



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Official Report

RURAL AFFAIRS, CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Wednesday 29 April 2015

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RURAL AFFAIRS, CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
15th Meeting 2015, Session 4

CONVENER

*Rob Gibson (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP)

DEPUTY CONVENER

*Graeme Dey (Angus South) (SNP)

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

*Claudia Beamish (South Scotland) (Lab)

*Sarah Boyack (Lothian) (Lab)

*Alex Fergusson (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con)

*Jim Hume (South Scotland) (LD)

*Angus MacDonald (Falkirk East) (SNP)

*Michael Russell (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)

*Dave Thompson (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP)

*attended

THE FOLLOWING ALSO PARTICIPATED:

Rebecca Bell (Clackmannanshire Council)

Neil Deasley (Scottish Environment Protection Agency)

Grant Ferguson (Edinburgh Napier University)

Bruce Kiloh (Strathclyde Partnership for Transport)

Neil Kitching (Scottish Enterprise)

Richard Lochhead (Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Food and Environment)

Jenny Neville (Scottish Ambulance Service)

David Palmer (Scottish Government)

Julie Robertson (Glasgow City Council)

David Seath (Police Scotland)

David Tulett (Scottish Government)

Chris Wood-Gee (Sustainable Scotland Network)

CLERK TO THE COMMITTEE

Lynn Tullis

LOCATION

The Robert Burns Room (CR1)

Scottish Parliament

Rural Affairs, Climate Change and Environment Committee

Wednesday 29 April 2015

[The Convener opened the meeting at 10:02]

Decision on Taking Business in Private

The Convener (Rob Gibson): Good morning and welcome to the 15th meeting in 2015 of the Rural Affairs, Climate Change and Environment Committee. I remind everybody that their mobile phones should not be on, but I should point out that committee members are using tablets for the day's business.

Agenda item 1 is a decision on taking business in private. Do members agree to consider our work programme in private at our next meeting?

Members *indicated agreement.*

Subordinate Legislation

Scottish Marine Regions Order 2015 [draft]

10:02

The Convener: Agenda item 2 is consideration of the draft Scottish Marine Regions Order 2015. The instrument has been laid under the affirmative procedure, which means that the Parliament must approve it before the provisions can come into force. Following the evidence session, the committee will, under agenda item 3, be invited to consider the motion to approve the order.

I welcome to the meeting Richard Lochhead, the Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Food and Environment, and his supporting staff, who are David Palmer, Ian Vickerstaff and David Tulett. Do you wish to speak to the order, Richard?

Richard Lochhead (Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Food and Environment): I do, convener. Thank you very much.

Good morning. As members will see, I have brought a number of colleagues with me to help with some of the order's technical aspects and some unusual phrases that you might find.

The committee will know that we recently adopted Scotland's first ever national marine plan. The next step, which is to take forward regional planning as part of that process, allows local ownership and decision making on specific issues out to 12 nautical miles.

The draft order designates 11 Scottish marine regions and identifies their boundaries. That needs to happen to ensure that regional marine planning can be delegated to the bodies that will form the marine planning partnerships. Finalising the draft order has taken some time, because we have had to carry out two rounds of consultation and because of the complexities of establishing marine boundaries, the yearly use of co-ordinates and how those things are joined up.

All Scottish marine regions must be part of the Scottish marine area, which is of course defined in the Marine (Scotland) Act 2010. It is bounded by the mean high-water spring tides of Scotland, the boundaries provided by the Scottish Adjacent Waters Boundary Order 1999 and the seaward limit of the territorial sea, which is commonly referred to as the 12-nautical-mile limit. Under the 1999 order, which is a United Kingdom order made under the Scotland Act 1998, boundaries have been drawn to determine which areas of the UK's internal waters and territorial sea are, for the purposes of the 1998 act, defined as part of Scotland.

However, recent mapping shows that those boundaries do not actually extend to the mean high-water spring tides at the border between Scotland and England. On the east coast, the boundary extends to the mean low-water spring tides, while on the west coast, the first co-ordinate under the 1999 order is now some distance from the border between Scotland and England, where it runs through the middle of the River Esk and the mouth of the River Sark. The distance between those points is now about 200m, which was not the case when the 1999 order was made. In effect, there is a 200m gap in the Scotland-England border.

I have recently written to Elizabeth Truss, the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, seeking a review of the 1999 order for two reasons. The first is to address the inconsistency of some 6,000 square miles between the North Sea boundary between Scotland and England on the east coast under the 1999 order and the previous boundary that had been established under the Civil Jurisdiction (Offshore Activities) Order 1987. The committee might remember that Parliament has debated the difference between these two boundaries on several occasions, including in its early days.

I have also written to the secretary of state to address a technical issue in relation to the boundary on the west coast that has arisen because of the change in the course of the River Esk that I have referred to, which is the result of natural processes since the 1999 order was made. The issue on the west coast was also recognised by the Delegated Powers and Law Reform Committee in its recent consideration of the order that we are discussing today, but it is important to note that the committee did not raise any legal issues with the order itself.

The extent of the Solway and the Forth and Tay Scottish marine regions in those two areas is that of the Scottish marine area as provided for in the 2010 act. It is not the function of the order that we are discussing today to determine the boundaries in these areas, which can be achieved only by amending the 1999 order.

Article 1 of the draft order sets out the details of the co-ordinates system and lines used in determining those boundaries, and those co-ordinates are expressed in terms of latitude and longitude and use the same projection as in the 1999 order. In the draft order's remaining articles, the regions themselves and their boundaries are described in a clockwise rotation, starting from the Solway, working around the coast of Scotland and ending with the Forth and Tay region.

The order is essential in establishing the 11 marine regions and thereby making possible the delegation of regional marine planning functions to

marine planning partnerships and the preparation and adoption of statutory regional marine plans. It will take some time to set up the marine planning partnerships and develop marine plans for all 11 regions; indeed, it will be an evolving process that will be taken forward in phases. Clyde and Shetland will be the first marine planning partnerships, but they can be created only after the establishment of marine regions by this order.

I hope that that introduction gives some background—I have tried not to make it too technical—and I am happy to take the committee's questions on the various issues that I have raised.

The Convener: Members have a number of questions. I will start off.

The setting of the boundaries is part of the process of establishing the way in which marine regions will be administered. What discussions have you had with the bodies that are going to administer the areas to ensure that they have the competences and skills to be able to manage them? Obviously that is something that will follow on.

I should also say that the marine borders that the Government has set are novel. I understand their onshore aspect, but some questions might be raised about the placing of boundaries between certain islands and the mainland and so on.

Richard Lochhead: First, it is worth pointing out that there have been two rounds of consultation in previous years. The first was on the concept of regional planning as part of the 2010 act and on establishing marine regions, and the second was on what the regions should be, how many there should be and what they should look like. We have concluded that there should be 11 such regions in Scotland, and that has broadly been agreed by the stakeholders and the people who responded to the consultations.

I do not deny that expertise is clearly an issue, but, as I said in my opening remarks, we are taking a phased approach to establishing the marine planning partnerships that will do the work. For that reason, the first two that we will establish are the Clyde and Shetland regions, where there is existing expertise, and they are on board for blazing the trail and being in the vanguard. We are confident that, with that expertise, those two regions—two out of the 11—will get under way in 2015, once we have gone through various processes and depending on the committee's view of the draft order before it today. I also point out that, when the committee and I previously discussed the national marine plan for Scotland, I gave a commitment that local authorities and other bodies will have a role in ensuring that we can build up expertise, and Marine Scotland is clearly taking that role seriously.

The Convener: I notice that some offshore islets on the north coast of Scotland have been associated with Orkney rather than with the nearer coast, which is the north coast of my constituency, and the north coast marine area. Why has that arrangement been made? I can understand why other ones have been associated with the Western Isles, but I am surprised that those areas have been joined to Orkney.

Richard Lochhead: I will ask David Palmer to answer that, as he has been involved in the detailed discussions with local authorities and other agencies.

David Palmer (Scottish Government): Our understanding is that those islands are actually part of Orkney, which is why we have included them in that region.

The Convener: I see. That is very interesting,

Richard Lochhead: Did you think that those islands were included in your constituency, convener? I am not sure whether you are having a land grab in Caithness and Sutherland, but I will not interfere too much if you are.

The Convener: There we go. Are they part of the same local government area as Orkney?

David Palmer: I guess so. That is my understanding.

The Convener: I would like an answer to the question, if that is possible, so that we can sort out this little matter.

