



House of Commons
Business, Energy and Industrial
Strategy Committee

Net zero and UN climate summits: Scrutiny of Preparations for COP26 – interim report

Third Report of Session 2019–21

*Report, together with formal minutes relating
to the report*

*Ordered by the House of Commons
to be printed 23 February 2021*

Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Committee

The Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Committee is appointed by the House of Commons to examine the expenditure, administration, and policy of the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy.

Current membership

[Darren Jones MP](#) (*Labour, Bristol North West*) (Chair)

[Alan Brown MP](#) (*Scottish National Party, Kilmarnock and Loudoun*)

[Judith Cummins MP](#) (*Labour, Bradford South*)

[Richard Fuller MP](#) (*Conservative, North East Bedfordshire*)

[Ms Nusrat Ghani MP](#) (*Conservative, Wealdon*)

[Paul Howell MP](#) (*Conservative, Sedgefield*)

[Mark Jenkinson MP](#) (*Conservative, Workington*)

[Charlotte Nichols MP](#) (*Labour, Warrington North*)

[Sarah Owen MP](#) (*Labour, Luton North*)

[Mark Pawsey MP](#) (*Conservative, Rugby*)

[Alexander Stafford MP](#) (*Conservative, Rother Valley*)

Powers

The Committee is one of the departmental select committees, the powers of which are set out in House of Commons Standing Orders, principally in SO No 152. These are available on the internet via www.parliament.uk.

Publication

© Parliamentary Copyright House of Commons 2021. This publication may be reproduced under the terms of the Open Parliament Licence, which is published at www.parliament.uk/site-information/copyright-parliament/.

Committee reports are published on the Committee's website at www.parliament.uk/beis and in print by Order of the House.

Committee staff

The current staff of the Committee are Bradley Albrow (Second Clerk), Zereena Arshad (Committee Specialist), Stephen Aldhouse (Senior Committee Specialist), Dawn Amey (Committee Operations Manager), Gary Calder (Media Officer), Dr Rebecca Davies (Clerk), Catherine Kisanji (Inquiry Manager Intern), Dr Matthew Lecznar (Committee Operations Officer), Becky Mawhood (Senior Committee Specialist), and Jack Miller (POST Secondee).

Contacts

All correspondence should be addressed to the Clerk of the Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Committee, House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA. The telephone number for general enquiries is 020 7219 4494; the Committee's email address is beiscom@parliament.uk

You can follow the Committee on Twitter using [@CommonsBEIS](https://twitter.com/CommonsBEIS)

Contents

1	Introduction	3
	Our inquiry	3
2	Arrangements for COP26	4
	Government ambitions for COP26	4
	The COP26 Unit and Resourcing	4
	Parliamentary engagement	5
	Select Committee hearings	5
	Wider parliamentary engagement	5
	Member Participation	6
	Aligning parliamentary recess with COP26	6
	Member inclusion in the UK delegation	7
	Covid-19 readiness and digital participation	7
3	Legislating for the Sixth Carbon Budget	9
	Conclusions and recommendations	10
	Formal minutes	13
	Witnesses	14
	Published written evidence	15
	List of Reports from the Committee during the current Parliament	16

1 Introduction

Our inquiry

1. In November 2021 the UK will host the 26th UNFCCC Conference of the Parties (COP26). The Glasgow summit will be a critical moment in the international response to climate change; it is the first year since COP21, at which the landmark Paris Agreement was signed, that Paris signatories are due to present more ambitious Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) climate pledges. Parliament, and select committees in particular, will play a unique role as they carry out scrutiny of the UK Government’s preparations for COP26 over the course of 2021.

2. The BEIS Committee is committed to taking a leading role in the scrutiny of the Government’s preparations for COP26. In March 2020 we announced a standing inquiry into Net Zero and UN Climate Summits, which we expect to last for the duration of this Parliament. This inquiry follows on from our predecessor Committee’s work in its Clean Growth Strategy and Outcomes of Bonn COP23 inquiries,¹ in the previous Parliament.

