

Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Committee

Oral evidence: Findings of the Report of Climate Assembly UK, HC 117

Tuesday 15 June 2021

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[Watch the meeting](#)

Members present: Darren Jones (Chair); Alan Brown; Judith Cummins; Paul Howell; Charlotte Nichols; Alexander Stafford.

Questions 1 - 55

Witnesses

I: Sue Peachey, Assembly Member; Ibrahim Wali, Assembly Member, Climate Assembly UK.

II: David Joffe, Head of Carbon Budgets, Committee on Climate Change; Rebecca Willis, Expert Lead, Climate Assembly UK, and Professor in Practice, Lancaster University; Signe Norberg, Head of Public Affairs and Communications, Aldersgate Group.

III: Rt Hon Anne-Marie Trevelyan MP, Minister for Business, Energy and Clean Growth; Chris Thompson, Director of Clean Growth, Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy.

Written evidence from witnesses:

- Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy [[CAUK0014](#)]



Examination of witnesses

Witnesses: Sue Peachey and Ibrahim Wali.

Q1 Chair: Welcome to this morning's session of the Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Select Committee for a hearing today following up on Climate Assembly UK, the citizens' assembly that this Select Committee and five others in the House of Commons commissioned to understand the public's views about how we can reach our net zero target. We have three panels today. To begin with, I am delighted to welcome Sue Peachey and Ibrahim Wali to the Committee, both TV celebrities following the recent documentary on BBC iPlayer. Good morning to both of you.

My first question to both of you is to give us a bit of colour about your experience in the Climate Assembly. What was your experience like? When you started it, compared to when you finished it, what surprised you about it?

Ibrahim Wali: It was a very interesting experience, because I thought I had background knowledge about climate change and what is needed to achieve net zero. However, I did not know that the topics were so broad; there were so many different areas and so many different options. It was a huge thing for me to get to hear from all the expert witnesses, the expert panels, and to talk with other people as well. Through time, you hear so many ideas from so many people.

By the end of the Climate Assembly, I felt I had learned a lot of new things, but also I realised that there are a lot of things I needed to do in my own part, and for my own friends, family and everyone else I can talk to, to try to make this change happen. It was really a good experience for me.

Sue Peachey: I did not really know much at all about climate change before I started the Climate Assembly. It was good to learn all about it and listen to the expert leads. It did not take very long before I realised that it was an important thing that we were doing. I now recognise the changes that everybody has to make. I champion now, as much as I can, for people to understand and recognise why we have to change.

Q2 Chair: For people who maybe did not see the documentary on iPlayer or have not seen how a citizens' assembly works, people ask whether you are really given all the information and the space to come to your own conclusions, or whether you are just being indoctrinated by climate activists about the need to meet net zero. Did you get everything you wanted on both sides of the argument so you could come to your own informed decisions?

Sue Peachey: The way it was worked out, it all worked out very well. You would get the expert leads speaking to you, some for and some against, with pros and cons. Then we would get an opportunity. We were in tables of eight and constantly moved round. We would listen to whatever it was, the topic they were talking about, whether it was pro or



HOUSE OF COMMONS

con, and then we would get to discuss it at our table and make points or ask questions. Then we would go back to them and could ask questions about some of the points they had made.

Afterwards, we made decisions about whether we thought it was a good or a bad thing or came up with some ideas of what we thought would be the right thing to do in that particular instance. There were lots of instances. I believe that we had a voice and everybody on the table had the opportunity to speak.

Q3 Chair: Ibrahim, do you feel that you had all the information on both sides of the argument, so you could come to your own informed decision?

Ibrahim Wali: Yes, it was quite balanced. I think we all had a similar goal, but it was quite balanced. The experts were giving both sides of the argument. What they did really well was to make sure it was at a level that would be appropriate for everyone. There were different people and you cannot give every technical thing, because not everyone would understand that. I personally still checked out some of the facts. I would go online and look at evidence-based areas to see. A lot of the information given was very correct but also appropriate for the different individuals within the assembly.

By then meeting on the tables, we could discuss even further. People had their own opinions, and then the experts would sit with us on the table, we could ask all our questions and they would be able to feed back. At the end of the day, I would go back to my hotel room and still go through some other areas, to check if there were any additional things that I might need to know. It was just at the right level for the assembly.

Q4 Chair: Sue mentioned there that there were points of disagreement between the assembly members. Were there any particular points that you had in disagreement with fellow assembly members, Ibrahim?

Ibrahim Wali: Yes. Initially, we all did it together before we went to the smaller groups. I love to travel, so one of the bits I was not really happy about was saying imposing taxes on travellers because of a personal choice. I would rather be allowed to be given that option. It was a very constructive talk by the section that did that.

I actually was in the housing section and it was a very different area, because everyone was in a different home. When you live in a flat in a city, it is different from when you live in a house in a rural area. The type of heating or energy you will need might be different. It was all individual. At the end of the day, we all had to come to some form of compromise to say, "We understand each other's situation. The only way forward is that everyone moves forward". Some might move more quickly, some might be slower, but we all have to head in the right direction.

Q5 Chair: Sue, from your experience what did you experience as points of disagreement?



HOUSE OF COMMONS

Sue Peachey: Some people did not believe in climate change. When presented with the evidence to pretty much say that it is a thing, there were still people who did not believe it was going to be that important. From my point of view, I went there with an open mind to learn, because I did not really know anything. I did homework as well and checked up on a few things. In the end, I think we all came to realise that things needed to change, regardless of what we knew before we went there. I think everybody at the end realised that things need to be done to stop this happening.

Q6 **Chair:** There was an attitudinal change. You had a mixture of climate activists, ambivalent members of the public or people who did not really know much about it, and maybe even some people who did not think climate change was real at the start. You then came together by the end.

Sue Peachey: Yes, I definitely think there was a consensus of change. The difficult thing is how to change. That is the problem. How do we go forward and achieve net zero? That is what we were tasked with. What will we accept, as the public, to change our lives? The report that came out is what we, as a group of people, came up with.

Q7 **Chair:** The purpose of today's session primarily is to follow on from that report and to question Government, Government bodies and other stakeholders on how they have implemented or considered the findings of the Climate Assembly report. From your perspective, what do you think Government should do with the findings of the assembly?

Sue Peachey: Obviously they have read the report. We were all worried that we were going to waste our time doing it and nothing would happen, but I think already things are happening and they are listening. My main thing that the Government need to do is educate people to make people understand why you are asking them to change, because nobody wants to change if they do not understand. My understanding of everything is that people do not really know enough about it.

Q8 **Chair:** That public engagement piece is a really key thing for you.

Sue Peachey: Yes, definitely.

Q9 **Chair:** Ibrahim, from your perspective, what should Government be doing with the report?

Ibrahim Wali: We spent quite a lot of time on the report. It was a really good report and it took into consideration different opinions from different households in different parts of the United Kingdom. That is really key to acceptability. When the Government look at it or are making plans, they should look at that report.

We did not have how much budget the Government would have for some of these projects, so some of the decisions made in the report may not reflect a huge amount of funding towards, say, carbon capture techniques. We looked at a balanced approach, but it is what is



HOUSE OF COMMONS

acceptable to most people. When that is used, it will be more acceptable to quite a lot of people. The Government should definitely consider it strongly.

There are a few changes happening, some of them in the motor industry. We have airlines that we need to tackle. We have the homes. There is a huge amount to do. I personally think that, if we get ahead of this, it is a bit like the vaccines that we are doing. We need to go ahead but set an example to the rest of the world. It is a problem for the whole world. If we do it right, we can set examples for others to follow. We should be leaders on this. The report should be strongly considered by Government and implemented as much as possible.

Q10 **Chair:** You mentioned local communities as well. I am sure that local government and regional mayors will be looking at the report as well, because they will have a role to implement things, not just at a national level but at a local level. As a final question to both of you, we have the Clean Growth Minister with us later. Is there anything you would like to say to the Minister for Clean Growth today, before we say goodbye to you this morning?

Sue Peachey: Just get on with it.

Q11 **Chair:** I agree. Ibrahim, your last answer was pretty good, but did you want to add anything further?

Ibrahim Wali: As I said, listen to what the people want but also implement things as soon as possible. There is no point setting timelines. It needs to be now, rather than waiting several years to implement.

Chair: Thank you to Sue and Ibrahim for setting the scene for us this morning. I am grateful as always for your time and commitment to giving evidence to this Committee, not least given all the time you gave to the assembly in the first point. Thank you to both of you. It was nice to see you both again.

Examination of witnesses

Witnesses: David Joffe, Rebecca Willis and Signe Norberg.

Q12 **Chair:** We are now going to welcome our next three witnesses for this morning, Dr David Joffe, Professor Rebecca Willis and Signe Norberg, who will be joining us on the screen from the Committee on Climate Change, Lancaster University and the Aldersgate Group. Welcome to all of you this morning. My first question is perhaps not a surprising question for you to receive. Tell me what impact the Climate Assembly report has had, either on your organisation or on the businesses or other stakeholders that you engage with. David from the CCC, I will come to you first, perhaps very specifically in the context of the sixth carbon budget. How did the Climate Assembly report influence your work?



