reader at Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, University of Manchester) (SCB0020); Institution of Engineering and Technology (SCB0030); Future Energy Networks (SCB0043); Airlines UK (SCB0062)

82 Q56 [Claire Dykta]; Q61 [Claire Dykta]

delivery risk remains high because enabling infrastructure must be built ahead of demand if it is to unlock decarbonisation across multiple sectors within the CB7 window.[83]

65. The CB7 pathway also assumes rapid scale up of hydrogen and carbon capture and storage, particularly through industrial clusters, but delivery remains exposed to uncertainty over infrastructure sequencing, commercial readiness and long-term policy signals. Progress has been made in moving CCUS projects through design, costing and planning stages, supported by public private co-investment at cluster level, but these remain first of a kind deployments which depend on timely build-out of shared transport and storage networks and a visible long-term project pipeline to unlock supply chain investment.[84]

Surface transport

66. Delivery of emissions reductions in surface transport during CB7 depends on far more than infrastructure rollout alone. While electrification of cars and vans is central to the pathway, witnesses emphasised that uptake is highly sensitive to affordability, access and the consistency of policy signals.[85] Although price parity for electric vehicles (EVs) is expected in the late 2020s, mixed messaging, such as proposals for per mile charging in the 2025 Budget, at the same time as offering grants for new EVs, is creating uncertainty about incentives to switch to EVs in the near term, and risks undermining consumer confidence.[86] We also heard reservations about the practicalities of the per mile charging, alongside evidence this is dampening demand.[87]

67. The switch to EVs has progressed fastest among households with off street parking and access to home charging, while renters and those in terraced housing and flats can face higher costs and inconvenience from reliance on public charging, which remains significantly more expensive.[88] The switch to commercial electric vans and HGVs presents a more acute challenge, with higher upfront costs, limited vehicle availability, and operational barriers for fleets without depot-based charging.[89] Without earlier clarity on charging

83 Q56 [Claire Dykta]
84 Q55 [Victoria Whitehouse]; Qq65–69 [Claire Dykta/Victoria Whitehouse]
85 Qq112–113 [Tanya Sinclair]
86 Qq112–113 [Tanya Sinclair]; Gov.uk, Electric and hybrid vehicles eligible for a plug-in grant: Cars, (accessed 13 February 2026)
87 Q113 [Tanya Sinclair]; Q121 [Tanya Sinclair]
88 Q122 [Tanya Sinclair]; Roundtable discussion with sectoral stakeholders
89 Q124 [Tanya Sinclair]; Roundtable discussion with sectoral stakeholders

infrastructure and the necessary grid provision, replacement cycles during the 2020s and early 2030s risk locking in higher-emitting vehicles well into the CB7 period.[90]

68. While electrification is central to the CCC pathway, the CCC identifies demand management and modal shift as important components of the balanced pathway.[91] Participants at our roundtable noted that current transport policy remains weighted more towards EV deployment than towards reducing car dependency, with comparatively weaker signals on walking, cycling and public transport. Without credible alternatives to private car use, pressure on the pace and scale of EV uptake will increase, raising delivery risks if consumer uptake, skills capacity and grid readiness do not scale at the required speed.[92]

Buildings (residential and commercial)

69. Decarbonising buildings during CB7 depends not only on infrastructure readiness, but on sustained policy clarity, affordability, and delivery capacity in the heat market.[93] Current heat pump deployment remains far below the levels implied by the CCC's pathway. While around 60,000 heat pumps were installed in 2023, witnesses highlighted that current installations remain far short of what is required. The CCC projects that annual installations will need to rise rapidly to around 450,000 per year by 2030, and reach around 1.5 million per year by 2035 to remain on track with the advised pathway.[94] Uptake remains constrained by high upfront costs, uncertainty over future policy on gas boilers, and consumer perceptions of risk around installation quality and disruption.[95]

70. The persistent price differential between electricity and gas remains one of the most significant obstacles to electrification of heat, with the UK's "spark spread" remaining structurally unfavourable to heat pumps.[96] Although recent Budget measures to shift levies away from electricity bills were welcomed as a first step, witnesses cautioned that this is unlikely, on its own, to close the operational cost gap or provide sufficient long-term certainty for households and installers.[97] The capital cost of heat pumps and associated retrofit works remains the dominant barrier against heat pump

90 Roundtable discussion with sectoral stakeholders
91 Climate Change Committee, The Seventh Carbon Budget, 26 February 2025
92 Q19 [Shaun Spiers]; Qq112–113 [Tanya Sinclair] Qq61–65 [Claire Dykta]; Roundtable discussion with sectoral stakeholders
93 Qq116–118 [Caroline Bragg]
94 Q117 [Caroline Bragg]; Climate Change Committee, The Seventh Carbon Budget, 26 February 2025
95 Qq116–117 [Caroline Bragg]
96 Q118 [Caroline Bragg]
97 Q116 [Caroline Bragg]; Q118 [Caroline Bragg]

installation for owner-occupiers, while gaps in minimum energy efficiency standards in the private rented sector were identified as a major brake on uptake in a large share of the housing stock.[98]

71. Scaling heat pump and heat network deployment at the pace assumed in CB7 requires rapid expansion of trained installers, heat network engineers and customer protection frameworks, alongside improvements in consumer trust following poor experiences of retrofit quality in previous schemes.[99] Heat networks were identified as an underutilised but potentially high impact option, particularly for dense urban areas and non-domestic buildings, but deployment remains slow due to high upfront capital costs, weak investment vehicles and delays to regulatory and zoning frameworks.[100]

Industry

72. Delivering industrial emissions reductions under CB7 depends not only on the availability of low-carbon infrastructure, but on strategic choices about the future shape of UK industry, particularly for high heat and hard to electrify processes, such as steel, cement and lime, and chemical processes.[101] Electrification offers the most immediate and scalable decarbonisation route for parts of industry, but only where electricity prices are competitive and grid connections are delivered at pace.[102] High industrial electricity prices were identified as a major barrier to investment in low-carbon production in globally traded sectors, with UK electricity costs significantly higher than comparator countries, weakening the business case for electrification and risking offshoring of emissions through imports.[103] Industry representatives emphasised that without policy interventions to address energy prices and competitiveness, decarbonisation pathways assumed in CB7 risk accelerating deindustrialisation rather than delivering genuine emissions reductions.[104] The Government has announced an Industrial Competitiveness Scheme to reduce electricity costs for energy-intensive industries, effective from April 2027.[105]

73. For high temperature and process emissions that cannot readily be electrified, delivery of the CB7 pathway depends on the timely availability of hydrogen and carbon capture, utilisation and storage (CCUS), alongside

98 Q117 [Caroline Bragg]; Roundtable discussion with sectoral stakeholders
99 Q117 [Caroline Bragg]
100 Q120 {Caroline Bragg]; Roundtable discussion with sectoral stakeholders
101 Q87 [Gareth Stace]; Q94 [Gareth Stace]
102 Q94 [Gareth Stace]
103 Q87 [Gareth Stace]; Qq94–95 [Gareth Stace]
104 Q87; Q95; Roundtable discussion with sectoral stakeholders
105 Department for Business and Trade, Government acts on top business concern and cuts electricity bills for thousands of manufacturers by up to 25%, 24 November 2025

clear prioritisation of where these limited resources should be deployed. CCUS and hydrogen remain first of a kind technologies at scale in the UK, with delivery risks relating to cluster sequencing, shared infrastructure, transport and storage networks, and regulatory clarity.[106] Dispersed industrial sites, which account for around half of industrial emissions, face additional barriers due to their distance from clusters and the absence of transport and storage infrastructure, making decarbonisation options more uncertain and costly.[107]

74. The development of hydrogen, CCUS and electrified industrial processes requires specialised engineering, construction and operational skills, alongside long-term policy certainty to justify private investment in new plant, supply chains and shared infrastructure.[108] Uncertainty over future policy direction, sequencing of clusters, and the pace of grid expansion discourages early investment, particularly for capital intensive, long lived industrial assets whose replacement cycles extend well into the CB7 period.[109] Without clearer prioritisation of industrial decarbonisation pathways, improved coordination between DESNZ, DBT and HM Treasury, and stronger measures to address competitiveness and skills constraints, the industrial emissions reductions assumed under CB7 risk being delayed or displaced overseas rather than delivered in the UK.[110]

Shipping and aviation

75. Whilst the CCC's anticipated pathway for decarbonising aviation relies primarily on demand management for 54% of emissions reductions and the availability of sustainable aviation fuels for 33% of emissions reductions, the Aviation Minister told us during our inquiry into Airport expansion that the Government would not be relying on demand management, but a suite of other approaches.[111]

76. Jonathan Counsell, Group Sustainability Director at the International Airlines Group, emphasised that while SAF deployment is central to the pathway, it depends on feedstock availability, long-term revenue certainty and rapid scale-up of production capacity, all of which remain subject to delivery risk.[112] Feedstocks for SAF are increasingly in demand for fuel use across sectors and constrained by wider circular economy objectives, and we heard that expansion beyond waste-based feedstocks risks creating

106 Q55 [Victoria Whitehouse]; Q68 [Victoria Whitehouse]; Q76 [Victoria Whitehouse]
107 Q68 [Victoria Whitehouse]
108 Qq68–69 [Victoria Whitehouse]; Roundtable discussion with sectoral stakeholders
109 Q94 [Gareth Stace]; Q96 [Gareth Stace]; Q68 [Victoria Whitehouse]
110 Future Energy Networks (SCB0043); Roundtable discussion with sectoral stakeholders
111 Oral evidence taken on 16 July 2025, Q267 [Mike Kane]
112 Q97 [Jonathon Counsell]; Airlines UK (SCB0062)

pressure on land use and sustainability objectives.[113] The pathway's reliance on engineered removals to offset residual aviation emissions later in the period concentrates delivery risk in technologies that remain unproven at scale and dependent on the same low-carbon energy system required for electrification across the economy.[114]

77. Decarbonisation of shipping during the CB7 period will depend on regulatory standards, fuel availability and transitional policy support operating together. While higher technical standards for vessels are a critical lever shaping fuel choices and investment decisions, the low-carbon fuels needed to meet those standards are not yet available at scale and, where available, are estimated to cost two to three times more than conventional marine fuels, creating material competitiveness risks during the transition if UK operators face higher costs than international competitors operating under weaker standards.[115] Long asset lifetimes in shipping mean that investment decisions taken in the 2020s and early 2030s will lock in fuel choices for decades, narrowing flexibility if low-carbon options are delayed.[116] Although programmes such as UK SHORE have helped stimulate innovation and co-investment in maritime decarbonisation, uncertainty over how carbon pricing revenues will be recycled into hard to abate sectors increases transition risk at the point when early support is most needed to enable operators to absorb higher costs and commit to low-carbon pathways.[117]

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114 Dr Lois Pennington (Research Associate at Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, University of Manchester); Professor Maria Sharmina (Professor of Energy and Sustainability at Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, University of Manchester); Dr Diarmaid Clery (Lecturer in Engineering for Net Zero at Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, University of Manchester); Dr Clair Gough (Senior Research Fellow at Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, University of Manchester); Dr Chris Jones (Research Associate at Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, University of Manchester); Dr Jingyi Li (Research Associate at Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, University of Manchester); Dr Sarah Mander (Reader at Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, University of Manchester) (SCB0020)

115 Q99 [Dr Edmund Hughes]

116 Q101 [Dr Edmund Hughes]

117 Q102

Land use and agriculture

78. Delivery of CB7 in the land use and agriculture sector depends on long-term changes in land management and farming practices, which require stable policy signals, predictable funding, and effective coordination across departments. Fragmented governance, inconsistent data-sharing (including across devolved administrations) and short-term funding cycles act as barriers to permanent land use change.[118] To deliver CB7 farmers need clear, long-term direction on how food production, nature restoration and carbon sequestration objectives will be balanced, alongside adequate and predictable income streams to support measures such as peatland restoration, woodland creation and low-carbon farming practices.[119]

79. We were cautioned that CB7 assumptions embed growing competition for limited land and biological resources between food production, energy crops, bioenergy with carbon capture and storage (BECCS) and sustainable aviation fuels (SAF). Meeting BECCS assumptions will require a substantial expansion of domestic energy crops, with potential risks to food production and biodiversity if poorly managed, and our evidence welcomed the CCC's recommendation for a common sustainability framework for biomass.[120]

80. Land use decisions increasingly sit at the intersection of climate mitigation, food security and rural livelihoods, and failure to integrate these objectives risks creating tensions in rural communities and weakening trust in the transition.[121] Credible delivery of CB7 therefore depends on clearer cross-government prioritisation of land use, robust and consistent sustainability standards for biomass and sustainable aviation fuel feedstocks, and long-term policy and funding frameworks that enable farmers and landowners

118 Dr Lois Pennington (Research Associate at Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, University of Manchester); Professor Maria Sharmina (Professor of Energy and Sustainability at Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, University of Manchester); Dr Diarmaid Clery (Lecturer in Engineering for Net Zero at Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, University of Manchester); Dr Clair Gough (Senior Research Fellow at Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, University of Manchester); Dr Chris Jones (Research Associate at Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, University of Manchester); Dr Jingyi Li (Research Associate at Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, University of Manchester); Dr Sarah Mander (Reader at Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, University of Manchester) (SCB0020)

