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Dear ECCLR Committee,

Thank you for your letter of 26th June regarding the importance of an effective green recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and your call for evidence on this matter.

As Scotland emerges from COVID-19, we have a chance to build a greener, fairer and more equal society and economy. I am grateful for your open call for views on the key principles that should underpin a green recovery; please see responses to your questions below.

I look forward to further engagement on green recovery, and in particular around our recast Climate Change Plan, which we hope to share with you in December.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Roseanna".

ROSEANNA CUNNINGHAM

What the Scottish Government means by a green recovery

1. What does the Scottish Government understand by a green, resilient or sustainable recovery? How will Scotland's economic recovery plans take account of the principles underpinning a green recovery, including those suggested by the Committee on Climate Change (CCC)?

Our response to COVID-19 continues in earnest, and our immediate priority is to save lives and livelihoods. However, the climate emergency has not gone away, and the Scottish Government remains absolutely committed to our world-leading climate change targets. These include achieving net zero emissions by 2045 and a 75% reduction in emissions by 2030.

COVID-19 is one of the biggest challenges we have faced in our lifetimes, but our ability to embrace new behaviours, ways of living and thinking in the face of this crisis has been striking. While very difficult in many respects, these unprecedented circumstances have given us a unique opportunity to reimagine the Scotland around us, and to build a greener, fairer and more equal society and economy.

A green recovery is one that delivers economic, social and environmental wellbeing and responds to the twin challenges of climate change and biodiversity loss. By embedding resilience we become more able to deal with future shocks. Our approach to ensuring a green recovery will be informed by experts and stakeholders. Earlier this year I sought advice from the Committee on Climate Change who responded by setting out 6 principles for a resilient recovery, including using climate investments to drive sustainable growths and jobs and ensuring fairness is at the heart of our approach. Publication of the CCC's annual Scottish progress report is expected in late September this year.

The Scottish Government has also received advice on the principles which should underpin a green recovery from other key stakeholders, including the Advisory Group on Economic Recovery, the Sustainable Renewal Advisory Group and most recently the Climate Emergency Response Group.

These principles and contributions are already informing our response. For example, our £230 million Return to Work package included £66 million to kick-start our green recovery and £35.5 million for digitisation, including in education services. In May we announced a package of £30 million for local authorities to implement temporary measures to support active travel whilst physically distancing. Furthermore, we recently announced a £62 million Energy Transition Fund to support a just transition towards net-zero emissions as we recover from COVID-19.

We will continue to reflect on these contributions over the coming weeks and months as we take the steps necessary to support Scotland's recovery and as we develop the recast Climate Change Plan (CCP), now due in December, which will be framed around the Green recovery.

2. How will the Scottish Government ensure that the definition and implementation of a green recovery is just, equitable, and inclusive, and has the needs and views of marginalised voices at its core?

A just transition to net-zero, ensuring that opportunities are accessible to everyone, the risks are managed and no one is left behind, must be at the heart of a sustainable, inclusive and resilient recovery in Scotland. We have learned from the COVID-19 crisis that we need to prepare for the transition to mitigate the risk of exacerbating inequalities through abrupt or unplanned shifts. As we build the economic recovery from COVID-19, ensuring a just transition will be more important now than ever.

We have taken world leading action to embed Just Transition principles in our Climate Change legislation. The Scottish Government has also asked the Just Transition Commission to consider COVID-19 in its work plan and provide written advice to ensure that our economic response contributes to our ambitions for a just and fair transition to a net zero economy. This advice is expected at the end of July, and we will respond in due course. These recommendations will inform our discussions on the recast CCP.

Recovery planning

3. What work is underway and what processes are being put in place across Government for delivering a green recovery? Who is leading this work?

Ensuring a green recovery requires a cross-ministerial response and ministers are currently engaging across their portfolios, and working together to implement the AGER recommendations.

We have already made several key announcements relating to a green recovery that showcase this collaboration. These include, as referenced in the response to question 1: the £230 million Return to Work and the £62 million package of support for an Energy Transition Fund and £30 million for local authorities and other statutory authorities to support active travel.

We are also developing our recast Climate Change Plan, which, recognising the need for collective action in this context, will be considered at cabinet, ahead of being laid in Parliament in December.

4. The Government's Advisory Group on Economic Recovery (AGER) published its recommendations on 23 June 2020. Beyond the Group's call for views, how are the views of others transmitting to Government?

Alongside AGER, our plans for a green economic recovery will be informed by advice from a number of organisations and stakeholder groups. As mentioned above, I wrote to the CCC to ask for their recommendations for a green recovery, and welcome their initial advice of 6 May.

I also recently established the Sustainable Renewal Advisory Group, made up of MSPs and stakeholders from across academia, industry, business, trades union and environmental organisations. This group has been tasked with identifying

opportunities to embed sustainability in Scotland's recovery from COVID-19, and our first discussions on 21 May and 25 June centred around the subject of green recovery and the recasting of the Climate Change Plan.

We have also asked the Just Transition Commission to consider COVID-19 in its work plan and provide written advice to ensure that our economic response contributes to our ambitions for a just and fair transition to a net zero economy.