Richard Lochhead: You might be able to pass some of your constituency casework to the local member for Orkney.

The Convener: I most certainly will. I suspect that, since nobody lives on those islands, any planning for the area will involve fishing development and so on.

Claudia Beamish (South Scotland) (Lab): I want to press the cabinet secretary further on the convener's question about resource implications. Has the Scottish Government itself or Marine Scotland set aside additional funds to support the implications of the roll-out? I take the point about there being expertise in the two pilot areas—I accept that in good faith—but I am concerned about the lack of knowledge in some local authorities and among stakeholders and as a result about the implications for support and training. Can you detail any additional funding that is going towards that?

Richard Lochhead: Marine Scotland does not have a dedicated fund in that respect, but its budget is being used to take forward everything that flows from the Marine (Scotland) Act 2010, including events that have been held in the past and anything that needs to be done to ensure that

we can work with local authorities and agencies to put appropriate training in place. No doubt that will continue in future. I cannot give Claudia Beamish specific budget headings for that, but I assure her that the Marine Scotland budget is being used in a general sense to do anything that needs to be done.

As this is an evolving process, it is difficult to say exactly what will have to be done to get us where we want to be by a particular time. After all, there are no set target dates for establishing the 11 marine regions. At the moment, we are focusing on the first two, which are keen and enthusiastic about getting established and moving forward and which have the expertise. Across the other nine regions, there are various levels of expertise. As you will know, there are different levels of activity in different parts of our marine area. Where there is a history of, say, aquaculture, those local authorities will have a certain level of expertise, but in other areas of Scotland that have little marine activity, it might be some years down the line before the marine regions get established. That said, although this is an evolving process, we are in constant contact with the potential partners in the marine partnerships to ensure that we understand their needs.

Claudia Beamish: For the record, having taken some soundings from a local councillor and others in the Solway area—and without going into any more detail—I would like to say that I am content with the changes to the boundaries.

Richard Lochhead: That is good. I should tell the committee that, in considering what to do in the Solway, we had to turn to the treaty of York of 1237, which a very good king of Scotland, Alexander II, and Henry III of England helpfully signed to establish the borders between Scotland and England.

The Convener: Mr Russell has a point about that.

10:15

Michael Russell (Argyll and Bute) (SNP): Mr Lochhead is correct, except that the treaty did not establish that, as it was subject to considerable revision later on.

The serious point is this: how do you resolve the issue? The issue of the boundary between Scotland and England might not seem particularly serious in relation to marine regions, but it is serious in relation to where the law and planning processes will apply. You do not seem to have a proposal on how you will resolve that. Therefore, how will you resolve it? You are speaking to the UK Government, but what is the basis of the resolution that you are seeking?

Richard Lochhead: The Scottish Adjacent Waters Boundary Order 1999 was established under the Scotland Act 1998. Therefore, as the Parliament is bound to the Scotland Act 1998, we have to use that order in determining our boundaries. On the Solway, the 1999 order clearly used as the boundary the mid-point of the two rivers the Sark and the Esk, but that mid-point moves. I am not sure whether the committee has access to the maps but, by looking at the maps over even the past 10 or 15 years, one can compare where the mid-point of the two rivers was with where it is now and see that it has moved substantially. The 1999 order does not account for that and, as a result, a 200m gap has appeared.

We are asking for the 1999 order to be revised to take that into account. The order should give a geographical description stating that, wherever the mid-point may be is where the boundary joins up. That would account for any future movement of the mid-point of the rivers.

On the east coast, if I recall correctly, one of the first debates that the Parliament had in 1999—indeed, it was the first debate that I spoke in—was on the boundary order, which was put forward in 1999 for devolution. The Civil Jurisdiction (Offshore Activities) Order 1987 was ignored and a new boundary was established, which in effect removed 6,000 square miles of waters from Scottish jurisdiction. Since then, there have been attempts to persuade various UK Governments to revisit the 1999 order, but that has not happened. Because of the new issue, however minor it may be, we are using the opportunity to again ask for a revision of the 1999 order.

Michael Russell: To be absolutely clear, on the east coast, the proposal is to revert to the 1987 order and, on the west coast, the proposal is to set global positioning system co-ordinates of where the line was in 1999 and to hold those as fixed points, rather than to allow a moving point, which is the mid-point, as that has changed. There will be GPS co-ordinates based on where the fixed point was in 1999, and that is where you want the official boundary to be drawn. Is that correct?

Richard Lochhead: Effectively, yes. I will bring in colleagues who are experts on establishing the co-ordinates.

David Tulett (Scottish Government): I am not sure that Mr Russell is correct. My understanding is that we want a geographical description rather than co-ordinates. The problem has arisen because co-ordinates were specified, and the mid-point of the river has since moved away from those co-ordinates.

Michael Russell: If we have GPS co-ordinates of where the boundary is, that is fixed for all time, is it not?

David Tulett: It would be, if that was what was chosen.

Michael Russell: Okay. It would surely be better to have a fixed decision rather than something that could change again.

Richard Lochhead: We are looking at the interaction between the marine boundary and the existing Scotland-England boundary. There is interaction between those two boundaries.

Michael Russell: They should be the same.

Richard Lochhead: What you are saying is a potential option. We are saying that, because at the moment the point that is used shifts over time, and the 1999 order does not account for that, we are left with a gap.

Michael Russell: It would be better to have a fixed boundary, would it not?

Richard Lochhead: In the Marine Regions Order 2015, we are closing that gap. In terms of revising the 1999 order, we have to find a way, through negotiation, to ensure that, should the sands shift in the future, that does not leave a gap between the marine boundary and the Scotland-England boundary.

Michael Russell: Which would imply that you need a fixed point.

Alex Fergusson (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con): No.

Richard Lochhead: It depends how you define—

Michael Russell: Sorry, but Mr Fergusson and I will now debate this issue between ourselves.

The Convener: Sarah Boyack has a question. Is it on this point?

Sarah Boyack (Lothian) (Lab): It is on a boundaries issue but not this exact point, so perhaps you can come back to me later.

The Convener: We will come back to you. Mr Fergusson?

Alex Fergusson: I picked up from the cabinet secretary's earlier remarks that the intention was to find a solution that took account of a shifting boundary in future. A fixed point surely would not, as Mr Russell intimates it would, have that effect. Can you clarify for me your thinking on the matter?

Richard Lochhead: Our thinking is that it would make sense to have a geographical description. Two boundaries are hitting each other: the marine boundary and the existing Scotland-England boundary. The marine boundary was established by the 1999 order and the other boundary was established as the mid-point of the two rivers. Where the co-ordinate in the 1999 order meets a

previous mid-point of the two rivers, then the co-ordinate becomes defunct. The mid-point has shifted because the sands have shifted, which has left a gap between the boundaries. It seemed to us that the easiest way of resolving the problem would be to still have a fixed point but one that would be wherever the mid-point of the two rivers happens to be.

Alex Fergusson: But that will not be a fixed point from the GPS point of view, will it?

Richard Lochhead: Not from the 1999 order, no.

Michael Russell: We may be making heavy weather of this, but it seems to be a fairly important point. The setting of a boundary as being the mid-point of two rivers is perfectly understandable when people thought that the rivers did not move very much and they looked out with their spyglass and said "That's where it's to be." However, if we have the capability of setting the mid-point by using satellite technology, surely it would be best simply to have the line defined by exactly where we believe the boundary to be and to have been, and that would be the end of the matter. Otherwise, we are going to come back to this in a few years' time.

Richard Lochhead: Clearly, we are asking for a revision of the 1999 order. There are two issues: one on the east coast and one on the Solway. Who knows where the negotiation with the UK Government will go? However, we are not proposing to reopen the 1237 treaty of York, which established the common-law border between Scotland and England. Of course, that border is one of the two boundaries that we are discussing, while the other is the marine boundary. The point that I am making is that the 1999 marine order fixed a point where the previous mid-point of the two rivers concerned was but that that has now shifted and the co-ordinate has left a gap of 200m.

The Convener: Now we know that, as "Sark runs over the Solway sands", they are shifting sands and that somehow or other we have to pin down the boundary.

Richard Lochhead: If only Alexander II or Henry III had thought about their own Scottish adjacent waters boundary order, we could have had this sorted.

Sarah Boyack: I, too, have a boundaries and borders question, but it is not about lines on a map, per se. This discussion has flushed out the fact that we have to think about time, space and depth, and that in the marine environment that is not as easy as negotiations about lines on maps.