3. As part of our current inquiry we held two evidence sessions over the last three months that specifically considered COP26 preparations and delivery. We specifically explored the aims and ambitions of COP26, key barriers for the summit and options for overcoming these.² We heard from Claire O’Neill, former COP26 President (July 2019–January 2020), who expressed concerns about the Government’s preparations for COP26.³ Our work has been underpinned by a report completed for us by the Parliamentary Office of Science & Technology (POST) on expert views on COP26 principles and priorities.⁴

4. On 19 January we took oral evidence from the COP26 President, Rt Hon Alok Sharma MP, on the Government’s progress on COP26 preparations, focusing on key areas including priorities for the summit, the Government’s diplomatic strategy, parliamentary and wider stakeholder engagement, covid-19 readiness, and the promotion of diversity and inclusivity at the summit.⁵ This short report follows up on key commitments made in that session, in particular the COP26 President’s plans to engage with Parliament over the next nine months. It also follows up on ongoing discussions around the UK delegation to COP26, covid-19 contingency measures and digital access to the summit, and on the UK Government’s intentions in relation to the sixth carbon budget.

1 Oral evidence taken on 28 November 2017, HC [596/597](#), and oral evidence taken on 16 July 2019, HC [871](#).

2 Oral evidence taken with Claire O’Neill, Pete Betts, Farhana Yamin, Dr Emily Shuckburgh OBE, Dr Jennifer Allan on 1 December 2020, HC (2019–2021) 144 ([transcript](#)) and oral evidence taken with Rt Hon Alok Sharma MP, Peter Hill, Ros Eales, Archie Young, Rt Hon Kwasi Kwarteng MP, Joanna Whittington, Jo Shanmugalingam, Ashley Ibbett on 19 January 2021, HC (2019–2021) 144 ([transcript](#)).

3 Qq73–78; Qq81–86

4 The Committee published its Fourth Special Report of Session 2019–21, [COP26: Principles and priorities—a POST survey of expert views](#), HC1000 on 26 November 2020.

5 We also took evidence from the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, Rt Hon Kwasi Kwarteng MP, on the newly published Energy White Paper. We are grateful to both for giving evidence to the Committee so soon after having changed roles, with the COP26 President having stepped back from his role as Secretary of State to focus exclusively on the COP26 Presidency and Mr Kwarteng having taken up the role of Secretary of State only two weeks prior to the session.

2 Arrangements for COP26

Government ambitions for COP26

5. We are keen to explore and understand what the Government intends to achieve at COP26, and in particular, how ‘success’ will be measured at the end of the process. The COP26 President identified four areas of focus, including “a step change in mitigation, [...] for countries to strengthen their adaptation plans, [...] to get finance flowing, [...] [and an] increase in international co-operation”.⁶ He explained that the international co-operation goal is underpinned by “five campaigns on nature, adaptation and resilience, clean energy, zero-emission vehicles and finance,” and that “I want this to be the most inclusive COP ever”.⁷

6. We welcome the Government’s headline ambitions for COP26 but note that no details have yet been provided on how success will be measured against each of these goals. We recommend that the headline ambitions be expanded to a clear list of measures, with a set of criteria attached to each in terms of how success will be measured. We ask that the Government share these details with this Committee in its response to this report.

The COP26 Unit and Resourcing

7. Planning and delivery of the summit is being led by the COP26 Unit, situated within the Cabinet Office. It is vital that the Unit has access to sufficient resources and expertise to be able to deliver COP26, as well as to effectively manage the associated diplomatic elements in the lead-up to it. CEO of the COP26 Unit, Peter Hill, told the Committee on 19 January that there are around 160 staff within the COP26 Unit, and that “we have a significant team [...] working night and day on this”.⁸