Furthermore, we have received correspondence from a variety of stakeholders, with recommendations from organisations including the Climate Emergency Response Group, key energy stakeholders such as SSE, Scottish Power and Scottish Renewables and civil society organisations such as Friends of the Earth. Ministers are also holding bilateral meetings with key stakeholders to discuss their proposals further. All of the advice we receive is being carefully considered, and will continue to inform our approach to a green recovery, as well as the shape and content of our recast Climate Change Plan.

5. In the context of a green recovery, is it prudent to delay the review of the National Planning Framework for a further year?

As part of the revision of the National Planning Framework, we are developing proposals for radical change to our national planning policies and a spatial strategy to support a transition to net zero and economic recovery. We will publish a National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) Position Statement in the Autumn, which will highlight potential policy changes and reflect on what planning can do to help recovery from the impacts of COVID-19. We will also ensure that the lessons from COVID-19 for place, and future development, are embedded into national planning policy.

Letters from the Scottish Government's Chief Planner in April and May of this year are clear that continuing to progress work on NPF4 is crucial, but that alignment with wider plans and strategies and capability of stakeholders to engage with the process also remains important. We have redesigned the process to ensure we can continue to collaborate effectively and are making good progress on this in the meantime, including through our work to support planning authorities in preparing regional spatial strategies. The publication of the Position Statement this autumn also gives us an excellent opportunity to fully align planning with economic recovery.

Governance

6. How is the Scottish Government coordinating the conversation and understanding of green recovery across Government and Government agencies? Building on the recommendations of the CCC and AGER, is the Scottish Government considering establishing a Cabinet SubCommittee on such an important cross-cutting issue?

To deliver our ambitious commitments, climate change and the green recovery must be embedded in everything we do. We are coordinating the conversation and understanding of green recovery across Government and agencies in a number of ways, including via our work with the Environment and Economy Leader's Group (EELG), which brings together a wide range of environment and other land-based

public bodies. EELG is currently working to promote engagement and collaboration amongst public bodies and encouraging them to rethink their organisational priorities in light of the green recovery agenda. We will also keep working with the Scottish Leaders Forum Climate Action Group, the Public Bodies Delivery Group and with other public sector bodies, as we develop our response to COVID19 and our green recovery.

More widely, we continue to work with our enterprise and skills agencies on green recovery, including considering the recent report from a sub-group of the Enterprise and Skills Strategic Board. This report includes recommendations for how colleges and universities can support people to learn critical skills needed by employers, including digital, automation, artificial intelligence and the transition to a net-zero economy. We are clear that green skills and jobs will be central to our green recovery.

Recognising the importance of green recovery, we have established the Sustainable Renewal Advisory Group and asked the Just Transition Commission to include green recovery in their work plan. Green recovery is regularly discussed at monthly bi-laterals between Cabinet Secretary Finance and Cabinet Secretary ECCLR. Ahead of the recast Climate Change Plan being laid in parliament in December, the plan will be brought to Cabinet to discuss at a number of key junctures in its development, recognising the requirement for a whole-Government response.

7. What is the role of the ECCLR Cabinet Secretary in delivering Scotland's green recovery and economic recovery plans?

The green recovery is a cross-government effort that seeks to maximise strategic opportunities across portfolios. I play an integral role in setting the scale and pace of our ambition as well as ensuring our work, including recovery, is in line with said ambition and specifically our statutory requirements, This will be supported by the recast CCP. I also have responsibility for environmental sustainability ambitions, as well as being directly responsible for a number of areas including water, waste, peatland and marine economy. Key areas of cross-ministerial collaboration include with finance, economy, agriculture and transport.

8. What is the role of local authorities and government agencies in green recovery? Is the Scottish Government rethinking the role of community councils, community bodies and other local organisations given the resilience delivered in many areas at local, rather than regional, or national, level?

Community groups have played a key role in the response to COVID-19 – coming together, while apart, to support one another and protect the most vulnerable. Together with Local Authorities (LA's) and government agencies they must continue to do so as part of a green recovery. Under the Climate Change Act, public bodies in Scotland are required to contribute to our emissions reduction targets. While that commitment remains, we must also acknowledge that the context has changed. We will therefore work with LA's and our agencies to develop a green recovery that

delivers economic, social and environmental wellbeing as we recover from COVID-19, while responding to the twin challenges of climate change and biodiversity loss. Demonstrating this collaboration, Councilor Steven Heddle (COSLA, spokesperson for Environment and Economy) sits on the Sustainable Renewal Advisory Group.

Our natural environment is diverse and that means that different actions will be needed across Scotland to ensure that we optimise these multiple natural benefits. Protecting and enhancing our natural environment will play an important role in aiding our recovery. Scotland's landscape is renowned throughout the world and the benefits and future opportunities it presents us with, be that in terms of climate change, bio-diversity or helping improve our air and water quality are widely acknowledged.

The Scottish Government has therefore committed to the establishment of Regional Land Use Partnerships to consider the best way to use and manage this resource. As a first step we have asked the Scottish Land Commission to take the lead on developing independent proposals and recommendations on the establishment of regional partnerships. They will be publishing their findings later this year.

