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Weekly Public Affairs Report: Friday 21st June 2019

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Written Answers – Monday 17th June

Climate Change

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [263254]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department has taken in response to the motion agreed by the House of Commons on 1 May 2019 declaring a climate emergency.

Chris Skidmore:

The Government fully recognises the urgency of acting on climate change.

I am pleased to confirm that on 12th June, the Government laid draft legislation to set a new net zero greenhouse gas emissions target for the UK, to be delivered by 2050. This world-leading target will bring to an end our contribution to climate change. We already have a strong foundation of action and leadership to build from, having cut our emissions by 42% since 1990 while growing the economy by 72%. And we are providing at least £5.8bn of international climate finance between 2016 and 2020 to help developing countries mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change, reduce deforestation and pursue clean economic growth.

Climate Change: International Cooperation

Catherine West: [263203]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent discussions he has had with his US counterpart on international co-operation to tackle climate change.

Chris Skidmore:

My rt. hon. Friend the Secretary of State and BEIS Ministers regularly meet with their international counterparts to discuss a range of issues including climate change. In discussions with US counterparts, the Secretary of State stressed that the UK would prefer the US to remain in the Paris Agreement. We work closely on a wide range of climate and energy issues, including renewables, innovation, CCUS and nuclear, and we will continue to do so.

Air Pollution: Wales

Ben Lake: [263842]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with the Welsh Government on cross-border arrangements on air pollution under the Draft Environment (Principles and Governance) Bill 2018.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

Air quality is largely a devolved matter, subject to a small number of areas that are reserved. There has been collaboration with the Welsh Government recognising the legal requirements for the UK.

<https://qnadailyreport.blob.core.windows.net/qnadailyreportxml/Written-Questions-Answers-Statements-Daily-Report-Commons-2019-06-17.pdf>

Written Questions – Monday 17th June

1N Frank Field (Birkenhead):

1N Frank Field (Birkenhead): To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to his Oral Statement of 12 June 2019, Official Report, column 661, what reforestation programme the Government plans to adopt to reach net zero by 2050; and whether that programme will

implement the recommendation of the Committee for Climate Change's on planting 30,000 hectares of trees each year. [Transferred] (264330)

<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmquestionbook/nq190617.pdf>

Written Questions – Tuesday 18th June

24N Tracey Crouch (Chatham and Aylesford):

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Education on planting (a) grass, (b) trees and (c) plants in schools to help tackle air pollution. (265485)

<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmquestionbook/nq190618.pdf>

Written Answers – Tuesday 18th June

Business: Carbon Emissions

Dr David Drew: [262225]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, which (a) businesses and (b) business organisations have declared an intention to be net-zero carbon by 2030.

Chris Skidmore:

We received representations from a number of organisations, including a letter from over 120 businesses, to adopt the Committee on Climate Change's recommendations on net zero. I am pleased to confirm that on 12 June, the Government laid draft legislation to set a new net zero greenhouse gas emissions target for the UK, to be delivered by 2050. This world-leading target will bring to an end our contribution to climate change.

Delivering a net zero target must be a joint endeavour, crossing political boundaries, and encompassing all parts of society. We have already seen many businesses set their own ambitious targets and intentions to be net zero.

As part of Green GB and NI Week 2018, more than 60 businesses made significant pledges worth millions to cut emissions while continuing to grow the green economy.

As we prepare for Green GB and NI Week 2019 (launching on 4th November), we

continue to encourage and support businesses in setting such targets.

Carbon Emissions

Dr David Drew: [262226]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what representations he has received from medical organisations in support of a policy of net zero carbon emissions by 2030.

Chris Skidmore:

We have received calls from a number of organisations, including in the medical sector, to adopt the Committee on Climate Change's recommendation of a new emissions target for the UK of net zero greenhouse gases by 2050.

I am pleased to confirm that on 12 June, the Government laid draft legislation to set a new net zero greenhouse gas emissions target for the UK, to be delivered by 2050. This world-leading target will bring to an end our contribution to climate change.

Climate Change

Dr David Drew: [262224]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, which local authorities have (a) declared a climate emergency and (b) resolved to go carbon net zero emissions by 2030.

