

Climate Change Advisory Council Meeting - DRAFT MINUTES

Date: 19th September 2019

Start time: 9:00am

Venue: Herbert Park Hotel, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4

Present: Professor John FitzGerald, Professor Anna Davies, Professor Frank Convery, Laura Burke, William Walsh, Professor Alan Matthews, Professor Gerry Boyle.

Apologies: Professor Ottmar Edenhofer, Dr Joseph Curtin, Professor Peter Clinch, Professor Alan Barrett.

Secretariat: Dr Margaret Desmond, Phillip O'Brien, Dr Tadhg O'Mahony, Gemma O'Reilly, Seán O'Leary, Sonja Smith, Caroline Donnellan.

1. Opening of Meeting

The Chair welcomed interim Chief Executive Officer William Walsh of SEAI replacing former CEO Jim Gannon.

1.1 Minutes for the Climate Change Advisory Council Meeting 04.04.2019

The minutes of the Council meeting held on the 13th June, 2019 were accepted and signed by the Chair.

1.2 Adoption of Agenda

The agenda was updated and adopted by the Council.

1.3 Disclosure of Interests

No disclosure of interests declared.

1.4 Chair's Report of Activities

In June, the Chair met Minister Richard Bruton to discuss the forthcoming Climate Action Plan and was accompanied by a member of the Secretariat. The Chair spoke at the Budgetary Oversight Committee where the second-hand electric vehicle availability and viability was discussed. The Chair attended the Energy Ireland meeting. The Chair attended a meeting with Salesforce. The Chair attended a National Economic Dialogue meeting. The Chair attended a meeting with the CEO of Bórd na Mona. The Chair

attended a Natural Capital Ireland meeting. In July, the Chair attended a meeting of the British Irish Chamber of Commerce at the British Embassy. At this meeting the Chair was informed that the next Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC is to be held in Glasgow in 2020. The Chair spoke to Taoiseach Leo Varadkar TD in July. In September, the Chair attended a meeting of Devenish Beyond Nutrition. The Chair attended a meeting with the Department of Agriculture. The Chair spoke at the Historical Society, TCD on the topic of climate change. The Chair also spoke at the Dublin Economics Workshop on climate change.

1.5 Annual Review Report

The Council were informed of the details of the media interviews and coverage surrounding the launch of the Annual Report in July.

The Council decided that the structure and focus of the 2020 Annual Review and related issues of resources and funding will be discussed at the upcoming November meeting.

The Council discussed just transition and it was agreed that more research was needed in this area. The Secretariat will develop a proposal for next year's Work Programme.

The Transport Workshop being held in the afternoon was discussed. It was agreed the workshop would inform preparation of a Special Focus Chapter on Transport in the 2020 Annual Review.

1.6 Adaptation Committee Update

The Council was informed that, in line with the Climate Act 2015, it had now been consulted on, and responded to, all draft sectoral adaptation plans for the 12 priority sectors under the National Adaptation Framework. The sectoral adaptation plans are to be submitted to Government for approval by the end of September 2019. The Council agreed that the Adaptation Committee should review the recent process of sectoral adaptation planning and consider any lessons learned or recommendations for the next cycle of adaptation plans. The Council acknowledged that the process of reviewing and providing advice and recommendations on the draft sectoral adaptation plans was time-consuming and detailed, and thanked the Adaptation Committee for their work on this. The Adaptation Committee will also review the recent preparation of local adaptation strategies and consider their implementation.

2. Hydrocarbon Recovery

The Council considered a request from the Taoiseach and the Minister of Communications, Climate Action and Environment for advice on the future exploration and recovery of Ireland's offshore oil and gas resources. A background paper was circulated to the Council before the meeting. A draft letter was discussed which advised a cessation of offshore oil exploration and recovery, but advised allowing for continued offshore gas exploration contingent on the deployment of decarbonisation technologies.

On the basis that global reserves of oil exceed the global carbon budget for 1.5°C, the exploration for, and recovery of new offshore oil reserves is not compatible with a low carbon transition.

However, the analysis indicates that natural gas will continue to contribute significantly to the national energy mix during the transition to a low carbon economy. The Chair outlined research by UCC suggesting that, if Ireland is to reach net-zero carbon dioxide emissions by 2050, some gas-fired electricity generation, combined with CCS, would probably still be needed to deal with the intermittency problem with renewables. Work for the UK also suggested that this option may be necessary.

The Chair also highlighted the range of research over the last 20 years on the importance for Ireland of having a secure gas supply, given the centrality of gas-fired generation.

Finally, modelling of the decarbonisation process also suggests that CNG could play a significant role in reducing emissions more rapidly in the transport sector.

Laura Burke asked that the need for deployment of decarbonisation technologies be emphasised and that all options be kept under review. The Council noted the input from Dr Joseph Curtin [*in absentia*] recommending a cessation of all offshore hydrocarbon exploration. Prof Anna Davies also supported this position. The majority of the Council agreed with the advice in the letter and requested minor drafting changes. The Council then agreed by majority that the Chair would revise the letter based on the discussion and send it to Minister Bruton.

3. Carbon Budgets

The Council were updated on the Department's plans for the development of new climate action legislation and Carbon Budgeting. It was acknowledged that carbon budgeting will be a significant demand on the resources of the Secretariat.

The Council agreed to deliver a recommendation on approaches to developing carbon budgets to the Department after its November meeting. To support the Council's considerations on this topic, the Secretariat will draft a paper informed by a carbon budget workshop taking place in October. The Secretariat will also commission a number of short pieces of research on the topic.

4. IPCC Special Report on Climate Change and Land

Dr Frank McGovern of the EPA updated the Council on the IPCC Special Report on Climate Change and Land.

5. Minister Richard Bruton, TD, Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment

Minister Bruton was accompanied by Brian Carroll, Assistant Secretary General of the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment and his Special Adviser. The Minister thanked the Chair and the Council for all their work.

The Minister was informed of the Council's conclusions on the issue of offshore hydrocarbon exploration and that a letter would follow.

The Minister also informed the Council of progress on the National Dialogue on Climate Action. The Minister spoke about the Climate Action Plan, which the Council welcomed, and his intention to introduce a more robust governance regime and to strengthen the Climate Change Advisory Council. He said that Government is using the science to inform policy.

The Chair informed the Minister about the upcoming carbon budget workshop and he invited the Department to attend.

6. Commission for Regulation of Utilities

Mr Paul McGowan and Ms Aoife MacEvilly of the CRU gave an update on their work to date.

The CRU agreed to provisional suggestion that they present an update on activities to Council on an annual basis.

The Council invited them to speak to the Adaptation Committee at a later date.

7. AOB

No AOB was raised.



29/11/19