119 Roundtable discussion with sectoral stakeholders

120 Roundtable discussion with sectoral stakeholders

121 Roundtable discussion with sectoral stakeholders

to manage competing demands on land in a stable and economically viable way.[122] The Government's forthcoming Land Use Framework, will need to address these issues.[123]

Data centres

81. We explored whether the pathway underpinning the Seventh Carbon Budget adequately reflects rising electricity demand from data centres and other growth sectors. The carbon budget must be delivered across the whole economy, and rapid growth in energy-intensive activities will compete for limited low-carbon generation and network capacity. Future energy demand across emerging sectors must therefore be factored explicitly into Government delivery plans to ensure that progress in one part of the economy does not displace or constrain decarbonisation elsewhere.[124]

82. The CCC's advice indicates that future electricity demand is subject to significant uncertainty and that its modelling already incorporates substantial growth across the economy, drawing on the Government's own energy demand projections. These projections assume rising electricity demand in industry and commercial buildings even in the absence of further electrification. On this basis, the CCC's Baseline scenario projects an increase in total electricity demand of nearly 30% by 2050 (an additional 81 TWh). NESO's upper estimate of additional demand from data centres (30–71 TWh by 2050) sits within this overall increase.[125]

Workforce capacity and skills

83. Workforce capacity and supply chains present an additional constraint, as deployment rates implied under CB7 require sustained growth in numbers of skilled installers, engineers, planners and technicians across multiple

122 Friends of the Earth (SCB0004); Dr Lois Pennington (Research Associate at Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, University of Manchester); Professor Maria Sharmina (Professor of Energy and Sustainability at Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, University of Manchester); Dr Diarmaid Clery (Lecturer in Engineering for Net Zero at Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, University of Manchester); Dr Clair Gough (Senior Research Fellow at Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, University of Manchester); Dr Chris Jones (Research Associate at Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, University of Manchester); Dr Jingyi Li (Research Associate at Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, University of Manchester); Dr Sarah Mander (Reader at Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, University of Manchester) (SCB0020); Future Energy Networks (SCB0043)

123 Defra, Government launches "national conversation" on land use, 31 January 2025

124 Q39 [Professor Grubb]; Q56 [Claire Dykta; Q63 [Claire Dykta]; Logistics UK (SCB0009)

125 Information supplied by the CCC; Letter to the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero relating to data centres and the Carbon Budget, 11 January 2026. See also: BBC, MPs fear data centre boom could derail Miliband's net zero plans, 12 February 2026

sectors simultaneously.[126] Where training pipelines, accreditation systems and local delivery capacity do not expand in parallel with policy ambition, shortages can emerge that slow deployment, increase costs and undermine delivery at the pace assumed in the pathway.[127]

84. **CONCLUSION**
Delivery of the Seventh Carbon Budget will depend on major cross-sector changes in infrastructure, technology, and behaviour, many of which must be secured well before the 2038–2042 period begins. These changes will not occur automatically in response to ambition alone. Without early clarity on policy instruments, funding mechanisms, delivery governance, infrastructure sequencing and skills capacity, the pathway assumptions will not translate into delivery.

85. **CONCLUSION**
Delivery risk is particularly acute in sectors that rely on technologies not yet available at scale and subject to significant cost, supply, and investment uncertainty. While policy frameworks exist in principle, they do not yet provide a sufficiently credible or transparent basis for delivering the scale of emissions reductions assumed in the Climate Change Committee's pathway. Without clearer plans, Parliament, investors, and the public are being asked to take delivery on trust.

86. **RECOMMENDATION**
Alongside the draft Seventh Carbon Budget Order, the Government should publish draft sector delivery plans setting out how each sector is expected to contribute to delivery of the budget. These plans should:

- Set out the policy instruments that will be used and when they will take effect;
- Identify the funding routes, including the balance between public support and private investment;
- Specify the infrastructure required, with indicative sequencing and delivery milestones to ensure that grid expansion, planning reform and infrastructure readiness precede electrification and deployment surges;

126 Dr Tariq Umar (Senior Lecturer at University of the West of England, UK) (SCB0010); The MCS Foundation (SCB0027); Liquid Gas UK (SCB0036)

127 Climate Change Committee, Progress in reducing emissions - 2025 report to Parliament, 25 June 2025; Dr Tariq Umar (Senior Lecturer at University of the West of England, UK) (SCB0010);

- Set out the behavioural, skills and capacity assumptions underpinning delivery;
- Demonstrate how the sectoral plans align with each other and with wider Government strategies and policy frameworks, such as those affecting land use, infrastructure, industrial strategy and skills;
- Explain how competing demands across sectors for constrained resources, including clean power, grid capacity, skilled workers, land and sustainable feedstocks, will be prioritised and managed, and how trade-offs between departmental objectives will be resolved to support delivery of the carbon budget as a whole.
- Set out how projected growth in electricity demand from data centres and other emerging energy-intensive sectors is factored into system planning and infrastructure delivery, including the implications for low-carbon generation, network capacity, and competing demands across the economy;
- and, for sectors reliant on emerging or nascent technologies it should include pre-agreed contingency options and clearly defined and actively monitored trigger points to be activated if technologies are not delivered at the expected pace or scale. This should include explicit consideration of delivery capacity and skills constraints, to avoid poor implementation that could undermine public confidence.

Together, these plans would strengthen Parliamentary scrutiny, provide greater transparency on delivery risk, and give investors, industry, and the public clearer signals about the Government's long-term commitment and expectations.

Managing uncertainty and delivery risk in the Seventh Carbon Budget pathway

87. Delivery of CB7 increasingly relies on technologies not yet deployed at scale, shifting abatement away from early, high-confidence mitigation towards later interventions dependent on infrastructure, supply chains and public acceptability.[128] This reflects a structural feature of the pathway: if emissions reductions are delayed or under delivered in the period leading up to CB7, the modelling assumes that the shortfall can be made up later through greater use of technologies that remove greenhouse gases from

128 Qq163–166 [Nigel Topping/Emma Pinchbeck]; Professor John Barrett OBE (Deputy Director (Policy) at Priestley Centre for Climate Future) (SCB0060); ClientEarth (SCB0068)

the atmosphere. Deferring abatement in this way reduces resilience, as the scope for corrective action narrows once investment windows for buildings, transport systems and industrial assets have passed. Reliance on later interventions therefore concentrates delivery risk rather than managing it.[129]

88. Greenhouse gas removals present particularly acute risks. Constraints relating to biomass availability, land use, transport and storage infrastructure, long-term subsidy requirements and public acceptability limit the extent to which removals can operate as a flexible backstop for under-delivery elsewhere. Removals are intended to address genuinely residual emissions, particularly in sectors such as agriculture and aviation, rather than to compensate for slower progress on mitigation. Over-reliance on removals therefore risks undermining the integrity of the pathway.[130]

89. Delivery risk is further exacerbated where technologies of differing maturity are treated as interchangeable. Proven measures such as electrification and energy efficiency are capable of rapid scale-up, while others, including engineered removals, hydrogen and carbon capture, utilisation and storage (CCUS), involve longer lead times and slower learning cycles. Treating these options as equivalent overstates system flexibility, particularly where multiple sectors compete for the same constrained infrastructure, land, or supply chains.[131]

90. The bulk of abatement required under CB7 depends on proven interventions. such as insulation, electrification, and demand reduction, which deliver earlier emissions savings and wider co-benefits. Where policy emphasis shifts disproportionately towards uncertain technologies representing a

129 Qq31–36 [Sam Hunter Jones/Mike Childs/Professor Grubb]; Climate Change Committee, The Seventh Carbon Budget, 26 February 2025

130 Qq165–168 [Nigel Topping/Emma Pinchbeck]; Professor John Barrett OBE (Deputy Director (Policy) at Priestley Centre for Climate Future) (SCB0060); ClientEarth (SCB0068)

131 Qq30–33; Dr Lois Pennington (Research Associate at Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, University of Manchester); Professor Maria Sharmina (Professor of Energy and Sustainability at Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, University of Manchester); Dr Diarmaid Clery (Lecturer in Engineering for Net Zero at Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, University of Manchester); Dr Clair Gough (Senior Research Fellow at Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, University of Manchester); Dr Chris Jones (Research Associate at Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, University of Manchester); Dr Jingyi Li (Research Associate at Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, University of Manchester); Dr Sarah Mander (Reader at Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, University of Manchester) (SCB0020)

smaller share of total abatement, there is a risk that delivery capacity, skills and political attention are diverted from the areas where progress is most critical.[132]

91. Managing uncertainty of this magnitude requires explicit contingency planning rather than reliance on monitoring alone. The dominant challenge is no longer whether policies exist, but whether they will deliver in practice. Credible delivery therefore depends on advance planning for how mitigation would be alternatively strengthened if higher-risk technologies are delayed or underperform, rather than relying on plan revisions once slippage becomes evident.[133]

92. **CONCLUSION**

Delivery of the Seventh Carbon Budget relies on nascent technologies and on greenhouse gas removals, including both land-based approaches and engineered removals, some of which face significant uncertainty over scale, cost, and delivery timescales. While these options are necessary for addressing genuinely residual emissions, increasing reliance on them shifts delivery risk towards the later stages of the pathway. This defers, rather than resolves, uncertainty, reduces resilience and limits the scope for corrective action if earlier mitigation falls behind.

132 Qq32–33 [Professor Grubb]; Dr Lois Pennington (Research Associate at Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, University of Manchester); Professor Maria Sharmina (Professor of Energy and Sustainability at Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, University of Manchester); Dr Diarmaid Clery (Lecturer in Engineering for Net Zero at Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, University of Manchester); Dr Clair Gough (Senior Research Fellow at Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, University of Manchester); Dr Chris Jones (Research Associate at Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, University of Manchester); Dr Jingyi Li (Research Associate at Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, University of Manchester); Dr Sarah Mander (Reader at Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, University of Manchester) (SCB0020); TAN, Transport Action Network (SCB0066)

133 Qq34–35 [Professor Grubb/Mike Childs/Sam Hunter Jones]; Qq41–42 [Mike Childs/Sam Hunter Jones]; Dr Lois Pennington (Research Associate at Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, University of Manchester); Professor Maria Sharmina (Professor of Energy and Sustainability at Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, University of Manchester); Dr Diarmaid Clery (Lecturer in Engineering for Net Zero at Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, University of Manchester); Dr Clair Gough (Senior Research Fellow at Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, University of Manchester); Dr Chris Jones (Research Associate at Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, University of Manchester); Dr Jingyi Li (Research Associate at Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, University of Manchester); Dr Sarah Mander (Reader at Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, University of Manchester) (SCB0020); ClientEarth (SCB0068)

93. **RECOMMENDATION**
The Government should ensure that delivery of the Seventh Carbon Budget is grounded primarily in early, high-confidence emissions reductions where possible. Greenhouse gas removals should be treated as conditional and supplementary, not as substitutes for mitigation.

94. **RECOMMENDATION**
The Seventh Carbon Budget delivery plan should set out explicit contingency arrangements, identifying in advance how mitigation would be strengthened if nascent technologies or greenhouse gas removals are delayed or underperform. These contingencies should prioritise accelerating proven measures, including energy efficiency, electrification, and demand reduction, rather than increasing reliance on uncertain technologies later in the pathway.

Preventing carbon leakage and offshoring emissions

95. While UK carbon budgets are measured on a territorial basis, reductions driven by declining domestic production offset by increased production elsewhere do not necessarily represent genuine progress in reducing global emissions.[134] In sectors exposed to international competition, including energy-intensive industry, aviation and shipping, emissions are highly mobile. Where domestic production contracts without corresponding reductions in demand, emissions are likely to reappear elsewhere, undermining the purpose of carbon budgets.[135]

96. This risk is particularly acute for trade-exposed and high-temperature industries,[136] where investment decisions are especially shaped by international cost competitiveness.[137] Industrial decarbonisation does not imply deindustrialisation. Retaining domestic manufacturing enables emissions to be reduced under stronger environmental standards, clearer

134 Q20 [Professor Rogelj]; Q4 [Shaun Spiers]; Bennett Institute for Innovation & Policy Acceleration, University of Sussex (SCB0007)

135 Q4 [Shaun Spiers]; Q34 [Professor Grubb]; ; Q99 [Gareth Stace]; Q108 [Jonathon Counsell] Qq99–101 [Edmund Hughes]; Mineral Products Association (SCB0029); Chemical Industries Association (CIA) (SCB0063)

136 High-temperature industries refers to industrial sectors that require very high levels of heat (typically above 1,000°C) for core production processes, such as steel, cement, glass and chemicals manufacturing. These processes are difficult to decarbonise because they currently rely heavily on fossil fuels for heat and often involve process emissions that cannot be eliminated through electrification alone.