Chris Skidmore:

I am pleased to confirm that on 12th June, the Government laid draft legislation to set a new net zero greenhouse gas emissions target for the UK, to be delivered by 2050. This world-leading target will bring to an end our contribution to climate change.

Already we have made great progress – since 1990 we have reduced our emissions by 42% while growing our economy by 72%.

Delivering a net zero target must be a joint endeavour, crossing political boundaries, and encompassing all parts of society. To date, 128 Councils in the UK (including dependencies and territories) have declared a climate

emergency with several also setting a target for net zero carbon emissions by 2030.

Climate Change

Frank Field: [264330]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to his Oral Statement of 12 June 2019, Official Report, column 661, what reforestation programme the Government plans to adopt to reach net zero by 2050; and whether that programme will implement the recommendation of the Committee for Climate Change on planting 30,000 hectares of trees each year.

David Rutley:

On 12 June, the UK announced that we will end our contribution to the most serious environmental challenge we face - climate change, by legislating the introduction of a net zero emission target for 2050, following the Committee on Climate Change's advice. We are one of the first major economies in the world to legislate for a net zero target. Meeting this target will require us to build on the progress already made, by further reducing emissions across all sectors of the economy.

Forests are vital in the fight against climate change and we are determined to grow woodland cover. The Government is delivering on a range of afforestation commitments including contributing £5.7M to kick start planting in the Northern Forest, £10 million for trees in towns and cities through the Urban Tree Challenge Fund and £50 million for new woodland through the Woodland Carbon Guarantee.

There is now guidance to ensure better recognition of the wider natural capital benefits that trees can provide and we have just reappointed our Tree Champion for a further year to continue to lead engagement on a new England tree strategy, which we will consult on later this year.

The Committee for Climate Change's recent report recognises the work we have done to lay the foundations to build a net zero economy. The Committee's indicative recommendations on tree planting are ambitious, and we know we need to go further and faster to plant more trees.

Climate Change

Dr Alan Whitehead: [264291]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 11 June 2019 to Question 261071, whether the Chancellor wrote to the Prime Minister on the cost of a net zero climate change policy.

Robert Jenrick:

The Chancellor is in regular contact with the Prime Minister on a range of issues. The UK is committed to tackling climate change and we are a world leader in clean growth. That is why last week the Government began to legislate for a net zero emissions target by 2050. The UK is the first major economy to put such a target in legislation.

At the same time, the Chancellor has accepted the recommendation of the Committee on Climate Change to conduct a Review into the costs of decarbonisation. This will be the world's first comprehensive review by a finance ministry into the costs of transitioning to a net zero economy. The Review will consider how to achieve this transition in a way that works for households, businesses and public finances, as well as the implications for UK competitiveness.

<https://qnadailyreport.blob.core.windows.net/qnadailyreportxml/Written-Questions-Answers-Statements-Daily-Report-Commons-2019-06-18.pdf>

Written Questions – Wednesday 19th June

28 Dr David Drew (Stroud):

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to page 5 of Public Health England's position statement on the Impact on Health of Emissions to Air from Municipal Waste Incinerators, what steps Public Health England is taking to increase its understanding of the measurement of number concentrations of particles in health terms. (266068)

29 Dr David Drew (Stroud):

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what the safe level of exposure is to (a) PM1 and (b) PM0.1. (266069)

30 Dr David Drew (Stroud):

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, by which date municipal waste incineration sites are required to submit their emissions of (a) PM2.5 and (b) PM10 for 2018. (266070)

49 Alan Brown (Kilmarnock and Loudoun):

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether the Government's aviation strategy will assume an increase in offshore and onshore wind deployment up to 2050 as the baseline operating scenario for aviation. (266200)

51N Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi (Slough):

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimate he has made of the projected cost to the public purse of the proposed Western Rail Link to Heathrow Airport. [Transferred] (265557)

26N Paul Farrelly (Newcastle-under-Lyme):

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the feasibility of all domestic flights being made by electric aircraft by 2040. (266115)

27N Paul Farrelly (Newcastle-under-Lyme):

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the 25 Year Environment Plan, whether his Department plans to provide additional support for the development of sustainable aviation fuels. (266116)

28N Paul Farrelly (Newcastle-under-Lyme):

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of requiring airlines to publish emission output estimates to (a) transparency and (b) aircraft efficiency. (266117)