David Joffe: It was a really helpful exercise and report. The challenge we have had, in recommending climate targets, is to understand what changes people were willing to make. How much are they going to embrace the opportunities to reduce emissions through their own actions? When we recommended the net zero target in 2019, we did not really have any evidence on what people would be willing to accept. Therefore, we erred on the side of being cautious and relatively conservative about the changes that would be possible.

In our sixth carbon budget advice last year, we were already moving away from that approach and using scenarios to explore more optimistic scenarios about how these changes could contribute. The Climate Assembly actually added evidence to that, rather than just “what if?” assumptions. We found that really helpful.

By the time we got the results of the Climate Assembly, we were well down the path of doing our analysis. It aligned very well to the assumptions we had already been making. We tweaked a few things to align as well as we could with the outputs, but we were already in the right ballpark. That gave us real confidence that we were on the right lines, so that was really helpful.

Even as the Government have accepted our advice on the sixth carbon budget, it was interesting to see that they distanced themselves a little bit from the sorts of behavioural changes that we had included in our pathway in doing so. There is a question there about whether it is simply the targets that we have provided advice on that they will take, or whether they will look maybe later in the year, in the net zero strategy, to actually adopt some more positive policy on those kinds of changes.

Q13 **Chair:** When you say “behavioural changes”, you mean things like frequent flying, maybe types of food consumption, the way we travel.

David Joffe: Yes. Specifically, I think they were distancing themselves from the diet changes. Yes, they are saying there are problems with the frequent flyer levy. It may well be that they just want to keep their powder dry and did not want to create headlines from setting a target that implied anything about the way it would be met. That is fair enough, as long as the other things come later.

Q14 **Chair:** Signe, you work with a lot of businesses and business groups. What impact has the assembly report had on your stakeholders?

Signe Norberg: The report is very important. David, and Sue and Ibrahim earlier, made the point that it is so important to understand what the public are willing to do and what they consider as essential, as we move towards the net zero target. Working with a lot of businesses that set very ambitious targets and put plans in place to meet net zero, it is an important report that underscores the importance of acting now and of Government leading that charge, to make sure it is fair and something that spreads across the country.



HOUSE OF COMMONS

From our perspective, we see this as underscoring the need for action now and that there has never been more support for reaching net zero. Government are now backed by science, business and the public. Now is the time for the Government to be ambitious and bold.

Q15 Chair: Do business see the assembly report conclusions and identify potential opportunities? If the public want to start buying heat pumps or whatever it might be, that is going to be a growth opportunity, is it not?

Signe Norberg: Yes, certainly. It is going to be a vital aspect, as we transition, to make sure that, when businesses put in place different measures to reach net zero, the public are behind them, buy in to the solutions that are put in place and understand them, and that they are accessible to them. It is a very important aspect of the report, for sure.

Q16 Chair: Rebecca, when we try to gauge public opinion, certainly in the Westminster bubble, we often talk about 1,000-people polls, focus groups or what MPs hear in their surgery appointments. This was fundamentally very different, was it not? Do you think it provided more credibility or confidence to understanding public opinion that should give Ministers confidence to use it on that basis?

Rebecca Willis: Absolutely, yes. We knew already that concern about climate change is very high among people in the UK, and across the world in fact, but we did not have a very detailed understanding of how people want to get to net zero. The Climate Assembly marks a different way of understanding people's opinions and a different way of doing climate strategy.

There has been a tendency of decision makers, including politicians and the climate community, to talk about getting people on board or taking people with us. The Climate Assembly has shown that people have really valuable insights that they can share into the process of policy development. It is not a case of them needing to come on side. It is actually a case of being able to talk to people, take the time and space, give people the information and help them to make the decision with you.

For example, at the Climate Assembly, I was in the group looking at energy use in the home. We had people there who, as a result of the assembly, understood the issues really well and could contribute all kinds of different viewpoints, whether they were renters or homeowners, whether they were living in rural or urban areas. Getting that social intelligence allows you to develop much more nuanced policies that work with the grain of people's lives. That is what we have not had before. That is the really valuable thing that something like the Climate Assembly and associated processes can provide.

At the end of the day, that is democracy, is it not? We want to have an informed public who understand the nature of the challenge and can also work with Government to provide solutions that work for all of us.

Q17 Chair: Given that it was so new, what advice would you have, or have



you given, to Ministers or officials about how they can best use it in developing policy? Did you find maybe that officials were not really sure how best to use an evidence base like this, given that it is new to the processes we might normally follow in Whitehall?

Rebecca Willis: I would like to see the Climate Assembly as the start of something, not just a one-off. I tend to see that we need to look at reaching net zero as essentially a social contract between Government and people. We are all in this together. We know that people have valuable evidence, experience and values to bring to that process. We also know that, if we get it wrong, there will be a backlash. We have seen that just this week in Switzerland, with a referendum opposing Swiss climate policy. We saw it previously with the gilets jaunes in France.

We know that this is a really careful negotiation that needs to happen. The Climate Assembly was that careful negotiation happening between politicians, experts and citizens, and with citizens between each other. It is what Ibrahim said about that process of reaching consensus. That kind of dialogue is what is going to have to happen every day between now and reaching our net zero goal.

When I talk to Government and politicians, I am trying to talk about ways that we can really embed this two-way dialogue, or talk about developing this social contract, and make that a normal part of how we do policy. That is both as an orientation and in terms of actual policy-making processes, which we can come on to if you want.

Q18 **Chair:** David, do you have any comments on that question about how Government can best use the report in their own policy development?

David Joffe: There are two aspects. One is to design a strategy that tries to build in the changes that we have already heard people are willing to make. The other is in terms of how you then design policy. For me, you need to design policies in such a way that you are going to get to where you need to get to in emissions, ultimately. If that means pulling through some technologies we would rather not use, they are designed to do that. First and foremost, they try to pull through the actions that are favourable to society, which have lower costs but also higher co-benefits on health and so on, so design policies in such a way that we try to get the good result, but we make sure we get the result we need, one way or another. That is really important.

Q19 **Chair:** Signe, do you have anything to add on that point about how Government can best use it?

Signe Norberg: That is a very crucial question. It is really important that Government see this as a licence to act, as I mentioned. For us, it will also be vital that, when the Government publish the net zero strategy later this year, it is a detailed, comprehensive plan for how we are going to reach the net zero target.



That should include a very clear timeline for introduction of policies and market mechanisms to help us reach that goal, including near-term and long-term targets and measures, as well as looking at it through a sector-by-sector lens. It should be underpinned by a very ambitious innovation programme to help us trial different technologies at scale to find the right solution for different parts of industry, support low-carbon skills development and deliver crucial infrastructure investment.

Finally, all this must be underpinned by an alignment of economic and financial policy and infrastructure spending that aligns with the net zero target but also, crucially, environmental goals. That will be a crucial element, as part of building resilience into the system in the long term. Having that clear plan from Government now will be quite important for industry and business going forward.

Q20 Charlotte Nichols: Over half of the assembly members agreed that informing and educating everyone was a priority in the transition to net zero. I am interested to hear from you what meaningful and impactful education would look like and why it is necessary.

Rebecca Willis: The assembly members came up with this principle at the end of the first weekend and it was a principle that guided their deliberations. Talking to them at the end of the process, it was clear that they felt really privileged to have been part of this process, and to have had the chance to contribute to discussing climate strategy. They thought that the discussion that had happened in miniature, in that hotel in Birmingham, should be one that is happening all the time in the media and politics. They were really surprised that it was not happening. That is a consistent finding from these deliberation processes, actually.

I do not think it is as simple as saying, "We need public awareness campaigns". It is actually about being very upfront about needing to meet the net zero target. It is about this being front and centre not just of climate policy but of all policy, for example Covid recovery, making sure that all Government priorities are aligned with climate action.

It is also about looking at policies that themselves inform and educate. It is very interesting that, in the past, we have tried to design policies that we hope people will not notice, like decarbonisation of the electricity grid. If you look forward to changes that are going to be needed to transport, home heating, what we eat and so on, they are all important parts of people's lives. That gives us an opportunity to have an ongoing conversation about the need to reduce emissions and the ways in which we can do it that improve people's lives. All those are points in the process in which we can raise awareness, educate people and learn from them as well.

David Joffe: Public awareness is a necessary precondition, but it is not the only thing. Once people know that action is required, they still need to understand what their choices are, essentially. We need to design a framework where people are not worse off through making low-carbon



HOUSE OF COMMONS

choices. For example, we need to put in place supporting infrastructure so people can cycle rather than drive. We need to reform regulation and the tax system to help that. There is a whole nudge framework that we can lean on as well. There are those sorts of things.

We need to convey the urgency with which we need to act. In around the next 10 years, we need to get to a point where every new heating appliance is low carbon, rather than a gas boiler, for example; every new car is an electric car, not a petrol or diesel one; and so on. The next 10 years are going to be crucial. We need to use that time to get people to understand how they can contribute, and the way in which it can improve their lives and mean they are no worse off financially. That requires the Government to put in place a framework to ensure that they would be no worse off.

Signe Norberg: I echo what has been said by David and Rebecca. It will also be very important that we put in place very clear regulation and information-sharing mechanisms as we transition. One clear area where we can see the importance of that is, for example, labelling, so customers understand the choices they are making and the potential impact it can have on carbon emissions or the environment.