137 Qq94–98 [Gareth Stace]; Q101 [Gareth Stace]; Mineral Products Association (SCB0029); Chemical Industries Association (CIA) (SCB0063)

monitoring and greater accountability, while supporting the supply chains required for the wider net zero transition.[138] Conversely, loss of domestic capacity weakens the UK's ability to influence how goods are produced globally and increases the risk of carbon leakage.[139] [140]

97. Electricity price and availability are central to these dynamics. As electrification becomes the primary route to emissions reduction across industry, transport and parts of shipping, sustained electricity price differentials between the UK and competitor economies materially increase the risk that low-carbon investment is directed overseas. Investment decisions also depend on confidence that sufficient grid capacity can be delivered at the right locations and within viable timescales.[141] Constraints relating to grid connections, network reinforcement and system readiness therefore pose a direct risk to domestic decarbonisation, regardless of policy ambition.[142]

98. Managing carbon leakage in internationally mobile sectors requires policy coordination beyond carbon pricing alone. While carbon pricing remains an important tool, its effectiveness depends on interaction with wider measures, including border adjustment mechanisms and transitional protections.[143] Evidence highlighted the risks created by policy uncertainty during transitional periods, particularly where the interaction between emissions trading, carbon border adjustment and the phasing of free allocation is unclear.[144] Given that large industrial investments are infrequent, capital-intensive and effectively irreversible, uncertainty over future cost exposure and policy design is likely to push decarbonisation investment overseas rather than into the UK.[145]

99. Similar risks apply in aviation and shipping, where emissions are not anchored to national boundaries and effective action depends on coordinated approaches. The Government has committed to address

138 Q20 [Professor Rogelj]; Q101 [Gareth Stace]; Bennett Institute for Innovation & Policy Acceleration, University of Sussex (SCB0007)

139 Qq94–98 [Gareth Stace]

140 Carbon leakage refers to the risk that emissions reductions achieved in one country are offset by increases in emissions elsewhere, for example where production relocates to jurisdictions with weaker climate policies, or where domestic production declines but demand is met through higher-emissions imports.

141 Q21 [Shaun Spiers];Q87 [Gareth Stace]; Q56 [Claire Dykta]; Bennett Institute for Innovation & Policy Acceleration, University of Sussex (SCB0007)

142 Q56 [Claire Dykta]; Q18 [Shaun Spiers]; Q16 [Professor Rogelj]; Q65 [Claire Dykta]

143 Q99 [Dr Edmund Hughes]; Q11 [Dr Edmund Hughes]; Q20 [Professor Rogelj]; Q101 [Gareth Stace]; Q108 [Jonathon Counsell]

144 Free allocation refers to the practice of providing some emissions allowances at no cost to certain industries under emissions trading schemes, to reduce the risk of carbon leakage and loss of international competitiveness while low-carbon alternatives and international carbon pricing frameworks develop.

145 Q87 [Gareth Stace]; Q21 [Shaun Spiers]

the treatment of international aviation and shipping emissions in carbon budgets, and clarity on their integration into the UK framework will be important to avoid emissions being displaced beyond the UK's accounting boundary.[146]

100. Managing carbon leakage in internationally competitive sectors depends on how the UK's policy framework operates as a whole, including the interaction between the UK Emissions Trading Scheme and the forthcoming UK Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM).[147] [148] Particular concerns were raised by witnesses that phasing out free allocation before the UK CBAM is fully operational and proven could significantly increase costs, undermine competitiveness and accelerate carbon leakage.[149] The EU's decision to retain free allocation alongside the introduction of its CBAM was repeatedly cited as a relevant comparator.[150]

101. **CONCLUSION**
The Seventh Carbon Budget must deliver genuine emissions reductions, not reductions achieved by exporting emissions overseas. Meeting carbon budgets through offshoring would undermine their environmental purpose and the integrity of the UK's climate framework, and risks weakening public confidence in decarbonisation by creating the appearance of progress without reducing global emissions.

102. **CONCLUSION**
Decarbonisation must not be confused with deindustrialisation. Allowing production to relocate abroad would weaken the UK's industrial base while doing little to reduce global emissions.

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146 Q108 [Jonathon Counsell]; Qq99–101 [Dr Edmund Hughes]; Environmental Audit Committee, Seventh Special Report of Session 2024–26, Airport expansion and climate and nature targets: Government Response, HC 1600, Recommendation 8

147 Q101 [Gareth Stace]; Chemical Industries Association (CIA) (SCB0063); Qq99–102 [Dr Edmund Hughes/ Gareth Stace]; Mineral Products Association (SCB0029)

148 The UK Emissions Trading Scheme (UK ETS) is a market-based policy that caps total greenhouse gas emissions from covered sectors and requires participants to hold allowances for each tonne of emissions produced. Allowances are either allocated for free or purchased at auction, creating a carbon price intended to incentivise emissions reductions where they are cheapest to achieve.
A Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) applies a carbon price to certain imported goods, reflecting the emissions associated with their production. Its purpose is to prevent carbon leakage by ensuring that domestic producers subject to carbon pricing are not placed at a competitive disadvantage relative to imports from jurisdictions with weaker climate policies.

149 Q101 [Gareth Stace]; Chemical Industries Association (CIA) (SCB0063)

150 Q101 [Gareth Stace]; Mineral Products Association (SCB0029)

103. **CONCLUSION**
Delivering the Seventh Carbon Budget therefore requires a policy framework that supports domestic decarbonisation and provides long-term certainty for investment in low-carbon production in the UK. Without this, there is a material risk that progress towards the carbon budgets is achieved on paper rather than through real emissions reductions.

104. **RECOMMENDATION**
The Government should set out clearly how its carbon budget policies will prevent the offshoring of emissions and support domestic decarbonisation, particularly in energy-intensive and trade-exposed sectors.

105. **RECOMMENDATION**
The carbon budget delivery plan should provide clarity on how key policy mechanisms, including electricity price support, infrastructure delivery, and carbon pricing will operate together during the Seventh Carbon Budget period to support domestic investment and manage carbon leakage.

106. **RECOMMENDATION**
The Government should also set out how free allocation under the UK Emissions Trading Scheme and the forthcoming UK Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism will interact during the transition, with a commitment to review their combined effectiveness globally once the UK Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism is in place.

107. **RECOMMENDATION**
We reiterate our previous recommendation in our report on Airport Expansion, and that of the Climate Change Committee, that the Government should provide Parliamentary time to legislate to include international aviation emissions within carbon budgets and the UK's net zero targets, before laying the draft Carbon Budget Order. This is increasingly important given the growing reliance on sustainable aviation fuels and international supply chains.

5 Behaviour change, fairness, and the public mandate

108. Delivery of the Seventh Carbon Budget (CB7) marks a shift in the UK's decarbonisation challenge. Delivery will now depend far more on decisions taken by households and communities in everyday life, such as how homes are heated, how people travel, and how energy- and carbon-intensive goods and services are used.[151] As climate policy becomes increasingly people-facing, public confidence, perceptions of fairness and the credibility of Government leadership become critical to delivery. This chapter examines how behaviour change, affordability, and public engagement shape public consent for delivering CB7.

Behaviour change as a central national delivery challenge

109. The Climate Change Committee's (CCC) balanced pathway reflects this shift. Alongside technological deployment, the CCC estimates that around a third of emissions reductions during the CB7 period will arise from changes in energy use, travel patterns, and consumption.[152] These are choices made by individuals and households, but they are strongly shaped by policy, pricing, infrastructure and market design. In practice, the pathway assumes improvements in energy efficiency, a transition from petrol and diesel vehicles to electric alternatives, greater use of public and active transport where available, a shift away from fossil fuel heating towards low-carbon options such as heat pumps, and broader changes in consumption, including dietary change.[153]

151 Climate Change Committee, The Seventh Carbon Budget, 26 February 2025

152 Oral Evidence taken on 7 April 2025, Q65 [Professor Forster]; National Energy Action (SCB0006); The Centre for Climate Change and Social Transformations (CAST) (SCB0016)

153 Climate Change Committee, The Seventh Carbon Budget, 26 February 2025; Oral Evidence taken on 7 April 2025, Qq8–12, Qq15–19; Qq126–128 [Professor Whitmarsh]

110. Behaviour change at this scale cannot be delivered through information or awareness-raising alone. Decisions involving high upfront costs or long-term commitment, such as heating systems, vehicles or home improvements, are shaped by affordability, convenience, default options and trust. Behavioural outcomes are therefore inseparable from the design of delivery systems and markets, rather than being a matter of individual responsibility in isolation.[154]

111. Despite this, evidence suggested that Government has been reluctant to engage directly with behaviour change as a core delivery challenge. Shaun Spiers, Executive Director of Green Alliance, described a degree of "squeamishness" around behaviour change, despite its central role in the CCC's pathway.[155] This is a missed opportunity: behavioural shifts can deliver substantial co-benefits for productivity, public health and resilience, and are often more cost-effective than purely technological interventions.[156]

112. There is now a well-established evidence base on how policy can support behaviour change, much of which is reflected in the CCC's advice. Public support for change exists, but it is contingent on policies, awareness and information, making low-carbon options easier, cheaper, more accessible and more attractive in practice.[157] Where these conditions are not met, uptake is unlikely to occur at the scale assumed. Our evidence indicated that Government has not yet made full or systematic use of the available policy levers to remove these barriers.[158]

113. Behaviour change within CB7 is therefore fundamentally a Government delivery challenge. Uptake at scale depends on active policy design that aligns prices, default choices, infrastructure, skills and stable cross-government delivery, particularly at key household decision points such as boiler replacement, home purchase or renovation. Evidence highlighted that around two thirds of boiler replacements are "distress purchases", triggered by breakdowns that require rapid replacement and leave little practical scope to switch to low-carbon alternatives such as heat pumps. Decisions taken under these conditions can lock households into high-carbon technologies for a decade or more, underscoring the importance of forward planning, targeted support and policy interventions that act well before these moments arise.[159]

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154 Q126 [Professor Whitmarsh]; Qq126–128 [Toby Park]

155 Q15

156 Bennett Institute for Innovation & Policy Acceleration, University of Sussex (SCB0007)

157 Energy & Climate Intelligence Unit, New analysis finds widespread misinformation around EVs in UK newspapers, 27 August 2025

158 Q127 [Professor Whitmarsh]

159 Q141 [Professor Whitmarsh/Toby Park]; Bennett Institute for Innovation & Policy Acceleration, University of Sussex (SCB0007)

114. Delivery must also reflect the diversity of the UK's housing stock and local circumstances. While electrification of heat will play a central role, a one-size-fits-all approach risks undermining uptake. Different housing types, densities and local infrastructure may require different delivery routes, including heat networks where these provide a more practical or cost-effective solution. A place-based approach that enables a range of low-carbon options is therefore critical to achieving the scale and pace of change assumed under CB7.[160]

115. **CONCLUSION**
Delivery of the Seventh Carbon Budget will depend more than ever on changes in how homes are heated, how people travel, and how energy and goods are used across the economy. We are concerned that, while behaviour change is a central assumption within the Climate Change Committee's pathway, it is not yet being treated as a core delivery challenge in its own right. Without clear ownership, coordination and delivery planning, there is a risk that the scale of behaviour change assumed under the Seventh Carbon Budget will not be realised in practice.

116. **RECOMMENDATION**
The Government should treat behaviour change for delivery of the Seventh Carbon Budget as a major national delivery challenge. Meeting this challenge should include sustained political leadership, clear accountability within Government, and coordinated action across departments. The Government should set out its approach to behaviour change within the Impact Assessment accompanying the draft Budget Order, supported by a costed public engagement and delivery plan with clear objectives, milestones, and reporting arrangements.

117. **RECOMMENDATION**
Behaviour change should not be treated as an adjunct to technology deployment or as a matter of individual responsibility alone. Delivery planning should make full and explicit use of policy levers to shape prices, incentives, defaults, infrastructure and markets, so that low-carbon choices are affordable, accessible and practical at scale. The Government should support behaviour change in practice through a place-based approach to decarbonisation, ensuring that households are offered low-carbon options that reflect their housing type, local infrastructure and circumstances.