We are also supporting local communities through the Climate Challenge Fund (CCF). Since its launch in 2008, the CCF has supported over 1150 projects across all 32 local authorities with total funding exceeding £111 million. In addition to reducing emissions, CCF projects have provided a range of social benefits to communities, many of which were of particular value during the COVID-19 pandemic. Last year we announced that we would create a regional network of community climate support hubs, spread across Scotland. These hubs will help to support the transition to low carbon and resilient living and provide localised support, helping groups to take advantage of community funding opportunities. Although we have been delayed by COVID-19, we hope to be able to set up a number of pilot hubs this financial year.

In addition to the community climate support hubs, we are developing an initiative to support Scotland's towns to play their part in community climate action. Recognising the importance of place, Climate Action Towns will provide a local framework for climate action.

As mentioned in the response to question 6, our work with EELG and Enterprise and Skills Agency is also critical to ensuring a green recovery.

9. How does the Scottish Government plan to engage with the Parliament on green recovery?

Green recovery necessarily cuts across many pieces of work and so engagement with Parliament will be ongoing through a variety of fora. This year, alongside being part of this enquiry, Parliament will consider green recovery proposals as part of the Programme for Government, Scottish Budget and the recast Climate Change Plan, a key strategic document on green recovery, which will be laid before Parliament in draft in December.

Opportunities and barriers

10. What work is the Scottish Government doing to lock in and maintain any positive behavioural or structural changes that resulted from lockdown (such as active travel, altered working practices) that offer emissions and wellbeing benefits?

We have seen rapid and comprehensive changes to almost all aspects of daily life as a result of COVID-19. Some of the new behaviours seen, whilst not to be celebrated, do highlight some of the potential opportunities for a greener, healthier recovery.

We are actively considering how to embed some of the positive travel behaviour changes arising and encourage further uptake as we transition toward a net-zero society. The CCC advice on making it easy for people to walk, cycle and work remotely will be incorporated as we work on delivering the recast Climate Change Plan update and a green recovery. As mentioned in the response to question 3, we have announced a package of support worth £30 million for local authorities and other statutory authorities to implement temporary measures (including pop-up cycle lanes and widening walkways) to support physical distancing for the increasing numbers of people who are walking, wheeling and cycling.

Developing and extending home-working has been pivotal in workers and employers adapting to COVID-19. Although legal powers governing flexible working are currently reserved to Westminster, we are working with employers directly and through their representative bodies to explore ways of promoting and supporting flexible working.

Continued flexible working and studying from home requires digital connectivity. Telecoms legislation is reserved, however the Scottish Government has chosen to invest its own resources in delivering the Reaching 100% programme which will help to ensure that every home and business in Scotland can access superfast broadband. Access to 4G is just as vital as access to broadband, particularly in our rural communities. That is why we have invested £25 million in the Scottish 4G Infill (S4GI) programme, designed to push coverage beyond commercial rollout and provide future-proofed mobile infrastructure to selected mobile 'not-spots' across Scotland.

We recognise that the context has changed and as a result, we are keen to ensure we establish a strong evidence base which supports effective communication and strong policy interventions. We have recently commissioned in-depth research into the ways in which behaviours related to climate change are changing and the factors influencing whether these changes 'stick'. This longitudinal research project will follow a diverse cohort of people in Scotland over the next 6 months to explore their experiences of, and attitudes towards, different behaviour changes and investigate the whether – and why – these changes are maintained when pandemic-related restrictions and guidelines are relaxed.

11. What are the biggest barriers that the Scottish Government has identified

in pursuing a green recovery? What work is the Scottish Government doing to identify and remove any barriers to locking in positive behavioural change and address potential negative changes (such as a shift from public to private transport)?

While we recognise that members of the public are rightly concerned by COVID-19, we must continue to create a compelling arguments for climate action. We have commissioned research exploring how to communicate climate change effectively in a post COVID-19 landscape to ensure that we can continue to engage effectively and raise awareness around the immediate need to act on climate change.

As referenced above, we have seen some behaviour change that could be seen as positive for our climate, such as home working and active travel, some new challenges have also arisen, such as a reduction in use of public transport and an increase in the use of single-use items. The ambitious nature of our targets means that our starting position pre-COVID was already challenging. Despite some of the changes we have seen highlighting potential opportunities for a greener, healthier recovery, with the delay to key pieces of work and changes to attitudes, its likely we will be facing many more challenges than opportunities. We will ensure that our approach to a green recovery reflects the need for measures which support positive behaviours, while addressing these new barriers and ensuring that we don't lock in negative behaviours.

Given the dramatic change in travel behaviour as a consequence of lockdown, this is an area of particular uncertainty as we work toward a green recovery. The decisions of people and businesses as we begin to resume accessing work, key services, and leisure will determine transport demand. We are drawing on a range of evidence including our national data sources, available planning tools and expertise.

Transport Scotland has commissioned new research to build the evidence base on employers' attitudes towards working from home and their intended approach to employee travel as we exit from lockdown. This will help inform our thinking on how to support employers to encourage sustained home working as businesses recover from the pandemic. Future transport investment decisions will continue to be made in line with both the Sustainable Travel and Sustainable Investment hierarchies, prioritising walking, wheeling, cycling and public and shared transport options in preference to single occupancy private car use.

The longitudinal research which we have commissioned (mentioned in response to question 10) will also help us to understand further barriers to locking in positive behavioural changes, and how we can address negative changes through providing greater understanding of the factors which will influence these.