Putting in place these tools that will help empower consumers to make informed decisions will be very important. The points that were made in terms of also ensuring that we have a regulatory system and supporting infrastructure as part of that are equally important, to help make these decisions as easy as possible.

Q21 **Charlotte Nichols:** On Friday, I think it is, of this week—it might be next week—I am visiting one of my local primary schools for talking about the climate emergency and these sorts of things with the children. They are very active, engaged and interested in it. This was something that was very much led by them writing me letters about biodiversity and things. In terms of reaching people who are not in full-time education, what strategy would you suggest? We touched on some of them already around consumer nudge policies. Is there anything else that you think would help to reach people where this was not part of the curriculum or part of their formal education?

Signe Norberg: Thinking from a business perspective will be important as well, so we utilise employers and the workplace to help reach as many people as possible and engage with employers, ensuring that there are opportunities for them to upskill themselves in order to adjust to changing work environments that they will need to respond to. For example, there is the transition towards low-carbon heating. There need to be opportunities for employees to engage with this through their work and equip themselves with the right skills.

It is important that it is a whole, encompassing package as well. We need to look at opportunities to embed education, as you mentioned, but also other services. We need to have these messages coming through loud



and clear about how we are transitioning to net zero and what that means for them, to make sure it is clearly understood.

Rebecca Willis: Processes like Climate Assembly UK can themselves have a really important education and engagement function. There is research to show that people's support for policy increases if they know that it is something that has been discussed and agreed by citizens as part of a democratic process like a climate assembly. This is really similar to support for jury trials. You were not there, you did not live through it, but you tend to trust the decisions made by your fellow citizens.

There is a lot that we could do to link individual processes like Climate Assembly UK and the many processes like this that have been held at a local level and get those people who have been involved in those processes in dialogue with wider publics. We can use that as a springboard for a public conversation.

David Joffe: It is important to recognise that probably we are not going to manage to reach absolutely everyone in the country. It is really important that the framework not only engages with as many people as possible but also has a fair transition and protects vulnerable people in the transition. Whether we have managed to engage with them or not, let us keep them in mind when we are making those policies, and try to ensure that people who do not take advantage of the opportunities are still not left behind when we are making the transition.

Q22 **Charlotte Nichols:** Staying on the topic of public engagement, the Government have committed to communicating their public engagement approach leading up to COP 26 in the net zero strategy. From your point of view, what should this public engagement strategy prioritise? Are the Government doing enough to engage the public in the policy design of reaching net zero?

Rebecca Willis: The starting point for this should be the Climate Assembly and, as I was saying, communicating the fact that 108 citizens have done the job on behalf of us all, in terms of charting a course for net zero. That is a really powerful message. That should absolutely be their starting point.

I also want to say what they should not do on communication, and that is always bringing it back to individual behaviour change and an individual consumer lens. There are lots of ways in which we need to engage people. We should not load all the decisions on them. We should not expect them to be thinking about flying less if it is really expensive to take the train. We should make sure that the systems and structures out there, our transport system, our food system and so on, reflect and model the changes we want people to make.

By loading it all on individuals and asking individuals to live the perfect low-carbon life, you endanger the overall strategy. We need to see this as a partnership between citizens, Government, business and so on. What



HOUSE OF COMMONS

not to do is load it on everyone to make those individual lifestyle changes. See this as a joint effort.

David Joffe: There are a number of aspects where public engagement is really important within the net zero strategy. We have big choices to make on how we heat our homes and buildings in general. There is a pretty strong argument for that to have a local dimension and actually to decide in different parts of the country what the right solutions are for an area, depending on its local resources, how the building stock is and so on. There needs to be a recognition of that and a process there to engage with people on a local basis to make those decisions.

It needs to set out how there is going to be a just transition that enables people in industries that are going to be declining to find new jobs and access the opportunities that come from the transition to net zero. It needs to set out a funding solution that is fair and seen to be fair, so that it brings people with it, but also encourages action by individuals and, as Rebecca said, more generally across society.

Finally, my organisation struggles all the time with questions around things like fossil fuel production, roadbuilding, airport capacity and so on. It would be really helpful for the Government to have a mechanism to align all their policy to the net zero target they have signed up to, so something like a net zero test that says, "This is what we are committed to and we will see all these separate decisions through that lens".

That will really help to bring people with us, because we are no longer seeing the mixed signals that we might have seen over the last few months, whether it is roadbuilding, the coal mine and so on. Something that commits to that and tries to align all policy to net zero would be really important as part of that public engagement strategy, to really show to people that the Government are committed to this.

Q23 **Charlotte Nichols:** Yes, for sure. I agree with the points that both you and Rebecca have made around people's individual, personal responsibility and liability. That is a very interesting and important point to dig down into. Particularly if people are seeing the Government make big decisions that take us away from those goals, it is a disincentive to, as Rebecca said, personally be the best kind of climate individual. You think, "What I am doing is not going to have the same impact as this new airport that the Government are opening", for example. Signe, was there anything that you wanted to add before I go on to my last question?

Signe Norberg: The only thing I would add to the excellent points the others have made is the importance of recognising that this is something that will happen over the long term as well. It is important that we definitely have a lot of public engagement ahead of COP, but similarly after that as well, to make sure the decisions and different solutions that are put in place are understood by the public as well.

Q24 **Charlotte Nichols:** Finally, I am interested in lessons learned from the



HOUSE OF COMMONS

pandemic on inciting changes in public behaviour that could be used in the net zero transition. Some 93% of assembly members agreed that, as lockdown eases, Government, employers and/or others should take steps to encourage lifestyles to change in order to be more compatible with reaching net zero. I am interested in hearing from you how effective the Government have been so far in harnessing the necessary behaviour changes from Covid to promote the behaviours needed for the net zero transition.

Signe Norberg: We would definitely agree that recovering from Covid and starting this transition to net zero go hand in hand, and support the report in that regard. We have commissioned a fairly detailed bit of research with academics at LSE to look at how we can utilise both, as opportunities to align recovery with climate and environmental objectives. It produced a number of recommendations, some of which Government have progressed, such as introducing new institutions to help drive a wider transformation, such as the UK infrastructure bank that can help support low-carbon solutions.

Similarly, the research really stresses the importance of ambitious public investment to help kickstart the recovery, learn the lessons from the previous global economic recession and have that public confidence in the Government's investment decisions. Introducing short-term measures that will produce jobs across the UK will be vital as well. We need a clear underpinning policy framework to drive investment.

By utilising all these levers, we will help unlock a lot of private investment that is needed to help achieve net zero. We need to make sure that, when we put measures in place to recover from the pandemic, it bears this in mind, they go hand in hand and they create a level playing field. Now is definitely the time to make sure that, as we recover, we put in place the desired frameworks and mechanisms to reach net zero and have an underpinning policy and regulatory framework that allows that to happen and creates a level playing field for businesses, so they can go above and beyond, and compete in low-carbon services and goods that are increasingly being asked for by the public and on the global market. In that way, we can really have an effective recovery.

Rebecca Willis: The Covid-climate links are really interesting. Covid struck two-thirds of the way through the assembly. The assembly members themselves asked to consider the links between climate and Covid. They were seeing these huge changes to the country and to their lives at the same time that they were discussing climate strategy. When we saw the results of that, they absolutely saw the links between the two. In fact, they saw climate and Covid recovery as one and the same thing. There was very strong support for the idea that Covid recovery should be aligned in its entirety with net zero.

There has been a lot of discussion about what you might call the behaviour change components. There is something in that. When people's lives change, that is the moment that you can open up a discussion about



HOUSE OF COMMONS

longer-term values and what you really want, as an individual and a society. There are implications for travel, land use and so on. The pandemic provided a chance to have that discussion about behaviour change.

Overwhelmingly, the important thing is that the assembly members wanted to avoid mixed messages, where Covid recovery was not aligned with climate. I have been a bit disappointed that they have carried on with sort of twin-track things. Government have not done as much as they could, both in actual policy and in communication and engagement. They have not united those two agendas nearly as much as they could.

Especially when you are looking at the local focus, the need for jobs and investment locally, we absolutely need to align Covid and climate in looking at those investment strategies. That is an open goal for Government.

David Joffe: It is worth thinking about what the pandemic and the lockdowns did to emissions in 2020. The main impact was on travel, in transport emissions, because obviously people were not travelling very much. While the lockdown is absolutely not a model for how we need to tackle climate change in the long term, it has brought to the fore some of the opportunities there: increased homeworking, reduced business travel and increased videoconferencing.

Now that people have got used to doing things in a different way for a while, we need to act as soon as we can to give them the opportunity to maintain those positive changes that they have been able to make over the longer term, whether that is better broadband and telecoms provision, cycling infrastructure or the willingness of employers to accept and embrace continued hybrid working, let us say, mixing offices and working from home.

As other speakers have said, there is a clear sense in which investment in recovery can be aligned with net zero and investment for net zero can be good for the economy. That consensus is really positive. The more we can make that link, the better, as a climate community and particularly as Government. The build back better slogan is a positive start, but making it concrete to people that we are doing this for both reasons and they are fully aligned is really powerful, as Rebecca said.