My boundaries question is not about national boundaries, although we have had a good debate

on that, but about regional boundaries. I have looked at maps in the context of discussions about regional boundaries between planning authorities. However, in the marine context, the cross-boundary discussions between those in charge of the different regional areas will become more important and I want to flag that up as an issue for the future.

The Government's selection of Shetland and the Clyde as our two starter points for marine regions is intelligent, but it begs questions about boundaries between the north and south of the Clyde, for example. The convener's questions earlier about the islands off the north of Scotland—for example, in Orkney—were quite interesting. However, we can see from looking around the map that there will be cross-boundary issues that need to be factored in for the future.

It is not about where the boundaries lie but more about activities and species that will cross boundaries and not remain in one regional area. It is about factoring in some kind of protocols or that will be a big issue at the start. The Government needs to think through how organisations in different areas will be required to relate to each other over time and have regular discussions.

Richard Lochhead: That is a very fair point from Sarah Boyack. As the process evolves and more regions are established, our intention will be to ensure that they work closely together.

Sarah Boyack: That is important at the UK level as well, but my concern is primarily interregion within Scotland.

The Convener: I think that we are talking about two or three areas where there are several local authorities, such as the Tay and Forth area—whatever that is called—and the one between Highland, Moray and Aberdeenshire, in the Moray Firth. There will be a need for that co-ordination. However, the boundaries have been proposed.

As there are no further questions, we move to agenda item 3, which is consideration of motion S4M-12904. The committee is asked to recommend that the draft Scottish Marine Regions Order 2015, which is an affirmative instrument, be approved. The motion can be debated for as long as we like, or at least for up to 90 minutes, although we hope that it will not take that long. Debating it for 1,237 minutes is out of the question.

I start the formal process by asking the cabinet secretary to speak to and move the motion.

Richard Lochhead: Thank you, convener. Although I am tempted to use the 90 minutes to continue my debate with Michael Russell on how to establish the Scotland-England border—

Michael Russell: I am happy to do so.
[Laughter.]

Richard Lochhead: —I will forgo that opportunity.

I thank members of the committee for their questions and reiterate that we are keen for regional marine planning to be bottom up and for local decision making to be built into the process as much as possible, albeit within the context of the national marine plan that has been adopted. It is clearly important to establish the boundaries of the marine regions to allow us then to establish the marine planning partnerships and allow that process to kick off. I thank the committee for its time.

I move,

That the Rural Affairs, Climate Change and Environment Committee recommends that the Scottish Marine Regions Order 2015 [draft] be approved.

The Convener: I would just like to say that there are clearly urgent issues in many places and the marine partnerships need to be set up and to become active. It is clear to me that, in areas that I represent, we have incursions by scallop dredging and things like that, which are already agitating many people. They want to see the process moving quickly, and we wish you every success in getting the authorities, especially where there are several, to work together speedily.

Does anyone else wish to make any points?

Members: No.

The Convener: Does the cabinet secretary wish to wind up?

Richard Lochhead: I thank the committee for its co-operation.

Motion agreed to.

The Convener: I thank Richard Lochhead and his officials. We will convey the information to the Parliament.

10:27

Meeting suspended.

10:34

On resuming—

Mandatory Public Sector Climate Reporting

The Convener: Our fourth agenda item is the taking of oral evidence on the Scottish Government's consultation on mandatory public sector climate reporting. We are joined by a panel of stakeholders, whom I welcome to the meeting. I say for everyone's benefit that the sound is controlled automatically; it is not necessary to press buttons. You will be brought into the discussion as I see fit. Please indicate that you wish to speak by raising your hand—you do not need to shout out. I am sure that you are all dying to contribute.

I ask all the witnesses to say who they are and what organisation they represent.

Bruce Kiloh (Strathclyde Partnership for Transport): Thanks very much, convener. I thank the committee for having us here. I am head of policy and planning at Strathclyde partnership for transport, which is the regional transport partnership for the west of Scotland.

Sarah Boyack: I am a Labour list member for Lothian.

Neil Kitching (Scottish Enterprise): I work in the strategy team in Scottish Enterprise.

Dave Thompson (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP): I am the MSP for Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch.

Grant Ferguson (Edinburgh Napier University): I am from Edinburgh Napier University.

Claudia Beamish: I am an MSP for South Scotland and the shadow minister for environment and climate change.

Jenny Neville (Scottish Ambulance Service): I am from the Scottish Ambulance Service.

Michael Russell: I am the MSP for Argyll and Bute, and I am abnormally obsessed with the treaty of York.

David Seath (Police Scotland): I am from Police Scotland.

Chris Wood-Gee (Sustainable Scotland Network): I am from the sustainable Scotland network.

Alex Fergusson: I am the MSP for Galloway and West Dumfries. I apologise for being late.

Julie Robertson (Glasgow City Council): I am from sustainable Glasgow in Glasgow City Council.

Jim Hume (South Scotland) (LD): I am an MSP for South Scotland.

Rebecca Bell (Clackmannanshire Council): I am a sustainability officer at Clackmannanshire Council.

Angus MacDonald (Falkirk East) (SNP): I am the MSP for Falkirk East.

Neil Deasley (Scottish Environment Protection Agency): I am the sustainability manager with the Scottish Environment Protection Agency.

Graeme Dey (Angus South) (SNP): I am the MSP for Angus South.

The Convener: I am the convener of the committee and the MSP for Caithness, Sutherland and Ross.

We will kick off the questions. Not everyone need answer. As I said, witnesses should just indicate if they wish to respond.

Graeme Dey: Good morning. What are your experiences of the current approach to climate change reporting? Could it be improved?

Chris Wood-Gee: Local authorities have been doing Scotland's climate change declaration reporting for the past six or seven years. The new mandatory reporting is very much based on that. We have found it useful because it includes things such as the carbon reduction commitment figures and what we find out through our energy billing systems, and it gives us an opportunity to look at what is happening across the wider region. The climate change declaration reporting process has been extremely useful in helping us to quantify what we are doing. We have faced many interesting challenges to do with data accuracy and so on, but the process has evolved. At the moment, we have a relatively stable format to report to.

Neil Deasley: I will give the SEPA perspective. We have been reporting voluntarily for some considerable time. Over that time, our process has evolved considerably and we have got better and more efficient at it. Reporting helps us to understand where we need to prioritise our efforts and focus our resources when it comes to reducing our emissions; it helps us to pinpoint where we should target our effort. A good example is that it has enabled us to understand our transport and travel emissions, which gives us the ability to target particular sectors or particular parts of the organisation that produce those emissions so that we can drive down those emissions and the associated costs.

For us, the reporting that we having been doing for the past 16 years has been very helpful, although I agree with Chris Wood-Gee that there

are many challenges—in particular, to do with getting the right data in the right format so that it can be used and understood.

The Convener: We want to develop that point as we proceed.

Graeme Dey: I guess that my initial question had a subtext: how seriously do you all take climate change reporting?

Grant Ferguson: Universities do the national mandatory reporting every year on scopes 1, 2 and 3, but we also have our own internal targets and carbon management plans. The sector certainly takes climate change reporting seriously. It is in our university strategy that sustainable ethical environments should be supported and driven. We believe that having an outside view on where others are is very important in order that we can learn from others.

To answer your question, I say that climate change reporting is very important to us.

Jenny Neville: The Scottish Ambulance Service certainly takes climate change reporting seriously. As has already been said, trying to collate all the data is quite challenging at the moment, and we probably recognise that we have a bit of a way to go to achieve what is proposed in the papers.

Bruce Kiloh: I agree absolutely with what everybody has said. The matter is very simple from SPT's point of view: it is about reducing our emissions and ensuring that we reduce our carbon output, but it is also about saving money and getting that message across. We have certainly tried to do that.

Chris Wood-Gee mentioned the carbon reduction commitment. That is a classic example of something that we can put a monetary value on. The efforts that an organisation makes to reduce its carbon output will reduce costs to it. It is very simple.

SPT has a carbon management plan and a target. We are taking forward a lot of initiatives, for example on ground-source heat pumps, work with Glasgow Caledonian University on what can be done with excess water that comes out of our subway system, and various other initiatives.

Regional transport partnerships including SPT take climate change reporting very seriously for those very basic reasons.

Julie Robertson: Glasgow City Council finds reporting to be a very useful and important tool for raising awareness within the organisation. Obviously, reporting is taken very seriously. We have to go through a variety of frameworks and get committee approval to sign off the process, so it really gets awareness to the very highest level.