12. What are the biggest economic opportunities for Scotland associated with pursuing a green recovery and what needs to happen to realise this potential?

As part of our green recovery from COVID-19, we have a unique opportunity to realise our ambitions for social renewal and resilience, accelerating the just transition to a net-zero economy that protects and restores nature and biodiversity in Scotland,

and creates sustainable growth and jobs. If we build resilience across our economic, social and environmental domains as part of an economy centred around wellbeing, we will be in a better position to tackle the long-term challenges we face, including those caused by climate change. We need to carefully consider our immediate actions and responses to this current crisis, to ensure we can meet these aims.

The AGER report last month set out a number of recommendations to support a recovery which is rooted developing a wellbeing economy, has fair work principles at its heart and is aligned to a clear net zero transition path. Our response was published on 5th August.

Scotland is a founding member of the Wellbeing Economy Government (WEGo) which has been identifying priorities for delivering a wellbeing economy. Our membership of this group enables us to engage, learn and collaborate with other countries and utilise the advice of experts as we set our path to recovery and renewal.

We are also committed to ensuring Scotland is in prime position to tap into the growing market for green investment opportunities, particularly in natural capital. We recognise that mobilising private finance to complement public investment will be vital as we transition to net-zero.

The Scottish National Investment Bank will be operational later this year and will play a central role in galvanising private investment as part of a just transition. The Bank will take a mission-oriented approach to investment of its eventual £2 billion capitalisation. Scottish Ministers will set the Bank missions to respond to societal challenges and its primary mission will be to support a just transition to net zero. The Bank is being established to deliver long-term, patient investment in projects and businesses across Scotland. The Bank will seek to deliver social, environmental and financial returns and is anticipated to be an important part of Scotland's green recovery.

13. How will Scotland's recovery plans use investment in low-carbon infrastructure and natural capital to support the economic recovery and jobs?

Infrastructure investment is central to our economic strategy and we are firmly committed to it as a key factor in securing economic growth and protecting and creating jobs. Our next Infrastructure Investment Plan – details of which will be announced in September - will set out our strategic plans for investing in infrastructure over the coming 5 years and will help us respond to the challenges of COVID-19 and prepare for the economic recovery that will be so important to us all. The Plan will be shaped around three key strategic themes, including enabling the transition to net zero emissions and environmental sustainability; building resilient and sustainable places; and driving inclusive economic growth. It will also respond to the recommendations of the Infrastructure Commission for Scotland, which proposed natural infrastructure be included within the official Scottish definition of infrastructure. In addition, as part of our commitment to investing in low-carbon infrastructure and securing our transition to net-zero in the 2020/21 Scottish Budget,

we committed to an additional £2bn of spend on low-carbon infrastructure across the life of the next Parliament.

We will work in partnership with the private sector to deliver a sustainable and resilient recovery towards a net-zero emissions economy. We are exploring options to mobilise private investment into natural assets, which is critical for enhancing our natural capital and a just transition to net-zero. Continuing to protect, restore and enhance our natural capital will be a vital part of a successful green recovery. The 2020/21 Scottish Budget increased public investment in natural assets, including £250 million over ten years for peatland restoration, and a record £53.8 million in forestry in 2020-21. The 2019 Programme for Government includes a commitment to: "Identify and bring to market a Green Investment Portfolio of £3 billion of investable projects over the next three years". This will include projects involving renewables, waste, circular economy and property, and will actively look to expand the investment market into other sectors that have strong green credentials.

The AGER report recommends that the financial services sector and the Scottish Government should develop and promote nature-based investments to protect and enhance Scotland's natural capital, including the development of financial solutions to fund forestry and other nature-based solutions, including agriculture.

14. Considering the shifts in using local places for recreation and active travel, and social distancing requirements, what role will planning and place making play in a green recovery? What will this mean for urban and rural areas and how can access to greenspace be improved, particularly for those living in densely populated areas and lower income households?

We recently published Guidance on Coronavirus (COVID-19): Safer Public Spaces for Scotland - Urban Centres and Green Spaces. This guidance focuses on the design principles for safer urban centres and green spaces, and promotes a wide range of existing policy ambitions including active travel, reductions in car use, place-based approaches and inclusive, people-friendly, environments. The guidance identifies opportunities for change, with an emphasis on people-centred cities and urban centres that focus on resilience, health and well-being, active travel and green space.

The Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 makes it a statutory duty for planning authorities to prepare Open Space Strategies. An open space strategy must contain: an audit of existing open space provision; an assessment of current and future requirements; and any other matter which the planning authority consider appropriate. New regulations on Open Space Strategy and Play Sufficiency Assessment (PSA) are therefore being developed as part of our implementation of the Act. In particular, councils will be encouraged to consider the wider outcomes, such as health and wellbeing, that open space can contribute to. There is also a new duty on PSAs, requiring local authorities to assess play opportunities for children in the natural and built environment, to inform the preparation of an Evidence Report as part of our Local Development Plan.

We are also enhancing and upscaling our programme of work around the Place Standard Tool. Later this year, we will launch a revised version of the Tool alongside new versions specifically tailored for children and young people. This will support the design process as well as promoting the role of place in improving urban and rural communities. As outlined in response to question 5, we will publish a National Planning Framework 4 (NPF 4) Position Statement in the Autumn, which will reflect further on what planning can do to help recovery from the impacts of COVID-19.

