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PARLIAMENTARY BRIEFING

Infrastructure and Capital Investment Committee briefing

June 2011

Background

The new Infrastructure and Capital Investment Committee will have a broad range of issues to grapple with for the new session. WWF Scotland would like to take the opportunity to brief new members ahead of the new session on some key issues for WWF. We look forward to engaging with new Committee members and staff over the course of the next Parliament.

Climate change

Scotland has been hailed across the world for its ambitious climate change plans. Having passed the Climate Change Act in 2009, we call on Parliamentary committees to hold the Government to account on its implementation in order to deliver a truly low-carbon, safer, cleaner, healthier future. Annual emissions reductions targets have to be met through the implementation of the Government's Report on Proposals and Policies (RPP). The RPP for 2010 - 2022, published in January 2011, shows that emissions reductions from current policies only add up to meet 3 out of the next 12 annual targets (2013, 2019 and 2020). Considerably more policy effort – particularly in the housing and transport sectors - must be achieved in order to give the confidence that these targets will be met. As noted in the TICC Committee legacy paper, a watching brief should be kept on the Government's implementation of the Act. WWF Scotland believes the housing and transport sectors have the potential to contribute much more investment and carbon reduction to help meet our targets, so we urge the ICI Committee to work closely with both the RACCE and the EET Committees to ensure that housing, transport and energy policies all contribute towards our efforts to tackle climate change.

Sustainable Development

The TICC Committee's legacy paper noted the role of committees in scrutinising sustainable development in the absence of SDC Scotland. With the loss of this independent scrutiny body, WWF is keen to ensure that there is some capacity with Parliamentary committees to scrutinise the Government's progress on aligning policy with Scotland's environmental, social and economic needs, now and in the future. WWF therefore asks the RACCE Committee to ensure that sufficient scrutiny is given to Ministers' embedding sustainable development into the architecture of Government.



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Housing

Scotland's homes account for about a quarter of our greenhouse gas emissions and a third of all households are in fuel poverty. It is essential the Government maximises the potential in home retrofit to ensure we meet climate change and fuel poverty targets, while at the same time building a low carbon economy. The Report on Proposals and Policies set out an intention to deliver a 36% cut in emissions from housing, but we believe the sector has the potential to contribute much more.

The Scottish Government's 2009 consultation *Conserve and Save* noted that despite the advantages associated with energy efficiency improvements a '*step-change is required to achieve significant reductions in energy demand*'. WWF Scotland calls on the Committee to scrutinise the Scottish Government's delivery of this 'step change' and monitor its compliance with statutory climate and fuel poverty duties.

WWF has always promoted a balanced package of support, finance, regulatory and fiscal measures to increase the take-up of energy efficiency measures in homes. Adequate and attractive finance measures – not only maximising UK programmes but also delivering the right Scottish programmes to ensure we deliver on Scottish targets – is crucial to enabling people to take up these measures and to reduce their upfront cost. Since 2008, WWF Scotland has also been calling for the introduction of minimum energy efficiency standards in all private housing, starting with the most energy inefficient properties (F and G) and moving them up the scale.

Transport

Scotland's transport sector has long bucked the trend seen across the wider economy to reduce emissions and instead has seen its contribution to climate change increase since 1990. The Report on Proposals and Policies described a necessary 'step change' in devolved policy action on transport if targets are to be hit. For WWF Scotland, this will only happen if the many transport proposals in the RPP are translated into committed policy action, such as delivering policies to reduce the need to travel, demand management measures and 'smarter travel'. We call on the Committee to explore options for making a real shift in transport

Active travel must be a priority for the new ICI Committee. WWF Scotland believes that the proportion of the transport budget spent on active travel should be at least 10% if we are to match the levels of investment seen in our European neighbours. The next budget process will start its development very shortly and we ask the Committee to push for this policy as an immediate priority.

We hope that the ICI Committee will also look at the uptake of electric vehicles in Scotland. Our research demonstrates that we need to secure at least 300 000 electric cars in Scotland by 2020 if Scotland is to hit its climate targets. WWF Scotland is currently completing a review of policy options available to the Scottish Government designed to increase the uptake of electric vehicles and we would be happy to discuss these with Committee members when complete.

In their manifesto, the SNP committed to a £50m Future Transport Fund and a £50m Warm Homes Fund. WWF hopes this investment will align with the Government's commitment to a low carbon future and we call on the Committee to ensure a real investment is made in low carbon transport and low carbon housing to ensure deep emissions reductions are made in line with the Scottish Climate Act.

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