Q25 **Alan Brown:** Good morning. The second highest priority-underpinning principle from the assembly was fairness on the path to net zero and protecting the most vulnerable in our society. David, I will start with you because you mentioned the just transition. What are the most important things to prioritise for a fair transition to net zero? Maybe elaborate on what actions the Government are taking that would demonstrate that they are prioritising fairness. How effective have these actions been?

David Joffe: There are a number of aspects to this. An absolutely key one is how we heat our homes. All our assessment says that the way we



heat our homes is going to become more expensive because we are trying to do it without the emissions. Frankly, fossil gas is relatively cheap and the low-carbon options are less cheap.

We already have a fuel poverty problem in this country. If we simply pass on the extra costs of heating our homes, those who are most vulnerable and least able to pay their energy bills at the moment will be that much more affected than those who can afford to pay that bit extra. Finding a way to fund that buildings decarbonisation that does not impact vulnerable people in that way is a hugely important part of it.

In terms of just transition on the jobs front, it is really important that we are able to both improve the skills and find the jobs for people whose industries will be declining because of tackling climate change. Those are probably the main two. There will also be benefits. It is important to distribute the benefits fairly, as well as the costs. Better air quality is great, but, if it is mainly happening in affluent areas, we already have worse air quality in more deprived areas. How can we make sure that the air quality improves most quickly in those areas most affected by bad air quality? There are a number of dimensions to it.

Q26 Alan Brown: Can I maybe come back, because you mentioned heating our homes? The Committee is doing an inquiry into decarbonisation of heating. We know that there is the heat and buildings strategy still to come out from the Government. When is it that the Government need to demonstrate how they are funding this? When is the critical period in which they have to demonstrate that? The 10-point plan, for example, targets rolling out 600,000 heat pumps per year by 2028. At the moment, there is no pathway at all as to how that is going to be ramped up. Is there a key timeline when the demonstration of how it is going to be funded is required?

David Joffe: The Treasury's net zero review ought to be setting out at least principles, if not practical detailed framework, for how buildings decarbonisation in particular is going to be funded. We recommended that they undertake that review over two years ago now. We are still waiting for the outcome. We would hope that it would be published either alongside the net zero strategy or beforehand. That is really critical in addressing these issues of fairness, and particularly in the buildings sector.

If we let it roll on beyond this year and say, "Here are some high-level things but we will come back with a more detailed plan in a year, two years, three years", that is a real problem. We do not have that time to waste. We need to be making decisions on how we are going to be heating people's homes in the middle of this decade. There is a whole engagement process to go through once we have put in place a framework. We really cannot afford to waste a year, two years or three years on this. It is absolutely crucial.



HOUSE OF COMMONS

To be honest, buildings is going to be the hardest bit of the lot. It is relatively expensive and comes with all those funding challenges. Even if it was not expensive, it is also going to be difficult because it involves people, their homes and the personal things that go with that. It is really important to recognise that we cannot afford to waste any time on that. We need to get a good framework, but as soon as possible.

Q27 Alan Brown: Sticking with you, David, back to the fair transition in the wider sense, in Scotland the Scottish Government set up a Just Transition Commission, which looks at Government policies and advises on that fairness. Is that something the UK Government should maybe consider as well?

David Joffe: Yes, absolutely. There is a question about whether, in a sense, now we have the report from the Scottish Just Transition Commission, the rest of the UK can learn from that and just adopt its recommendations immediately. Do we need to have separate exercises for England, Wales and Northern Ireland? I do not know the answer to that. That is not really for me to say.

The commission, chaired by Jim Skea, has done a really good job, in bringing out some of those challenges and making recommendations of how to deal with them. That is a really important contribution, regardless of whether it just applies to Scotland or is adopted more widely.

Q28 Alan Brown: Signe, you were nodding a lot when David was talking about priorities. Is there anything you want to add? If you look at vulnerable people in communities, are they being supported enough at the moment in the net zero transition, both from industry and from Government?

Signe Norberg: It will be an important area to be really mindful of as further measures are put in place, some of which we do not necessarily have the answers to. For example, as we have talked about, buildings will be an area where there will be a range of measures that we need to put in place. As we do that, it is important that, when Government and businesses implement their own actions, there is mindful consideration of how that is rolled out to those who are able to pay and those who are not. Provisions should be made to support both as part of that.

One particular thing I would like to stress, which David mentioned, relates particularly to making sure the opportunities are spread across the country. If you look at retrofitting of housing, for example, that is an area where there will be ample opportunities to create jobs across the country. Making sure that is done in an effective and efficient way will be crucial to make sure we take people with us as we transition.

To be fair, this is something that the Government are very mindful of. The net zero review that David mentioned will be a crucial mechanism as part of that. Similarly, the recommendations from the green jobs taskforce will be an important part of this. There will be transformations



that will happen, but we need to be really mindful so we do not leave anyone behind, everyone can be part of this transition and the easy choice will be the right one—the one that will reduce our carbon emissions but also not adversely impact people financially.

Q29 Alan Brown: Rebecca, do you want to add anything about whether there is enough support for vulnerable people and communities at the moment, and what else maybe needs to be considered?

Rebecca Willis: Making sure we support vulnerable people and communities is important in its own right, to make sure we do not worsen those vulnerabilities. It is also a really important condition that people put on climate strategy, whether or not they are vulnerable. You quite rightly said that fairness for everybody was an important principle for the Climate Assembly. It was part of almost every discussion around those tables when the citizens were deliberating. There was a wide conception of fairness, not just between people but between regions and communities as well.

There was a really strong emphasis throughout the assembly on having a more local approach. One of the best ways we can create a fair transition is to free up nations and regions to be able to develop a climate strategy that is right for their area. That is definitely what the citizens supported for energy use in the home, those heating issues, but also for transport and jobs. Making sure we are geographically specific is a really important part of that fairness agenda.

Q30 Alan Brown: Finally on that, clearly the UK Government talk about levelling up and have the levelling-up fund, which is obviously a different way of trying to rebalance the economy, as it were. Is there any sense that the Government understand what the assembly was talking about in terms of fairness and who to protect, and are challenging themselves to come up with strategies that would deal with that?

Rebecca Willis: I have seen this first-hand. I live in Cumbria and have been really involved in debates about the mine. At the moment, communities are being put in an impossible position, where they are literally being offered 500 jobs with a huge carbon price tag attached, 9 million tonnes a year in the case of the mine. It is not fair to load those decisions on particular communities that really need those jobs.

It is absolutely about Government at a national level setting really clear priorities, having very clear policies to make sure that job strategies and levelling up, if you want to call it that, are aligned with the net zero transition, and then freeing up local areas to find the best route to that. We would be hoping that Cumbria and other local areas could be choosing between all sorts of different job opportunities, but that they would all be low carbon. Setting that clear and consistent policy at a national level and freeing up at a local level is a really important principle.



Q31 **Paul Howell:** I would like to explore the issue of public trust in Government, as to where this goes, in particular when support schemes are changed or withdrawn, like the green homes grant has gone on. I was in a little village called Chilton, near to Sedgefield, in my constituency, watching some external insulation being applied to some terraced houses.

When you are talking to the people there, they were so sceptical, when the scheme was put to them, that this was going to be done to their houses and it was going to be free. It almost felt like a scam to them, so you had that problem of getting engagement in the first place. You got past that and they really bought into what they are getting now. They are really delighted with what they are getting, the whole agenda, and now the scheme has been withdrawn, at least in part, as to where it goes. How do you feel that that stop-start, in terms of Government initiatives, impacts on trust? What can the Government do to build back, if you think it is knocking it back?

Signe Norberg: It is a very important area. This comes back to the point of the clear plan for how we are going to reach net zero to ensure consistency and instil business confidence as part of that, as well as public faith in these policy measures. That is why we need to have this strategy that sets out these clear timelines for introduction of policies and mechanisms, innovation programmes, skills development and the alignment of economic and financial policy and infrastructure spending as part of that.

If we set out this comprehensive framework, that is how we get faith in the measures that are put forward. It also increases the confidence for business to invest. It will provide them with a very cost-effective signal to the market of where they should make business investments. It increases innovation of British companies, produces a wide range of low-carbon goods services that are increasingly being asked for, grows supply chain, drives economic growth and invites investment into crucial areas of skills. Having this clear plan in place will be very important to ensure we get a comprehensive set of policies in place.

Specifically on the green homes grant that you mentioned, it is very important that we look at that, understand what worked and what did not work and embed those learnings going forward. Particularly, we saw there the impact of the lack of a long-term strategy for the sector to roll it out, and the development of low-carbon skills and supply chains being something that, potentially, held it back slightly, in terms of the speed at which it was rolled out.

We know that we need to address these areas. We need to invest in the supply chains, ensure there are the skills to deliver on the improvements we need to see and have regulatory standards that can help provide that baseline in tackling emissions of buildings. We will need to go forward in housing to retrofit existing housing and if the answer is not the green



HOUSE OF COMMONS

homes grant, we need to understand from Government what that answer will be and what will be done to ensure we tackle those emissions.

Paul Howell: It is about clarity of a future vision and consistency; that is really what you are saying.

Signe Norberg: Yes, precisely.