32N Caroline Lucas (Brighton, Pavilion):

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimate he has made of the percentage change in real terms of the average cost to the individual of travelling by international aeroplane since (a) 1980, (b) 1997, (c) 2010 and (d) 2015. (266290)

33N Caroline Lucas (Brighton, Pavilion):

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent comparative assessment he has made of the average greenhouse gas emissions per kilometre of an individual travelling by (a) private car, (b) bus, (c) train and (d) domestic aeroplane; and if he will make a statement. (266291)

<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmquestionbook/nq190619.pdf>

Written Answers – Wednesday 19th June

Electric Vehicles: Manufacturing Industries

Matthew Pennycook: [263914]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of requiring automotive manufacturers to make a fixed proportion of the vehicles they make available for sale electric.

Michael Ellis:

EU regulations set mandatory limits on the CO₂ emissions of new cars and vans registered in the UK. Negotiations on new targets for 2025 and 2030 have recently concluded and were informed by a European Commission impact assessment of mechanisms to encourage manufacturers to produce electric vehicles, including setting a sales mandate. The assessments are available

https://ec.europa.eu/clima/sites/clima/files/transport/vehicles/docs/swd_2017_650_p1_en.pdf and
https://ec.europa.eu/clima/sites/clima/files/transport/vehicles/docs/swd_2017_650_p2_en.pdf

Written Questions – Thursday 20th June

1. Mr David Davis (Haltemprice and Howden):

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of progress on the carbon capture and storage project announced in November 2018. [Transferred] (266091)

18N Sir Christopher Chope (Christchurch):

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the effect on climate change of local authorities in England declaring a climate emergency in their area; and if he will make a statement. (266620)

20 Dr David Drew (Stroud):

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 18 June 2019 to Question 262224, which councils have (a) declared a climate emergency (b) set a target for net zero emissions by 2030; and whether any councils set other dates for net zero greenhouse gas emissions. (266626)

21 Dr David Drew (Stroud):

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 18 June 2019 to Question 262226, which (a) organisations from the medical sector and (b) other organisations have contacted his Department; and whether any of those organisations called on the Government to meet the net zero target by (i) 2030 and (ii) by any other date earlier than 2050. (266627)

22 Dr David Drew (Stroud):

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 18 June 2019 to Question 262225 on Business: Carbon Emissions, which organisations made those representations; which businesses signed the letter referred to in the Answer; and how many of those (a) organisations and (b) businesses supported net zero (i) by 2030 and (ii) before 2050. (266628)

55N Frank Field (Birkenhead):

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 18 June 2019 to Question 264330, when his Department plans to publish an update on the afforestation programmes that are being undertaken to achieve the Government's commitment to be net zero in emissions by 2050. (266716)

<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmquestionbook/noq190620.pdf>

Written Answers – Thursday 20th June

Government Departments: Climate Change

Stephen Lloyd: [263801]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment each Department makes of the implications for climate change when making policy decisions.

Chris Skidmore:

Government departments undertake a policy impact assessment when developing new legislation. Where relevant, impact assessments include consideration of how a policy may decrease or increase greenhouse gas emissions. This is reflected in our strong progress on climate change – we have reduced emissions by 42% since 1990, while growing our economy by two thirds, and transformed our power sector with over half of our electricity now coming from low carbon generation.

Air Pollution: Schools

Tracey Crouch: [265485]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Education on planting (a) grass, (b) trees and (c) plants in schools to help tackle air pollution.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

The Secretary of State has regular discussions with Ministers across Government Departments about air pollution and how to reduce it. There remains a significant debate among experts about the efficacy of vegetation in reducing air pollution. Defra's Air Quality Expert Group conclude that overall, vegetation and trees in particular are regarded as beneficial for the environment but they are not a solution to air quality problems in our cities and towns. The Government is giving priority to action on the multiple sources of pollutants, delivered through the Clean Air Strategy.

Heathrow Airport: Railways

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [265557]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimate he has made of the projected cost to the public purse of the proposed Western Rail Link to Heathrow Airport.

Andrew Jones:

Government policy is for developers to pay the costs of upgrading or enhancing road, rail or other transport networks or services where there is a need to cope with additional passengers travelling to and from expanded or growing airports. Where the scheme has a wider range of beneficiaries, the Government will consider, along with other relevant stakeholders, the need for additional public funding on a case-by-case basis.