8. Claire O’Neill outlined challenges she had faced while COP26 President, in relation to the set-up of the Unit. She explained that it was “exceptionally difficult for the Whitehall system to manage because, essentially, it descended into a whole series of turf wars about budget and influence that were being expressed both by Ministers and by civil servants.”⁹ However, Mr Hill indicated that the situation is no longer the case, stating that “there is a very significant number of Departments with standing teams working on this, co-ordinated in the ways you would expect across Government”.¹⁰

9. The sitting COP26 President told us that the diplomatic networks of the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) are being put to use, and Mr Hill told us that “the Permanent Secretary of the FCDO and the Foreign and Development Secretary have both, in recent weeks and months, written to the [diplomatic] network to ensure that they understand the priority that [COP26] needs to be given”.¹¹

10. We welcome the assurances from the COP26 President on the level of resourcing that is available to the COP26 Unit. It is vital that, as the largest summit ever organised in

6 Q186

7 Q186

8 Q191

9 Q72

10 Q191

11 Q193

the UK and a critical event in the global response to climate change, COP26 is provided the greatest levels of resourcing and is held in highest priority across Government.

11. *The success of COP26 is dependent on effective diplomacy. It remains unclear whether the COP26 Unit has been assigned a dedicated diplomatic team, nor the extent to which the diplomatic network is engaged further than having received correspondence from the Foreign and Development Secretary. We recommend that the COP26 President, alongside the Prime Minister and Foreign and Development Secretary, make it publicly clear that the full force of the British civil service is being appropriately applied to secure the desired outcomes from COP26 this November.*

Parliamentary engagement

Select Committee hearings

12. Contributors to the POST Expert Survey emphasised that the Government needs to be more transparent about its aims for COP26, and that Parliament should be given the opportunity to adequately scrutinise COP26’s campaigns and outcomes.¹² In his appearance before the Committee, the COP26 President told us “I am sure there will be more occasions during this year when I will be coming in front of you”.¹³

13. Since then we have been working closely with other select committees across the House to agree mechanisms to work jointly and collaborate closely on scrutiny of the UK Presidency of COP26. This will ensure effective, detailed and collaborative scrutiny over the coming months, with different Committees leading on different themes. As part of this collaborative process, the BEIS Committee intends to lead the questioning of the COP26 President on two occasions before the summit begins, and then early in 2022 in order to evaluate the success of COP and identify the appropriate next steps.

14. **It is essential that Parliament has sufficient opportunity to question the Government’s preparations for the COP26 summit. Opening the process up to scrutiny is key not only to ensure accountability in the planning and preparations to facilitate a successful Presidency, but also to promote public and stakeholder confidence in the work of the COP26 Unit.**

15. *We welcome the COP26 President’s commitment to appear before the Committee. We invite him to confirm his willingness to appear before the Committee on the three occasions set out above, and to provide detail on any other approaches to facilitating Parliamentary scrutiny of COP26 preparations that he intends to take. This approach should be extended to all devolved legislators.*

Wider parliamentary engagement

16. On 13 January the Prime Minister indicated that the COP26 President will answer questions on the floor of the House on preparations for COP26.¹⁴ On 19 January the COP26 President confirmed that he wanted to be “as collaborative as possible with

12 BEIS Committee, Fourth Special Report of Session 2019–21, [COP26: Principles and priorities—a POST survey of expert views](#), HC1000, page 33

13 Q186

14 Oral evidence taken before the Liaison Committee on 13 January 2021, HC (2019–2021) [1144](#), Q89

parliamentary colleagues” across the House.¹⁵ He committed to make himself “available to answer questions and [...] to give regular updates by way of statements to the House”.¹⁶ The COP26 President answered questions at the despatch box for the first time on 24 February 2021.¹⁷

17. We welcome the fact that questions to the COP26 President are now included on the regular rota of questions to Government Departments on the floor of the House. We welcome the opportunity to have questioned the COP26 President at the despatch box on 24 February, in his first appearance in this capacity.