Q32 **Paul Howell:** If I throw in another point, it has been said as well that there is evidence of a disconnect between the public supporting the need for climate change and their understanding of what they need to do and their part in it. I know that you said we should not leverage things on the individual, but there still needs to be a clarity of where the individual fits into things. I wonder if you can embellish that answer with that observation as well, please.

Rebecca Willis: By saying we should not load it all on to the individual, I am not saying for a moment that people should not embrace this change or they will not need to change the way they do things. We know that we need to change home heating, the way we travel and so on, but it is about providing the support around them that makes the obvious choice that improves their lives. Stop-start policies do not help with that.

Signe has explained why it is problematic for business, but for people as well, if you look at the Climate Assembly's findings, they were adamant about this point for consistent, clear and long-term strategy, not only so that people can plan and see what is ahead, but because it is really confusing for people if a Government tell them that they are really serious about the net zero target, but then abandon a policy or introduce a contradictory policy, whether that be a high-carbon investment in airport expansion or something like that. It gets very confusing for people and quite disheartening.

You have said there is a disconnect sometimes between people's personal actions and their overall concerns for climate change. Part of that comes about because we do not have that clear and consistent messaging from Government at the moment. Having a long-term strategy and developing policies that are really clear as to where we are going over time is the way not only to get businesses engaged, but also to make sure that people know what is ahead of them and that they are convinced that Government are playing their part alongside what individuals are doing.

David Joffe: People are not just the people who live in these homes. The supply chains that Signe talked about are also fundamentally people and jobs, and the supply chains for energy efficiency improvements, for example, dropped off a cliff, really. They have withered. Sorry, I am mixing my metaphors. Since 2012, the rate of energy efficiency improvement in existing buildings has fallen by more than 90% and the supply chains that undertake that work have fallen with it.



HOUSE OF COMMONS

Having a hugely ambitious programme to spend £3 billion in less than a year was never going to work with the supply chains that we had because we did not have a long-term programme, which is the same point that others have made. It is not just about whether we can reduce emissions. It is a jobs point. If we have stop-start policy, people are not going to trust that they can retrain to improve efficiency in people's homes.

Q33 Paul Howell: David, I will move on to you first with my next question. It is something that Rebecca touched on, so she may want to come back in shortly. When you look at things like nuclear power and carbon capture and storage, they were only supported by a minority of the Climate Assembly, but your advice on the sixth carbon budget recommended their use. How do we take account of public opinion? How did you take account of public opinion in the analysis? Were weights given to this and other factors?

How do you get past this challenge that people do not like that type of power, but it is necessary to get there? Is it because people do not like those routes to get there or is it because they do not understand? If they do not understand, how do we educate without it being patronising or saying, "We know better", given that the Climate Assembly went through a lot of education and then still came out with those views? Can you try to explore that for me?

David Joffe: The electricity generation that we have in the sixth carbon budget is over 80% renewables, so it really is dominated by the sorts of sources of electricity generation that people expressed a preference for, but you cannot do everything with wind and solar. Sometimes the wind does not blow. Sometimes, such as at night, the sun does not shine. We need a mix, but the mix is dominated in our work by those renewables. We do not have much new nuclear and it varies across scenarios.

This was borne out by the preferences of the Climate Assembly. There was a preference for diversity, not just putting all our eggs in one basket but going for a range of sources. Nuclear can be part of that while not being the dominant solution. I clearly take the message that people do not really like CCS and particularly fossil fuels with CCS, but at the same time we need to decarbonise and to do that in such a way that, when the wind is not blowing, there is still enough capacity there, so it needs to be there in a backup role to some extent. We need to minimise that, push it to the margins and get the wind and solar front and centre.

Q34 Paul Howell: The point I would like to cover a little further with Rebecca is about how we get people to engage with that, though. I accept what you are saying in terms of needing a baseload power situation with nuclear or something like that for when the renewables are not available, but how do you get that clear message to people that that is the right thing to do?

Rebecca Willis: When people express concerns, take them seriously. I say that for two reasons. First, they are the voters. They are in charge in



a democracy. We need to take people's views and values into account; otherwise there will be a backlash.

Secondly, I have seen this time and time again in public deliberations. People throw up issues that really need addressing, not so much to do with technologies. When they express views, it is not so much to do with whether they like technology X or Y. It is much more often under what conditions they support or worry about technology X or Y. In the example of CCS, there were some concerns about the technology, but the main objection was that, essentially, they saw it as allowing business as usual, just like continuing with fossil fuels when what we need to do is phase them out, so they saw that as very contradictory.

If they are worried about particular technologies, it is not necessarily about saying no to those technologies. It is about taking the conditionality that they place upon them really seriously and dealing with that in policy. If we still want some fossil fuel generation with CCS as part of the transition, we need to be clear that it is a transition, that it is not just allowing us to continue with fossil fuel generation forever, that it is an interim measure and that the policies reflect that stepdown. If we take people's worries seriously and explore them, we often get some really useful social intelligence that will help us to design better policies in areas like CCS and nuclear.

Q35 Paul Howell: It is one of those challenges, I think you are saying. It is a more nuanced consideration of what we are listening to from what people are saying and, the more nuanced something is, the more difficult it is to get a clear message to go over the top of it. Signe, would you like to put any final comments to that?

Signe Norberg: It has been covered quite well by both David and Rebecca. With a technology such as CCS, it is important to recognise that it will be a vital technology in the short term for a lot of industries to decarbonise. When businesses in these sectors, such as steel, cement and so on, put it into their plans, it is not a silver bullet. It is often accompanied by a wide range of other measures and is taken as a comprehensive approach. If some of these technologies do have a role to play, Rebecca's point about really engaging with the public view on them will be important.

It is equally important to recognise that it is all about having a mixed set of measures and, to borrow David's terminology, not putting all the eggs in one basket. There is a role for some of these technologies and it will be important to communicate why they will be important, but also what else will accompany them, because there is not going to be one solution that will fix everything for one part of the sector. It is often quite a complex picture.

Paul Howell: We have just repeated the point, Chair, that it is about clear messaging and dealing with the nuances. The opportunity and the risk is that people from both parties or both sides of that argument



HOUSE OF COMMONS

exploit the extremes, instead of taking the central path. We somehow need to make sure the messaging deals with that.

Q36 Chair: My last question for our witnesses here is just on the issue of behavioural change. David, I will come to you first. You mentioned that there was a little bit of distancing in the Government's response to the sixth carbon budget. I just wanted to get to the nub of how you engage the public here. If we say to people, "You need to change your diet" or, "You are going to be charged more if you fly more frequently", without having explained why we are doing that, people are going to say, "I am not going to do that. I quite like having meat on a Sunday and two holidays a year with a flight to Europe".

Just saying to them, "We did the citizens' assembly and it said that you should want to do that" is not going to be enough, clearly. How do we tackle those behavioural change issues, engaging the public in such a way that, when we actually come to having to make those changes, we are bringing people with us and not just failing to deal with obvious points of conflict?

David Joffe: That is a really important question. I am not sure I have all the answers, but it is certainly important not just to do a Climate Assembly but to engage with the whole population or as much of it as you can. It is important to explain why we are doing this and not just say, "We are doing it", and to explain that there are questions about how we do it and that different ways of doing it will have different implications for how people live their lives.

There are opportunities. There are low-carbon choices that people can make that will help the transition and may also help them in terms of their health or their lifestyles, but ultimately you need processes as well to enable them to engage and to effect decisions. It is not just about saying, "We have politely told you that these things are going to happen to you". It is about finding ways for them to input into decisions as well. In particular, the local ones about how we heat our homes are really important. It cannot just be warm words, although that is better than nothing. It needs to be built into processes.

Q37 Chair: Rebecca, presumably this is your point that we ought to build on the citizens' assembly and not just see it as a one-off.

Rebecca Willis: Yes. You said that we cannot just say to people, "The citizens' assembly said that we should eat less meat and reduce aviation growth, so therefore you have to do it", but actually we kind of can, in that it is better coming from a carefully designed democratic process than it is from what people might regard as a load of experts telling us what to do.

The Climate Assembly is not enough for that. We know what issues are likely to be coming up. They are around home heating, diet and air travel. Those are just a few examples. We can use these sorts of processes to find out more about how to design those policies and to



HOUSE OF COMMONS

create this link between climate assemblies or individual deliberative processes.

You could do a whole process around dietary change, for example, and use those citizens as a way of having a debate with the public much more widely that includes the public, politicians and so on. As I said before, you can say, as you would do in a legal jury, "Okay, this group of people have done the work for you and this is what they came up with", and use that as a starting point for engagement. It does not mean that you can get support for anything that way. You still need to, as David said, set those decisions in context, explain why we are doing them and design them well, fairly and everything else we have been talking about. That much more two-way debate between citizens and Government is absolutely a way to build support.

Chair: That brings us to the end of this part of the session this morning, so thank you to David Joffre, Rebecca Willis and Signe Norberg for your time and your evidence this morning. We are very grateful to each of you.

Examination of witnesses

Witnesses: Anne-Marie Trevelyan and Chris Thompson.

Q38 **Chair:** We are now moving to the final of three sections of our hearing this morning. We are delighted to welcome the Minister for Energy and Clean Growth, Anne-Marie Trevelyan, and Chris Thompson, who is the director for clean growth in the BEIS Department. Good morning.