160 ADE HeatNetworks (SCB0072)

Integrating behavioural policy and co-benefits

118. Behavioural change that contributes to emissions reduction frequently delivers wider benefits for households, communities and the economy. Evidence consistently highlighted that outcomes such as warmer homes, lower energy bills, improved health, cleaner air and more attractive local environments are often more immediate and tangible to the public than carbon savings alone.[161]

119. These co-benefits are central to the effectiveness of behavioural policy. People are more likely to support and adopt changes in how they heat their homes, travel or consume goods when policies are experienced as improving everyday life, rather than as abstract climate interventions. In practice, measures relating to home energy efficiency, low-carbon heating, transport choices and diet are most effective when framed through impacts on comfort, affordability, safety, health and wellbeing, rather than emissions metrics alone.[162]

120. This is particularly important in the context of ongoing cost-of-living pressures. Households are unlikely to engage with behavioural change where it is perceived to increase financial strain. They are more responsive where measures reduce running costs and exposure to volatile fossil-fuel prices.[163] The CCC's analysis indicates that many of the changes assumed in its recommended pathway could reduce household energy and transport costs over time. However, the CCC was clear that these estimates relate to ongoing costs only and do not account for the upfront capital costs associated with installing low-carbon heating or purchasing new vehicles. Whether households experience net benefits in practice therefore depends on Government action, particularly to address upfront costs and the relative price of electricity compared with fossil fuels. Without this, households may face the costs of transition without experiencing the benefits assumed in the CCC's modelling.[164]

121. Local delivery experience shows that leading with co-benefits is critical to effective delivery in practice. Local authorities, for example, have reported that programmes focused on fuel poverty, thermal comfort, health, clean

161 Qq130–135 [Toby Park/Professor Whitmarsh/Polly Cook]; Q139 [Professor Whitmarsh]

162 Qq130–134 [Polly Cook/Toby Park]; Qq169–174 [Nigel Topping/EmmaPinchbeck]; National Energy Action (SCB0006); Friends of the Earth (SCB0004)

163 Friends of the Earth (SCB0004); National Energy Action (SCB0006); Bennett Institute for Innovation & Policy Acceleration, University of Sussex (SCB0007); Grantham Institute and Imperial Policy Forum (SCB0017); Consumer Scotland (SCB0021); Energy Saving Trust (SCB0042); WWF-UK (SCB0048); ADE HeatNetworks (SCB0072)

164 Climate Change Committee, The Seventh Carbon Budget, 26 February 2025

air and safer neighbourhoods resonated more strongly with residents than climate framing alone.[165] Behaviour change is reinforced when policies deliver visible improvements to local places and when interventions across Government act together rather than in isolation. Policies to deliver CB7 will therefore be most effective when embedded within wider Government objectives, including health, transport, air quality, nature recovery, the cost of living and wellbeing.[166]

122. **CONCLUSION**
Behaviour change at the scale required for the Seventh Carbon Budget will not occur by default. It depends on policies that tangibly improve everyday life for households and communities. Warmer homes, lower running costs, cleaner air and better local environments are not ancillary benefits of climate action, but essential delivery mechanisms. Where climate policy aligns with health, affordability and quality of place, behaviour change becomes feasible at scale. Without this alignment, the level of behaviour change assumed under the Seventh Carbon Budget will not be delivered.

123. **RECOMMENDATION**
The Government should place delivery of co-benefits at the centre of its approach to the Seventh Carbon Budget. Policies intended to drive behaviour change should be designed from the outset to improve affordability, health outcomes, air quality and local environments. Departments responsible for housing, transport, energy, planning and public health should be required to set out, within their contribution to the Seventh Carbon Budget Delivery Plan and Impact Assessment, how their policies deliver these co-benefits and enable the level of behaviour change assumed under the budget.

Fairness, affordability and public consent

124. Fairness and affordability are central conditions for securing public consent for delivery of CB7. As climate policy becomes increasingly people-facing, public support cannot be assumed. Where costs are experienced early and unevenly, while benefits arrive later or are less visible, confidence

165 Qq130–132 [Polly Cook/Toby Park]; The Centre for Climate Change and Social Transformations (CAST) (SCB0016)

166 Community Planning Alliance (SCB0002); The Centre for Climate Change and Social Transformations (CAST) (SCB0016); Bennett Institute for Innovation & Policy Acceleration, University of Sussex (SCB0007); Friends of the Earth (SCB0004); National Energy Action (SCB0006)

in the transition will weaken and delivery will be placed at risk. Fairness is therefore not an abstract principle, but a practical requirement for legitimacy.[167]

125. This challenge is particularly acute for households. While electrification and improved energy efficiency can provide long-term protection from volatile fossil-fuel prices, households are often required to bear upfront costs and disruption before those benefits are realised. The way climate policy costs are currently distributed compounds this risk: funding decarbonisation through energy bills was widely described by witnesses as regressive, disproportionately affecting lower-income households with limited ability to invest in alternatives or change default choices.[168]

126. High electricity prices further weaken incentives to electrify heat and transport, reinforcing exposure to fossil-fuel price volatility and slowing uptake of cleaner alternatives.[169] More progressive funding of climate policy costs currently recovered through energy bills, including through greater use of general taxation, would reduce costs for the majority of households and better align affordability with decarbonisation objectives.[170] Measures to improve home energy efficiency, will be critical to reducing bills, improving thermal comfort and ensuring that the benefits of the transition are felt by those most exposed to high energy costs.[171]

127. Programmes designed to support household decarbonisation must prioritise fairness in both design and delivery. The Government's Warm Homes Plan, with £15 billion of public investment, is intended to upgrade up to five million homes by 2030, and help households out of fuel poverty.[172] Support is targeted principally at low-income households through fully funded improvements and grants, with broader offers of low- or zero-interest loans to other households, and new minimum efficiency standards for rental

167 Q127[Professor Whitmarsh]; Q138 [Toby Park]; Q155 [Nigel Topping/Emma Pinchbeck]; See, for example, The Centre for Climate Change and Social Transformations (CAST) (SCB0016); Consumer Scotland (SCB0021); Utilita Energy (SCB0031); Dr. Alex Waller (Visiting Professor at American University of Sovereign Nations) (SCB0033); The Centre for Energy Policy, University of Strathclyde (SCB0037); OVO (SCB0053); Professor John Barrett OBE (Deputy Director (Policy) at Priestley Centre for Climate Future) (SCB0060); ADE HeatNetworks (SCB0072)

168 Complexity Economics Programme, Institute for New Economic Thinking, University of Oxford (SCB0044); OVO (SCB0053); National Energy Action (SCB0006); Bennett Institute for Innovation & Policy Acceleration, University of Sussex (SCB0007)

169 Climate Change Committee, The Seventh Carbon Budget, 26 February 2025

170 Professor John Barrett OBE (Deputy Director (Policy) at Priestley Centre for Climate Future) (SCB0060)

171 Q61 [Claire Dykta]; Q130 [Polly Cook]

172 Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, Families to save in biggest home upgrade plan in British history, 20 January 2026

properties.[173] However, questions remain about whether the Plan's focus on technology subsidies and financing will adequately prioritise basic energy efficiency improvements for the least efficient home, or be delivered at sufficient scale and pace to address the upfront cost and accessibility barriers experienced by many households.[174]

128. Fairness also extends beyond households to workers and communities affected by structural change. Some sectors face more complex or slower decarbonisation pathways, and without targeted support the costs of transition risk falling unevenly across regions and workforces. A credible delivery approach must therefore include measures to support skills development, retraining and workforce mobility, alongside sufficient installer capacity, clear standards and consumer protections.[175] Without this, households and communities may be unable to participate in the transition in practice, even where financial support exists.[176]

129. **CONCLUSION**

Fairness is fundamental to the legitimacy of the Seventh Carbon Budget. Where transition costs are experienced early and unevenly, while benefits arrive later or are less visible, public consent cannot be assumed. The current approach to funding energy policy risks placing disproportionate burdens on households with the fewest options, while weakening incentives to move away from fossil fuels. If unaddressed, this risks undermining a central delivery pathway for the Seventh Carbon Budget.

173 Carbon Brief, Q&A: What UK's 'warm homes plan' means for climate change and energy bills, 23 January 2026

174 Nesta, Six things to look out for in the UK government's upcoming Warm Homes Plan, 19 January 2026

175 Logistics UK (SCB0009); Dr Tariq Umar (Senior Lecturer at University of the West of England, UK) (SCB0010); Dr Ewan Gibbs (Senior Lecturer in Economic and Social History at University of Glasgow); Riyoko Shibe (Doctoral Researcher at University of Glasgow) (SCB0019); The Centre for Energy Policy, University of Strathclyde (SCB0037)

176 Oral Evidence taken on 7 April 2025, Qq27–31 [Mike Childs/Sam Hunter Jones/Professor Grubb]; Consumer Scotland (SCB0021)

130. **RECOMMENDATION**
The Government should further prioritise reducing electricity costs by removing appropriate policy costs from electricity bills and funding them through general taxation. This would improve affordability for households and businesses, strengthen incentives for the electrification of heat and transport, and avoid placing additional costs on households that are not yet able to switch away from gas. Shifting policy costs from electricity to gas bills may improve price signals in the short term, but would risk unfairly penalising households who face practical, financial or housing constraints on electrification.

131. **RECOMMENDATION**
Alongside the Seventh Carbon Budget Delivery Plan, the Government should publish a Fairness and Distribution Assessment setting out the expected distributional impacts of carbon budget policies, identifying groups at risk of disproportionate costs, including workers whose jobs are displaced by the transition, and the measures in place to support them.

Engaging the public

132. Professor Lorraine Whitmarsh MBE, Director, Centre for Climate Change and Social Transformations, told us that the public often infers the seriousness of climate risk from the Government's policy response, rather than from explicit messaging. She contrasted the unprecedented measures taken during the Covid-19 pandemic, which led the public to perceive the risk as severe, with the more mixed and inconsistent policy signals on climate change, which can lead people to infer that net zero is not being treated as an urgent national priority.[177]

133. The Government has published its public participation plan, Energising Britain: Your voice in our Clean Energy Superpower Mission (December 2025), setting out an intention to communicate more clearly, listen to communities, enable households to access the benefits of the transition, and work with trusted organisations beyond central Government. The Plan positions public participation as an ongoing approach that will be reviewed and adapted over time.[178]

177 Q135 [Professor Whitmarsh]
178 Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, Energising Britain: Your voice in our Clean Energy Superpower Mission, 3 December 2025

134. Our evidence supports this direction of travel but raised concerns about the gap between communication and delivery capability. As delivery of the Seventh Carbon Budget increasingly reaches into everyday decisions, public consent cannot be assumed.[179] Households cannot make these shifts "in the world as it currently is", given existing cost barriers, skills shortages and practical constraints.[180] Public engagement must be anchored in credible, practical delivery that reshapes the choices people face, making low-carbon options affordable, accessible and the default, rather than expecting individuals to change behaviour within systems that still favour high-carbon choices. Without this, engagement risks becoming a substitute for the policy levers required to make low-carbon choices feasible in practice.[181]

135. In the absence of sustained, credible public-facing leadership, space is created for confusion and misinformation.[182] Toby Park, Director of Climate, Energy and Sustainability, at the Behavioural Insights Team, told us that negativity bias and misleading narratives play a significant role in shaping perceptions of low-carbon technologies, particularly heat pumps and electric vehicles, with negative or exaggerated accounts often circulating more widely than accurate information.[183] Evidence indicated that poor-quality installations, inconsistent standards and skills shortages, such as those seen under the Great British Insulation Scheme,[184] undermine household confidence. Where delivery is poor, mistrust is reinforced and misinformation spreads more easily. Building trust in the transition therefore depends not only on countering false narratives, but on ensuring high-quality, reliable delivery by a skilled workforce that households can rely on.[185]

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179 Qq135–136 [Professor Whitmarsh/Toby Park]

180 Q126 [Toby Park]

181 Q148; Dr Lois Pennington (Research Associate at Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, University of Manchester); Professor Maria Sharmina (Professor of Energy and Sustainability at Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, University of Manchester); Dr Diarmaid Clery (Lecturer in Engineering for Net Zero at Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, University of Manchester); Dr Clair Gough (Senior Research Fellow at Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, University of Manchester); Dr Chris Jones (Research Associate at Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, University of Manchester); Dr Jingyi Li (Research Associate at Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, University of Manchester); Dr Sarah Mander (Reader at Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, University of Manchester) (SCB0020); The Centre for Energy Policy, University of Strathclyde (SCB0037); Community Planning Alliance (SCB0002)

182 Q136 [Toby Park]; Q138 [Toby Park]

183 Q136 [Toby Park]; The Centre for Climate Change and Social Transformations (CAST) (SCB0016)

184 Committee of Public Accounts, Sixty-second Report of Session 2024–26, Faulty energy efficiency installations, HC 1229

185 Q136 [Toby Park]; Qq149–152 [Professor Whitmarsh/Toby Park/Polly Cook], Qq153–156 [Nigel Topping/Emma Pinchbeck]

136. Public engagement must be consistent across departments and sustained over time, rather than episodic campaigns that cannot compensate for contradictory policy signals.[186] Effective engagement is two-way, place-based and inclusive, involving people early, deliberating openly about trade-offs, and demonstrating how public input has shaped decisions (including through citizens' assemblies, juries, climathons, and local panels[187]). We also heard how important trusted intermediaries are to effective engagement, including local authorities, community organisations, installers, practitioners and health voices. Similarly, without access to independent, impartial advice to guide households through complex decisions, particularly on home upgrades, uptake will fall short of the scale and pace assumed in the Seventh Carbon Budget pathway.[188]

137. **CONCLUSION**

Public participation is an essential delivery requirement for the Seventh Carbon Budget, not a communications add-on. As decarbonisation increasingly depends on decisions taken by households and communities, public consent must be sustained through consistent leadership, honest explanation of trade-offs, and genuine two-way engagement that is rooted in credible, practical policy and visibly improves everyday life.

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186 Bennett Institute for Innovation & Policy Acceleration, University of Sussex (SCB0007); Met Office (SCB0018); Professor John Barrett OBE (Deputy Director (Policy) at Priestley Centre for Climate Future) (SCB0060)

187 Citizens' assemblies, juries, climathons and local panels are deliberative engagement methods that bring together a diverse group of members of the public to consider policy questions, hear evidence, deliberate on options and provide informed recommendations. Citizens' assemblies and juries involve structured, facilitated discussions over one or more sessions; climathons are time-limited, collaborative events focused on developing solutions to climate related challenges; and local panels are place based forums enabling ongoing dialogue between communities and decision makers.