The most recent reporting declaration had a lot more questions around climate adaptation. I definitely feel that it was very helpful for us in raising awareness of adaptation. Climate mitigation has been well covered, so a focus on adaptation helps to push that agenda much further forward.

David Seath: Police Scotland is a relatively new organisation, and we are still pulling together a lot of the restructuring. Nevertheless, we have introduced a carbon management plan. We have some experience of voluntary reporting, so reporting is not completely new to us, but there were previously 10 separate organisations, so it is difficult to get a standard across the country. One of our intentions is to ensure that we are consistent throughout the whole of Scotland.

We have no reservations about the need to report. We are signed up to it right up to executive level in the organisation and in the Scottish Police Authority. Everyone considers it to be of critical importance.

Graeme Dey: I want to be clear on that, Mr Seath. Does the carbon management plan take account of the impact of operational changes in Police Scotland? I will give an example. In the area that I represent, we have seen criminal investigation department, garage and traffic police relocated to Dundee away from Angus. Obviously, that has either a positive or a negative carbon impact. We see officers being moved about all over the division—that will be common to many parts of Scotland. Is that taken into account when you measure your carbon impact?

David Seath: Absolutely. We measure all dimensions of the carbon impact, not just what is done in our premises. It is about how we move about and police the country. We measure everything that it is possible to measure.

We are perhaps struggling a little bit in the scope 3 areas, but we certainly have no issue with scopes 1 and 2. Part of our strategy is to rationalise a lot of what we do in order to get the benefits of the 10 organisations coming together. Therefore, that is factored into our calculations.

Graeme Dey: When were the baseline figures for the measurement established?

David Seath: That was done in the last financial year. We took that baseline because that was our first year coming into—

Graeme Dey: When will we see figures on your progress?

David Seath: There will be figures in the pilot year. We will report on the previous year so that we can see how we have got on in comparison with the targets that we have set. Like most organisations, we will meet the requirements by

2020—we have a plan to get there and we know what we need to do each year to do that. Sometime this year, we will be able to report back on last year; the baseline is the previous year.

10:45

Graeme Dey: Will the information be broken down to divisional level or will it just be a national picture?

David Seath: We are holding information only at national level at the moment, but I am sure that we could provide reasonable variations if we were asked to do so.

Graeme Dey: Thank you. That would be useful.

Rebecca Bell: I echo what my colleague from Glasgow said; Clackmannanshire Council also takes its climate change reporting very seriously. I have been compiling the reports for the past six or seven years. There have been six reports in total, and they go through our committee process before they are submitted. Like most of the other public bodies that are represented here, we have a carbon management plan, and we have a sustainability and climate change strategy, which is our way of trying to address the duties on public bodies.

The Convener: Is it easier to draw things together in a smaller council than it is in, say, Glasgow City Council?

Rebecca Bell: It is possibly easier, given that there is only ever one person that I need to talk to in order to get the information. In relation to how data are gathered through water bills and so on, I imagine that the systems are the same. There is probably not much difference, in that sense.

Julie Robertson: Glasgow City Council has been reporting since 2008 and has got to the point at which we have a fairly set structure for gathering data. It can be difficult given the sheer number of people we have to go through, but we are pretty much there.

Neil Kitching: Scottish Enterprise already reports our carbon emissions and we have a carbon reduction target to 2020. The introduction of mandatory reporting will increase consistency across the public sector and, more important, it will increase awareness and the profile of the work. It is easy to set up a carbon plan and carbon reporting, but interest in it can fade away. Mandatory reporting will push it right back up to the top managers and leaders.

Claudia Beamish: Good morning. I represent the committee on the public sector climate leaders forum—I am an observer, although I am allowed to speak occasionally—and I have followed with interest the developments towards the position

that the Scottish Government now has on the consultation. What is your view of the proposals to introduce mandatory reporting?

Neil Deasley: Our position is clear: we support the proposal and the elements within it. Through our involvement in the climate leaders forum and the officers group that supports it, we have been active in working with partners to help to develop the proposal, so we are supportive. For us, it is a logical next step from 16 years of voluntarily reporting to move towards more consistent mandatory reporting. We are absolutely supportive of the process and we will actively participate in the pilot of the proposal for the current reporting year.

Rebecca Bell: Clackmannanshire Council also supports the concept of mandatory reporting, because it is likely to prompt more climate change activity in organisations, because it is a way of recognising and celebrating the progress that they have made and because it is a way of identifying areas of weakness and tailoring support to them. Reporting will probably require additional time and resources, but in the long term it will lead to improvements in how we handle climate change.

My other point is that analysing the reports is probably the most important thing. We need to ensure that we are reporting for a purpose, which is to improve the way in which we tackle climate change.

The Convener: There are interrelated questions here. We are talking about mandatory reporting and reporting in general.

Rebecca Bell raised the interesting point that the discussions probably increased the number of ideas about how we could reduce emissions by public bodies and that is where we have to be focusing. Is the reporting—and discussing it—what changes people's behaviour or are there other factors?

Michael Russell: I am particularly interested in Rebecca Bell's remark that reporting will prompt more climate change activity within organisations and in the specific ways that individuals within organisations will be driven to change what they do because of the reporting process. This is a hearts and minds issue, but it is also a practical issue in terms of actions that individuals take within organisations—universities, the Scottish Ambulance Service, the police and so on. I am interested in hearing about that.

The Convener: We will make a wee addition to what Mike Russell said so that you get a rounded picture.

Graeme Dey: Mike Russell is right about changing behaviour within organisations. What impact are actions having on changing the

behaviour of your workforces as individuals? The organisations that you represent employ considerable numbers of people. The committee is focused very much on behavioural change being behind what we need to achieve as a country. Organisations demonstrate how important action is, but are you beginning to see evidence that your workforces, as individuals outwith the workplace, are changing their behaviour?

Chris Wood-Gee: Reporting will help us to deliver more on the ground and it will bring the issue to the attention of senior management and to our members. Dumfries and Galloway Council has very supportive members across all parties down in south-west Scotland, so that works very effectively. There are some really challenging issues—in particular, adaptation, for which the decision cycle will be well out of line with political cycles. Things are going to happen in 30, 40 or 50 years that we need to take account of and start to plan for now. That will be a challenge.

As regards what we do practically, we run a cultural change programme and we have carbon champions. We have about 7,000 staff. We do an annual survey to see where we are and whether people are taking account of climate change. Over the past few years, the level of awareness of staff has risen: we are running at about 90-odd per cent at the moment, which is fantastic and is much better than we originally anticipated. In fact, we have had to change the metric slightly to maintain that level because we were getting to nearly 100 per cent.

We still need to do work on identifying exactly where we are. We are doing great on waste, we are doing pretty well on transport—we think, but we want to check the figures—and we are doing okay on buildings. However, we need to do a lot more.

It is about whether we go for renewables as a solution, or for techie fixes such as boiler controls and so on. There is a range of approaches. Trying to get our estate managers to focus on such things, as opposed to new build, for example, is quite a challenge. It is about trying to get action so embedded within the organisation that individuals remember that doing the simple things such as switching the lights off makes a big difference. Equally, it is about making sure that the investment programme looks at carbon.

This year, we are down about 6.5 per cent on our building emissions. We have lost about £500,000 off the budget as well, which is fantastic, but that is primarily down to oil prices, so that has had a positive financial impact for us this year but it is probably a short-term benefit.

We must try to take account of all the different factors from a whole range of different sources

and we must get the issue properly embedded within the organisation.

The Convener: Can I just clarify a point? You talked about 7,000 employees. Are you talking about Dumfries and Galloway Council or the sustainable Scotland network?

Chris Wood-Gee: I am an agent manager and sustainability officer for Dumfries and Galloway Council, so I am using the council as a day-to-day example. Across the sustainable Scotland network, we are probably talking about hundreds of thousands of people—well into six figures—from all the different authorities.

The Convener: We will develop that point with Julie Robertson, who is from a council where there are quite a lot of those people, and then with David Seath.

Julie Robertson: Again, I raise the point about reporting and how it keeps carbon high on the agenda in terms of mitigation and adaptation. Throughout Glasgow City Council, carbon mitigation has been a long-established process. A lot of work has gone on and is currently being done in that regard.

Regarding behaviour change among staff, we have energy awareness officers and we run campaigns about switching off lights and the many different things that people can do to reduce carbon. Reporting brings importance to that and keeps it high on the agenda. However, it has also lends us a lot of support for taking part in innovative adaptation initiatives. Glasgow City Council takes part in and is actively involved in progressing a regional adaptation strategy and action plan entitled climate-ready Clyde. The reporting gives us a bit of a push and influences the support for such innovative action that might be over and above what would be in a city council's realm.

As Chris Wood-Gee mentioned, it is not necessarily easy to combine the timescales of climate change action, which sometimes looks way into the future—30, 50 or 80 years—with political cycles. The reporting lends support for longer-term initiatives.

David Seath: There is a forum called the national police estates group, which involves all police forces throughout the United Kingdom. Part of its work has been to produce an eco-handbook that deals with environmental impact. The booklet is aimed at all staff, not just management staff, and it explains clearly what their contribution can be to improving the climate of the organisation. It gives some practical tips about what staff can do, including some of the things that we have just heard about.

We need to spread the message throughout the organisation that climate change action is not only for people who collect data, analyse data or produce information or reports, but for everybody.

Rebecca Bell: Reporting is likely to drive improved climate change action in two ways. First, there is the cliché that what gets measured gets managed. If reporting becomes mandatory and shines a light on what the organisations are doing on climate change, that is likely to sharpen people's focus, particularly among those who do not see climate change action as their job at the moment.

At Clackmannanshire Council, we will review our governance arrangements on climate change, which will really sharpen up how we are doing and how climate change action gets embedded throughout the organisation.

On behaviour change, the Sustainable Scotland Network has produced a basic e-learning module, which is available to the whole public sector. The module, which is aimed at all staff—not those whose jobs relate to climate change—concerns the duties and the science on climate change and gives suggestions about what staff can do to address it in their day-to-day jobs.

Grant Ferguson: I echo everything that has been said about the reporting side. It is the detail that gives the savings and progress, which we can then use to empower people and motivate them to continue their contribution. That is the important thing. The central control is what the techies do behind the scenes. The people who do the day-to-day work have control of the lights, but it is also about what they take home.

The eco-schools projects are coming through the primary and secondary schools. The students come into the higher and further education sectors and then go into industry. We hope that the cycle of learning about, awareness of and respect for the environment will continue, that they will take that to their employers and that it will contribute to the wider context.

Commuting is another aspect. We try to promote cycling—we are part of the cycling project in Edinburgh—and public transport. We try to get people to do as much as they can beyond our boundaries. That is a reputational gain for us—we teach it and we want to do it and be seen to do it—but it is also about making a contribution to Edinburgh more widely and the wider agenda.

Neil Deasley: I will give a practical example of how we translate the data into actions. We measure travel closely. Each year we pull together an awful lot of information to enable us to understand our transport and travel. That then enables us to set targets most years for reducing our transport and travel in particular sectors or

particular parts of the organisation, monitor those targets and put together carrots and sticks.

Starting with the carrots, that means ensuring that the right infrastructure is available for staff to do the right thing. Rolling out videoconferencing and a software package that we use called InterCall, which allows live file sharing across computers, allows people to do their business and to have meetings without needing to travel. That enables people to do the right thing, and it is much more convenient for staff.

Looking at this the other way round, that approach also enables us to identify where we need to be a little bit harder and to prevent what we might call bad behaviour. A good example of that is flights. We actively manage flights very closely now, to the point that they require a very senior manager's sign-off. That has enabled us to achieve a 95 per cent reduction.

11:00

The Convener: We have representatives of three big transport users coming up now: Bruce Kiloh, David Seath and Jenny Neville. I invite them to comment on those aspects.

Bruce Kiloh: I am delighted to hear that everybody is trying to do their bit for transport. That is what SPT is all about: we try to encourage people to use sustainable transport and active travel. We are delighted to have put considerable resources into that over the past few years, and we continue to do so. That includes subway modernisation and the fastlink bus scheme in Glasgow. We are delighted to do anything that we can to support organisations in moving towards more sustainable travel. As I said earlier, that is about reducing carbon emissions and saving money. On active travel, we all know that cycling is good for you; that point refers back to the earlier question.

It is important that organisations use reporting to reinforce the change. Over the past few years, we have found—as have others, I am sure—that it is very easy to get the low-hanging fruit, but we then get to the things that are harder to do. During the subway modernisation, we are changing the lights and doing all sorts of things. We are totally changing the way in which we operate that system. We are trying to embed environmental thought into that as we do it, and that is the tough bit.

If the reporting can assist with that, that is beneficial. In SPT, we are fortunate to have very supportive members and senior management, who try to build that into how we go about our business. That is about reinforcing change.

Any organisation that is serious about climate change should start from the bottom up with its workforce. Over the past year, we refreshed an initiative called, "Make it second nature." That appealed to the workforce not just as SPT employees but as individuals. People are a lot more educated now about climate change and the effect that it can have; that includes their energy bills at home. They are more appreciative. The initiative aimed to reinforce what people were hearing when they were at home when they were in their office or workplace. They could see the benefits within the organisation—saving money and energy makes more room for more jobs or more work. Also, they see a benefit in their house.

David Seath: I will add a bit to what I said earlier about who we require to educate. One of the key things that we say to staff is that they should take this home. They should not just stop at the workplace. They can make a considerable improvement to Scotland as a whole by doing at home the same things that we ask them to do at work and by applying those things to their home environment. We are keen to emphasise that.

On transport, we have roughly 3,500 vehicles running about Scotland. Sometimes it is difficult to say to people who have to respond to an emergency, "By the way, you've got climate change duties here, so can you take your foot off the gas, please? Your driving style doesn't suit." There is a conflict, and it is a question of how we balance that. There will be issues at times when we have to respond to emergencies, and climate change is perhaps a secondary consideration. However, that accounts for a minority of times when our vehicles are on the road. We are educating drivers about responsible driving.

We are introducing zero-emissions electric vehicles where we can. That, too, must go further than just the workplace—we need to take that outside the workplace, too.

The Convener: That is true. We could examine lots of those things in a great deal of detail but, at this stage, we have to take it on trust that we will be able to get more detail at some point in the future.

Jenny Neville, your vehicles have to travel fast.

Jenny Neville: On occasion, yes, they do. We have had a lot of similar initiatives to those that others have mentioned around estate adaptation, encouraging cycling schemes, videoconferencing and all those kinds of things. However, there is no doubt that the majority of our emissions are created by our vehicles, which respond to patient demand, whether that is accident and emergency or patient transport demand.

We have done quite a lot already in trying to use energy-efficient vehicles and in moving towards

vehicles that are compliant with the Euro 6 emissions standards. Obviously, there is a cycle time for doing that in that we have to retain our vehicles for a period of time and therefore replacing them is not something that we can do overnight.

What will probably help us the most to make an impact on our emissions in the future is the work that the Ambulance Service is doing to progress its new corporate strategy of taking the care to the patient in support of the Government's 2020 vision. If we can achieve a reduction in the number of patients that we take to hospital, that should, I imagine, reduce our mileage and the associated carbon emissions.

The Convener: Graeme Dey wants to ask a small supplementary question.

Graeme Dey: I am aware that the Scottish Ambulance Service is in discussions with the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service about co-location. Finance is one of the drivers, but is reducing your carbon footprint part of that as well?

Jenny Neville: Yes. That is certainly the case. We have co-located in a number of places round Scotland and actively look to continue doing so. That can be a difficult thing to achieve, because people have established estate and do not always have space. We are therefore looking at new build. We have taken that type of opportunity where possible, not just co-locating with the Fire and Rescue Service and the police but also with other health service partners, such as hospitals and general practices in certain parts of the country.

Sarah Boyack: I have a brief supplementary question, partly for Jenny Neville but I presume it applies round the table. It relates to the issue of procuring goods, services, vehicles or energy equipment from outwith your organisation. The challenge is to make sure that your staff members know not only what they need to procure but whether the private sector firms offering the services and goods that you buy are beginning to meet climate and carbon reduction targets. Is the position beginning to shift?

Jenny Neville: Yes, but more slowly than we would like. It can be difficult to ensure that staff have the skills to be able to assess the differences between the goods and services they are being offered in a consistent way. That is a challenge, and we probably have more to do.

We use quite a lot of items that come from collaborative contracts, therefore we are supported by the larger buying authorities that have more procurement resources. Where we contract on our own behalf, we are starting to put more evaluation criteria into the procurement process to pick up on those issues. We are

certainly addressing the matter, but there is more to do.

The Convener: I will bring in Claudia Beamish before anyone else, because I want to keep the discussion rolling.

Claudia Beamish: I note from the pie chart by source in the SPICe briefing that 67 per cent of emissions in the public sector come from buildings. It would be helpful to hear from the witnesses—briefly, please—how mandatory reporting will help to focus the minds of those organisations that do not so far report on buildings and whether there is good practice at the moment.

The Convener: I was going to ask whether anyone is against mandatory reporting. It seems not. That is good. I am glad that we have that on the record. What are you doing about the very large chunk on the pie chart that relates to the buildings? Does anyone want to make a particular point? Grant Ferguson has one of the most building-rich organisations.

Grant Ferguson: There are well-established practices. It is not the national organisations that are driving those but what has happened over the last decade on building improvements, technology changes and carbon investment. We have a ring-fenced carbon investment fund that self-finances. It pays for projects and the savings go back into the fund, which allows further investment. We have been able to save 35 per cent of our carbon emissions over the past five years. We are no different from anyone else.

Scope 1 and scope 2 are easier to record because everybody is doing that. Scope 3, which includes emissions from procurement, is the difficult bit. Ninety-nine per cent of the savings are in buildings and infrastructure, and the systems for buildings are well established. Carbon management plans have been in existence for many moons and they have driven the change. They detail what we are going to do, when we are going to do it and what we are going to invest, and they are publicly available on the internet.

David Seath: One of the key planks of our corporate strategy is to rationalise our estate, so we are evaluating all our properties across Scotland, and one of the factors that we consider as part of the evaluation is the carbon emissions that are associated with properties. It is not the only criterion that we use to decide whether we should retain a property or divest ourselves of it, but it is an important one. Because buildings are such a large contributor to greenhouse gas emissions, as has been pointed out, we need to tackle them first, and we should get the biggest hits there.

I return to the point about the carbon footprint from procurement. A model has been developed

for the police that will enable us to see exactly what our carbon footprint would be from procurement activities depending on what we purchase, with conversion factors for different commodities such as information and communication technology and uniforms. It is possible to come up with numbers for those things, and they are quite big numbers.

Neil Kitching: We lease nearly all our office properties, and most of the leases are now for five years. When we looked at our property estate, the first thing that we did was to upgrade all the lighting systems. They tend to have short paybacks of, say, 18 months to two years, so we can do that within a lease and benefit financially from it. Such things are the easy wins. The difficult things are, for example, boiler upgrades, which might have a seven or eight-year payback, and external wall insulation, which might have a 10 or 15-year payback. There is no financial case for us to upgrade our buildings within those parameters, and that is a bit of a stumbling block for us.

Neil Deasley: On the point about rationalisation, there are real opportunities for both carbon savings and financial savings. We have been rationalising our estate. We have moved from two buildings to one in Stirling and from three buildings to one in Lanarkshire.

The other point that I wanted to make is about opportunities for co-location, or sharing buildings, across the public sector. We have started to do that in a number of our buildings. In Aberdeen and Stirling we share with Scottish Natural Heritage, and in Perth we share with the Scottish Government. There are big opportunities to do more of that, and carbon savings and financial savings will flow from that.

The Convener: We will move on with a question from Jim Hume.

Jim Hume: Rebecca Bell said that we need time and resources and Jenny Neville said that we have a way to go. It would be interesting to hear from some of you how prepared your organisations are for mandatory reporting. What steps would you need to take to comply with the proposed reporting requirements?

David Seath: At the moment, we do no mandatory reporting. There is no requirement on us to do that, so we are starting from a zero base, and a steep climb will certainly be involved to ensure that we have resources in place to fulfil the expectation. I am not sure that we have sufficient resources to do that, because we do no such work at present and collecting a series of data beyond what we currently collect is not part of our plan.

The proposal will therefore impact on us, but we will have to face up to that and come up with a solution. The solution may well lie in contributions

from other organisations, if we can pull together and they can help us by showing us how things can be done more simply than we perhaps expect.

We do not get carbon information with anything that we are supplied with. An electricity bill does not say how many tonnes of CO₂ someone has used. We do not get that information from anything—someone has to calculate it. The issue is not just the analysis of the data but the information that we take out of that. The information part of the proposed report is key for me. What message are we trying to put out? How do we identify what needs to be done to make things even better than they are now?

11:15

Graeme Dey: I very much appreciate your candour, Mr Seath. To be clear, was it the case that, under the old police regime with the different forces, nothing was being done?

David Seath: No—that is not true. The only force that was caught by the carbon reduction commitment was Strathclyde. However, Strathclyde Police ceased to exist and Police Scotland came into effect and, in this round, there is no requirement for us to record carbon emissions. We will be caught in the next round, so the CRC will eventually come to us, but at the moment it does not apply.

Chris Wood-Gee: I guess that we are reasonably well prepared, because we are nearer to the local authority side. For a number of years, SSN has been involved in the climate change declaration reporting and heavily involved in developing the mandatory reporting. That is a resource that will help organisations such as Police Scotland. The fact that Police Scotland is now separate has created work challenges for us, because we are having to disaggregate it and the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service from our existing carbon management plan. However, we recognise that a lot of good work went on in the past in both those services.

There are resources that will help with data collection, such as the resource efficient Scotland service. SSN is very involved in helping the public sector across the piece to understand what the numbers mean. We analyse the reports that are produced at the moment. A report will be out shortly on the latest round of Scotland's climate change declaration reports.

Other agencies do similar things and resources are out there to support that. The area probably needs to develop further to ensure that we are all singing from the same song sheet and being fairly consistent in what we report.

Grant Ferguson: We are reasonably well placed to fill out the return. I have only one reservation. We are lucky enough to have a resource in the university to do such things—we have an energy manager and a sustainability team—because we are big enough and we want to do them. I suspect that there will be more of a challenge for organisations that do not report and for which this is the first time that they have had to do so. We do mandatory reporting and voluntary reporting—we are different.

The challenge that we will face is that we report on our financial and academic year, which is different from the reporting period. We report from 1 August to 31 July in everything that we do, apart from the CRC. We will have one set of statistics, and the proposal will involve another set of statistics, which will not marry up because they involve different reporting periods. Colleges, universities and some other organisations will have that challenge.

A lot of the statistics are available. The Achilles' heel is still procurement, which concerns the robustness of the data. We have gone through the Carbon Masters carbon standard and we have external validation of electric, gas and water use. That is all easy stuff.

Another reservation is about what the validation process means. We could collect the data, but the validation process could take as long, if not longer—it could easily be more than the 20 days.

It is important that we set a standard from year 1. There is nothing worse than getting a mandatory report that then changes. People set themselves up for delivery, then things come in. I understand that the process has to evolve, but there is nothing more galling than getting the systems ready and then having the goalposts shifted, when people have invested time that they could have done other things with.

I have raised a few points, but our university is well placed.

Rebecca Bell: Clackmannanshire Council is reasonably well geared up for the new reporting proposals, although the new format will require quite a bit more detail than the climate change declaration reporting does. My colleagues have advised me that most of that will be doable, although whether the information can be gathered together for this year or even next year is another matter. However, we will be able to work that out in time.

The only thing that it looks as if we will not be able to report on is our waste arising. As a local authority, Clackmannanshire Council collects waste across its area, and we measure and report on that to SEPA. However, we do not measure the waste arising from our estate, and I understand

that there is not sufficient capacity or resource to do that any time in the future.

Neil Deasley: We are lucky, as we start with a fairly mature reporting process. We hope that we will just need to reorientate what we do to fit the new requirements. That will require us to do some things that we have not done until now and to do differently some things that we do already. An implication is that we will probably need to reset the baselines for some of our targets as they migrate to the new system. Generally, however, we feel that we can take on board the new process and are prepared for it.

I echo the points that have been made about the need for support and about sharing good practice and learning. We need to share the journey for those of us who are coming at the issue from very different places. Support and capacity building are key.

We have externally validated each of our reports for the past 10 or 12 years. We get a third party to evaluate our claims and the data that we present not just so that we are absolutely on the money, robust and accurate but because that helps us to improve our process every year. Every time the review and validation process happens, we get better, because we get recommendations from a third party that has looked at how we operate. Over time, that gradually improves our process. We already do that and we will continue to do it, and we will fit it into the new template process.

The Convener: Is Bruce Kiloh's organisation getting better?

Bruce Kiloh: I think so and hope so. One thing that is for sure is that we will be ready to comply with whatever the Government comes out with. Grant Ferguson made the point that that might be a bit more of a challenge for smaller organisations. That is why it is important that, in introducing formal reporting requirements, the Scottish Government issues clear guidance to try to keep the system as simple as possible.

The Government should also offer as much training as possible. It should accept that, over the first year or couple of years, some organisations will have to be allowed to evolve their systems. The proposals talk about penalties, but there has to be a period to allow the system to bed in and to allow organisations to mainstream reporting and see how that settles down.

As I said, we need clear guidance from the Government and we need to keep the system simple and ensure that organisations such as ours can build on what is already there. The more the approach is similar to what was there previously, the better.

Julie Robertson: On resources, as I said, we have voluntarily reported since 2008, so the structures are there, although they might need slight tweaking. We see the proposal for validation as a potential slight stumbling block, as it could require additional resource and have cost implications, when there is perhaps not an identified budget. We would pick up on that. One of our recommendations is to go down the line of peer review, perhaps with some of our higher and further education establishments.

Bruce Kiloh made a point about guidance, which will be key, especially for organisations that have not done such reporting before.

Jim Hume: That was interesting. We have heard from the police that they are starting from zero and that they will need resources, but we have heard from Glasgow City Council that it has provided resources. What kind of resource was that? Was it financial resource, people or just a change of culture in the organisation?

Julie Robertson: I suppose that the resource is a combination of things. The organisation's culture has changed. However, resources might be needed for validation—there might be time and cost implications. A number of the data streams that are collated are already validated, so one consideration might be about the usefulness of an additional element of validation and the time that it might take to go through the process for us to be ready to report annually.

The Convener: That probably sums up quite a few people's jobs very well.

We move on to a question about training and support from Angus MacDonald.

Angus MacDonald: My question follows on from Jim Hume's question and picks up on Bruce Kiloh's point. I am curious to know whether you feel that support or training is needed in your respective organisations to allow you to comply with the proposed reporting requirement.

David Seath: There is absolutely no doubt about that. Given our current position, I cannot sit here and make a commitment that we would be able to report successfully without such support. I am not saying that we have zero resource, but we do not have a lot of resource. We want to be able to report smartly and as efficiently as possible, and we believe that that could be facilitated through training. If any training is out there, we would like to know where it is and how we can access it.

Bruce Kiloh: To pick up on something that Julie Robertson said, I add that expertise is available out there, but there is a finite resource—pardon the pun—for the expertise that organisations such as ours choose to buy in. If things get too complicated—for example, in relation to any

validation of our climate change reporting—and we have to spend more money on buying in expertise, there will be a resource implication.

When any new piece of mandatory reporting comes out, training is essential, even for organisations that feel that they are on the ball. The whole point of the reporting is to ensure consistency, so that people can look across different organisations and compare like with like. Training will be really important in getting that message across.

As I said, the question of resources arises. Organisations such as ours will closely monitor the situation. As mandatory reporting comes in, organisations such as ours and those that are represented round the table might be given the opportunity to feed back on how the climate change reporting is going and, beyond that, on resources, training, skills and expertise. Those things should be monitored as well as how we are performing on carbon reduction.

Rebecca Bell: I agree that support and guidance—particularly guidance on reporting standards—will be key.

I am sorry—I have forgotten the other point that I was going to make.

The Convener: We might well come to that point in a moment, but fair dos. You are right—guidance is a key issue.

Rebecca Bell: Absolutely. For organisations such as local authorities that have been reporting voluntarily for some years, the value will probably be in peer support such as that which the sustainable Scotland network offers, whereas those who are starting from scratch on reporting will need much more tailored support and training. After the year of trialling the new template and voluntary reporting using it, it will become clear where most support is needed, and that can be tailored.

Julie Robertson: Guidance will be essential to clarify terminology and, given the slight changes, to confirm what organisations should do and what is expected if data is not available, especially for the first round of reporting.

Another thing that will be essential, although perhaps not for Glasgow City Council, is a note on potential double counting. When more organisations are brought in, there is potential for crossover, and it is important to ensure that people do not report on each other's values.

Neil Deasley: I re-emphasise a point that I made earlier. There is a lot of expertise round the table and across the networks and bodies that we represent, and there is a genuine opportunity for us to work collaboratively on the journey that we are about to embark on with mandatory reporting.

Bruce Kiloh made a point about comparing like with like. That will be quite difficult, and in my view it is not necessarily desirable because, although we are all public bodies, we have very different functions and duties, which have implications for our emissions. We have different levels of control over those emissions, and we have different sizes and different geographical locations.

I therefore perhaps caution against the desire for like-for-like reporting. There is an opportunity for benchmarking for particular types of authorities, but we would caution against compiling a dreaded league table of performance.

11:30

Neil Kitching: I agree with Neil Deasley. Every public body has its own unique circumstances. The temptation will be for somebody to divide total emissions by the number of employees, but that would create a misleading picture.

In our response, we will suggest a new section in the guidance that enables people to briefly describe up front their organisational context. We would say that we have 1,000 employees, overseas offices through Scottish Development International, an industrial and commercial property estate and the Glasgow Science Centre subsidiary. The reader needs to know that before they look at our results.

The Convener: That is true. What Claudia Beamish wants to ask about follows on from that.

Claudia Beamish: I want to ask about the challenging issue of sanctions, penalties or whatever you want to call them. Obviously, there is awareness around the table and beyond that organisations are at different stages along their journeys. The committee would value comment on whether there is a need for sanctions in the future. If they are needed, what might a realistic timescale be for that?

The Convener: Okay. Does anyone have comments on that?

Claudia Beamish: And on what those sanctions might be.

The Convener: Yes, indeed. Fair enough.

I will not pick anyone at random. You will have to come up with some answers yourselves.

Bruce Kiloh: I will step in first.

I am sure that the committee understands that the issue is quite challenging. I go back to what I said earlier. With the introduction of mandatory reporting, there must be an appreciation on the part of the Government of how the process evolves. Organisations should be allowed to make changes within themselves, particularly those that

have perhaps not done as in-depth work as others, as people around the table have said. In the first two or three years, a more evolving approach should be taken, whereby warnings or whatever are taken forward.

I am never one for advocating putting fines in place; if I did that, I think that I would be hung, drawn and quartered when I went back to the office. There are financial penalties with the carbon reduction commitment. That is one way of getting the profile of what is being done in climate change up the agenda in an organisation and before committees and politicians. When they see the hard facts and figures, that very much gets their attention.

By its very nature, the process has to be an evolving one, and the approach must be proportionate over time.

David Seath: Imposing sanctions is a very difficult direction to go in. I can imagine different scenarios in which I did not reach my target because the degree-day figure was not the same figure that I had assumed when I made my calculation. The weather can have a big effect on us; hard winters can throw figures all over the place, so I may have to suffer a sanction in the future because of that. A wide range of factors could cause people not to achieve the target.

I am not saying that the approach is impossible, but a lot of careful thought is needed about how to take it. I cannot offer the committee a solution; I do not know what that should be. We are already strapped for cash in the police service and we cannot afford to lose any more, so we would want to ensure that we did as well as we could to meet our obligations. The fact that we would suffer reputational damage if we were found wanting would be a severe penalty on its own. We certainly would not want to be named and shamed.

That is as far as I am prepared to go at the moment.

Julie Robertson: I echo what the other witnesses said. Because we are all starting from different baselines, it would be best to make slow progress to a level of compliance and take a tiered approach. Initially, there should be guidance and support for organisations that, for whatever reason, do not meet the demands of the reporting.

We thought about the use of a compliance notice with extended timescales for providing information and the reasons why that would be essential. To echo David Seath's comment, the most severe punitive measure that we suggest is naming and shaming. Reputational damage is just as off-putting as anything else that we might use to make people comply.

Neil Deasley: I echo much of that. Particularly in the early years, we should support and not sanction organisations. We need to focus our efforts on getting the support networks in place to bring everybody along on that journey to approximately the same place, particularly in the early years. However, it is useful to keep tabs on and keep reviewing the progress that we make and what different public bodies do so that we can begin to identify issues that we need to tackle before we introduce sanctions.

The Convener: Is a standardised form an important aspect of allowing that to happen? Does anyone disagree that a standardised form is necessary for us to achieve the progress that we require?

Chris Wood-Gee: I do not disagree at all, but it is important to build in some sort of review process, perhaps on a three-year cycle.

I echo a comment that David Seath made about degree days. Our consumption goes up or down by 10 per cent—about 10 million kilowatts—depending on how the weather affects us. That can throw things out, so it might be necessary to mediate things to recognise that.

The Convener: Indeed. Those are wise words.

Sarah Boyack: The guidance mentions specific public bodies that are to be included on the basis of influence or impact on climate change and sets out some clear criteria about public bodies with

“large estates and large numbers of staff ... high impact and influence ... large expenditure”

and those that provide

“an auditing or regulatory function”.

Is the list of bodies that are covered right and are the criteria right?

David Seath: No, we do not think that the list is right. The police manage to appear twice in the list of bodies in schedule 1 to the draft order, but it is the same organisation that does the work. Although the list mentions “a chief constable”, it also includes the Scottish Police Authority and we think that that is the same. We do not think that the Scottish Government is looking for two reports; one report would suffice for the Police Service of Scotland.

The situation is different for freedom of information—that is probably where the list came from—because the chief constable can have different information from that to which the authority would have access, but that is not true for climate change duties. The list should be revised to include only the Scottish Police Authority. We would have to produce the report on its behalf and it would scrutinise and approve it before it went into the public domain.

That is one area that is not right. However, the criteria for inclusion are valid. They hit all the right buttons. Any organisation that meets the criteria should make its contribution to reporting.

The Convener: If there are no other answers to Sarah Boyack’s question, I think that the witnesses are all reasonably happy.

Sarah Boyack: The other issue is peer reporting. It is interesting to think about how that might be made to work with the big list of bodies. Scottish Enterprise made the point that although the small organisations do not have a lot of staff, they have a huge impact, whereas local authorities have a huge staff complement but a fixed financial envelope. How do we compare and contrast those bodies? How should the Scottish Government play into the process as the setter of the rules and through how it reports on its own performance? There are some interesting issues in there.

Neil Deasley: That comes back to the point about what any validation process might look like. There are different ways to validate. The approach that we have taken is to have a third-party employer spend a small number of days looking at our data, the way that we analyse the data and the claims that we make as a result. That is a relatively small consultancy project.

An alternative way to validate is exactly as Sarah Boyack described, which is to set up an arrangement whereby other public bodies are able to provide support and review to contribute to an organisation’s validation. It would probably be worth while for the network of public bodies that are to provide climate change reports to explore that idea. It is certainly a way of bringing in validation without the costs that might otherwise be built in.

I was going to make another point about validation, but it has gone from my head. It might come back to me.

The Convener: You might remember it yet.

Graeme Dey: Although I accept entirely the example that David Seath gave, is it not the case that no public body should be excluded from the reporting requirement?

The Convener: I see that nobody demurs. That is good to know.

Grant Ferguson: On validation, peer-to-peer review is the best way forward, because otherwise we will hand over money to external parties that will see the process as a cash cow at certain points of the year. A few people will train to do it and at the pinchpoints they will charge public bodies for the service. Would there not be egg on faces if carbon reporting had costs for the Government or individual organisations? That needs to be carefully considered.

The Convener: That is a good point.

Chris Wood-Gee: On validation—sorry, what was the previous question about?

The Convener: We agreed that there should be standard reporting, but Sarah Boyack asked whether the criteria for including public bodies were right.

Chris Wood-Gee: On whether all public agencies should be involved, perhaps the answer is yes, but we might need to have dual-scale reporting. A doctor's surgery would then become part of the reporting system. There would be a need for a lite version of reporting if the requirement to report extended beyond the existing 120 to 130 organisations.

The Convener: If any new criteria were added, that would be fair enough.

Neil Kitching: On validation, although I am not against peer-to-peer reviews, it would be quite complicated to set up the process and to ensure that the peer-to-peer review had been done before the reporting deadline. An alternative that we were going to mention in our submission would be to do something similar to the process for the carbon reduction commitment, whereby the organisation makes its submission and SEPA does sample checks. All organisations are aware that they could be subject to a sample check and that keeps them on their toes.

Neil Deasley: I have remembered what I was going to say. I had left my brain somewhere else for a short while. On the point about peer-to-peer review and validation, the process need not validate everything. In the past, we have looked at very specific areas, particularly on particular elements of data or particular ways in which we have interpreted and then reported on elements of data. There may be a way of doing something that provides the security and robustness that validation or peer-to-peer review provides, but which is very much focused on a few key areas that we agree on.

11:45

Chris Wood-Gee: On both peer review and the CRC, the answer is yes. We had a SEPA review a few years ago. We also bring in consultants to have a quick look over things. There is a risk in that we might face a challenge in finding the additional cash to do that. As has been said, at the moment no one is in a position to do that, so it may be that part of our review would be what we already do with the CRC. There is not that body of people out there, so peer review could potentially be a useful mechanism.

The Convener: I can think of a parallel: marine management plans are being developed in places

such as Shetland first, and those authorities are offering their services on a commercial basis. There is an opportunity for entrepreneurialism in public bodies.

Rebecca Bell: Our organisation does not currently have the expertise or capacity to undertake validation, whether it is internal or peer review. I imagine that the situation is similar across the public sector. If that is the route that the Scottish Parliament decides to go down, there will be a real need for training and capacity building to support it.

Bruce Kiloh: The point about SEPA and the CRC is correct, but SEPA would struggle to deal meaningfully with the range of organisations that would suddenly come under its reporting arrangements. The peer-to-peer review might present challenges for organisations, but sharing best practice and building up expertise in that area is absolutely vital. We need to build expertise within those public sector organisations that do not have the luxury of a dedicated team. That is hugely important, otherwise—as Grant Ferguson said—there will be a series of consultants making a fortune out of the public sector every year. That is not something that we want to see happen; we want to make sure that we are spending our money wisely. We must share best practice and build expertise so that we can take care of the issue ourselves and mainstream it within our organisations.

Sarah Boyack: The discussion about raising the standard of knowledge in all the organisations and having information that can be properly interrogated and which stands up to independent or public scrutiny, regardless of whether there is a sanctions regime, is important. Your views and feedback are important in terms of thinking about not just who is on the list, but what the different challenges are for different people. Some fine-detailed thoughts about how that works in practice, and generally across the public sector, would be useful to us in our scrutiny of the process and to the Scottish Government in designing a scheme that is fit for purpose.

The Convener: I assume that the process will allow all the organisations to be even more granular about what they tell the Government in their submissions.

Dave Thompson: My question follows on from that discussion and relates to the timescales for reporting. I notice that there was a suggestion that, in the first year, reporting should be pushed back to November rather than October, and that in the following years it would be within six months, which would be the end of September. What is the reasoning for that? In the first year, folk will be learning the ropes. Is the six-month period in the following years a sensible timescale for reporting?

Chris Wood-Gee: That was certainly one of the views that came out of the consultation with 41 different organisations that SSN ran. The general view was that the timescale should be pushed back. The CRC reporting deadline is 29 July, so we will not have the accurate CRC data for those organisations before then.

The second issue is that, because of the committee cycle—in our case, the local authority committees—it takes six weeks to a couple of months to get a report through, so that takes us from the end of July to the end of September. October is quite tight, because we will still have to pull the data together, beyond what we get with the CRC.

The view was that, in theory, it would be nice to do it by October, but in practice it might be a challenge to do that because of the committee cycles. It was thought that November would be a better deadline across the piece to account for the time that it takes to get the report together and to get it agreed by the Parliament's committees or whoever is looking at it.

Dave Thompson: Would that be November, rolling on?

Chris Wood-Gee: I would have thought so, unless the CRC is changed, but that will be a challenge because we have financial year end and all the other steps before we can get to that point.

Dave Thompson: There will also be the problem of getting the peer review squeezed in, too.

Chris Wood-Gee: Yes, we put in the CRC report and then we get reviewed on that. We do not necessarily get the report back in advance of that. It is a challenge.

The Convener: Does anyone else have a point to make on the question of timing?

Neil Deasley: In all the years that we have been reporting voluntarily, I do not think that we have met the September deadline once—it has always been October or November. It is a fair comment that September is a little bit tight.

The Convener: You get a star for reporting every year.

Thank you. We have covered quite a big skelp of ground. I thank all the witnesses for taking part. Your evidence gives us a chance to make our report to the minister on what we think should be noted. Your views have been very valuable.

As we agreed at previous meetings, the committee will now move into private session to consider draft letters on the review of agricultural holdings legislation final report and the Scottish Government's biodiversity strategy. At the next meeting of the committee on 6 May, we will

consider the draft Climate Change (Additional Greenhouse Gas) (Scotland) Order 2015, as well returning to correspondence on the biodiversity strategy and the committee's work programme.

11:52

Meeting continued in private until 12:52.

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