The first question is from me, Minister. We all know there is a lot of business lobbying that goes on in Westminster and Whitehall. How are you ensuring that you build consumer voice and consumer opinion, or citizen voice and citizen opinion, into the development of our net zero policies?

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: The key challenge, and one of the things that the Climate Assembly and you as committees have all drawn together, is that we will achieve our net zero only if we have consumer buy-in in its broadest sense, in terms of how people spend their pound but also the broad acceptance of the policies that Government set in place. Business is an important part of the whole delivery, because it will be doing the change activities that we all, as consumers, want to buy into and, indeed, that we more widely, as consumers and as citizens, want to see to drive that net zero challenge to success.

We are, to pardon the pun, literally all in this together. We all have to be part of that solution. One of the interesting challenges is that, recently, there is a real shift across the business community to a positive



understanding and, indeed, a positive determination to be much more focused and understanding in whatever their business space is, to attempt within their own business to achieve net zero, to think about the impacts they are having and to work with their supply chains to try to drive change.

That is the driven, at the end of the day, by the fact that you and I, and their consumers, whoever they are, have now understood and want to see us live our lives in a different way, to ensure that the net zero challenge, which we have set ourselves in a world-leading way as a nation, can be achieved. There is a very positive symbiotic relationship between businesses, citizens and consumers, much more than there was even a few years ago, to help push this forward. I am very excited sitting in this role now as I talk to businesses. I hear a completely different tone coming back to us and it is an understanding that they have to make change themselves in order to maintain credibility and a good place in the market.

Q39 Chair: Consumers will change business behaviour because of their demand. You have received the Climate Assembly report on behalf of Parliament as a voice of the people in the UK. Do you see there being a specific requirement on Government as the executive branch to engage with consumers on this issue and, if so, what practical steps will you be taking to do that?

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: Absolutely, that is critical. To be fair, that goes on all the time. Every Department has a number of citizen tracker systems and consumer surveys. They vary. BEIS has a big ongoing tracker survey that it does. A key part of the net zero strategy, which we will be publishing in the autumn, is going to be the tools that we want to use that exist already, how we expand that out to make sure that we are both listening to and educating those for whom we are all on this journey, and how we use all those tools to understand it.

Some interesting work that we have already been doing in BEIS as part of this, in order to prepare for what we put into the net zero strategy, is understanding where a broad range of historic Government campaigns over many years, like the obesity campaign and the green cross code campaign, have or, indeed, sometimes have not been very successful. We are trying to drill down with experts in this field to understand what the right drivers are to use, and how we can make sure that we use the right tools to help push that forwards, draw in from consumers their needs, anxieties and wants, and then turn that into policy and delivery.

Yesterday we launched the Together for our Planet campaign as part of the COP work that we are doing this year with our presidency, but, for me, it is a much wider tool than that, because it affords the opportunity to really help have a conversation about this. I often to say to people who are anxious and feel a bit overwhelmed by the sudden change in everything that this is a journey. We are aiming to be net zero by 2050



and that involves lots and lots of juncture points on the way through, so you do not have to have an electric vehicle tomorrow.

Between now and 2050 you will have a number of cars if you are a driver, so do not worry about it too much. Know that the technology is moving, that we are setting the framework for business to provide a better vehicle and that you will, therefore, be part of that change. You do not have to be anxious about it. It will be part of your day-to-day journey. It is just that technology will afford a cleaner vehicle. Those sorts of things provide reassurance as well as understanding.

Those of us, as in my case, who have children see the wonderful beauty of the child's simplicity of understanding, which says, "This is bad. We are clearly damaging the planet. Let us not do that". Those children are empowered, in a way that I never was empowered to get my mother to do something different in the shops. They are empowered by a level of understanding of the bigger picture, which is quite a responsibility for them.

It is an incredibly powerful driver for all of us, as citizens spending our pounds, but also as parliamentarians and leaders, to drive policy that makes sense and will deliver what that next generation needs. We are doing this not for fun and not because we have nothing else to do, but because we want the world to be a sustainable and better place for our children and grandchildren than we have allowed it to get to now. That is really important and a really powerful message that we should never forget. When we say we are doing this for our children, that is literally what we mean, because otherwise the sustainability of our planet becomes impossible to manage.

Q40 Chair: You mentioned the net zero strategy. In the Government's submission to this inquiry, you said that you would be communicating your public engagement approach leading up to COP 26 in that net zero strategy. My understanding is that the strategy is due to publish in September. COP is November. Is two months enough or is it just going to be a really busy two months of public engagement?

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: It is already quite a busy five months running up to COP. Together for our Planet was launched and that is rolling. Defra has just launched Plant for our Planet. All of you, please take that back to your constituencies and find ways to use it. It is the most fantastic visual and physical way to help people get involved in the whole question.

COP is, if you like, almost a springboard for us as the UK from which to then move on with our conversation with our own citizens. We have the extraordinary honour and responsibility of being the COP president for this very important COP, but we then revert to being the UK and continuing to do our part as a nation and, indeed, as a leader among nations to help deliver net zero, help with the technology transfers and so on. It is a continuum for me, but we want to publish the net zero strategy before COP, because we want to lead and demonstrate that all the



thinking we have done can be brought together, and to help other countries think about how they might want to deliver something similar from the other side of COP, as everyone continues to move on this journey.

Q41 Chair: COP is often referred to in similar terms to hosting the Olympic Games, but bigger. Are we going to have a hydrogen-powered torch going through every community in the run-up to COP and, if not, how are you going to use COP to engage every community across the country?

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: The challenges of Covid have been very real and very limiting in terms of helping us to do what, as you say, might be normal outreach. Indeed, just even from the technical negotiations perspective, they have had to be virtual. These have been real human challenges, because so much benefit comes from real interaction, but there is a huge amount of work going on and we have done an enormous amount of work, with youth and civil society in particular, within the limitations, to hear their voices and make sure that that is heard.

I am sure, as and when CPD talks to you, he can talk to you in more detail, but there has been an enormous number of submissions of amazing projects that people want to be able to present and showcase at COP. Indeed, the beauty of the virtual world is we that have more tools available to share the really amazing forward-thinking projects that are going on alongside big industry. The COP sponsors, such as some of the big renewables organisations and so on, are able to demonstrate the work they are doing at an industrial part of this whole journey that we are on.

Q42 Charlotte Nichols: Thank you, Minister. The Together for our Planet campaign's website lists three avenues of engagement, all aimed at business and children, so I am interested to hear what your plans are for engaging adults and how you will reach groups that are disengaged or underrepresented in this space.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: It is a really fair challenge. That is part of the development of it. We have launched it and, as you say, we have targeted initially those two groups, partly, on the business side, to engage to help them think about what they can do. Within the COP world, the Race to Zero, which is a campaign running globally, encourages businesses to sign up to their own net zero journey. That has been a very important initial focus to help drive change and planning for them, alongside helping our youngest members of society to really understand, because they are the ones who are going to be in this for longest and who have the most to gain or, indeed, lose if we get it wrong. That is a really important focus.

As we move forwards, part of the whole engagement strategy that we publish as part of the net zero strategy will be to think across the piece about the different methods of outreach, both what we do at a national campaign level and how we empower local authorities to think about how



HOUSE OF COMMONS

they can engage with their communities to do the things that they need to do, in order to reduce their carbon emissions and, indeed, have a much more sustainable way of life. Defra is leading on work in terms of waste management and thinking more about the circular economy. All those areas of Government policy can be both delivered and encouraged at a number of levels.

All of those will feed through as part of that broader strategy going forward, but in a practical sense, if we look at the key areas that individuals make a difference on in terms of transport, how they move around and what they do with it, and, indeed, the home they live in and the equipment they have within it, that is where citizens can make a personal day-to-day difference in their usage of energy and what sort of energy they want to use.

Those can be driven at a number of levels. That will continue and will allow each area of policy, if it comes to a deliverable level, the opportunity to drive those, but at a number of levels, not just at a national campaign level, although we have done some and will continue to do more. They can be very successful, but we do not disagree that sometimes Government campaigns are not as effective as we would have hoped. A really interesting piece of work that we have done is to try to assess why that would be, so that we can target and be most effective, because we are on a clock here. We cannot say, "It did not work this time. We will come back in 10 years' time". That is not an option here.

We have to make sure that we engage, persuade and, indeed, provide the opportunity for citizens to lead and drive the change. The report that the Climate Assembly has published is helpful and sits in many ways very comfortably with a lot of Government policy. At the end of the day, every four to five years we have general elections and the opportunity to put forwards more or less radical propositions for the next stage of the journey that we are on to net zero, at which point every adult citizen has a voice. We should not underestimate or forget that that will be a very powerful opportunity to drive those next stages of how we want to ensure that we can get to our net zero challenge.

Q43 **Charlotte Nichols:** You have alluded in some of your answers to the challenges that Covid has brought in terms of public engagement. Darren asked in the previous question about the lack of lead-up time between the publication of the net zero strategy and COP 26 itself. What are your longer-term post-COP plans for public education around net zero?