188 See, for example, Community Planning Alliance (SCB0002); Dr Lois Pennington (Research Associate at Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, University of Manchester); Professor Maria Sharmina (Professor of Energy and Sustainability at Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, University of Manchester); Dr Diarmaid Clery (Lecturer in Engineering for Net Zero at Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, University of Manchester); Dr Clair Gough (Senior Research Fellow at Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, University of Manchester); Dr Chris Jones (Research Associate at Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, University of Manchester); Dr Jingyi Li (Research Associate at Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, University of Manchester); Dr Sarah Mander (Reader at Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, University of Manchester) (SCB0020); National Energy Action (SCB0006); Dr Amy Barnes (Deputy Director of the Born in Bradford Centre for Social Change and Senior Researcher in the Department of Health Sciences at University of York); Dr Kelli Kennedy (Research Associate at University of York); Maddie Baxter (Research Assistant at University of York) (SCB0013); The Centre for Climate Change and Social Transformations (CAST) (SCB0016); Professor John Barrett OBE (Deputy Director (Policy) at Priestley Centre for Climate Future) (SCB0060)The MCS Foundation (SCB0027); Consumer Scotland (SCB0021)

138. **RECOMMENDATION**
The Government should set out its public participation approach for the Seventh Carbon Budget as a clear, resourced programme within the Seventh Carbon Budget Delivery Plan. This should focus on engagement, rather than just communications, and should:

- embed ongoing, two-way engagement, including deliberative processes at a national and local level, with transparent feedback loops showing how public input has shaped decisions;
- use trusted messengers and independent advice, supporting local authorities, community organisations and industry practitioners to engage communities and guide households through key decisions, particularly on home upgrades;
- ensure communications and policy are mutually reinforcing, with consistent cross-government messaging on the practical choices people are being asked to make; and
- frame engagement around tangible co-benefits and fairness, including warmer homes, lower bills, cleaner air and improved health, while being clear about costs, constraints and the consequences of inaction.

The role of local authorities in delivering net zero

139. Local authorities are central to enabling the behaviour change required to deliver CB7. Many of the decisions that shape everyday behaviour, how homes are heated, how people travel, and how neighbourhoods are designed, are influenced or delivered locally. Place-based approaches, rooted in local knowledge and trusted relationships, are often more effective than national programmes alone in shaping behaviour and building public mandate. Local authorities, community organisations, employers and schools frequently act as trusted messengers and are well placed to tailor delivery to local circumstances, increasing both participation and acceptance.[189]

140. Polly Cook, Chief Officer, Climate, Energy and Green Spaces, at Leeds City Council told us that there is a growing mismatch between expectations placed on local authorities and the resources available to them. Government has not set out a clear framework for responsibility and

189 Q143 [Polly Cook/Professor Whitmarsh]

accountability for emissions reduction at local level.[190] While councils possess important levers, including decision making powers in planning, parking policy, clean air zones and local transport, these tools are only effective where affordable alternatives exist and where local authorities are supported with the necessary powers, duties and financial resources.[191] Misalignment between national policy signals and local delivery responsibilities was repeatedly identified in our evidence as undermining implementation and weakening public confidence.[192]

141. Critically, local authorities do not currently have a statutory responsibility for net zero. In practice, this means climate action must compete with legally mandated duties, which are absorbing an ever-larger proportion of council budgets in the context of severe financial pressure on local government. The absence of a statutory duty on climate change was identified as a structural barrier to prioritisation, long-term workforce planning and sustained public engagement. Without clearer responsibilities, funding and governance to support local delivery, the Government risks weakening one of the most effective mechanisms available for achieving the emissions reductions assumed under CB7.[193]

190 Qq133–134

191 Energy Saving Trust (SCB0042)

192 Q144 [Polly Cook/Toby Park]; Community Planning Alliance (SCB0002); Bennett Institute for Innovation & Policy Acceleration, University of Sussex (SCB0007); Dr Amy Barnes (Deputy Director of the Born in Bradford Centre for Social Change and Senior Researcher in the Department of Health Sciences at University of York); Dr Kelli Kennedy (Research Associate at University of York); Maddie Baxter (Research Assistant at University of York) (SCB0013); Professor Greg Marsden (Professor of Transport Governance at Institute for Transport Studies, University of Leeds) (SCB0014); The Centre for Climate Change and Social Transformations (CAST) (SCB0016)

193 Dr Lois Pennington (Research Associate at Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, University of Manchester); Professor Maria Sharmina (Professor of Energy and Sustainability at Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, University of Manchester); Dr Diarmaid Clery (Lecturer in Engineering for Net Zero at Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, University of Manchester); Dr Clair Gough (Senior Research Fellow at Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, University of Manchester); Dr Chris Jones (Research Associate at Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, University of Manchester); Dr Jingyi Li (Research Associate at Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, University of Manchester); Dr Sarah Mander (Reader at Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, University of Manchester) (SCB0020); Dr Tariq Umar (Senior Lecturer at University of the West of England, UK) (SCB0010)

142. **CONCLUSION**

Local authorities are essential to delivering the Seventh Carbon Budget as it will rely on place-based action rooted in local knowledge, trusted relationships and visible local benefits. Without a clear mandate and sustained funding, the Government cannot credibly expect local authorities to deliver the scale of change assumed under the Seventh Carbon Budget.

143. **RECOMMENDATION**

The Government must place local authorities at the centre of delivery of the Seventh Carbon Budget by:

- legislating for a clear statutory duty for local authorities in relation to net zero delivery; and
- providing long-term, predictable funding to support place-based delivery, including behaviour change, public engagement and household decarbonisation.

6 Parliamentary scrutiny of the Seventh Carbon Budget

144. Under the Climate Change Act 2008 (CCA), Parliament is asked to approve carbon budgets that set legally binding limits on UK greenhouse gas emissions. These decisions have long-term implications for public spending, infrastructure investment, industrial strategy and household behaviour. As the Seventh Carbon Budget (CB7) relies more heavily than previous budgets on cross-government coordination and changes in everyday behaviour, the adequacy of Parliamentary scrutiny at the point of approval becomes a material issue for democratic accountability and delivery confidence. This chapter examines the arrangements for Parliamentary scrutiny of CB7.

The draft budget order approval process

145. The Sixth Carbon Budget, set in 2021, illustrates the limits of current practice.[194] The Carbon Budget Order was considered under the affirmative procedure,[195] with debates in both Houses, including in a Delegated Legislation Committee in the Commons,[196] and the Order was approved without a division in either House.[197] While this reflected the broad cross-party consensus at the time, CB7 raises wider delivery risks and distributional impacts than previous budgets, and will therefore require more sustained Parliamentary engagement, particularly given its reliance on cross-government coordination and changes in household and business behaviour.[198]

146. Our predecessor Committee set out detailed proposals to strengthen Parliamentary engagement with the carbon budget-setting process. These included the publication of a draft delivery plan alongside the draft Carbon Budget Order, followed by a period of scrutiny by Committees in

194 The Carbon Budget Order 2021
195 The Draft Carbon Budget Order 2021
196 Draft Carbon Budget Order Bill Committee, 21 June 2021, col 1. The debate lasted for 17 minutes.
197 Votes and Proceedings, Tuesday 22 June 2021, item 6
198 Qq34–37 [Mike Childs/Sam Hunter Jones/Professor Grubb]; National Energy Action (SCB0006); TAN, Transport Action Network (SCB0066); WWF-UK (SCB0048)

both Houses before a debate on the floor of the House.[199] The previous Government agreed to this approach in principle, including the publication of a draft delivery plan, which Ministers stated would not be unduly burdensome.[200]

147. This Government has stated that, in line with the CCA, an Impact Assessment will be published alongside the draft Carbon Budget Order for CB7, with a full delivery plan laid before Parliament as soon as reasonably practicable after the budget level has been approved. While this approach complies with the statutory framework, Parliament's ability to scrutinise carbon budgets is constrained not only by limited time, but by the information available at the point of approval.[201]

148. We welcome the commitment to publish an Impact Assessment alongside the draft Order and to lay a delivery plan thereafter. However, effective Parliamentary scrutiny requires the ability to assess not only the costs and benefits of the proposed target, but the credibility of the arrangements to deliver it at the point Parliament is asked to approve a legally binding emissions limit. This includes sufficient clarity on the policies, delivery mechanisms, dependencies and risk management arrangements underpinning the proposed budget level.[202]

Scrutiny of carbon budget delivery

149. The CCA provides important oversight mechanisms, including the CCC's annual progress report and the Government's formal response.[203] However, Ministers are not routinely required to account directly to Parliament for progress, slippage or emerging risks. This gap was evident when Ministers did not address Parliament following the High Court's ruling that delivery plans for the Fourth to Sixth Carbon Budgets were unlawful.[204] As delivery

199 Letter from the EAC Chair to the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, relating to parliamentary scrutiny of Government proposals for the Seventh Carbon Budget, 6 February 2024

200 Letter from the Secretary of State for Energy Security & Net Zero, responding to the Committee's letter of 6 February on parliamentary scrutiny of Government proposals for the Seventh Carbon Budget, 26 March 2024

201 Department of Energy Security and Net Zero (SCB0065)

202 See, for instance, Hleb Buziuk (Independent policy researcher and human-rights advocate at FairGo CIC) (SCB0011); Carbon Capture and Storage Association (SCB0032); TAN, Transport Action Network (SCB0066); Dr Tariq Umar (Senior Lecturer at University of the West of England, UK) (SCB0010); Professor Greg Marsden (Professor of Transport Governance at Institute for Transport Studies, University of Leeds) (SCB0014)

203 Climate Change Committee, Progress in reducing emissions - 2025 report to Parliament, 25 June 2025

204 Qq33–36 [Mike Childs/Sam Hunter Jones]

under CB7 becomes more complex and politically sensitive, the absence of a routine, structured opportunity for Ministers to explain progress risks weakening Parliamentary ownership of delivery.[205]

150. This takes place in a political context in which climate policy and net zero are now more openly contested across Parliament than when earlier carbon budgets were set.[206] Parties from across the House have articulated differing positions on the merits of net zero and concerns about its delivery. These encompass divergent perspectives on the merits of net zero, the pace and sequencing of the transition, the appropriate balance between state intervention and marketled delivery, the implications for household affordability and costofliving pressures, the consequences for industrial competitiveness and economic growth, and the distribution of costs and benefits across different regions and communities.[207]

151. Where Parliament is asked to approve legally binding decisions, like CB7, with far reaching consequences for public spending, infrastructure and everyday behaviour, it is necessary that these differences are debated openly.[208]

152. **CONCLUSION**

We welcome the Government's decision to invite us to undertake early scrutiny of the Seventh Carbon Budget. This represents a material improvement on previous practice and reflects growing recognition of Parliament's role in scrutinising not just carbon targets, but the credibility of the plans intended to deliver them.

205 Qq26–31; Bennett Institute for Innovation & Policy Acceleration, University of Sussex (SCB0007)

206 BBC News, How the political consensus on climate change has shattered, 2 May 2025

207 BBC News, Net Zero by 2050 'impossible' for UK, says Kemi Badenoch, 18 March 2025; BBC News, Green Party manifesto 2024: Key policies analysed, 12 June 2024; BBC News, Reform UK sets out plan to tax renewable energy, 12 February 2025

208 Philip Dunne, How should Parliament handle the Seventh Carbon Budget - and why does it matter?,18 April 2024

153. **CONCLUSION**

However, experience shows that Parliamentary scrutiny of carbon budgets has too often been cursory. The Sixth Carbon Budget, despite setting a legally binding emissions limit with implications for public spending, infrastructure and everyday life, did not remotely receive commensurate Parliamentary focus. That approach is no longer defensible. As delivery of carbon budgets becomes more complex, more intrusive and more politically contested, Parliament must be given adequate opportunity to scrutinise the assumptions, trade-offs and risks that underpin them. Robust scrutiny of the Seventh Carbon Budget is essential to democratic accountability and to sustaining confidence in its delivery. Parliament must not be reduced to a rubber stamp for legally binding climate decisions of this scale and consequence.

154. **RECOMMENDATION**

The Government should support a formal, enhanced Parliamentary scrutiny framework for the Seventh Carbon Budget that enables meaningful scrutiny both before approval and throughout delivery, by an annual report on each Department's progress towards time framed targets. Following the setting of the Sixth Carbon Budget, our predecessor Committee made a comprehensive set of recommendations on how Parliamentary scrutiny of future carbon budgets should be strengthened. We consider that those recommendations remain the most appropriate framework for scrutiny of the Seventh Carbon Budget, and we recommend that the Government implement them in full. In particular, the Government should adopt the approach set out below:

- When Ministers announce the proposed level of the Seventh Carbon Budget, they should simultaneously lay before Parliament a draft carbon budget delivery framework, setting out the policies and proposals intended to deliver the budget, as described in Chapters 2 and 3, for scrutiny and debate. Ministers should give notice of a motion under Standing Order No. 118(3)(a) that the draft Order is not to be referred to a Delegated Legislation Committee in the House of Commons, but instead debated on the Floor of the House.
- A defined period of three months of Parliamentary scrutiny should elapse between publication of the draft delivery framework and the laying of the draft Carbon Budget Order. While recognising statutory constraints, this period should be sufficient to allow committees to take evidence, publish reports, and engage constructively with Ministers on delivery feasibility and risk.