18. Members from both Houses attended a cross-All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) briefing led by the COP26 President and his team in December 2020.¹⁸ He told us in oral evidence that “very shortly, I will be inviting chairs of the appropriate APPGs to meet me to see how we can work together”.¹⁹

19. We welcome the COP26 President’s engagement with APPGs and his plans to explore the potential for further briefings with these groups, which are a key link between parliamentarians and wider stakeholder groups. However, this should not be considered to be a substitute for public scrutiny by Parliament, which will be key to ensuring transparency and accountability.

Member Participation

20. In addition to scrutiny ahead of the summit, there is widespread interest from Members of the Committee and across both Houses in engaging with and attending COP26 in November. Members will be keen to maximise their engagement, whether with official discussions or the substantial programme of activities expected to take place in the blue and green zones, and wider parts of Glasgow. If in-person activities are restricted due to ongoing covid-19 restrictions, then strong engagement with any digital activities that replace these would also be anticipated.

Aligning parliamentary recess with COP26

21. The COP26 President told us that “we want to think about whether the half-term autumn recess this year can have some overlap with COP26, which will hopefully allow parliamentarians to go up to Glasgow”.²⁰ We acknowledge the potential challenges that COP26 as a two-week summit could raise for the coordination of business in the House with Members’ access and welcome the COP26 President’s intentions to work with colleagues to align recess with COP26.

22. We recommend that the COP26 President work closely with the Leader of the House to align the autumn recess with one of the COP26 weeks in November. We note that the first week of COP26 also coincides with Parliament week and will support any initiative both to maximise the opportunities for Member participation at COP26 and public engagement with the process.

15 Q207

16 Q212

17 HC Deb, 24 February 2021, [col 897](#)

18 The briefing, hosted by the Parliamentary Renewable and Sustainable Energy Group (PRASEG), allowed Members to question the COP26 President and his team, including officials and both the High-Level Action and Net Zero Business Champions, on the progress of the five COP26 campaigns and wider preparations.

19 Q207

20 Q211

Member inclusion in the UK delegation

23. At each COP, every signatory brings a national delegation to represent it at official proceedings and to take part in negotiations. The composition of this delegation is decided by the executive, and the UK Government has conventionally taken the stance that its delegation should be comprised solely of Ministers and officials. This is not a position that is widely shared by other countries, as there exist many examples of past delegations that have included members of the national legislature who do not sit within government.²¹ The size of the UK delegation in recent COPs has been around 50 individuals, though it has been common for the size of a country's delegation to increase substantially in a year in which the Presidency is held.²²

24. Both the Prime Minister and the COP26 President have been questioned about the inclusion of Backbench and Opposition frontbench members in the UK's delegation to COP26. When asked in the Liaison Committee evidence session on 13 January, the Prime Minister would not commit to a decision on the issue, stating that he did not “wish to allocate places on this or that committee or delegation right now”.²³ In evidence to the Committee on 19 January, the COP26 President gave a similar response, stating that “no decisions have been taken on the issue. We will share any details when we have them. I take on the suggestion [to include non-ministerial Members in the delegation], but [...] we are not allocating places in a Committee session like this”.²⁴

25. The inclusion of backbench Members within the UK's COP26 delegation would widen access to UK parliamentarians on a cross-party basis in the year of the UK's Presidency. We recommend that the Government follows the precedent set by previous COP Presidencies, by expanding its delegation and widening access to parliamentarians. We recommend that the COP26 President engage with the Committee and other parliamentarians on the appropriate composition of the delegation and update the Committee as soon as any decision is made. The leaders and relevant ministers of devolved governments should also form part of the UK delegation.

Covid-19 readiness and digital participation

26. Despite the UK's positive progress in deploying covid-19 vaccines, some questions remain around the extent to which COP26 will be able to take place as a physical event, as planned, in November 2021. It is evident that a substantial number of UK and international delegates could present health risks to those attending the conference as well as the wider populations in Glasgow and the UK. The COP26 President told us that protecting public health was “paramount” in planning,²⁵ and Ros Eales, Chief Operating Officer, COP26 Unit, Cabinet Office, told us that the COP26 Unit is “working very closely with the Scottish Government to understand the public health protection measures that will be in place in various scenarios”.²⁶

21 UNFCCC, [Provisional list of registered participants](#), 2019.

22 UNFCCC, [Provisional list of registered participants](#), 2019, pages 582–585, and UNFCCC, [Provisional list of registered participants](#), 2018, pages 579–582. For analysis, see Carbon Brief, [Analysis: Which countries have sent the most delegates to COP25?](#) accessed 5 February 2021.

