

Quarterly Policy Briefing

October 2020

This document outlines the main policy changes seen in the last quarter that will affect EAUC-Scotland and Scottish institutions.

Scottish Policy Updates

- The Scottish Government has published a [National Review](#) on how well Scotland is doing at meeting the Sustainable Development Goals. The report breaks down the progress against each goal and identifies the challenges and legislation need to progress each one. Progress is mixed but the government do stress that, for goals that are doing well, it aims to go above and beyond what it initially set out and not stop when it achieves the targets.
- The Scottish Government were seeking views on the proposal to establish “Regional Community Climate Action Hubs”. In light of the decision to remove the Climate Challenge Fund this could serve as a replacement for community led climate action. Views were sought in July but at time of writing the government has not yet announced what is has decided.
- The Scottish Government has [pledged](#) to invest £1.6bn over the next parliament to decarbonise heating and improve energy efficiency, as part of its 2020-21 programme. It also said it would spend £60m to support industrial decarbonisation and increase annual infrastructure investment until it is £1.5bn higher by the end of the next parliament than in 2019-20. It is setting up a £62m Energy Transition Fund to support diversification in the oil, gas and energy sectors.
- The Scottish Government has [published](#) a draft £24bn Infrastructure Investment Plan which it says will support 45,000 jobs, develop Scotland’s resilience and enable an inclusive, net-zero emissions society.

UK Policy Updates

- In an update to the Environment Bill, [published 19 August](#), the Department for Food, Environment and Rural Affairs (Defra) confirmed that it is developing time-bound, numerical targets aimed at tackling an array of environmental issues. At least one “strong and meaningful” target will be introduced for each of the four priority areas for the Bill: biodiversity, air quality, water and waste. All targets will be deadlined for the mid-to-late 2030s and will be backed up with interim targets that will not be legally binding, to help spur early progress.
- The UK Government announced a [Carbon Emission Tax Consultation](#) which closed for responses on the 29th of September. Whilst it is too early for anything to have happened as a result the consultation the main aim was based around the proposed EU tax laws and how they could be implemented in the UK (regardless of Brexit). The Government explanation is below:

“Under the Carbon Emissions Tax, installations currently in the EU ETS whose emissions exceed their annual tax emission allowance would become liable to pay the tax on their emissions from 1 January 2021. This consultation sets out details on how Her Majesty’s Revenue & Customs (HMRC) propose to operate the tax if it were introduced”