- This scrutiny period will enable relevant House of Commons and House of Lords committees to examine elements of the draft delivery framework within their remits. The Secretary of State for DESNZ, who has principal responsibility for delivery, should agree to appear before the Environmental Audit Committee at an early stage.
- The Government should arrange for a debate of not less than half a day on the floor of the House on a motion to approve the draft Order. This would allow the House to consider the budget level as a whole.
- The Government should introduce an annual oral ministerial statement to Parliament on progress in delivering carbon budgets, timed to coincide with publication of the Climate Change Committee's statutory annual progress report. This statement should set out progress against delivery plans, identify emerging risks, and explain how Ministers intend to respond where delivery is off track.
- The Government should facilitate engagement with devolved legislatures.
- If the draft Order is approved, Ministers should, when laying a final delivery plan as required under section 14 of the Climate Change Act 2008, clearly reflect changes made in response to Parliamentary scrutiny.
- The Government should publish and maintain a Seventh Carbon Budget Risk and Contingency Register once the delivery plan has been approved, setting out key delivery risks, early warning indicators, and the policy responses that would be triggered if progress deviates materially from the planned pathway.

Conclusions and recommendations

Setting the Seventh Carbon Budget

1. The Climate Change Committee's advised level for the Seventh Carbon Budget is technically credible, but will require tough political decisions, and represents a necessary checkpoint in the UK's statutory pathway to net zero by 2050. (Conclusion, Paragraph 30)

2. As the 'low hanging fruit' of decarbonisation has largely been achieved, delivery risk increases materially under the Seventh Carbon Budget, at the same time as delivery options are reduced (as represented by the CCC's decision to produce a single balanced pathway rather than multiple pathways). Emissions reductions become more complex, more capital-intensive and more dependent on coordinated action across infrastructure, markets and behaviour. Without clear planning, sustained policy signals, transparency over delivery assumptions and credible contingency arrangements, the risk of under-delivery and unequal impacts will rise. (Conclusion, Paragraph 31)

3. The Government should legislate for the Climate Change Committee's recommended level of 535 $MtCO_2e$ for the Seventh Carbon Budget period. However, legislation must be accompanied by strengthened action to address the delivery risks identified in this report. (Recommendation, Paragraph 32)

4. The Government should consider additional measures that offer an opportunity to provide resilience and headroom against delivery risk, without damaging public consent for the measures. (Recommendation, Paragraph 33)

5. In legislating for the Seventh Carbon Budget, the Government should consider the United Kingdom's contribution to global efforts to limit warming, alongside its domestic statutory framework. While the UK has exercised international leadership through the Climate Change Act 2008, the statutory net zero target and its 2035 Nationally Determined Contribution, continued leadership cannot be assumed. The credibility of the UK's climate framework depends on domestic emissions limits

being consistent with its obligations under the Paris Agreement and its commitment to a just transition, as well as the coherence of its overall contribution to global climate action. (Conclusion, Paragraph 38)

6. The Government should set out clearly in the impact assessment that will accompany the draft Carbon Budget Order, how the proposed legislative level of the Seventh Carbon Budget aligns with the United Kingdom's legally binding obligations under the Paris Agreement, including how CB7 enables the UK to meet its status as an Annex I Party, with heightened responsibilities under the UNFCCC. (Recommendation, Paragraph 39)

Government delivery of the Seventh Carbon Budget

7. The Government must make sure its cross-departmental arrangements offer the clarity, authority and consistency required to deliver the Seventh Carbon Budget. As emissions reductions must accelerate sharply in the 2030s, delivery will depend on sustained, coordinated action across multiple departments and policy areas. Strong central leadership and clear mechanisms for collective responsibility are needed to avoid departmental priorities and policy signals diverging, undermining confidence in delivery of the carbon budget. (Conclusion, Paragraph 50)

8. Alongside the draft Carbon Budget Order for the Seventh Carbon Budget, the Government should publish a clear, indicative, cross-governmental delivery framework. The framework should demonstrate how departmental policies will be aligned, mutually reinforcing and consistent with the emissions limits set by Parliament. This framework should:

    - set out the respective roles and responsibilities of relevant departments in delivering the carbon budget pathway;
    - be explicitly endorsed by the Prime Minister's Office and HM Treasury to demonstrate collective ownership;
    - provide transparency on how cross-government governance arrangements will operate in practice to resolve policy conflicts and oversee delivery; and
    - set out clearly how delivery shortfalls will be identified, addressed and allocated across departments, including where responsibility lies for corrective action within the overall carbon budget framework. (Recommendation, Paragraph 51)

9. Public perceptions are shaped not by ministerial statements alone, but by the cumulative impact of decisions taken across Government. Where policy choices in areas such as transport, buildings and infrastructure cut across climate objectives and are not aligned, they signal that net zero is a conditional ambition rather than a binding national obligation. This inconsistency has practical consequences and would slow the uptake of low-carbon technologies and deter long-term private investment, undermining confidence in the delivery of net zero and the Seventh Carbon Budget. The erosion of cross-party consensus on net zero further compounds this uncertainty at precisely the point when clarity, stability and sustained political commitment are most needed. (Conclusion, Paragraph 56)

10. DESNZ should provide clear, consistent and sustained cross-government leadership on communication of net zero policy. Policy announcements and public messaging should reinforce, rather than dilute, the urgency of emissions reductions and the long-term direction of travel required to deliver the Seventh Carbon Budget. (Recommendation, Paragraph 57)

11. DESNZ should set out a clear cross-sector prioritisation framework within the Seventh Carbon Budget Delivery Plan, explaining how limited low-carbon resources, including clean electricity, network capacity, sustainable feedstocks and land, will be allocated between competing demands. This framework should set out how priorities will be managed where policies across sectors draw on the same constrained resources, and how trade-offs will be handled to ensure that progress in one part of the economy does not displace or constrain decarbonisation elsewhere. (Recommendation, Paragraph 58)

12. DESNZ Ministers should provide visible cross-government leadership by setting out, in a single, authoritative statement within our recommended indicative delivery framework, how departmental policies collectively support delivery of the Seventh Carbon Budget. This should include clear objectives, indicative timelines and an explanation of how policies that risk increasing emissions or delaying progress will be mitigated, so that Parliament and the public can assess the coherence and credibility of the Government's overall approach. However, DESNZ will only have the credibility, capacity and capability to do this if it is explicitly backed by the Prime Minister and the Chancellor of the Exchequer. This includes public statements, clear steers across government and the resources to ensure departments meet their agreed net zero commitments and work together when delivery requires it. (Recommendation, Paragraph 59)

Sectoral pathways to delivering the Seventh Carbon Budget

13. Delivery of the Seventh Carbon Budget will depend on major cross-sector changes in infrastructure, technology, and behaviour, many of which must be secured well before the 2038–2042 period begins. These changes will not occur automatically in response to ambition alone. Without early clarity on policy instruments, funding mechanisms, delivery governance, infrastructure sequencing and skills capacity, the pathway assumptions will not translate into delivery. (Conclusion, Paragraph 84)

14. Delivery risk is particularly acute in sectors that rely on technologies not yet available at scale and subject to significant cost, supply, and investment uncertainty. While policy frameworks exist in principle, they do not yet provide a sufficiently credible or transparent basis for delivering the scale of emissions reductions assumed in the Climate Change Committee's pathway. Without clearer plans, Parliament, investors, and the public are being asked to take delivery on trust. (Conclusion, Paragraph 85)

15. Alongside the draft Seventh Carbon Budget Order, the Government should publish draft sector delivery plans setting out how each sector is expected to contribute to delivery of the budget. These plans should:

- Set out the policy instruments that will be used and when they will take effect;
- Identify the funding routes, including the balance between public support and private investment;
- Specify the infrastructure required, with indicative sequencing and delivery milestones to ensure that grid expansion, planning reform and infrastructure readiness precede electrification and deployment surges;
- Set out the behavioural, skills and capacity assumptions underpinning delivery;
- Demonstrate how the sectoral plans align with each other and with wider Government strategies and policy frameworks, such as those affecting land use, infrastructure, industrial strategy and skills;
- Explain how competing demands across sectors for constrained resources, including clean power, grid capacity, skilled workers, land and sustainable feedstocks, will be prioritised and managed, and how trade-offs between departmental objectives will be resolved to support delivery of the carbon budget as a whole.

- Set out how projected growth in electricity demand from data centres and other emerging energy-intensive sectors is factored into system planning and infrastructure delivery, including the implications for low-carbon generation, network capacity, and competing demands across the economy;
- and, for sectors reliant on emerging or nascent technologies it should include pre-agreed contingency options and clearly defined and actively monitored trigger points to be activated if technologies are not delivered at the expected pace or scale. This should include explicit consideration of delivery capacity and skills constraints, to avoid poor implementation that could undermine public confidence.

Together, these plans would strengthen Parliamentary scrutiny, provide greater transparency on delivery risk, and give investors, industry, and the public clearer signals about the Government's long-term commitment and expectations. (Recommendation, Paragraph 86)

16. Delivery of the Seventh Carbon Budget relies on nascent technologies and on greenhouse gas removals, including both land-based approaches and engineered removals, some of which face significant uncertainty over scale, cost, and delivery timescales. While these options are necessary for addressing genuinely residual emissions, increasing reliance on them shifts delivery risk towards the later stages of the pathway. This defers, rather than resolves, uncertainty, reduces resilience and limits the scope for corrective action if earlier mitigation falls behind. (Conclusion, Paragraph 92)

17. The Government should ensure that delivery of the Seventh Carbon Budget is grounded primarily in early, high-confidence emissions reductions where possible. Greenhouse gas removals should be treated as conditional and supplementary, not as substitutes for mitigation. (Recommendation, Paragraph 93)

18. The Seventh Carbon Budget delivery plan should set out explicit contingency arrangements, identifying in advance how mitigation would be strengthened if nascent technologies or greenhouse gas removals are delayed or underperform. These contingencies should prioritise accelerating proven measures, including energy efficiency, electrification, and demand reduction, rather than increasing reliance on uncertain technologies later in the pathway. (Recommendation, Paragraph 94)

19. The Seventh Carbon Budget must deliver genuine emissions reductions, not reductions achieved by exporting emissions overseas. Meeting carbon budgets through offshoring would undermine their environmental purpose

and the integrity of the UK's climate framework, and risks weakening public confidence in decarbonisation by creating the appearance of progress without reducing global emissions. (Conclusion, Paragraph 101)

20. Decarbonisation must not be confused with deindustrialisation. Allowing production to relocate abroad would weaken the UK's industrial base while doing little to reduce global emissions. (Conclusion, Paragraph 102)

21. Delivering the Seventh Carbon Budget therefore requires a policy framework that supports domestic decarbonisation and provides long-term certainty for investment in low-carbon production in the UK. Without this, there is a material risk that progress towards the carbon budgets is achieved on paper rather than through real emissions reductions. (Conclusion, Paragraph 103)

22. The Government should set out clearly how its carbon budget policies will prevent the offshoring of emissions and support domestic decarbonisation, particularly in energy-intensive and trade-exposed sectors. (Recommendation, Paragraph 104)

23. The carbon budget delivery plan should provide clarity on how key policy mechanisms, including electricity price support, infrastructure delivery, and carbon pricing will operate together during the Seventh Carbon Budget period to support domestic investment and manage carbon leakage. (Recommendation, Paragraph 105)

24. The Government should also set out how free allocation under the UK Emissions Trading Scheme and the forthcoming UK Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism will interact during the transition, with a commitment to review their combined effectiveness globally once the UK Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism is in place. (Recommendation, Paragraph 106)

25. We reiterate our previous recommendation in our report on Airport Expansion, and that of the Climate Change Committee, that the Government should provide Parliamentary time to legislate to include international aviation emissions within carbon budgets and the UK's net zero targets, before laying the draft Carbon Budget Order. This is increasingly important given the growing reliance on sustainable aviation fuels and international supply chains. (Recommendation, Paragraph 107)

Behaviour change, fairness, and the public mandate

26. Delivery of the Seventh Carbon Budget will depend more than ever on changes in how homes are heated, how people travel, and how energy and goods are used across the economy. We are concerned that, while behaviour change is a central assumption within the Climate Change Committee's pathway, it is not yet being treated as a core delivery challenge in its own right. Without clear ownership, coordination and delivery planning, there is a risk that the scale of behaviour change assumed under the Seventh Carbon Budget will not be realised in practice. (Conclusion, Paragraph 115)

27. The Government should treat behaviour change for delivery of the Seventh Carbon Budget as a major national delivery challenge. Meeting this challenge should include sustained political leadership, clear accountability within Government, and coordinated action across departments. The Government should set out its approach to behaviour change within the Impact Assessment accompanying the draft Budget Order, supported by a costed public engagement and delivery plan with clear objectives, milestones, and reporting arrangements. (Recommendation, Paragraph 116)

