

Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee
Tuesday 18 November 2025
34th Meeting, 2025 (Session 6)

Adapting to the impacts of climate change

Introduction

1. The Committee agreed to hold an evidence session with the Climate Change Committee (CCC) on Scotland's readiness, including interventions so far, to adapt to the impacts of climate change. The CCC is an independent public body that: advises the UK and devolved governments on climate change targets; monitors progress on emissions reduction; and assesses risks from climate change. The Committee will take evidence from:
 - Dr Richard Millar, Head of Adaptation, CCC.

Background

2. The UK Climate Change Act 2008 ([section 56](#)) requires the publication every 5 years of a Climate Change Risk Assessment (CCRA): an assessment of the risks for the UK of the current and predicted impact of climate change.
3. The CCRA is informed by an [Independent Assessment of UK Climate Risk](#), which is published by the CCC and developed by a consortium of expert technical authors, in partnership with the Met Office. The third CCRA was [published in 2022](#). There is a website – [UK Climate Risk](#) - which hosts all the outputs from the CCRA3 including a national [Summary for Scotland](#).
4. The [Summary for Scotland](#) from CCRA3 identifies 61 risks and opportunities from climate change in Scotland. Risks include new pests and pathogens affecting agriculture, wildfires and coastal erosion, and the impact of higher temperatures on health and well-being. Of these risks, more action is needed now to address 32 of them, while the urgency scores of 25 have increased since the last assessment. The report also identifies which Scottish Cabinet Secretary is the 'Risk Owner' with the Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero Energy and Transport (as this was the role title at the time, these briefs are now shared between two Cab Secs), owner, or co-owner, of 34 of the risks.
5. The CCC also carry out assessments of progress in adapting to climate change in Scotland, with the latest [published in November 2023](#).
6. The Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 ([section 53](#)) requires Scottish Ministers to lay a programme before the Scottish Parliament setting out their objectives in relation to climate change adaptation and addressing the risks identified in the CCRA. This document must be published 'as soon as is reasonably practicable' after they receive the CCRA. The 2009 Act (at [section 54](#)), also requires Scottish Ministers to publish annual progress reports on the adaptation programme, with [the latest on the 19 June 2025](#)

7. Following CCRA3 in 2022, a Scottish National Adaptation Plan (SNAP) 2024-2029: the [third Scottish climate adaptation programme](#), was published in September 2024. The CCC had published [a letter](#) in response to a published draft SNAP3 in April 2024. SNAP3 identifies four 'domestic outcomes', with 23 'objectives' sitting under these. The four outcomes are:

- **Nature connects** across our land, settlements, coasts and seas.
- **Communities** are creating climate-resilient, healthy and equitable places.
- **Public services** are collaborating in effective, inclusive adaptation action.
- **Economies and industries** are adapting and realising opportunities in Scotland's Just Transition.

Current CC work on adaptation and wider context: draft Climate Change Plan

8. The CCC are currently developing their advice to inform the [UK's Fourth Climate Change Risk Assessment \(CCRA4\)](#), which is expected to be delivered in 2026. The publication of CCRA4 will necessitate the Scottish Government laying another programme before the Scottish Parliament (likely a new SNAP) after they receive the new CCRA.
9. The Net Zero Energy and Transport Committee has recently begun leading cross-Parliament scrutiny of the Scottish Government's [draft Climate Change Plan](#), laid on 6 November. The CCP outlines how the Scottish Government intends to meet emissions reduction targets across all portfolio areas and sectors of the economy, in line with the recently agreed Scottish carbon budget, and the overall aim of achieving net zero in emissions by 2045.¹
10. The CCP is not required to set out the Scottish Government's proposals for actions to respond to the impact of climate change, as these are considered under the parallel process set out above, with the SNAP the key policy document on adaptation.
11. However, the more rapidly global emissions can be reduced the more likely the impacts of climate change can also be reduced, reducing the need for adaptation measures, some of which could be costly or disruptive in the short term.
12. This evidence session is an opportunity to explore the extent to which the CCC considers the Scottish Government's adaptation measures to be adequate as the Committee prepare to consider Scottish Government proposals to reduce emissions in line recently set Carbon Budgets.

Clerks to the Committee November 2025

¹ Carbon Budgets are limits on the amount of greenhouse gas which can legally be emitted over a given time. Scotland's carbon budgets cover four 5-year periods from 2026-2045, and were set by Regulations in October 2025.