The new National Planning Framework, Regulations and the Place Programme will all seek to improve the provision and access to green spaces, open spaces and outdoor play opportunities within both the natural and built environment across Scotland. We are ensuring that we keep things local with Local Place Plans, introduced in the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019, improving community involvement in the planning system. Later this summer we will launch a new partnership website focussed on place, and place-based working, that aims to promote collaborative approaches to place design, service delivery and community participation.

We are also investing in the quality of our greenspaces, through funding the Central Scotland Green Network, Europe's largest greenspace project. Through the CSGN Development Fund we have invested more than £7 million since 2010 in projects that are promoting active travel, woodland planting, community growing and restoring land for the Central Scotland Green Network.

Furthermore, along with Scottish Natural Heritage, we are funding a project to support place-design that maximises the benefits of green infrastructure in social housing. Working with Architecture & Design Scotland (ADS) and the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations, this project has provided financial support to three new projects in North Maryhill, Glasgow (Southside) and Edinburgh (Meadowbank).

2021/22 Budget

15. How is the Scottish Government engaging across portfolios to ensure that sustainable development and the CCC's green recovery principles inform its 2021/22 Budget?

Our transition to net-zero sits at the heart of our National Performance Framework, current Programme for Government and Scottish Budget. Officials from Climate Change work across a range of cross government structures to ensure that the advice from the Committee on Climate Change, and others such as the Just Transition Commission are considered in our work to ensure a Green Recovery. Key examples of this are through the development of the updated Climate Change Plan and its alignment with the Budget.

16. What opportunities has the Scottish Government identified for aligning preventative spend opportunities with the green recovery agenda?

As a green recovery is one that delivers economic, social and environmental wellbeing and responds to the twin challenges of climate change and biodiversity

loss, a core component of the recovery must be increasing resilience to the global climate changes which are already locked in. The independent expert advice published by the Committee on Climate Change on 6 May, which the Scottish Government has welcomed, identifies enhanced adaptation to climate change as one of the six key principles for guiding a wider resilient recovery from COVID-19.

The Scottish Government's statutory 5-year programme for climate change adaptation was published last September. Delivering on this remains key to our green recovery agenda, and this CCC have expressed their support for this in a recent letter to the Cabinet Secretary. The programme, SCCAP2, sets out around 170 policies and proposals across seven high-level outcomes – aligned to the National Performance Framework and UN SDGs. These policies include continuing to investing £420 million over 10 years to protect homes in many of Scotland's most flood-prone areas. We also continue to fund the Adaptation Scotland programme to support capacity building and action on adaptation by the public sector, businesses and communities in Scotland. The first annual report on progress to the implementation of SCCAP2 was laid in Parliament in May 2020, including an initial assessment of the impacts of COVID-19 on the various policies.

17. How will the reconstruction of local economies be prioritised in the 2021/22 Budget and future financial plans, rather than looking to rebuild 'as was'?

We will develop an economic recovery that supports a sustainable and inclusive wellbeing economy, which is underpinned by our three key ambitions of boosting Scotland's competitiveness and growth, tackling inequalities, and transitioning to a net-zero economy. A place-based approach will be central to understanding our national, regional and local priorities.

Protecting and growing our local and regional economies will be a central priority in developing our Budget and framing our investment priorities. Part of this will be reflecting on the impact of COVID and how we can enable greater resilience in our economy at the national, regional and local levels in future.

We must seek to be innovative, for example, focusing on new opportunities to develop green infrastructure and industries to create new, high quality jobs. Key to realising our aims will be forging greater common purpose between all public and private sector partners, as well as involving communities themselves in designing a future focused economic growth that is both sustainable and inclusive. By harnessing the innovation, skills and strengths of our business and people, we can accelerate our transition towards a greener and fairer economy and in doing so, ensure that Scotland can thrive and compete in the future.

18. How will the approach to budgeting change to invest more in low carbon infrastructure and other low carbon initiatives?

The Scottish Budget 2020-21 provides investment to deliver on the priorities which matter to the people of Scotland including climate change. We have substantially met our pledge to increase the proportion of investment in low carbon infrastructure, with £1.8 billion of capital investment in 2020-21, an increase of over £500 million on 2019-

20. In addition, the Scottish Government has committed to make available a new, additional £2 billion of low carbon infrastructure investment over the lifetime of the next parliamentary term.

Enabling the net zero transition remains at the core of our next Infrastructure Investment Plan and we are undertaking research to explore the approaches the Scottish Government could use to assess and report on the alignment between its infrastructure investment plan and Scotland's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction ambitions.

We have committed to work with the ECCLR Committee on a joint review of the Budget as it relates to Climate Change. While the final scope of this project has still to be agreed, we remain committed to undertaking the review to help inform the next and future Scottish Budgets.

19. Will the Scottish Government be committing to any support to high carbon industries being linked to supporting them make a green transition?

As Scotland emerges from this crisis, we have a chance to build a greener, fairer and more equal society and economy. We have explored domestic and international approaches to conditionality, in the context of calls for 'green strings' to be added to COVID support packages. We note that the term encompasses a broad range of approaches and interventions and there are significant risks of unintended consequences. We are continuing to explore the role for bespoke approaches that link business support with climate change objectives, building on our experience with Fair Work and emphasising the need to work in partnership with businesses.