23 Oral evidence taken before the Liaison Committee on 13 January 2021, HC (2019–2021) [1144](#), Q91

24 Q209

25 Q214

26 Q214

27. We welcome the assurances that public health is a priority for the COP26 Unit, while acknowledging the challenges presented by continuing uncertainties. We recommend that the UK Government engages on this issue constructively with the Scottish Government. The Government should share, in response to this report, the proposed health protection and contingency measures it will put in place in various scenarios relating to the continuing pandemic.

28. The COP26 President told us that “our clear intent is that we have a main conference that is in person” and highlighted that this is the preference of many of the most vulnerable countries.²⁷ However, we heard calls to explore alternative arrangements for all or parts of the summit—both the negotiations and the wider schedule of events that normally takes place at COP—either by downscaling parts or replacing them with an online offer. Dr Jennifer Allan, Lecturer in International Relations, Cardiff University, told us that “what we need is clarity on how the meetings will be scaled back, who will be invited and how to ensure that inclusivity, given that fewer people will be coming to Glasgow than originally anticipated.”²⁸ Claire O’Neill told us how it was her ambition to increase transparency in the negotiations by livestreaming them, but that this had been opposed by some.²⁹

29. The COP26 President and Ms Eales confirmed that the COP26 Unit is exploring the use of digital technologies in the context of covid-19 readiness and increasing accessibility. The COP26 President said that “as part of trying to make this inclusive, we have learned over the past year that you can do things virtually”.³⁰ Ms Eales highlighted the Climate Ambition Summit and UNFCCC climate dialogues, both hosted online in late 2020, saying that “there are some useful learnings and experiences that we can draw on as we are planning our event.”³¹

30. We welcome the stated aim of delivering an in-person summit and agree that this would allow for the most effective engagement with the widest number of countries—particularly those most at risk of climate impacts. However, the Government must also plan for the distinct possibility that large parts of the summit will have to be moved online or downscaled because of prevailing risks from covid-19. We recommend it outlines the steps it is taking during planning to make COP26 a success regardless of the format. We further welcome the intention to explore how digital events can increase participation in the summit and request further details as they become available.

31. We ask that the COP26 President sets out how the conference procedures will be adjusted to reflect the possibility that delegations from certain countries (where, for example, covid vaccination roll out has been slower or where new variants of the covid virus are discovered) may not be able to fully participate physically in the conference; and what steps will be taken to ensure equality of access to the conference between developed nations (where vaccine roll out has been quicker) and some developing nations (where vaccine roll out has been slower). In addition, in the scenario that country delegations are reduced in size, we ask the COP26 President to set out how other important stakeholders—such as city leaders and business leaders—will be invited to take part in proceedings if they are unable to physically be at the conference.

27 Q214

28 Q129

29 Q74

30 Q214

31 Q214

3 Legislating for the Sixth Carbon Budget

32. On 9 December 2020 the Climate Change Committee (CCC) published its statutory advice on the level of the sixth carbon budget, which covers the period 2033–2037.³² If the Government accepts the recommendations within the advice, it will be the first budget to be set in line with the UK’s net zero target, which was adopted in 2019. Shortly before its publication, the CCC advised that the UK’s updated Nationally Determined Contribution (outlining its emissions targets for 2030 under the Paris Agreement) be set at a level that would be in line with its advice on the sixth carbon budget.³³ The Government have accepted the recommended NDC level and will legislate to set the sixth carbon budget level later this year, with a deadline to do so by June 2021.