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: This is going to be a continuum, without a doubt. The net zero strategy will demonstrate, with all the cogs put together, our strategy to reach our now CB6-approved challenge of 78% decarbonisation by 2035, through to being fully net zero by 2050. This is going to be an ongoing conversation. The net zero strategy will have within it the first iteration, but this will be a continually developing set of programmes using the tools that work. There are so many ways to



HOUSE OF COMMONS

engage all our citizens, different age groups, different communities and so on, that we will need to continually iterate that.

We will set a clear springboard in the net zero strategy of how we operate and the key areas that we know we want to be talking about with citizens, so that that is up and running. COP is an opportunity for us, not as president, but as the UK, to showcase our really world-leading efforts to pull together a whole national net zero strategy. Beyond that, we will continue to drive that and deliver what is a very big programme with infrastructure, behavioural choices and technological development.

Q44 Paul Howell: Thank you, Minister. The second highest priority-underpinning principle from the assembly was fairness within the UK, including for the most vulnerable, in actions, not just words. Existing measures to help people decarbonise have had limited success and maybe are not accessible to all, whether you are talking the green homes grant, electric vehicle grants, et cetera. How can future measures be better targeted towards the less affluent to support them to decarbonise?

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: It is an incredibly important question. That we deliver a just transition is absolutely fundamental to this Government, as is making sure that, as we do that, we bring people with us. The two go hand in hand, but there are opportunities as well as changes for people to make with that net zero challenge. We do not want to leave places or people behind at all as we move to the net zero world that we are going to live in. Making sure that we get that right is really important.

The Treasury is doing a very substantial review at the moment on the costs of decarbonisation across the piece, including thinking about how to achieve a transition in a way that works for households, as well as businesses and the public finances. That is going to be a really important piece of work and a baseline from which to help us to work and make sure that we are thinking across the piece on that.

You mentioned the green homes grant and the real ongoing success of that is the next level of the local authority scheme, where those living in social housing, who are those who perhaps are least able to afford major investment changes in their own lives, are having their homes invested in, so that they are much more energy efficient. That is a really good first step.

I sat it a lot: this is a journey. We have reached one hurdle and we can look across, say, our housing stock and say, "This is fantastic. Of the 30% of social housing, 50%, 60% or 70% is now energy efficient. This is going really well. How do we tackle, through regulation as well as potentially through financial incentives, the owner occupier property base?"

The future homes standard coming in will, much like the shift towards electric cars and vehicles, automatically help us move to a zero-emission vehicle, if you drive one, and, indeed, a new house, which will then have



a net zero standard. A lot of these things, regardless of the ability to invest now at a personal level, will help us all move into a more energy-efficient and clean energy world to work in.

On the other side of that, it is very important to me, perhaps like you, Paul, speaking as a north-east MP, to think about the questions of levelling up and how all our communities can benefit from what we will call a green job in future. The ability to work in an environment where they are part of the solution to the net zero challenge is really important. In every sense, in a daily life, whoever's it is, in both the way you consume and what you give back through your work and, indeed, through other community activity you might do, that is a really important part of being part of the transition. It is making sure we empower people who perhaps did not think they were part of it to understand how important their role is in their work, as well as in their home life, to their contribution to net zero.

Q45 Paul Howell: I will come back to the green jobs taskforce in a minute, if that is okay. Just to continue in terms of the support and investment, the decision to replace the £1 billion budget set aside for green homes with £320 million for 2021-22 was not really well received by industry experts at all. I know there was talk and people saying that it was because people would not let tradesmen into their houses and things like that, but we have seen a lot of associations saying that really was not one of the main reasons.

Would it not have been better just to keep that funding there to push the green recovery? In terms of encouraging people to engage with this process, one of the things that came out of the assembly was about the need for simpler consumer protection measures. Is there any way we can establish a guarantee for home decarbonisation upgrades?

Like you, I am a north-east MP. I met with Lord Callanan and some green homes people to see the implementation of some external products that were being put on wall cladding in Chilton last week. The people there were offered it free, but even there they were still very concerned about getting it done because it was something that they did not really understand. They did not understand why it was free, blah, blah, blah, so it is about how we get these messages to people as well.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: That is a really interesting observation. That is the wider communication piece, is it not? It is having that conversation and identifying that there are personal, family and household benefits to changing what is the status quo in one's community and home life at the moment, and why it is worth investing or, indeed, why Government are investing, despite, as you say, perhaps the temporary disruption that it brings to day-to-day life. That is part of that bigger conversation.

Our schools are incredibly good at educating our children and understanding more holistically, whether they are talking about food, wildlife, the geography lesson of how weather can change if you disrupt it



and all those areas. As so often, by taking that out of the classroom and asking, "What do we do at home to make a difference and, indeed, if we cannot afford to do it, how might a Government policy help us do it?", there is a lot more to do to educate. Our local authorities have all now published a climate campaign of what they want to do, knowing their own areas better than anyone. There is more to do to filter that through.

Certainly thinking about Northumberland, you see enormous engagement in the whole waste and recycling piece. There is a constant demand to the council to do more. There is a drive that comes from the local people to push on that. On the flipside to your point is fixing social housing. Has that message got through as to why they are doing it or is it just another thing the council is turning up to do to disrupt the community? There is a piece of engagement there to join the two up.

Always I come back to the fact that there is a great story to tell. We are not just doing this "because". We are doing it because, if we use less energy and greener energy, the impact on our planet in the round is big. This is not only for us; it is for everybody. We have to keep telling that story. I have been constantly pleasantly surprised by how people do engage in that. We have to join the dots up, not to disappear down a deep mitigation tunnel that talks about the complexity of decarbonisation, CCUS and my area of work day to day, but to remember why we are doing all that and talk about it in the round, because that is when people understand how important it is and they want to contribute.

Q46 **Paul Howell:** I want to push you a little further on the decision to pull the £1 billion and knock it down to £320 million. It feels to me like it sends the wrong message. If the money was not being used, why not leave it there anyway, just to make a constant message from Government that they stood behind the green homes and the need to decarbonise? It just feels like it was the wrong message to send out.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: I know that you have spoken to Lord Callanan at length about this. The delivery programmes for the short-term stimulus the Chancellor wanted to move and help the construction industry last year proved a bit more challenging. I am sure Lord Callanan has talked you through that. It is not within my portfolio, but the driver, which will continue to be so, is to find the right, most effective and speedy ways to enable those who would not be able to make those investments personally to do so. That is why driving it through the local authority scheme should be at the top of our list.

Part of the heat and buildings strategy will look at that in the round, along with the future homes standard coming, which will drive new build to be net zero. To your earlier point in terms of the just transition challenge, where we can, we will drive taxpayers' money to those least able to make those changes themselves and then continue to try to find the right levers to help the rest of us think about how, over this journey, we reduce our own footprint.



Q47 **Paul Howell:** I agree with a lot of the points you have made. I still come back to the point that the consistency of messaging is important. We need to make sure that we get it a little bit better and we do not do the stop-start, which can be picked up in some quarters as meaning we are not really committed to it, because I do believe we are committed to it.

Can I just move on to something you touched on a couple of seconds ago, which was the green jobs taskforce? I am just trying to understand what practical steps the Government are considering to support workers through this transition. When will these details get published? How do you protect the incomes of people who may not be able to get another job with the same level of salary? Do you have any sort of estimates yet of the number of people who will not be able to retrain? There is going to be quite a transition there.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: The green jobs taskforce is joint with BEIS and the DfE, and Minister Gillian Keegan is my co-chair. We are waiting for the taskforce, imminently, actually, in the next few weeks, to report to us. The challenge was to think across the piece, in terms of both new areas of potential work and, really importantly, that transitioning piece, as you say, identifying where there were gaps in the ability to transition, where, indeed, there might eventually be no work, and what sorts of changes there are. We look forward to receiving it and will provide a response relatively soon afterwards to help feed the net zero strategy part about workforce.

Really importantly, it is about making sure that we have the right tools for industry that is transitioning to retrain and upskill its existing staff. One thing that has been very interesting, particularly within the heavy industry sector, is the challenge of what are extremely complex and high-level skills that might be very usable in new decarbonised sectors, but the skillsets do not quite match up in technical terms. You have to tick the right box. You might have to go and do another course, or you might not because you have those skills. One of the challenges we have asked the taskforce to think about is how much is already there, but we just have not thought about how those skillsets migrate relatively straightforwardly to others.

Then you have areas like the automotive sector. Every car mechanic in every one of our towns in due course will be an electric vehicle expert. There is a huge amount of training and retraining there, alongside growing that pipeline for the next generation. That is very much Minister Keegan's space. She has the apprenticeships and higher education brief. It is about how we make sure that our colleges start to broaden their education offer now, so that they are getting that pipeline right over the next 10 or 15 years, and, within the building and construction sector more widely, thinking about the skillsets that come there.

The construction sector has been really forward thinking in this space. Just themselves they have recently launched ConstructZero, where they are thinking across the piece and asking their own members to think



HOUSE OF COMMONS

about the changes they need and the sorts of skills they are going to need, so that we can think about how we bring that next generation through.