The Scottish Government's continued support for oil and gas sector businesses operating in the North Sea is now conditional upon contributing to a sustainable, secure and inclusive energy transition. This is reflected in the £62 million Energy Transition Fund, which will support the energy industry to undergo a just transition to net zero. We support the industry's Roadmap 2035 that will decarbonise the remaining production in the North Sea.

The knowledge and experience of the oil and gas sector and its supply chain will also be very important for developing and investing in essential low carbon technologies, such as Carbon Capture Utilisation and Storage – a technology that is seen by experts such as the UK Committee on Climate Change and International Energy Agency as being essential to achieving Scottish, UK and international climate emissions targets.

We believe Scotland is in a unique position to undertake this technology on an industrial scale and that the opportunity to repurpose key existing pipeline infrastructure assets already in place provides the most cost-effective pathway to the deployment of CCUS. Our waters in the North Sea also provides access to vast carbon storage resources in depleted oil and gas reservoirs and we believe that coupled with our existing oil and gas capabilities, ready supply chain, and strategically important industrial clusters, Scotland is potentially the best-placed country in Europe to realise CCUS on a commercial scale.

Many of the key levers needed to support the oil and gas sector are reserved to Westminster, and while we do all we can to stimulate development, protect jobs and retain vital skills the UK Government must take action where we do not yet have the power to do so.

20. What impact will the green recovery have on future spend in those sectors responsible for significant emissions, for example agriculture, transport, and the residential sector?

Since the start of the Coronavirus crisis, the Scottish Government has offered support to those sectors affected, while maintaining our commitment to reaching net-zero and achieving a just transition. This approach is demonstrated in our recent announcements including; investment in active travel (£30m since the start of the crisis), the £62 million Energy Transition Fund and through our reprioritisation of the Heat Transition Deal.

It is our intention that the recast CCP will align with the Scottish Budget, seek to ensure policies impacted by COVID are kept on track; and seize green recovery opportunities for boosted and new policies to reduce emissions even further.

As referenced in the responses to questions 12 and 13, not all spend needed to reach net-zero can come from government, In the CCC's advice on green recovery they argued for the need to accelerate private investment and the role of the Scottish National Investment Bank in doing so.

Green recovery and the climate and biodiversity emergencies

21 .How will the promised review of all policy, as per the climate emergency declaration last year, link to the plan for Scotland's green recovery?

Last year, my statement to Parliament confirmed that all Cabinet Secretaries are looking across the full range of policy areas to identify where they can go further and faster in terms of climate change. The recast Climate Change Plan provides a framework for assessing our policies in light of the climate emergency declaration. Significant announcements reflecting our ambitious climate change targets have been made since the deceleration, and these targets will continue to be at the heart of our approach this year, including in our Programme for Government, Infrastructure Investment Plan, Scottish Budget and recast Climate Change Plan.

22. How will the green recovery link to the updated Climate Change Plan (CCP)? How will the updated CCP be formatted, now that it is being 'recast' in light of green recovery work, what is the new timeline, and how is the SG engaging with stakeholders on this? How does the SG plan to engage with the Scottish Parliament ahead of the CCP update being laid?

As you are aware, the Climate Change Plan update was due to be laid in Parliament on 30 April, but was necessarily paused as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic. It is important to note that the plan will not be starting afresh. We were on track to lay the plan on 30 April, and will look at the proposed policies again in light of the

changed context. The recast CCP will now be published later this year, and will be framed around our green recovery from COVID-19, while retaining its purpose to outline a credible pathway to our emissions reduction targets. This publication is an opportunity for us to demonstrate how our economic recovery actions have centred net zero ambitions ensuring that we progress towards our world-leading targets, whilst creating jobs and stimulating the economy. We are seeking to ensure that there is ample time for parliamentary scrutiny of the recast CCP before the end of this Parliament.

We are exploring a number of options around the shape of the recast Plan, and have already begun engaging with stakeholders. I recently established the Sustainable Renewal Advisory Group, made up of MSPs and representatives from across academia, industry, business, trade unions and environmental organisations. This group aims to meet every 4-6 weeks, with our first two meetings held on 21 May and 25 June, and will help to shape our thinking around green recovery and the recast Climate Change Plan.

23. How will the Scottish Government ensure that any policies or actions as part of a recovery from Covid-19 also follow a pathway to biodiversity recovery?

A successful green recovery will respond to the twin challenges of climate change and biodiversity loss, and the Scottish Government and Scottish National Heritage (SNH) are working closely on this. The COVID-19 pandemic has further highlighted the urgent importance of combining action on climate change and biodiversity loss. Biodiversity must therefore be a key part of our green recovery. Reflecting this, we ensure internal collaboration through reciprocal director-level representation at programme boards between green recovery and forestry.

We also recognise the key roles played by environmental NGOs, environmental charities and partnerships, and the financial challenges facing them as Scotland emerges from the COVID-19 crisis and that is why, in developing thinking on the green recovery we are committed to continuing work, led by SNH, with environmental NGOs and other partners, to ensure resources are best placed to meet these challenges.