33. In oral evidence on 19 January, the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy told the Committee that “there will be legislation in the summer that will seek to put into law the carbon budget six targets that were put forward by the CCC”.³⁴ On 26 January he followed up on this in correspondence, stating that “while the Government will set the sixth carbon budget legislation in summer, this will follow careful consideration of the CCC’s advice and any representations from devolved administrations.” He added “a full impact assessment will accompany the legislation setting out the issues we have considered, including those required by the Climate Change Act 2008”.³⁵

34. We welcome the Government’s decision to accept the CCC’s advice on the level of the UK’s updated Nationally Determined Contribution. In the year of the UK’s COP26 Presidency this sends the right signal about the Government’s commitment to domestic climate policy. However, while we acknowledge the need to fully assess the sixth budget advice, we reiterate the need for the Government to show global leadership by taking decisive action on the UK’s domestic ambitions. We recommend that the Government commit to accepting the sixth budget advice in full and lay the Statutory Instrument required to give effect to it as early as possible.

35. We further encourage the Government to follow the advice of the CCC in engaging with the public and other stakeholders early to ensure that necessarily detailed delivery plans accompany legislative targets in a timely fashion, building in the considerations of Climate Assembly UK.

32 CCC, [The Sixth Carbon Budget: The UK’s path to net zero](#), 2020. The CCC recommended the budget be set such that UK territorial greenhouse gas emissions would have reduced 78% between 1990 and 2035.

33 CCC, [Letter: Advice on the UK’s 2030 Nationally Determined Contribution \(NDC\)](#), 2020. The CCC’s recommendation was that the UK’s NDC incorporate a target for 68% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 compared to 1990 levels.

34 Q219

35 Correspondence, [letter from the Secretary of State to the Chair clarifying statements made to the Committee during the Net zero and UN climate summit session on 19th January 2021](#), received on 26 January 2021.

Conclusions and recommendations

Arrangements for COP26

1. *We welcome the Government's headline ambitions for COP26 but note that no details have yet been provided on how success will be measured against each of these goals. We recommend that the headline ambitions be expanded to a clear list of measures, with a set of criteria attached to each in terms of how success will be measured. We ask that the Government share these details with this Committee in its response to this report. (Paragraph 6)*
2. *We welcome the assurances from the COP26 President on the level of resourcing that is available to the COP26 Unit. It is vital that, as the largest summit ever organised in the UK and a critical event in the global response to climate change, COP26 is provided the greatest levels of resourcing and is held in highest priority across Government. (Paragraph 10)*
3. *The success of COP26 is dependent on effective diplomacy. It remains unclear whether the COP26 Unit has been assigned a dedicated diplomatic team, nor the extent to which the diplomatic network is engaged further than having received correspondence from the Foreign and Development Secretary. We recommend that the COP26 President, alongside the Prime Minister and Foreign and Development Secretary, make it publicly clear that the full force of the British civil service is being appropriately applied to secure the desired outcomes from COP26 this November. (Paragraph 11)*
4. *It is essential that Parliament has sufficient opportunity to question the Government's preparations for the COP26 summit. Opening the process up to scrutiny is key not only to ensure accountability in the planning and preparations to facilitate a successful Presidency, but also to promote public and stakeholder confidence in the work of the COP26 Unit. (Paragraph 14)*
5. *We welcome the COP26 President's commitment to appear before the Committee. We invite him to confirm his willingness to appear before the Committee on the three occasions set out above, and to provide detail on any other approaches to facilitating Parliamentary scrutiny of COP26 preparations that he intends to take. This approach should be extended to all devolved legislators. (Paragraph 15)*
6. *We welcome the fact that questions to the COP26 President are now included on the regular rota of questions to Government Departments on the floor of the House. We welcome the opportunity to have questioned the COP26 President at the despatch box on 24 February, in his first appearance in this capacity. (Paragraph 17)*
7. *We welcome the COP26 President's engagement with APPGs and his plans to explore the potential for further briefings with these groups, which are a key link between parliamentarians and wider stakeholder groups. However, this should not be considered to be a substitute for public scrutiny by Parliament, which will be key to ensuring transparency and accountability. (Paragraph 19)*
8. *We recommend that the COP26 President work closely with the Leader of the House to align the autumn recess with one of the COP26 weeks in November. We note that*

the first week of COP26 also coincides with Parliament week and will support any initiative both to maximise the opportunities for Member participation at COP26 and public engagement with the process. (Paragraph 22)

9. *The inclusion of backbench Members within the UK's COP26 delegation would widen access to UK parliamentarians on a cross-party basis in the year of the UK's Presidency. We recommend that the Government follows the precedent set by previous COP Presidencies, by expanding its delegation and widening access to parliamentarians. We recommend that the COP26 President engage with the Committee and other parliamentarians on the appropriate composition of the delegation and update the Committee as soon as any decision is made. The leaders and relevant ministers of devolved governments should also form part of the UK delegation. (Paragraph 25)*
10. *We welcome the assurances that public health is a priority for the COP26 Unit, while acknowledging the challenges presented by continuing uncertainties. We recommend that the UK Government engages on this issue constructively with the Scottish Government. The Government should share, in response to this report, the proposed health protection and contingency measures it will put in place in various scenarios relating to the continuing pandemic. (Paragraph 27)*
11. *We welcome the stated aim of delivering an in-person summit and agree that this would allow for the most effective engagement with the widest number of countries—particularly those most at risk of climate impacts. However, the Government must also plan for the distinct possibility that large parts of the summit will have to be moved online or downscaled because of prevailing risks from covid-19. We recommend it outlines the steps it is taking during planning to make COP26 a success regardless of the format. We further welcome the intention to explore how digital events can increase participation in the summit and request further details as they become available. (Paragraph 30)*
12. *We ask that the COP26 President sets out how the conference procedures will be adjusted to reflect the possibility that delegations from certain countries (where, for example, covid vaccination roll out has been slower or where new variants of the covid virus are discovered) may not be able to fully participate physically in the conference; and what steps will be taken to ensure equality of access to the conference between developed nations (where vaccine roll out has been quicker) and some developing nations (where vaccine roll out has been slower). In addition, in the scenario that country delegations are reduced in size, we ask the COP26 President to set out how other important stakeholders—such as city leaders and business leaders—will be invited to take part in proceedings if they are unable to physically be at the conference. (Paragraph 31)*

Legislating for the Sixth Carbon Budget

13. *We welcome the Government's decision to accept the CCC's advice on the level of the UK's updated Nationally Determined Contribution. In the year of the UK's COP26 Presidency this sends the right signal about the Government's commitment to domestic climate policy. However, while we acknowledge the need to fully assess the sixth budget advice, we reiterate the need for the Government to show global leadership by taking*

decisive action on the UK's domestic ambitions. We recommend that the Government commit to accepting the sixth budget advice in full and lay the Statutory Instrument required to give effect to it as early as possible. (Paragraph 34)

14. *We further encourage the Government to follow the advice of the CCC in engaging with the public and other stakeholders early to ensure that necessarily detailed delivery plans accompany legislative targets in a timely fashion, building in the considerations of Climate Assembly UK. (Paragraph 35)*

Formal minutes

Tuesday 23 February 2021

Virtual meeting

Members present:

Darren Jones, in the Chair

Alan Brown	Mark Jenkinson
Judith Cummins	Charlotte Nichols
Richard Fuller	Sarah Owen
Ms Nusrat Ghani	Mark Pawsey
Paul Howell	Alexander Stafford

Draft Report (*Net Zero and UN Climate Summits: Scrutiny of Preparations for COP26 – interim report*), proposed by the Chair, brought up and read.

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

Paragraphs 1 to 35 read and agreed to.

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

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

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

[Adjourned till Tuesday 2 March at 9:45am

Witnesses

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

Thursday 02 July 2020

Jim Watson, Expert Lead, Climate Assembly UK, Professor of Energy Policy, University College London; **Sarah Allan**, Head of Engagement, Involve [Q1–14](#)

The Rt Hon. the Lord Deben, Chair, Committee on Climate Change; **The Baroness Brown of Cambridge DBE FREng FRS**, Deputy Chair, Committee on Climate Change; **Mike Thompson**, Director of Analysis, Committee on Climate Change [Q15–48](#)

James Diggle, Head of Energy and Climate Change, Confederation of British Industry (CBI); **Eliot Whittington**, Director, Prince of Wales Corporate Leaders Group; **Andrew Large**, Chair, Energy Intensive Users Group; **Jim Skea**, Chair, Just Transition Commission [Q49–68](#)

Tuesday 01 December 2020

Claire O'Neill, Managing Director, Climate & Energy, World Business Council for Sustainable Development [Q69–96](#)

Pete Betts, Associate Fellow, Chatham House, Professor of Practise, Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment, LSE; **Farhana Yamin**, Chief Executive Officer, Track 0, Vice-Chair, Climate Vulnerable Forum Expert Advisory Group, Senior Advisor, SYSTEMIQ; **Dr Emily Shuckburgh OBE**, Director, Cambridge Zero, University of Cambridge, Reader of Environmental Data Science, University of Cambridge; **Dr Jennifer Allan**, Lecturer in International Relations, University of Cardiff [Q97–135](#)

Tuesday 12 January 2021

Chris Stark, Chief Executive Officer, Committee on Climate Change; **Emma Pinchbeck**, Chief Executive Officer, Energy UK; **Nina Skorupska CBE**, Chief Executive, The Association for Renewable Energy and Clean Technology; **Sam French**, Interim Chair, Decarbonised Gas Alliance [Q136–164](#)

Richard Leese, Director, Mineral Products Association; **Frank Aaskov**, Energy and Climate Change Policy Manager, UK Steel; **Richard Woolley**, Head of Energy and Climate Change, Chemical Industries Association; **Deirdre Michie OBE**, Chief Executive, Oil and Gas UK [Q165–184](#)

Tuesday 19 January 2021

Rt Hon Alok Sharma MP, COP 26 President, Cabinet Office; **Peter Hill**, COP 26 Chief Executive Officer, Cabinet Office; **Ros Eales**, COP26 Chief Operating Officer, Cabinet Office; **Archie Young**, COP26 UK Lead Climate Negotiator, Cabinet Office [Q185–217](#)

Rt Hon Kwasi Kwarteng MP, Secretary of State, Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy; **Joanna Whittington**, Director General, Energy and Security, Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy; **Jo Shanmugalingam**, Director General, Industrial Strategy, Science & Innovation, Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy; **Ashley Ibbett**, Director General, Trade, Europe and Analysis, Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy [Q218–257](#)

Published written evidence

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

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

- 1 Allan, Dr Jennifer (Lecturer in International Relations, University of Cardiff) ([COP0004](#))
- 2 Betts, Peter (Associate Fellow, Chatham House) ([COP0002](#))
- 3 Cardiff University ([COP0006](#))
- 4 Chemical Industries Association ([COP0007](#))
- 5 Chemical Industries Association ([COP0005](#))
- 6 Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment; and Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment ([COP0001](#))
- 7 Hale, Thomas (Associate Professor, Blavatnik School of Government) ([COP0003](#))

List of Reports from the Committee during the current Parliament

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

Session 2019–21

Number	Title	Reference
1st	My BEIS inquiry: proposals from the public	HC 612
2nd	The impact of Coronavirus on businesses and workers: interim pre-Budget report	HC 1264
1st Special	Automation and the future of work: Government Response to the Committee's Twenty-third Report of Session 2017–19	HC 240
2nd Special	Future of the Post Office Network: Government Response to the Committee's First Report of Session 2019	HC 382
3rd Special	Safety of Electrical Goods in the UK: follow-up: Government Response to the Committee's second report of Session 2019	HC 494
4th Special	COP26: Principles and priorities—a POST survey of expert views	HC 1000