28. Behaviour change should not be treated as an adjunct to technology deployment or as a matter of individual responsibility alone. Delivery planning should make full and explicit use of policy levers to shape prices, incentives, defaults, infrastructure and markets, so that low-carbon choices are affordable, accessible and practical at scale. The Government should support behaviour change in practice through a place-based approach to decarbonisation, ensuring that households are offered low-carbon options that reflect their housing type, local infrastructure and circumstances. (Recommendation, Paragraph 117)

29. Behaviour change at the scale required for the Seventh Carbon Budget will not occur by default. It depends on policies that tangibly improve everyday life for households and communities. Warmer homes, lower running costs, cleaner air and better local environments are not ancillary benefits of climate action, but essential delivery mechanisms. Where climate policy aligns with health, affordability and quality of place, behaviour change becomes feasible at scale. Without this alignment, the level of behaviour change assumed under the Seventh Carbon Budget will not be delivered. (Conclusion, Paragraph 122)

30. The Government should place delivery of co-benefits at the centre of its approach to the Seventh Carbon Budget. Policies intended to drive behaviour change should be designed from the outset to improve

affordability, health outcomes, air quality and local environments. Departments responsible for housing, transport, energy, planning and public health should be required to set out, within their contribution to the Seventh Carbon Budget Delivery Plan and Impact Assessment, how their policies deliver these co-benefits and enable the level of behaviour change assumed under the budget. (Recommendation, Paragraph 123)

31. Fairness is fundamental to the legitimacy of the Seventh Carbon Budget. Where transition costs are experienced early and unevenly, while benefits arrive later or are less visible, public consent cannot be assumed. The current approach to funding energy policy risks placing disproportionate burdens on households with the fewest options, while weakening incentives to move away from fossil fuels. If unaddressed, this risks undermining a central delivery pathway for the Seventh Carbon Budget. (Conclusion, Paragraph 129)

32. The Government should further prioritise reducing electricity costs by removing appropriate policy costs from electricity bills and funding them through general taxation. This would improve affordability for households and businesses, strengthen incentives for the electrification of heat and transport, and avoid placing additional costs on households that are not yet able to switch away from gas. Shifting policy costs from electricity to gas bills may improve price signals in the short term, but would risk unfairly penalising households who face practical, financial or housing constraints on electrification. (Recommendation, Paragraph 130)

33. Alongside the Seventh Carbon Budget Delivery Plan, the Government should publish a Fairness and Distribution Assessment setting out the expected distributional impacts of carbon budget policies, identifying groups at risk of disproportionate costs, including workers whose jobs are displaced by the transition, and the measures in place to support them. (Recommendation, Paragraph 131)

34. Public participation is an essential delivery requirement for the Seventh Carbon Budget, not a communications add-on. As decarbonisation increasingly depends on decisions taken by households and communities, public consent must be sustained through consistent leadership, honest explanation of trade-offs, and genuine two-way engagement that is rooted in credible, practical policy and visibly improves everyday life. (Conclusion, Paragraph 137)

35. The Government should set out its public participation approach for the Seventh Carbon Budget as a clear, resourced programme within the Seventh Carbon Budget Delivery Plan. This should focus on engagement, rather than just communications, and should:

- embed ongoing, two-way engagement, including deliberative processes at a national and local level, with transparent feedback loops showing how public input has shaped decisions;
- use trusted messengers and independent advice, supporting local authorities, community organisations and industry practitioners to engage communities and guide households through key decisions, particularly on home upgrades;
- ensure communications and policy are mutually reinforcing, with consistent cross-government messaging on the practical choices people are being asked to make; and
- frame engagement around tangible co-benefits and fairness, including warmer homes, lower bills, cleaner air and improved health, while being clear about costs, constraints and the consequences of inaction. (Recommendation, Paragraph 138)

36. Local authorities are essential to delivering the Seventh Carbon Budget as it will rely on place-based action rooted in local knowledge, trusted relationships and visible local benefits. Without a clear mandate and sustained funding, the Government cannot credibly expect local authorities to deliver the scale of change assumed under the Seventh Carbon Budget. (Conclusion, Paragraph 142)

37. The Government must place local authorities at the centre of delivery of the Seventh Carbon Budget by:

- legislating for a clear statutory duty for local authorities in relation to net zero delivery; and
- providing long-term, predictable funding to support place-based delivery, including behaviour change, public engagement and household decarbonisation. (Recommendation, Paragraph 143)

Parliamentary scrutiny of the Seventh Carbon Budget

38. We welcome the Government's decision to invite us to undertake early scrutiny of the Seventh Carbon Budget. This represents a material improvement on previous practice and reflects growing recognition of Parliament's role in scrutinising not just carbon targets, but the credibility of the plans intended to deliver them. (Conclusion, Paragraph 152)

39. However, experience shows that Parliamentary scrutiny of carbon budgets has too often been cursory. The Sixth Carbon Budget, despite setting a legally binding emissions limit with implications for public spending,

infrastructure and everyday life, did not remotely receive commensurate Parliamentary focus. That approach is no longer defensible. As delivery of carbon budgets becomes more complex, more intrusive and more politically contested, Parliament must be given adequate opportunity to scrutinise the assumptions, trade-offs and risks that underpin them. Robust scrutiny of the Seventh Carbon Budget is essential to democratic accountability and to sustaining confidence in its delivery. Parliament must not be reduced to a rubber stamp for legally binding climate decisions of this scale and consequence. (Conclusion, Paragraph 153)

40. The Government should support a formal, enhanced Parliamentary scrutiny framework for the Seventh Carbon Budget that enables meaningful scrutiny both before approval and throughout delivery, by an annual report on each Department's progress towards time framed targets. Following the setting of the Sixth Carbon Budget, our predecessor Committee made a comprehensive set of recommendations on how Parliamentary scrutiny of future carbon budgets should be strengthened. We consider that those recommendations remain the most appropriate framework for scrutiny of the Seventh Carbon Budget, and we recommend that the Government implement them in full. In particular, the Government should adopt the approach set out below:

- When Ministers announce the proposed level of the Seventh Carbon Budget, they should simultaneously lay before Parliament a draft carbon budget delivery framework, setting out the policies and proposals intended to deliver the budget, as described in Chapters 2 and 3, for scrutiny and debate. Ministers should give notice of a motion under Standing Order No. 118(3)(a) that the draft Order is not to be referred to a Delegated Legislation Committee in the House of Commons, but instead debated on the Floor of the House.

- A defined period of three months of Parliamentary scrutiny should elapse between publication of the draft delivery framework and the laying of the draft Carbon Budget Order. While recognising statutory constraints, this period should be sufficient to allow committees to take evidence, publish reports, and engage constructively with Ministers on delivery feasibility and risk.

- This scrutiny period will enable relevant House of Commons and House of Lords committees to examine elements of the draft delivery framework within their remits. The Secretary of State for DESNZ, who has principal responsibility for delivery, should agree to appear before the Environmental Audit Committee at an early stage.

- The Government should arrange for a debate of not less than half a day on the floor of the House on a motion to approve the draft Order. This would allow the House to consider the budget level as a whole.

- The Government should introduce an annual oral ministerial statement to Parliament on progress in delivering carbon budgets, timed to coincide with publication of the Climate Change Committee's statutory annual progress report. This statement should set out progress against delivery plans, identify emerging risks, and explain how Ministers intend to respond where delivery is off track.
- The Government should facilitate engagement with devolved legislatures.
- If the draft Order is approved, Ministers should, when laying a final delivery plan as required under section 14 of the Climate Change Act 2008, clearly reflect changes made in response to Parliamentary scrutiny.
- The Government should publish and maintain a Seventh Carbon Budget Risk and Contingency Register once the delivery plan has been approved, setting out key delivery risks, early warning indicators, and the policy responses that would be triggered if progress deviates materially from the planned pathway. (Recommendation, Paragraph 154)

Annex 1: Seventh Carbon Budget Roundtables

1. On 27 October 2025, the Committee held a roundtable event with over 20 representatives from six sectors across the UK economy, as part of its inquiry into the Seventh Carbon Budget:

   - Transport (surface, aviation, shipping),
   - Industry,
   - Buildings (residential and non-residential),
   - Land Use and Agriculture,
   - Energy and CCUS, and
   - Finance.

2. The purpose of the roundtables was to explore the deliverability of the Seventh Carbon Budget, identify key barriers to emissions reductions, and understand the practical challenges across sectors, including technology readiness, policy certainty, behavioural factors, and investment needs. Summarised points raised by participants have been included below, for illustrative purposes.

Transport (surface, aviation and shipping)

- EV deployment is achievable but faces barriers: While electric vehicle technology is ready for widespread adoption, uptake is slowed by consumer hesitation, misinformation campaigns, and industrial policy concerns. Effective delivery requires attention to supply chain robustness, domestic battery production, and recycling infrastructure.
- Policy consistency is crucial: Sustained phasing out of internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles, continuation of EV grants, and clear mandates are essential. Any weakening of targets or incentives risks undermining market confidence, investor certainty, and sectoral investment.

- Aviation and shipping decarbonisation are uncertain: Achieving net zero in aviation depends on scaling sustainable aviation fuels (SAF), hydrogen fuel cells, and renewing fleets, while shipping requires electrification for short routes and low-carbon fuels such as e-methanol or e-ammonia. These solutions are long-term, internationally interdependent, and likely to contribute significantly only post-2040.
- Freight and HGVs need standards and incentives: Electric truck adoption is constrained by limited charging infrastructure, lack of cross-border compatibility, and insufficient regulation. Policies such as zero-emission freight zones and coordinated standards are required; current uptake in the UK remains very low.
- Modal shift depends on convenience and pricing: Encouraging public transport use, active travel, and reduced car dependence requires strategically placed infrastructure, dynamic pricing mechanisms, and integration into housing and transport planning from the design stage.
- Rail electrification is straightforward but funding-sensitive: Electric and battery-powered trains are technically ready, but timely investment, project prioritisation, and long-term network funding are necessary to deliver measurable emissions reductions.
- Economic and diplomatic factors affect delivery: Reliance on international supply chains (e.g., China for batteries), delayed international agreements, and political consensus impact progress across the transport sector.
- Aligned incentives and effective communication: Coordinated taxation, grants, low-interest loans, and trusted messaging are essential to encourage low-carbon transport behaviours, counter misinformation, and build public confidence in new technologies.

Industry

- Steel and heavy industry decarbonisation: Ambitious targets aim for near-complete decarbonisation of blast furnaces by the mid-2030s, heavily reliant on electrification and low-carbon energy inputs.
- High industrial electricity costs hinder competitiveness: UK electricity prices are higher than European counterparts, slowing investment. Delays in grid connections further exacerbate competitiveness challenges.

- Hydrogen and industrial clusters are essential but constrained: Hydrogen is critical for decarbonising hard-to-abate sectors, but timely deployment is limited by infrastructure availability, high costs, and long lead times.
- Policy and strategy gaps: Existing industrial strategies, including sector-specific plans, are insufficient to deliver CB7 targets, particularly for foundational industries.
- Carbon pricing and leakage risks: Current mechanisms could reduce UK competitiveness, risk deindustrialisation, and increase imports of high-carbon products. Border adjustments and free allocations do not fully address these risks.
- Incentives over penalties: Greater use of subsidies, market interventions for green gas and hydrogen, and support for recycling could accelerate industrial decarbonisation.
- Investment certainty is critical: Stable political direction, predictable energy costs, and guaranteed access to low-carbon inputs are necessary to enable long-term investment and sectoral planning.

Buildings (residential and non-residential)

- Retrofit is more complex than new builds: Variability in existing housing stock means decarbonisation requires a whole-house, systems-based approach, rather than single-technology interventions.
- Operational carbon dominates: Most emissions from buildings arise from energy use, making energy efficiency measures and decarbonised heating systems critical priorities.
- Skills and capacity gaps: The limited availability of trained installers and retrofit coordinators constrains delivery, particularly for complex or large-scale projects.
- Funding and incentives are key: High upfront costs and limited homeowner incentives impede uptake. Grants, low-interest loans, council tax reductions, and mortgage incentives are important enablers.
- Centralised advice and public awareness: Accessible guidance, demonstration case studies, and coordinated programmes, such as Scotland's Home Energy Scotland, improve homeowner engagement and uptake.

- Regulation drives adoption: EPC standards, Part L/Part Z building regulations, and future whole-life carbon requirements are essential to standardise practices and increase adoption rates.
- Behavioural and market signals: Aligning electricity and gas pricing with low-carbon incentives encourages adoption, as consumers respond to comfort, cost, and aesthetic considerations.
- Equity and accessibility: Vulnerable households require free or subsidised support to ensure inclusive access to retrofit measures.
- Integration with wider infrastructure: Coordination between housing, energy grids, EV charging, and local planning reduces disruption and improves overall efficiency.