You should be thinking about buildings in a holistic way, as you would for a great, big building. When you are building domestic homes, think of them in a system of systems kind of way, with a whole series of new skills that presently probably are not being invested in for those who are coming through into the building trade. These sectors are thinking really hard about it. We will then have the opportunity to think about how, mostly led by DfE, but BEIS has a number of skills leads as well, we can both empower business and provide the flex that ensures that all those in transitioning sectors and those coming into new sectors can do it.

Just because she is not here and she would be cross with me if I did not say so, Minister Pow from Defra is always very keen to highlight that, across the wider agricultural, forestry and ecology sector, there is going to also need to be a growth in workforce. Thinking about how, feeding that from school age upwards, we help to grow that cohort of green jobs will be a really important piece too.

There is a lot of work and DfE is going to have the lion's share of the delivery, but thinking about that next generation, whether it is those who are in work now with skills that can migrate but we need to change the regulatory frameworks, or those who will need upskilling, is something that we are doing on a sector-by-sector basis, for instance with construction, to make sure that they will have the tools they need to maximise the benefit of their workforces.

Q48 Paul Howell: In terms of that, it is important that policy aligns with job creation as well. One of the arguments, again on the green homes grant, was that we did not have enough people there who could do the work to put the houses into place, so it is about joining those dots up. It is good to hear that you are working with Minister Keegan, et cetera, but the policy needs to come at the right time to match that as well.

You talked about jobs and transitions. For me, it is all part of levelling up, et cetera, or whichever slogan you want to use on whichever day. It is all about people in those communities. You used the example of people working in a high-carbon industry, like a car mechanic now as opposed to an electric car mechanic of the future. Would people who are doing that sort of transition, going from high-carbon to low-carbon jobs, be prioritised for training into the new green roles? How can we do things to stimulate particularly the regional economies and local supply chains that support those industries and particular sectors, either to develop a new cluster or to replace one that was there already?

Chair: Sorry, Minister, could I just ask that your answer is on point, because we only have about 10 minutes left and we have some more questions to get through?



HOUSE OF COMMONS

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: Yes, of course, Chair. I published the industrial decarbonisation strategy a couple of months ago. Within industrial clusters where there is change, there is very focused sector activity thinking about that. The North Sea transition deal with the oil and gas sector is thinking very closely about that.

We have already made investments as part of that wider investment we are making in, for instance, Humberside and Teesside, to help them think about both the shift to low-carbon jobs and different technologies, and how they can make best use of local education environments to grow those skillsets. There are some really good interrelationships now between business and local colleges to help build that supply of next generation of workforce as they come through.

The lifetime skills guarantee will be an opportunity, for those perhaps not, as you describe, in a specific sector area where there is natural employer-employee skills development, to come back into training and give themselves a new training set for a next career.

Q49 **Alan Brown:** Good afternoon, Minister. For a successful net zero, there needs to be a lot of cross-Government co-ordination, but the National Audit Office, the Public Accounts Committee and the Institute for Government have all found that existing cross-Government co-ordination is insufficient to achieve net zero. Do you accept that finding, Minister? Probably given time constraints, a yes or no would do on this one.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: I cannot speak historically, but I would say no now. Whitehall has never been more co-ordinated than it is on the challenge of net zero. The Prime Minister created the climate action committee, which is meeting regularly, and that is genuinely cross-Whitehall ministerial level, as well as official level, to drive through what are big, complex policy changes in many areas and make sure that there is as co-ordinated and, therefore, efficient as possible a Whitehall output to whatever the particular area of policy is, be it electric vehicles, buildings or industrial decarbonisation, just to pick but a few. We are driving really hard at a much more effective cross-Whitehall co-ordination than probably ever before.

Q50 **Alan Brown:** If I just come back in, last week the Committee heard evidence from James Richardson of the National Infrastructure Commission. To give a couple of quotes from him, "That governance is not there to drive this through". "It is certainly something that we would hope to see move forward in the heat and buildings strategy. We need much more clarity on who does what and how that is all going to be co-ordinated". He also said, "If you don't know who is doing what, it is very hard to say that you have a proper strategy".

In my opening remarks, I said the National Audit Office, the Public Accounts Committee and the Institute for Government all believe there is insufficient cross-Government co-ordination. If they all say there is a problem and the Government say there is not a problem, that means it is



even worse, because the Government do not recognise there is a problem, so will not do anything to rectify matters and ensure proper cross-Government co-ordination is in place.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: I would hope that James will be reassured when both the Treasury's net zero review is published and, indeed, the net zero strategy is published in the autumn, because they are genuinely cross-Whitehall and cross-Government perspectives on the whole challenge that is net zero. They are drawing together in a whole-of-Government way, in a way that probably has not been done for many decades on anything as important, all-encompassing and all-reaching as net zero is. There will always be an opportunity to push more, but I have been genuinely impressed. I lead a number of cross-Whitehall committees where there is really positive determination to find solutions, so I hope that both of those will help give James some confidence.

Q51 **Alan Brown:** If we move on, in terms of delivering net zero and the findings from the citizens' assembly, you may have heard this come up earlier, but only a minority of assembly members support the use of carbon capture and storage and nuclear energy, but both of these are central for the UK Government's policies for net zero. That is repeated in the 10-point plan in the energy White Paper, in which at the time the previous Secretary of State was very big on nuclear. Why are you pursuing these technologies when the evidence suggests the public do not support them? Again, be really brief if you can, please.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: The Committee on Climate Change has been really clear that, to achieve net zero for the UK by 2050, CCUS is going to be a necessity, not an option. We need that mix of technologies blended together to help decarbonise the power sector at low cost and balance renewable variability against demand to maintain security of supply, which for me, as the Energy Minister, is the most important thing. The one thing we cannot allow on this journey is to find that we do not have security of supply, so CCUS is a really important part of that journey.

On the nuclear piece, there is a broad consensus that reliable low-carbon power, like nuclear, really is needed, alongside wind and solar. Nuclear plays a crucial role as we move to net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. It is the only technology that is currently proven and can be deployed on a sufficiently large scale to provide continuous reliable low-carbon electricity. The challenges are security of supply, moving to low carbon and making sure that we do not allow the costs to spiral, because that would rapidly go against what is our very clear focus for a just transition.

Q52 **Alan Brown:** Clearly, costs already have spiralled in terms of Hinkley Point C. Nuclear power stations have been around for a while, so this is not new technology, whereas carbon capture and storage is, yet the public seemed informed enough that they do not want nuclear. Assembly members cited dealing with nuclear waste as one of the issues. We know the nuclear waste legacy at the moment is predicated to cost £132



HOUSE OF COMMONS

billion. Realistically, how do you get the public on board when they have expressed legitimate concerns about nuclear waste?

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: I see a lot of information to suggest that, on the whole, many are not too concerned and most are supportive.

Alan Brown: Just to be clear, those are the findings of the assembly. They were very clear on their objections to nuclear and carbon capture.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: Their voice is an important one in the mix, but there are others that take a broader view and believe that nuclear power is an important part of that low-energy production. On the question of waste, in fact, I was visiting Sellafield last week just to talk to them about the work they are doing for that next generation of waste management, with a view to the geological disposal facility coming forwards over the next number of decades.

We have the safest safety record in the world, and an extraordinary team of people and organisation there, managing what has some historic complexity to it, but is a really effective way of managing waste. As part of the 10-point plan, we have made a commitment to look at both small modular reactors, but also advanced modular reactors. There is some very interesting technology work across the piece.

Q53 **Alan Brown:** I am so sorry. I am going to have to be rude and cut across you, because it did not really answer how that brings the public on board. If I move on to another question, please, one of the more controversial recommendations made by the assembly was that 80% of assembly members agreed that there should be taxes that increase as people fly more often and further, suggesting that the majority of the informed public support this. Are the Government considering a frequent flyer duty?

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: That is an interesting question and above my pay grade. You would need to ask a Treasury Minister, but all those questions are being looked at in detail through the Treasury net zero review.

Q54 **Alan Brown:** Given there is the best ever cross-Government Department co-ordination, presumably the merits of a frequent flyer duty have been discussed within Cabinet or whatever. Presumably there will also be strong opinions on the suggestion that air passenger duty could be lowered as part of the recovery, because that seems to be at odds with what assembly members think and a green recovery.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: There are a number of areas within the aviation space, which is led by the Department for Transport, that are investing in technology to think about the uptake of sustainable aviation fuels. There is a lot of investment going into R&D to develop zero-emission aircraft and the infrastructure of the future that goes with that. The Jet Zero Council, I know, is working to deliver net zero aviation by 2050.



HOUSE OF COMMONS

Again, I come back to the point that the challenge is about clean energy rather than not flying, so finding the right solution in the long term is the prize. On the way through, though, clearly the aviation sector has indeed not had a good year at all. Finding those ways forward will be very much part of the Chancellor's challenge as he thinks about the right levers that ought to give citizens the opportunity to think more closely about their contribution to carbon emissions.

Q55 Chair: In a lot of the written evidence we have received in this inquiry, it was noted that the Government have not yet formally responded to each point in the citizens' assembly report. That was previously promised. Are you happy just to recommit that you can write to us on each point in that citizens' assembly report to give the Government's view?

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: Yes, of course.

Chair: Super, thank you. I am sorry that we ran over briefly, but thank you for your time, Minister Anne-Marie Trevelyan and Chris Thompson, from the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy.