

Written evidence submitted by The Involve Foundation (CAUK0018)

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The Involve Foundation ('Involve') is the UK's leading public participation charity, with a mission to develop, support and campaign for new ways of involving people in the decisions that affect their lives. Our vision is of a vibrant democracy with people at the heart of decision-making.

Involve was founded in 2003 to "to create a new focus for thinking and action on the links between new forms of public participation and existing democratic institutions". We've been promoting and practising participatory and deliberative decision-making ever since. We have worked with governments, parliaments, civil society organisations, academics and the public across the UK and internationally to put people at the heart of decision-making.

We believe that decision-making needs to be more:

- **Open** – so that people can understand, influence and hold decision-makers to account for the actions and inactions of their governments;
- **Participatory** – so that people have the freedom, support and opportunity to shape their communities and influence the decisions that affect their lives; and,
- **Deliberative** – so that people can exchange and acknowledge different perspectives, understand conflict and find common ground, and build a shared vision for society.

We believe that these principles are fundamental to bridging the divisions in our society, overcoming the complex challenges we face, and giving people power over the decisions that affect them.

Involve led the team outside of Parliament that delivered Climate Assembly UK. We were responsible for ensuring that Climate Assembly UK was a high quality citizens' assembly. We worked closely with the Expert Leads on the assembly's design, focussing on areas such as the assembly's structure, timings and accessibility. We also provided the facilitation team for the assembly, acted as the main point of contact for Assembly Members and managed the project overall.

Summary of key points

Has Climate Assembly UK (both its process and recommendations) been helpful to your work (or the work of your organisation), and if so, how?

- Climate Assembly UK (CAUK) has enabled us to further demonstrate the potential of citizens' assemblies in helping policy makers to address complex policy challenges such as reaching net zero.
- CAUK has raised the profile of public engagement on climate in general – and deliberative public engagement on climate in particular – and increased recognition of its importance in policy development.
- More detailed learnings from designing and delivering the assembly have also been useful to our work. This was the first citizens' assembly that we had run fully or partially online and the experience gave us an others confidence to continue to engage the public during lockdown.

What impact has Climate Assembly UK had across your sector, and more widely?

- While CAUK was commissioned to inform the work of Parliament, it has also proved a valuable resource for stakeholder organisations outside of Parliament and Government.
- CAUK has had a significant impact on the views of the assembly members that took part. This highlights the importance of methods that allow people to reach informed and considered preferences when inputting into policy decisions.
- CAUK has had a significant impact on the actions of the assembly members that took part. 83% of assembly members report making changes to their behaviours since the assembly.
- CAUK has had international impact as one of a number of high profile citizens' assemblies globally that have helped to raise the profile of citizens' assemblies in general and citizens' assemblies on climate change in particular.

How do you perceive Climate Assembly UK to have affected the work of Government since the Assembly's report was published (10 September 2020)? To what extent do the Government's actions since then reflect Climate Assembly UK's recommendations?

- The Government has stated that it will use CAUK's report as a source of evidence in its forthcoming policy decisions on net zero, including its Net Zero Strategy. The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) facilitated briefings for around 400 civil servants from across Whitehall on the assembly's recommendations.

- It is hard to assess how much effect the assembly has had on specific policy decisions without the Government acknowledging and clearly pointing to that impact on the record.
- On public engagement, the Government has cautiously welcomed the use of citizens' assemblies and similar methods – these words are welcome but they now need to be matched by action.
- As recommended by CAUK and the CCC this action should include involving the public in decision-making as part of national conversation on the options available for achieving Net Zero. This is not just about communications.

What would a good response to Climate Assembly UK from the Government look like?
 What would a good response from Parliament look like?

Government

- The Government should publish a full response to CAUK's recommendations including a response to each chapter of the report and a clear explanation of which recommendations it is taking forward, which it isn't, which it may look to address later - and why it has reached these decisions.
- It is not the case that a good response from the Government requires it to accept all the assembly's recommendations. The public's preferences are one important source of input to policy decisions, but they are not the only ones. However it is the case that the Government should have a good reason for not accepting a recommendation from the assembly and that this should be clearly explained in its response.
- Providing a full response to the assembly's recommendations treats the assembly members with the respect they deserve. We hope this is something that the Committee can secure through this inquiry.

Parliament

- Parliament should honour the initial intention behind the Assembly's commissioning, namely to use the outcomes of the assembly as the basis for detailed work on implementing the assembly's recommendations, examining the policy issues raised, scrutinising the steps taken by Government on the path to Net Zero and making proposals for new laws.
- All six commissioning Committees should use the assembly's findings to inform their agendas (e.g. choice of Inquiries), areas of focus (e.g. areas of focus within Inquiries), and recommendations. This could include picking up on the key principles and cross-cutting issues raised by the assembly to ensure these are not lost. The Committees should work with colleagues to feedback to assembly members about how they are using their work.

- As with Government, a good response does not mean that the commissioning committees need to accept all of the assembly's recommendations. However where their recommendations are at odds with the assembly's, they should provide a clear explanation of their rationale. They should also be explicit about how they are using the assembly's recommendations in their reports and other work.
- Engaging with and seeking input from the public between elections is very much within the UK parliamentary tradition. Parliament should keep step with governments and Parliaments around the world by using citizens' assemblies and/or other deliberative methods as part of this work. The OECD^[1] has found citizens' assembly to be most valuable in addressing values-based dilemmas, complex problems that involve trade offs, and long-term issues that extend beyond electoral cycles.

Full submission

1. Has Climate Assembly UK (both its process and recommendations) been helpful to your work (or the work of your organisation), and if so, how?

Climate Assembly UK (CAUK) was the first UK-wide citizens assembly on climate change. **It enabled us to further demonstrate the potential of the method in helping policy makers to address complex policy challenges such as reaching net zero.**

CAUK produced a clear, internally consistent and timely path for how the UK can reach its legally binding target of net zero emissions by 2050. Its set of recommendations were welcomed by MPs and other key stakeholders as balanced and measured. At the launch event for the CAUK report, Mel Stride MP, Chair of the Treasury Select Committee, referred to the recommendations “...as being proportionate....and also sensible”, whilst Chris Stark, Chief Executive of the Climate Change Committee (CCC) described them as “a really balanced and proportionate set of recommendations”.^[2] This was also a point strongly reflected in the comments of MPs from across the political spectrum in a House of Commons debate welcoming the CAUK report in November 2020.

CAUK has also raised the profile of public engagement on climate in general – and deliberative public engagement on climate in particular – and increased recognition of its importance in policy development.

For example:

- In their Sixth Carbon Budget the Climate Change Committee (CCC) frequently cited the useful insights that CAUK had provided on the priorities of the UK population and how these were reflected in their report. At the launch of the Sixth Carbon Budget, Mike Thomson, the CCC’s Director of Analysis stated: “We’ve taken their advice and we’ve constructed our scenarios to align to it so you’ll see on diet change, on flying, on driving the sorts of trends that they said they’d be happy with in future we reflected those into our scenarios. But it also really matters for the way that we design policy. We need to talk to people about how they want us to go about policy development, policy implementation. And they want things to be fair and they want to have choice. [...] We need to build those recommendations into policy design in the same way that the CCC has built them into our scenarios.”
- The Sixth Carbon Budget report also stated that “An effective net zero strategy will need to include a public engagement strategy that should be built on the findings of the UK Climate Assembly” and “A successful public engagement strategy for Net Zero is likely to require the following: Involvement of people in decision-making, not just persuading them to change, as part of a national conversation on the options available for achieving Net Zero. This should be done in a way that allows people to

understand and deliberate over the options available, at a point where people's input is most useful in policy-making - which is likely to differ according to the policy being developed - and in a way that is transparent about how people's decisions will influence the course of action taken."

- The Institute for Government's report *Net Zero: how government can meet its climate change target*^[3] concluded: "The climate assembly convened by parliament has demonstrated that the public support action even when confronted with the costs and adjustments they will face. But this needs to happen on a larger scale. The assembly should be the start of a co-ordinated effort to involve the public in decisions about how the economy will be restructured and their lives will change."

We give a more detailed account of the impact of CAUK - both its process and recommendations - on stakeholders in response to Question Two below.

More detailed learnings from designing and delivering the assembly have also been useful to our work. Most notably, the arrival of COVID-19 in the UK meant we had to move the latter stages of the CAUK process online. This was the first time we had run a citizens' assembly online, and developed the relevant processes, materials and designs to support an online event of this scale. The approach we took has been influential in informing the now numerous online processes we have run during lockdown. Anecdotal evidence from organisations considering commissioning public engagement work, and from engagement practitioners, suggests that the success of moving CAUK online also had an impact on others in encouraging them to continue and/or begin public participation work during lockdown.

2. What impact has Climate Assembly UK had across your sector, and more widely?

Involve is the UK's leading public participation charity. We specialise in public participation and aim to show the value of public participation through our work, to others within our sector and more widely.

We have already outlined above that CAUK raised the profile of public engagement on climate and increased recognition of its importance in policy development, including for the CCC. We noted the role of CAUK's move online in encouraging others to undertake public engagement during lockdown.

The assembly has also had further and wider impacts.

a. UK stakeholder impact

CAUK was commissioned to inform the work of Parliament, but it has also proved a valuable resource for organisations outside of Parliament and government. Chris Stark, Chief Executive of the CCC, said at the launch of the CAUK report: "We have had for decades

in the UK a community of scientific experts who've been building a picture of the climate science and the urgent actions that we need to tackle to decarbonize the UK and our society....but we have never had evidence like this before. This is the first time.....that we can say we really understand the views of UK citizens.”

The official evaluation of CAUK did not look at stakeholder impact. However in recent months we have been working with the assembly's independent evaluation team to look at this area more closely. To-date this has involved an evaluation survey issued in February 2021, which received responses from 166 organisations and individuals (itself a testament to the assembly's reach).^[4]

Preliminary results from the survey show that:

- 85% (123 respondents^[5]) said they or their colleagues had discussed the assembly with colleagues or work contacts;
- 78% (130 respondents^[6]) said their own thinking or work had been influenced by the idea of CAUK (i.e. the use of a citizens' assembly);
- 63% (104 respondents^[7]) said their own work or thinking had been influenced by CAUK's recommendations.

The survey results also suggest that the assembly achieved a wide reach. In addition to the above, respondents reported engagement with the assembly included: 61% who had read all or part of one of the assembly's reports; 52% who said they or their colleagues had visited the assembly's website; 48% who said their organisation had mentioned the assembly in its communications; 37% who said they or their colleagues had mentioned the assembly at roundtables or in speeches, and 38% who said they or their colleagues had mentioned the assembly in policy work/reports. 19% said they or their colleagues had mentioned the assembly in government consultation responses or evidence to parliamentary committees.

Take up of briefings on the assembly's report has also been high. In total well over 400 individuals from outside of government and Parliament have now attended detailed briefings on the assembly's recommendations.

Comparable data on stakeholder reach and impact does not exist for other citizens' assemblies so there is no benchmark against which to assess these figures. However we believe these results to show a very good reach.

Opportunities for stakeholders to engage with CAUK included:

- Membership of its Advisory Panel or Academic Panel (invite only);
- Observing the assembly weekends (invite only);
- Speaking at the assembly (invite only);
- Attending briefings about the assembly while it was running;
- Attending the launch of the assembly's report;

- Attending detailed briefings on the assembly recommendations, or asking for tailored in-depth briefings from the CAUK team at internal events.

Stakeholders could also engage with the assembly on social media or through other communications channels. The assembly received universally positive broadcast media coverage including TV channels such as BBC News, Channel 4 News and Sky News and other outlets such as BBC Radio 4 Today, BBC 5 Live, Newsnight, Good Morning Britain, BBC World Service and Radio 2. Newspaper coverage was widespread, covering titles such as the Guardian, Financial Times, Daily Telegraph, iNews, The Times and the Economist. There was also extensive online and wire coverage from outlets such as BBC News, Sky News, Press Association, Bloomberg and Reuters, which in turn resulted in widespread local media coverage.

Finally, the stakeholder survey showed strong consensus amongst respondents on the future use of citizens' assemblies and similar methods including by Parliament, their potential in enhancing the UK's climate leadership ahead of COP26, and whether or not Government should take account of the assembly's results:

- 84% strongly agreed or agreed that the UK Parliament should use methods such as citizens' assemblies again in its work;
- 83% strongly agreed or agreed that Government should take account of the recommendations when developing policy, for example in deciding which policies to implement;
- 87% strongly agreed or agreed that methods such as citizens' assemblies are a good way of involving people in making recommendations on important issues;
- 73% strongly agreed or agreed that methods such as citizens' assemblies are a good way of enhancing the UK's climate leadership ahead of COP26.

b. Assembly member impact

Taking part in Climate Assembly UK had a powerful impact on assembly members' feelings of political efficacy, views and behaviours.

Both Involve and CAUK's independent evaluation team tracked some areas of potential impact on assembly members during the CAUK process itself.

Involve's questions focussed on assembly members' **feelings of political efficacy**. Responses to survey questions at the end of the assembly process suggested that taking part in the assembly had a strong positive effect on assembly members:

- 88% of assembly members strongly agreed or agreed that "I feel more confident to engage in political decision-making as a result of being involved in this citizens' assembly."

- The same percentage strongly agreed or agreed that “taking part in this citizens’ assembly has made me want to be more involved in other aspects of decision-making.”

More recently, we have been collaborating with CAUK’s independent evaluators to assess what impact taking in part in CAUK has had on assembly members just over six months after the assembly reported. This involved an evaluation survey issued to assembly members in April 2021. 83 assembly members completed the survey.

Preliminary results show that **a significant majority of assembly members report changing their views about a variety of climate-related topics as a result of taking part in the assembly.**

Q. To what extent, if at all, has participating in Climate Assembly UK changed your views about the following topics?					
Area	No change	A small change	A significant change	I didn’t have a view about this before taking part in the assembly	Unsure /don’t know
Climate change (e.g. whether its happening, its effects, to what extent it is or isn’t a problem)	8%	24%	63%	2%	2%
How we travel on land	8%	41%	48%	1%	1%
How we travel by air	12%	25%	55%	6%	1%
Heat and energy use in the home	10%	32%	56%	0%	2%

What we eat and how we use the land	17%	35%	44%	2%	1%
What we buy	11%	37%	48%	2%	2%
Where our electricity comes from	11%	28%	54%	5%	2%
Greenhouse gas removals	14%	30%	38%	14%	5%

75 assembly members went on to provide further detail about their answers. Many of these responses talk about changes in behaviours as well as or instead of changes in views. However, by way of illustration, examples of comments that did just focus on views included:

“I now believe climate change is happening”

“I have changed because before I was not taking issues of climate change seriously. But now I am more of a champion on lecturing others.”

“I feel the climate assembly has given me an opportunity to learn and become interested in climate change. I am more aware of the consequences if we continue to do nothing and the legacies we will leave our future generations if we don’t start changing now.”

“Before I wasn’t as educated on how we could change our lifestyles in order to reach net zero by 2050 but now I have learnt a lot more about the specific changes we can make e.g in everyday travel so I have changed my opinion on this. I also was not as concerned about climate change previously but now I fully understand its impact.”

“My views did not change all that much but Climate Assembly UK showed me the severity of the issues that were present and the urgency to which we need to address them.”

“I was already very aware of issues concerning climate change so my life had already reflected this where it could. No change but more knowledge to share with others which is just as important.”

“No change. I do not feel there's any evidence to require a significant change in my lifestyle. I do however feel that we should all take some personal responsibility to live our lives in an environmentally friendly and sustainable manner.”

The survey also asked assembly members two questions about if and how their behaviours had changed since taking part in the assembly. **Across the two questions, a total of 83% of assembly members reported making changes to their behaviours since taking part in the assembly.** Changing assembly members' behaviours was not part of the aims of assembly. However several members had told us about changes they had made so we decided to investigate the issue further in the evaluation survey.

The results of the first question are shown in the table below:

Q. Climate Assembly UK wasn't about asking you to make changes to your own life. However we would be interested to know whether or not you have done any of the following (please tick all that apply)		
Change	I did this before taking part in Climate Assembly UK (no. assembly members)	I have done this since taking part in Climate Assembly UK (no. assembly members)
Improved my home insulation	36	14
Reduced the amount of meat and/or dairy in my diet	25	28
Switched to a renewable energy provider	34	16
Switched to an electric car instead of a petrol/diesel car	4	8
Signed a petition about climate change	22	21
Contacted a politician about climate change	8	14
Carbon offset my flights	9	6
Became a member of a climate or nature organisation	14	5
Attended a demonstration or protest about climate change	3	4

Ran for an elected position to influence decisions about climate change	1	2
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66% of assembly members said they had done at least one of the activities in the above table since taking part in the assembly. Of these, the overwhelming majority did not report also making changes in the same areas before taking part in CAUK. The exceptions were:

- 5 people who had signed a petition about climate change since CAUK, also said they had done this before CAUK;
- 1 person who had attended a demonstration or protest about climate change since CAUK, had also been on one before;
- 1 person who had contacted a politician about climate change since CAUK, had also done so before;
- 1 person who had improved their home insulation since CAUK also reported making changes before.

The other 110 changes that assembly members reported making since CAUK were in areas that they did not report having changed previously.

The second question about behaviour change was worded as follows: “Think about whether or not Climate Assembly UK has contributed to you changing anything about your work or personal life that wasn’t covered in the last question. If it has, please briefly tell us about it here. If it hasn’t, please write ‘no change’.”

Of the 76 assembly members who responded to this second question, 23 (30%) wrote ‘no change’ or variations on it. The other 53 assembly members reported a variety of changes. Again, there is not space to provide a full list of their comments here. The table on the next page aims to give an indication of the type and range of changes reported. Assembly members’ responses often covered more than one theme and we have included comments in their entirety.

Theme	Examples of assembly member responses
Travel	<p>Better planning of work routes and home deliveries to reduce carbon footprint.</p> <p>I have purchased a lot more eco products and have changed some habits like walking when doing school runs and shops that are close by instead of driving.</p> <p>Currently, at 76 in the process of obtaining an electric bike, use the car</p>

	<p>less.</p> <p>Gone from two to one family car. Redesigning a proposed house extension to use underfloor heating to be heat pump ready. Using soap bar shampoo to avoid discarding plastic bottles.</p> <p>I have changed my attitude to short haul flights to Europe. I would now use alternative transport (ferry, trains).</p> <p>Walk more and use the car less.</p>
<p>Food</p>	<p>Changed eating habits and type of milk</p> <p>It has made me more aware of where food comes from and how far away. I try to buy food from farm shops or grown closer to home. I eat far less meat than I did. More careful with gas and electricity in the home. I also watch a lot more programmes on different aspects of climate change in different parts of the world.</p> <p>Less supermarket shopping, frequent local shops, little & often carry on foot - fresh and home cooked food. No waste.</p> <p>I try to travel less and make slightly better food choices.</p>
<p>What we buy</p>	<p>I recycle more than I did before. I am more aware of switching off lights and plugs when not in use and do more research on efficiency before buying an electrical appliance.</p> <p>Checking if products are sustainable and made in the UK before buying them, and trying to buy less products with plastic packaging</p> <p>I found myself taking time to consider the carbon impact of purchasing decisions, I will, if I can, buy local.</p> <p>More recycling of waste material</p>
<p>Home</p>	<p>I am looking into getting solar panels on our house.</p> <p>I walk more when possible, never use the tumble dryer</p> <p>Looked to implement better home insulation and heating</p>

<p>Awareness and education</p>	<p>I always watch more programmes on climate change now and make sure friends and family take an interest as well.</p> <p>I pay more attention to climate change issues in the news and I help to raise awareness about it</p> <p>More actively discussing the topic with people around me when the topic arises.</p> <p>Educated myself further on climate change, and I am more open to learning more about it.</p> <p>I also look for and read more articles on companies who are actively reducing their carbon</p>
<p>Politics</p>	<p>Been invited to become a Parish Councillor.</p> <p>I became a parish councillor.</p> <p>Contacted local council about putting in a cycle path.</p> <p>I now belong to our local climate action group, the group has been instigating various climate proposals one of which is planting trees and helping to form local allotments</p>
<p>Jobs</p>	<p>I have applied for climate related jobs in the civil service and become part of the Civil Service Environment Network leadership team. I have decided to ration the number of flights I will take in the future.</p> <p>Climate Assembly UK has deeply impacted my life in a positive way I'm in the process of starting up my own eco friendly business as I've been in retail since I was 13 so I saw an area I'd be great at.</p> <p>Climate Assembly UK has had a large and positive impact on me. It led to me taking a new post as Sustainability Manager at work and consider my future career. It has helped shape my work on our company's Sustainability Policy and Environmental Management System to place more focus on emissions in addition to plastic. It has led to me to push for more sustainable changes at work and to make more low emissions choices in my own life. And it has engaged me more in politics in regards to the environment and to bring up some of these issues with my local elected representative and to attend sessions on the environment held by my council.</p> <p>I have pushed for sustainability in my NHS trust and I am now leading on it.</p> <p>Change of career, resulting in launching new business selling ladies</p>

preloved clothing locally to reduce waste and prolong the life of clothing.
Yes I've now started to produce films specifically about climate change -
having worked on 4 in the last 4 months.

The strong impact that taking part in CAUK had on assembly members shows the importance of engagement methods that allow members of the public to feed their informed and considered preferences into policy decisions. Most people would not make significant purchases or life decisions without seeking out significant information or talking to others. It is right that public engagement should afford members of the public the same opportunity when considering complex policy issues that will have a significant impact on their lives.

c. International impact

CAUK is one of a number of high profile citizens' assemblies globally that have helped to raise the profile of citizens' assemblies in general and citizens' assemblies on climate change in particular. Other examples include the Irish Citizens' Assembly and Constitutional Convention, the French climate assembly, and the Scottish Climate Assembly. We say more about the expanding use of citizens' assemblies and similar methods in response to Question Four.

Members of the CAUK team are regularly sought after by organisations outside of the UK for advice on climate assemblies and related initiatives. Involve has received requests for input from organisations including foreign governments, international organisations and networks (e.g. Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, World Resources Institute), academics, and country-specific civil society organisations.

d. Parliament and government impact

We discuss CAUK's impact on Parliament and government in response to Questions Three and Four below.

3. How do you perceive Climate Assembly UK to have affected the work of Government since the Assembly's report was published (10 September 2020)? To what extent do the Government's actions since then reflect Climate Assembly UK's recommendations?

The Government has stated that it will use CAUK's report as a source of evidence in its forthcoming policy decisions on Net Zero.

Rt Hon Alok Sharma MP, then BEIS Secretary of State, and now President of COP26, welcomed the report at its launch stating it "...will help to shape the work that we in government

are doing over the next critical 14 months.” He later added that “the report’s recommendations are an important part of the evidence base for developing the Government’s Net Zero Strategy.”

Responding for the Government in the House of Commons debate on the CAUK report in November 2020, Rt Hon Kwasi Kwarteng MP (then Minister for Business, Energy and Clean Growth and now BEIS Secretary of State) stated that the Government has “taken this report extremely seriously” in BEIS and that “Initiatives such as the Climate Assembly play an important role in helping to develop policies that are achievable and fair.” He also said that: “Public engagement of this kind, as I have said, is absolutely necessary. We completely agree with the spirit of the Climate Assembly’s recommendation on greater citizenship involvement” and that “The Government will continue to engage with the public on the changes that are needed to develop our ambitions on net zero and to listen very attentively to feedback.”

In-line with Kwasi Kwarteng’s comments, around the launch of the CAUK report in September 2020 officials in BEIS helped to organise seven thematic briefings for those working in Government about the assembly’s recommendations. Around 400 people from across Whitehall attended these briefings. While comparable figures are not available for other citizens’ assemblies in the UK or internationally, we believe this to present a very good reach.

The Government’s words and, in the case of the briefings, actions to-date are welcome. But it is hard to assess how much effect the assembly has had on specific policy decisions without the Government acknowledging and clearly pointing to that impact on the record. This kind of response has been lacking. For example, Rt Hon Kwasi Kwarteng MP, in the debate referenced above, drew comparisons between CAUK’s recommendations and the contents of the Prime Minister’s 10 point plan, which “...delivered and reflected many of Climate Assembly UK’s recommendations” in relation to wind and solar power, low-carbon hydrogen, low carbon buses and trains, sustainable aviation and building energy efficiency. However he did not comment on the extent to which this was influenced by CAUK’s work. The Government should publish a full response to the assembly’s recommendations (we say more on this under Question Four below).

One instance where the Government did reference CAUK directly is the BEIS Energy White Paper. The White Paper noted that CAUK identified “fairness within the UK, including for the most vulnerable” as one of the top two principles that should guide decisions around net zero, going on to confirm the Government’s agreement with this. Again this is welcome, but the Government should also say how the other key principles identified by the assembly will be reflected in government policy. The highest-priority principles for the assembly were:

- Informing and educating everyone (the public, industry, individuals and government)
- Fairness within the UK, including for the most vulnerable (affordability, jobs, UK regions, incentives and rewards) in actions, not just words)
- Leadership from government that is clear, proactive, accountable and consistent (cross-party consensus)
- Protecting and restoring the natural world

- Ensuring solutions are future-proofed and sustainable for the future
- A joined up approach across the system and all levels of society (working together, collaborating, and sharing)
- Long-term planning and a phased transition
- Urgency
- Support for sustainable growth (including pioneering innovation)

Since the launch of the CAUK report, the Government has cautiously welcomed the use of citizens' assemblies and similar methods. At the CAUK report launch, Alok Sharma welcomed the assembly approach saying it “has shown us the benefits of working with a dedicated group, one that’s been given time and information to consider complex issues in full”.

At the House of Commons debate on the report, Kwasi Kwarteng said that “initiatives such as the Climate Assembly play an important role in helping to develop policies that are achievable and fair” and that “public engagement of this kind is absolutely necessary” and “we completely agree with the spirit of the Climate Assembly’s recommendation on greater citizenship involvement”. He later added at an event hosted by the Institute for Government^[8] that “we could do a lot more in raising awareness through local targets, local debates, climate assemblies, citizens’ assemblies and that kind of thing. I have said it to colleagues in government we could do a lot more in that space trying to mobilise the public to a greater extent on these issues.”

CAUK assembly members were strongly in favour of further public engagement on Net Zero. Their recommendations included:

- “Government should be better held to account for their action on net zero by an on-going relationship with citizens through mechanisms like regular citizens’ assemblies” (82% support);
- “There should be a communication and engagement plan to engage the public, with multiple formats, which also ensures there is local level engagement as well as feeding back to central government” (86% support).

As outlined in our response to question one, the CCC’s Sixth Carbon Budget report also emphasised the importance of public engagement, calling for a Net Zero public engagement strategy that builds on CAUK’s recommendations.

The Government’s positive words about public engagement are welcome, but they now need to be matched by action. As recommended by CAUK and the CCC this should include involving the public in decision-making as part of national conversation on the options available for achieving Net Zero. This is not just about communications.

4. What would a good response to Climate Assembly UK from the Government look like? What would a good response from Parliament look like?

a. What would a good response to Climate Assembly UK from the Government look like?

The Government should publish a full response to CAUK's recommendations. **We hope this is something that the Committee can secure through this inquiry.** The Government should include:

- **Its response to each chapter of the report**, covering the assembly's key recommendations in terms of *what* a Net Zero UK should be like (CAUK's recommendations on 'futures') and *how* the UK should get there (CAUK's recommendations on policies). By structuring its response by chapter, the Government will aid assembly members in seeing how the response relates to their work;
- Within the above, **a clear explanation of which recommendations the Government is taking forward, which it isn't, which it may look to address later - and why it has reached these decisions.**

It is not the case that a good response from the Government requires it to accept all the assembly's recommendations. The public's preferences are one important source of input to policy decisions, but they are not the only ones. However it is the case that the Government should have a good reason for not accepting a recommendation from the assembly and that this should be clearly explained in its response.

Providing a full response to the assembly's recommendations treats the assembly members with the respect they deserve.

A good response from the Government also includes listening to how assembly members wanted it to approach policy-making on Net Zero. The Committee could ask the Government about the assembly's recommendations for a cross-party approach and continued public engagement, for example.

b. What would a good response from Parliament look like?

A good response from Parliament would be to honour its initial intention in commissioning the assembly.

Climate Assembly UK was commissioned by six select committees (Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy; Environmental Audit; Housing, Communities and Local Government; Science and Technology; Transport; and Treasury). The Committees came together to commission the assembly in order to better understand public preferences on how the UK should tackle climate change because of the impact these decisions will have on people's lives.

Their intention was to use the outcomes of the assembly as the basis for detailed work on implementing the assembly's recommendations, examining the policy issues raised, scrutinising the steps taken by Government on the path to Net Zero and making proposals for new laws.

This is a broader and more complex brief than the Citizens' Assembly on Social Care. The Health and Social Care and the Housing, Communities and Local Government Select Committees commissioned that citizens' assembly in 2018 to inform one specific joint inquiry on the future of social care funding in England. It is clear from their Inquiry report that it reflects the key thrusts, and vast majority, of the assembly's recommendations.

The General Election that took place after CAUK was commissioned but before its work took place complicated matters further, but does not change what a good response from Parliament to CAUK should look like.

To-date Parliament has been active in responding to some elements of the CAUK report.

For example, representatives from the six Committees were present at the launch of the report, welcomed its publication and thanked the assembly members for their work. The Committee Chairs also wrote to the Prime Minister^[9] and other party leaders^[10] at Westminster to commend the report, encourage a formal Government response to the key findings and recommendations and highlighting the assembly's call for cross-party consensus and a long term approach.

A statement was made in Parliament by Darren Jones MP, Chair of the BEIS Select Committee, welcoming the report and a debate on the report followed in November 2020.

We also welcome the significant steps taken by the BEIS Committee to 'mainstream' the CAUK results and use them to inform their own deliberations on all relevant inquiries (e.g. decarbonising heating in the home, the Government's preparation for COP26), as well as their decision to hold this specific inquiry on the Government's engagement and interaction with the assembly's recommendations, and progress made in implementing them.

The other commissioning Select Committees have taken steps to build on the assembly's recommendations and use them to inform their inquiries and work programmes too. For example:

- The Transport Committee inquiry on zero emission vehicles and road pricing;
- The Science & Technology Committee inquiry on the role of hydrogen in achieving net zero;
- The Environment Audit Committee inquiry into the energy efficiency of existing homes and the actions Government needs to take to decarbonise UK homes by 2050.

A good response from Parliament would see all six commissioning Committees use the assembly's findings in their own work to inform their:

- **Agendas (e.g. choice of Inquiries):** This could include picking up on the key principles (e.g. fairness) and cross-cutting issues (e.g. public engagement) raised by the assembly and running Inquiries on those, so they are not lost in possible department-by-department approach to meeting the Net Zero target.
- **Approach:** We would like to see all of the Committees mainstream CAUK's recommendations as the BEIS committee has done, using the recommendations to inform all of their areas of focus within Inquiries and their questioning of Ministers and other officials at public evidence sessions.
- **Recommendations:** As stated in relation to the Government response, a good response from the commissioning committees does not require acceptance of all of the assembly's recommendations but it should see a clear explanation of why committee's disagree with certain recommendations.

The Committees could also promote the report to other Committees^[11] and their Chairs, including through, for example the Liaison Committee, which would also provide an opportunity to question the Prime Minister about the Government's response.

The Committees should liaise with the CAUK team within Parliament to allow full and timely feedback to assembly members about how they are using their report. The should be explicit in their reports and other work about how they are using the assembly's recommendations.

Finally, **Parliament should show a willingness to use citizens' assemblies and/or other deliberative methods to inform its work in other areas.** Governments and parliaments around the world are increasingly using citizens' assemblies and similar methods to understand the public's informed and considered preferences. The recent OECD report Innovative Citizen Participation and New Institutions: 'Catching the Deliberative Wave'^[12] recorded 177 examples of the use of such methods between 2011 and 2019, across four continents. They found them to be most valuable in addressing:

- Values-based dilemmas
- Complex problems that involve trade offs
- Long-term issues that extend beyond electoral cycles.

They noted benefits from their use including better policy outcomes, greater legitimacy to make hard choices, enhanced public trust and more inclusive governance. The report also documented the institutionalisation of such methods by governments and parliaments at national and subnational levels in countries including the United States, Canada, Belgium, Austria, Poland, Japan, Mongolia, Denmark and France.

Engaging with and seeking input from the public between elections is very much within the UK parliamentary tradition: MPs do valuable work in engaging and assisting their constituents; and select committees issue open evidence calls, among other engagement activities, to inform their reports and recommendations to Government. As new techniques for public engagement become available it's important that Parliament and Government are open to using them to inform their work. The CAUK evaluation shows that, following their experience, 90% of assembly members strongly agree or agree that “assemblies like this should be used more often to inform government and parliament decision-making.”

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[1] <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/339306da-en/index.html?itemId=/content/publication/339306da-en>

[2] <https://www.involve.org.uk/resources/blog/project-updates/climate-assembly-uk-final-report-top-ten-developments>

[3] <https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/publications/net-zero>

[4] Of the survey respondents: 31% had been closely involved in the assembly (Advisory Panel member, Academic Panel member, speaker, observer); 30% had been somewhat involved in the assembly (attended one or more briefings about the assembly or the launch of its report - and had not been more closely involved); 36% had had some contact with the assembly (received the assembly's newsletter, read all or part of its report, saw content about the assembly on social media/in the media, visited the assembly's website - and had not been more closely involved); 4% had had no previous contact with the assembly.

[5] 145 respondents answered this question.

[6] 166 respondents answered this question

[7] 165 respondents answered this question

[8] <https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/events/delivering-net-zero>

[9] <https://www.involve.org.uk/sites/default/files/field/attachemnt/Climate%20Assembly%20UK%20-%20Letter%20to%20PM.pdf>

[10] <https://www.involve.org.uk/sites/default/files/field/attachemnt/Climate%20Assembly%20UK%20-%20Letter%20to%20opposition%20parties.pdf>

[11] The Public Accounts Committee, which was not involved in commissioning CAUK, recently released a report on achieving net zero, which references CAUK specifically in a call for the government to develop a 'public engagement strategy' in the next 12 months, that builds on the public conversation begun through the Assembly and improves the coordination of communications with the public around lifestyle choices and behaviour change.

[12] <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/339306da-en/index.html?itemId=/content/publication/339306da-en>