Energy and CCUS

- Sector support with caveats: While CCC assumptions are broadly supported, uncertainties remain around CCUS, hydrogen, low-carbon gas, and large-scale infrastructure deployment.
- Policy certainty and simplification: Clear, consistent, and simplified frameworks reduce risk, encourage investment, and enable workforce planning and skills development.
- Electrification is not sufficient alone: CCUS, hydrogen, and low-carbon gas are essential for sectors that cannot fully electrify, ensuring that hard-to-abate emissions are addressed.
- Government can stimulate demand: Public infrastructure and fiscal measures can create market pull for low-carbon products, supporting industry transition while maintaining competitiveness.
- Grid and network planning is essential: Long-term, coordinated planning across electricity, gas, and water networks is required to ensure whole-system integration and efficient deployment.
- Workforce and skills development: Rapid energy transition requires scaled-up training, apprenticeships, and standardised practices across sectors. Real-world case studies help attract and retain workers.
- Investment depends on government certainty: Over half of CB7 funding is expected from private investors, who require stable policy, clear timelines, and guaranteed low-carbon inputs.

- Coordination across departments: Reducing regulatory overlap and administrative burdens is essential for coherent delivery of decarbonisation measures.

Land use and agriculture

- Data and coordination gaps: Limited data sharing and inconsistencies, particularly across devolved administrations, hamper effective planning and monitoring.
- Competing land-use pressures: Climate targets, food production, housing, and other priorities create tensions in land allocation and can slow progress.
- Farmer incentives and clarity: Clear, long-term policy direction and financial support are needed to enable farmers to meet climate and nature-based objectives.
- Funding continuity: Predictable and long-term funding is essential to enable permanent land-use changes, including biodiversity net gain and restoration projects.
- Policy vs populism: Short-term political decision-making can undermine evidence-based approaches to net zero and nature restoration.
- Food security and productivity: Balancing domestic food production, soil quality, and yields with environmental targets is necessary to maintain both security and sustainability.
- Nature-based solutions challenges: Long lead times, local inconsistencies, and limited private-sector engagement slow adoption of interventions such as peatland restoration.
- Consumer behaviour matters: Food waste, consumption patterns, and affordability influence outcomes; policies should link producers and consumers to encourage sustainable practices.
- Long-term vision needed: Consistent multi-government alignment and a clear “north star” strategy provide certainty for investment, land stewardship, and climate outcomes.
- Resilience planning: Droughts, floods, and other climate risks require proactive water management, soil health measures, and adaptive practices.

Finance

- SMEs are critical but under-supported: SMEs represent roughly 50% of supply chain emissions but often lack resources, expertise, and access to green finance. Support is needed to enable alignment with net zero and reskilling where required.
- Policy certainty drives investment: Long-term government signals, carbon budgets, and contracts for difference provide confidence for businesses and investors to commit to low-carbon initiatives.
- Simplified and standardised communication: Clear, concise language, shorter guidance, and consistent terminology (e.g., “transitioning” instead of “green finance”) improve understanding and engagement.
- Cross-sector collaboration: Public-private partnerships, supply chain coordination, and engagement between SMEs and larger companies enhance delivery and access to finance.
- Government intervention enables scale and risk mitigation: Support for infrastructure projects and innovative or small-scale technologies accelerates adoption and reduces risk.
- Accessible green finance: Simplifying processes and providing clear guidance ensures SMEs can participate in low-carbon investment opportunities.
- Investment guided by clear incentives: Early and transparent signals on circular economy practices, product labelling, and funding objectives reduce uncertainty and prevent perverse outcomes.
- Economic framing and risk management: Presenting climate action alongside job security, energy security, and economic growth opportunities supports public and business buy-in.
- Environmental strategy integration: Comprehensive strategies, including biomass plans and nature-based solutions, underpin carbon budgets and broader sustainability objectives.
- Monitoring and alignment: Coordination across business, finance, and government ensures accountability, reduces duplication, and supports efficient delivery of emissions reductions.

Formal Minutes

Wednesday 25 February 2026

Members present

Mr Toby Perkins, in the Chair

Julia Buckley

Jonathan Davies

Carla Denyer

Barry Gardiner

Sarah Gibson

Chris Hinchliff

Sojan Joseph

Manuela Perteghella

Martin Rhodes

Dr Roz Savage

Sammy Wilson

The Seventh Carbon Budget

Draft Report (*The Seventh Carbon Budget*), proposed by the Chair, brought up and read.

Ordered, That the draft Report be read a second time, paragraph by paragraph.

Paragraphs 1 to 154 read and agreed to.

Annex and Summary agreed to.

Resolved, That the Report be the Eighth Report of the Committee to the House.

Ordered, That the Chair make the Report to the House.

Ordered, That embargoed copies of the Report be made available, in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order No. 134.

Adjournment

Adjourned till Wednesday 4 March 2026 at 2.00 pm.

Witnesses

The following witnesses gave evidence. Transcripts can be viewed on the inquiry publications page of the Committee's website.

Wednesday 12 November 2025

Shaun Spiers, Executive Director, Green Alliance; **Professor Joeri Rogelj**, Professor of Climate Science & Policy, Director of Research, Imperial College Business School and Grantham Institute – Climate Change and Environment Q1–25

Mike Childs, Head of Science, Policy and Research, Friends of the Earth; **Sam Hunter Jones**, Senior Lawyer, ClientEarth; **Professor Michael Grubb**, Professor of Energy and Climate Change, UCL, Strategy Director, Economics of Energy Innovation and Systems Transition Q26–52

Wednesday 3 December 2025

Claire Dykta, Director of Policy and Strategy, National Energy System Operator (NESO); **Victoria Whitehouse**, Deputy Director, UKRI Industrial Decarbonisation Challenge; **Rt Hon Chris Huhne**, Chair, Anaerobic Digestion and Bioresources Association Q53–79

Jonathon Counsell, Group Sustainability Director, International Airlines Group; **Gareth Stace**, Director, UK Steel; **Dr Edmund Hughes**, Director, Green Marine Associates Q80–111

Caroline Bragg, CEO, Association for Decentralised Energy; **Tanya Sinclair**, CEO, Electric Vehicles UK Q112–124

Wednesday 7 January 2026

Polly Cook, Chief Officer, Climate, Energy and Green Spaces, Leeds City Council; **Toby Park**, Director, Climate, Energy and Sustainability, Behavioural Insights Team; **Professor Lorraine Whitmarsh MBE**, Director, Centre for Climate Change and Social Transformations, Department of Psychology, University of Bath Q125–152

Nigel Topping, Chair, Climate Change Committee; **Emma Pinchbeck**, CEO, Climate Change Committee Q153–190

Published written evidence

The following written evidence was received and can be viewed on the inquiry publications page of the Committee's website.

SCB numbers are generated by the evidence processing system and so may not be complete.

1	ADE HeatNetworks	SCB0072
2	Airlines UK	SCB0062
3	Anaerobic Digestion and Bioresources Association (ADBA)	SCB0070
4	Anderson, Professor Kevin (Professor of Energy and Climate Change , Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, University of Manchester); Gharde, Dr Gaurav (Research Associate , Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, University of Manchester); Larkin, Professor Alice (Professor in Climate Science & Energy Policy, Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, University of Manchester); and Li, Dr Jingyi (Research Associate , Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, University of Manchester)	SCB0049
5	Barnes, Dr Amy (Deputy Director of the Born in Bradford Centre for Social Change and Senior Researcher in the Department of Health Sciences, University of York); Kennedy, Dr Kelli (Research Associate, University of York); and Baxter, Maddie (Research Assistant, University of York)	SCB0013
6	Barrett OBE, Professor John (Deputy Director (Policy), Priestley Centre for Climate Future)	SCB0060
7	Bennett Institute for Innovation & Policy Acceleration, University of Sussex	SCB0007
8	Building Controls Industry Association (BCIA)	SCB0045
9	Buziuk, Hleb (Independent policy researcher and human-rights advocate, FairGo CIC)	SCB0011
10	CCRI, University of Gloucestershire	SCB0051
11	CO2RE Hub (The Greenhouse Gas Removal Hub)	SCB0034
12	Carbon Capture and Storage Association	SCB0032
13	Carbon Gap	SCB0046

14	Chemical Industries Association (CIA)	SCB0063
15	ClientEarth	SCB0068
16	Climate Emergency Science Law (CESL)	SCB0024
17	Community Planning Alliance	SCB0002
18	Complexity Economics Programme, Institute for New Economic Thinking, University of Oxford	SCB0044
19	Consumer Scotland	SCB0021
20	Department of Energy Security and Net Zero	SCB0065
21	Drax power station	SCB0067
22	Drummond, Brian (Researcher, Independent)	SCB0015
23	Energy Saving Trust	SCB0042
24	Friends of the Earth	SCB0004
25	Future Energy Networks	SCB0043
26	Gibbs, Dr Ewan (Senior Lecturer in Economic and Social History, University of Glasgow); and Shibe, Riyoko (Doctoral Researcher, University of Glasgow)	SCB0019
27	Grantham Institute Imperial and Imperial Policy Forum	SCB0017
28	Green Gas Taskforce	SCB0040
29	Historic England	SCB0038
30	Hughes, Dr Edmund	SCB0071
31	Hyde, Byron (Academic, Bangor University)	SCB0025
32	Hydrogen UK	SCB0056
33	Institution of Engineering and Technology	SCB0030
34	Jenkins, Michael (One of the UK home population, The UK home population)	SCB0012
35	Liquid Gas UK	SCB0036
36	Logistics UK	SCB0009
37	Marsden, Professor Greg (Professor of Transport Governance, Institute for Transport Studies, University of Leeds)	SCB0014
38	McKenzie, Dr Kate (CEO/Founding Director, The Climate Change Legal Initiative - a Community Interest Company); Wegener, Dr Lennart (Senior Associate, The Climate Change Legal Initiative - a Community Interest Company); Williams, Dr Rebecca (Lecturer in Environmental Law,	

	University of Glasgow); and Sindico, Dr Francesco (Professor of International Environmental Law, University of Strathclyde)	SCB0039
39	Met Office	SCB0018
40	Mineral Products Association	SCB0029
41	Music Futures	SCB0059
42	National Energy Action	SCB0006
43	National Physical Laboratory (NPL)	SCB0054
44	Nuclear Industry Association	SCB0022
45	OVO	SCB0053
46	Oldridge, Simon	SCB0050
47	Opportunity Green; Foxglove; and Global Action Plan	SCB0035
48	Pennington, Dr Lois (Research Associate, Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, University of Manchester); Sharmina, Professor Maria (Professor of Energy and Sustainability , Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, University of Manchester); Clery, Dr Diarmaid (Lecturer in Engineering for Net Zero, Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, University of Manchester); Gough, Dr Clair (Senior Research Fellow, Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, University of Manchester); Jones, Dr Chris (Research Associate, Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, University of Manchester); Li, Dr Jingyi (Research Associate, Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, University of Manchester); and Mander, Dr Sarah (Reader, Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, University of Manchester)	SCB0020
49	Renewable Energy Association	SCB0052
50	Renukappa, Professor Suresh (Professor of Sustainable Smart Innovation , University of Wolverhampton); Dixey, Mrs Caroline (Research Scholar , University of Wolverhampton); Suresh, Professor Subashini (Professor of Knowledge Management , University of Wolverhampton); and Veenith, Professor Tonny (Professor , Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust)	SCB0005
51	SGN	SCB0058
52	Salford Business School	SCB0028
53	Speca, Dr Anthony (Councillor, East Suffolk Council); and Hammond, Mr Toby (Councillor, East Suffolk Council)	SCB0023

54	Stone Federation Great Britain	SCB0069
55	Sustain	SCB0047
56	Sustainable Aviation	SCB0064
57	Sustainable Energy Association	SCB0055
58	The Centre for Climate Change and Social Transformations (CAST)	SCB0016
59	The Centre for Energy Policy, University of Strathclyde	SCB0037
60	The DCA - Data Centre Alliance	SCB0026
61	The MCS Foundation	SCB0027
62	The Vegan Society	SCB0041
63	Transport Action Network (TAN)	SCB0066
64	UK Research and Innovation (UKRI)	SCB0073
65	Umar, Dr Tariq (Senior Lecturer , University of the West of England, UK)	SCB0010
66	Utilita Energy	SCB0031
67	WWF-UK	SCB0048
68	Waller, Dr. Alex (Visiting Professor, American University of Sovereign Nations)	SCB0033

List of Reports from the Committee during the current Parliament

All publications from the Committee are available on the publications page of the Committee's website.

Session 2024–26

Number	Title	Reference
7th	Environment in Focus	HC 1310
6th	Environmental sustainability and housing growth	HC 439
5th	Airport expansion and climate and nature targets	HC 831
4th	Flood resilience in England	HC 550
3rd	The UK and the Antarctic environment	HC 499
2nd	Governing the marine environment	HC 551
1st	The role of natural capital in the UK's green economy	HC 501
7th Special	Airport expansion and climate and nature targets: Government Response	HC 1600
6th Special	Flood resilience in England: Government Response	HC 1591
5th Special	The UK and the Antarctic environment: Government Response	HC 1273
4th Special	Governing the marine environment: Government Response	HC 1272
3rd Special	The role of natural capital in the green economy: Government Response	HC 1242
2nd Special	Net zero and UK shipping: Government Response	HC 705
1st Special	Enabling sustainable electrification of the economy: Government Response	HC 564