The Western Rail Link to Heathrow is being promoted by Network Rail and is expected to benefit both airport and non-airport users. The scheme must demonstrate a satisfactory business case; with the cost to the public purse being a factor. The Department and Network Rail are engaged with Heathrow Airport Limited, the Civil Aviation Authority and Her Majesty's Treasury on this issue and to comment further would prejudice the department's commercial position.

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Written Answers – Friday 21st June

Air Pollution: Health Hazards

Angela Smith: [264377]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 7 May 2019 to Question 251249, what assessment his Department has made of the (a) reach and (b) effectiveness of its work to communicate with people vulnerable to the effects of air pollution during episodes of high pollution.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

The Government does not assess the reach and effectiveness of its communication for each air pollution episode. However, we work closely with Public Health England and a network of health charities to ensure that key health messages reach those who are vulnerable to the effects of air pollution, during episodes of high pollution.

The Government has committed in the 2019 Clean Air Strategy to develop and deliver a personal air quality messaging system to inform the public, particularly those who are vulnerable to air pollution, about the air quality forecast and provide clearer information on air pollution episodes and health advice. This builds on the air quality forecasts and information already published on the Government's UK-AIR website.

Low Emission Zones: Greater London

Catherine West: [263900]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to support the Mayor of London's ultra low emissions zone scheme.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

The Mayor of London is responsible for air quality in the capital and has reserve powers under Part IV of the Environment Act (1995) to reflect this. London received funding for air quality as part of the 2015 £5.7 billion Transport for London funding settlement. London and Londoners have also received almost £147 million funding from the Government's £3.5 billion plan to improve air quality and reduce harmful emissions, including almost £10 million this year to clean up London's buses.

Motor Vehicles: Exhaust Emissions

Catherine West: [263898]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural affairs, what steps his Department is taking to support scrappage schemes for highly polluting vehicles.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

The Government is not currently considering a national scrappage scheme in light of concerns over deliverability and value for money. However we have not restricted the types of measures eligible local authorities could bid for funding for from the Clean Air Fund which supports local authorities with nitrogen dioxide exceedances. The Government will continue to assess bids that relate to scrappage and where these are approved support the local authorities in delivery of these schemes.

Air Space

Andy McDonald: [264416]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether airspace will be classified as national infrastructure.

Michael Ellis:

The Government considers airspace to be a key part of our national infrastructure in the UK, yet there has been little change to its overall structure since the 1950s. We are therefore working with key stakeholders to ensure it is modernised to meet the future needs of airspace users whilst minimising the environmental effects of aviation.

Aviation: Noise

Ruth Cadbury: [264426]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will update the Survey of Noise Attitudes 2017 report to include areas that have experienced a three decibel or greater change in the noise environment.

Michael Ellis:

My department has discussed the need to commission a further Survey of Noise Attitudes with the Airspace and Noise Engagement Group, which is a formal channel of communication between the department and airspace and airport noise stakeholders, and also with the Independent Commission on Civil Aviation Noise (ICCAN). The scope of any further study will be agreed in consultation with these bodies.

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What's On
24th- 28th June 2019

Mon 24th June

N/A

Tues 25th June

10.00 am
Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy - Oral Evidence Session
Post Office Network

Kelly Tolhurst MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Minister of Small Business, Consumers and Corporate Responsibility, Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy

Carl Creswell, Director, Professional Business Services, Retail and Post, Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy

Tom Cooper, Director, UK Government Investments, Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy

Location: Other

Weds 26th June

9.30 am

Environment, Food and Rural Affairs - Oral Evidence Session *Countryside and Environmental Stewardship Schemes*

Paul Caldwell, Chief Executive Officer, Rural Payments Agency

Andy King, Operational Delivery Director, Rural Payments Agency

Alan Law, Deputy Chief Executive, Natural England

James Diamond, Director, Operations, Natural England

Location: Other

2.30 pm

Public Accounts - Oral Evidence Session *Help to Buy*

Melanie Dawes, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

Nick Walkley, Chief Executive, Homes England

Location: Other

Thurs 27th June

N/A

Fri 28th June

N/A