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, SNH have sought to support grant recipients through adjustments to grant contracts to allow continued support at this challenging time. Development funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) for multi-million pound partnership projects to halt and reverse trends in species decline around our coasts and islands, has been secured. In response to COVID-19, a range of emergency funding sources have been established. These include; SCVO - £20 Million Third Sector Resilience Fund, National Lottery Heritage Fund - £50 Million emergency fund – which includes funding for organisations working on landscape and nature projects, Scottish Crown Estate Coastal Fund - a £7.2 million Scottish Crown Estate fund which is devolved to Local Authorities, National Lottery – National Lottery Community Fund.

We are also keenly aware of the significant impact that coronavirus has had in relation to ongoing nature surveillance and monitoring activities. As we entered

lockdown, it was unfortunately necessary to pause all non-essential work, in order to suppress the rate of transmission of COVID-19 among and between communities. We have focused on developing solutions for the resumption of forestry and environmental management, aligned to both the Scottish Government's Coronavirus (COVID-19): framework for decision making, published 23 April, and the associated route map through and out of the crisis published on 21 May. Following the publication of the route map, Scottish Forestry worked with the forestry sector and safety body representatives to develop a restart and resilience plan and safe working guidance on how outdoor environmental management could safely restart. That guidance is available at the Scottish Forestry website.

24. Does the Scottish Government see an increased role for nature-based solutions, land reform, landscape-scale collaboration and investment in natural assets, within a sustainable recovery – if so, what action does the Scottish Government intend to take?

The Scottish Government is clear that investing in our natural assets is crucial in enabling a sustainable recovery. Investment in natural capital is one of the key recommendations of the Advisory Group on Economic Recovery, and we are committed to expanding the delivery of nature-based solutions in Scotland. For example, the AGER report highlights peatland restoration as a key area of investment opportunity. Earlier this year Scottish Government committed to invest more than £250 million in peatland restoration over the next ten years, which sends a clear signal that we are committed to substantially enhancing our efforts on peatland restoration. This commitment will enable large-scale restoration projects to be developed, enhancing biodiversity, supporting jobs in the rural economy and delivering significant greenhouse gas emission reductions

We have also committed to significant investments into forestry. The Climate Change Plan 2018 sets out targets to increase new woodland planting to 15000 hectares a year by 2025, and to increase the use of Scottish wood products as a natural renewable resource and store of carbon. Much increased levels of woodland planting have been achieved in the two years since we set these targets, reaching 11,210 hectares in 2018-19, and 10,860 hectares in 2019-20. Taken together these two years of planting have met the planting targets to date, and the pipeline of future projects looks positive at this stage. We are taking action to help expand the woodland carbon market including further development of the Woodland Carbon Code.

Through our commitment to develop Regional Land Use Partnerships, we are putting in place the means to facilitate improved landscape-scale collaborations, bringing a renewed focus to restoring Scotland's natural capital and maximising the contribution land can make to our emissions reduction targets.

Green recovery and a sustainable economy

25. What investment in and support for business recovery is needed to ensure a green recovery and what conditions will be attached to support? Will investment from the Scottish National Investment Bank be prioritised to support a green recovery?

Since the start of the crisis, we have supported businesses through several packages that total over £2.3bn – more than the consequentials we received from the UK Government and have put in place a £230m Restart the Economy capital stimulus package to help stimulate the economy following the pandemic.

As mentioned in question 19, we have considered “green” conditionality and are looking at the role of bespoke approaches that link business support with climate change objectives. We will also specifically consider how to frame bespoke work on transition planning with key businesses.

As set out above, the Scottish National Investment Bank will be operational later this year and will have a primary mission to support the transition to net zero emissions. It is anticipated that the Bank will make an important contribution to Scotland’s green recovery. Work is ongoing within the team setting up the Bank to build a robust pipeline of investment opportunities that align with the Bank's missions.

26. What plans are in place to support low carbon sectors and sectors which support biodiversity recovery?

Our recovery from COVID-19 must align with our world-leading climate change targets, with emissions reduction central to our approach. Our next Programme for Government and the recast Climate Change Plan will reflect these plans, as well as outlining our actions to address biodiversity loss.

Prior to these publications, and addressing the green recovery in the short-term, we recently announced the reprioritisation of the Heat Transition Deal and the Energy Transition Fund, detailed above. The Heat Transition Deal will be implemented this year, and will accelerate and scale-up action to reduce emissions from homes and buildings by supporting delivery of low carbon heat infrastructure projects, including heat pumps and heat networks.

We are also seeking to influence the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework and deliver against Scotland’s 2020 biodiversity strategy. We will continue to work with partners across the public, private and third sectors to encourage, through all of our policies and programmes, the adoption of biodiversity-friendly practices and to seek to improve people’s connection with, and understanding of the importance of, biodiversity to securing the benefits that nature provides to people.

27. How can the Scottish Government create resilient and sustainable local economies and communities in the context of a globalised, interconnected and just-in-time market?

It is vital that we balance the benefits of a global, interconnected market with sustainable local economies. Demonstrating our commitment to sustainability at a

local level, we have established a circular economy work stream within Scottish Government. A circular economy is focused on keeping products and materials in high value use for as long as possible, benefitting the environment, the economy and communities. Our enterprise agencies will continue to work with Scottish companies to deliver sustainable local economies and communities.

The Scottish Government recognises the fundamental importance of our land in relation to local economies. The way it is owned, managed and used influences the resilience and sustainability of local economies and communities. We are continuing to implement the measures in the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2016, which promotes responsible, diverse land ownership, and address issues of fairness, equality and social justice connected to ownership, access, and use of land. We have, this year, extended the right to buy to include land in order to further sustainable development. We expect to complete the passage of secondary legislation to establish a Register of Persons Holding a Controlled Interest in Land later this fiscal year. As part of our commitment to optimising the role that our land plays in local communities, we have asked the Scottish Land Commission to develop advice and recommendations in several key areas, including: how Scotland can transform its approach to vacant and derelict land to serve the public interest; the scale and concentration of land ownership; and the establishment of the much anticipated Regional Land Use Partnerships.

28. How will lessons learned on resilience (or lack of resilience) in the food system be used as part of a green recovery from Covid-19?

The Rural Economy & Connectivity Committee considered food security and the resilience of our food systems during Stage 2 of the Agriculture (Retained EU Law and Data) (Scotland) Bill on 17 June. The last 4 months have been a salutary lesson in the importance of food security, be that through questioning of global supply and availability of raw materials, considering the resilience of food manufacturing and distribution systems including import and export routes, understanding the particular challenges faced by rural and island communities, and even asking whether basic commodities will be on the shelves of supermarkets, and at what price.

As we begin to recover from the Covid pandemic, and prepare for the end of the Brexit transition period, government, industry and stakeholders alike need to consider the lessons from the last few months. The recovery plan that is being developed with Scotland Food & Drink is looking at themes including local food growth and home market opportunities, fairer and greener supply chains with greater reward for farmers, and export recovery and growth. The Farming & Food Production Future Policy Group has also been considering the effects of COVID-19 in their work.

29. What is the role of the circular economy in a green recovery?

The circular economy has an important role to play in our green recovery. Embracing the circular economy offers huge economic rewards for business and aligns with Scotland's low carbon ambitions. McKinsey Centre for Business & Environment say that adopting circular-economy principles could generate a net economic benefit of

€1.8 trillion by 2030 in the EU alone. Our work on the circular economy within the Scottish Government will include a focus on ensuring circular economy principles are included in our green recovery. For example, initiatives such as our ambitious Deposit Return Scheme for single-use drinks containers provide an opportunity to stimulate investment in high quality reprocessing as well as making more efficient use of materials.

30. With employment a central issue to social and economic recovery, what steps is the Scottish Government taking to align the education, skills and green recovery agenda?

There is no doubt that education, skills and jobs will be central to our green recovery. It will be vitally important that, as we manage the economic impacts of COVID-19, Scotland is equipped with the right skills to undertake the sustainable jobs of the future. This is important for all but particularly for our young people whose first experiences in the job market could be badly affected by the combined shock of COVID-19 and Brexit.

We are supporting our colleges and universities to make a key contribution to recovery. In particular, we are working with the Scottish Funding Council to support the sectors to maximise their expertise in digital technologies, in social and civic policy development, and in supporting industry towards a better connected, inclusive and greener recovery. Fundamental to this approach will be attempts to accelerate knowledge exchange and commercialisation, as well as supporting our universities to develop new tools, new processes and new solutions in support of recovery. And with the completion of Stage 1 in the development of the Climate Emergency Skills Action Plan we are working with Skills Development Scotland to ensure support for the skills that will accelerate our transition to a net zero carbon economy post COVID-19. As part of this work we will seek to align and maximise the college and university contribution in response to recommendations 11 and 12 of the AGER report. The AGER report includes a discussion from young people on the impact of the virus and the group stated that, alongside the negative consequences, there are opportunities in a switch to remote working, if young people are able to access them. They also highlighted the chance to promote active travel and reduce carbon emissions. .

31. How is the Scottish Government's own Strategic Research Programme, delivered by SEFARI, feeding into the recovery plan?

Experts funded through the Strategic Research Programme are contributing to the COVID-19 response, and will continue to inform recovery. I agreed on the 3rd April 2020 to extend the Scottish Government's Strategic Research Programme by one year because of the COVID-19 outbreak. It was due to be recommissioned currently and finish on 31st March 2021, but has been extended until 31st March 2022. This was to ensure delivery of the programme in the face of laboratory closures, staff absences etc., as well as recognising the significant support that SEFARI members have given to the COVID-19 response, both delivering expertise in outbreak

modelling, and also laboratory equipment such as PCR machines to the NHS. The year's extension of the programme is worth around £46 million directly, with significant additional value as it supports scientific research and highly qualified and professional staff.

Through the programme there have already been several research projects launched directly on the COVID-19 response and aftermath, and more will be agreed over the next few months. Currently agreed research includes projects through CREW (Centre of Expertise in Waters) on COVID-19 in wastewater, and its potential use in assisting with COVID-19 monitoring. Climate Exchange (CXC) have agreed a project called Climate change behaviours in the recovery from COVID-19, and Scotland's Rural College (SRUC) and the James Hutton Institute are working on a project called 'Understanding the Rural Response to COVID-19,' expected to report by end September.