

## WRITTEN SUBMISSION FROM FALKIRK COUNCIL

**The Bill creates a statutory framework for greenhouse gas emissions reductions in Scotland by setting a 50% reduction target for 2030 and an 80% reduction target for 2050.**

**What are your views on the 2050 target and a 2030 interim target proposed in the Bill?**

Falkirk Council welcomes the proposal. It is essential that the Scottish Climate Change Bill establishes a statutory target for at least an 80% reduction of greenhouse gases in Scotland by 2050. But it is recognized that this will present significant challenges to all sectors. The Council notes that the UK emissions reduction target has been increased to match the Scottish target.

**The Bill requires that the Scottish Government sets annual targets, in secondary legislation, for Scottish emissions from 2010 to 2050. It is proposed that these annual targets will be set in batches, the first being for the years 2010 to 2022 inclusive.**

**What are your views on the setting of targets in batches from 2010 to 2022?**

Falkirk Council supports the move with the provision that the targets can be revised if necessary, subject to recommendation by a wholly independent scientific body on the basis of changing scientific knowledge or consensus amongst the climate change lobby.

**The Bill provides that from the year 2020, the annual emissions targets must be set so that each is at least 3% lower than the target for the previous year. Prior to 2020, the Scottish Government has indicated that it intends to set annual targets which build towards delivering emissions reductions of at least 3% each year.**

**What are your views on this approach or any possible alternative approaches?**

Falkirk Council supports the proposal emphasising the importance of retaining flexibility in light of scientific developments and other international climate change targets.

**The Bill introduces the concept of a “net Scottish emissions account” as a point of reference against which the target for reducing greenhouse gases can be measured. It is defined as the net Scottish emissions plus or minus any carbon units credited to or debited from the account. Any units purchased may be used to offset Scottish emissions. Any carbon units generated in Scotland and sold to customers outside Scotland, count as emissions made in Scotland.**

**What are your views on the proposals in the Bill relating to the net Scottish emissions account, and should there be a limit on the number of carbon units which Scotland can purchase?**

Whilst Falkirk Council supports the purchase of international CO<sub>2</sub> units, recognising that this will allow the lowest cost methods of emissions reduction to be implemented, it believes that the purchase level should be limited to avoid complete dependence on this route which could result in no reduction in emissions. Clear identification of unit origins would, of course, be essential and desirable in such a scheme.

**The Bill defines “Scottish emissions”, in relation to a greenhouse gas, as being emissions of that gas which are attributable to Scotland. The policy memorandum states that “Scottish emissions” are defined as being those greenhouse gases which are emitted in Scotland or which represent the Scottish share of emissions of gases from international aviation and international shipping.**

**What are your views on this definition of Scottish emissions?**

Falkirk Council supports the proposal that “Scottish emissions” should be those emitted in Scotland. It also welcomes the move to include consideration of emissions arising from international aviation and shipping, in recognition of the significant quantities of greenhouse gases arising from them and the rate at which they continue to increase.

**The Scottish Government has indicated that initially it intends to seek independent, expert advice on climate change from the UK Committee on Climate Change. The Scottish Government states in the policy memorandum that if it determines that the UK Committee on Climate Change does not meet all the advice needed for Scotland, the Bill contains provisions which will allow the Scottish Government to establish a Scottish Committee on Climate Change or to designate an existing body to exercise these advisory functions.**

**What are your views on the Scottish Government's approach to obtaining independent, expert advice on climate change?**

Falkirk Council supports the move to initially seek guidance from the existing UK Committee on Climate Change to avoid unnecessary duplication. However, it also welcomes the option to explore other sources of guidance and advice should that prove necessary.

**The Bill places duties on the Scottish Government requiring that it reports regularly to the Scottish Parliament on Scotland's emissions and on the progress being made towards the emissions reduction targets set in the Bill. The Bill sets out details of these reporting requirements.**

**What are your views on these proposed reporting arrangements?**

Falkirk Council supports the proposed arrangements.

**The Bill contains powers to allow the Scottish Government, by regulations, to impose duties on public bodies in relation to climate change, to issue guidance to those bodies relating to their climate change duties and to require that they report upon the discharge of those duties.**

**What are your views on this proposal?**

Falkirk Council acknowledges the role that local authorities can and should play in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and also acknowledges that it is appropriate that national and international government commitments should be reflected by targets at local government level. The Council reiterates its request for additional funds to support such action. Installation of improved technology, retrofitting of energy inefficient buildings, CO2 budgeting and management, along with achieving fundamental behavioural change amongst staff cannot be delivered on existing resources. Additional duties require additional funding and support in the form of expertise and systems change support.

**The Bill places a duty on the Scottish Government to produce a report for Scotland, setting out its objectives in relation to adaptation to climate change, proposals and policies for meeting them and the timescales within which they will be introduced.**

**What are your views on this proposal?**

Falkirk Council welcomes this proposal but with due consideration to the additional funding required to undertake the actions necessary to deliver the report objectives. Parts of the Falkirk Council area are recognised as being at high social, economic and environmental risk from climate change, in recognition of the combined issues of flood threat, housing and industrial concentration in the Grangemouth area.

**Muirburn is the act of controlled burning of vegetation on open semi-natural habitats such as muir (Scottish word for moor) or moorland, and includes the burning of plants such as gorse, heather and grass. The Bill contains an enabling power to allow the Scottish Government to vary the permitted times during which muirburn may be made where they consider it necessary or expedient to do so in relation to climate change.**

**What are your views on this proposal?**

Falkirk Council supports the proposal provided due regard is given to biodiversity considerations in the areas and ecosystems involved.

**The Bill will allow modification by order of the functions of the Forestry Commissioners to enable the Forestry Commission in Scotland to play a greater role in tackling climate change. The immediate intent of the Scottish Government is to take forward proposals relating to renewable energy development on the National Forest Estate and the release of capital from the National Forest Estate for woodland creation.**

**What are your views on this proposal?**

Falkirk Council supports the twin objectives as expressed but recognises that environmental considerations in terms of landscape impact and community engagement will require to be managed effectively.

**The Bill requires the Scottish Government to produce an action plan setting out current and proposed measures to improve the energy efficiency of buildings in Scotland, as well as measures to encourage behavioural change.**

**What are your views on this proposal?**

Falkirk Council welcomes this proposal and acknowledges the role local authorities can play in achieving greater energy efficiency in the built environment and the effect that behavioural change can have on that aim. This can be readily set out through performance target for buildings within the Building Standards (Scotland) Regulations. However, the mechanism for delivery of the proposal on existing properties will impact significantly on local authorities, should targets be made mandatory and enforced through statutory legislation applied by local authorities. The impact on existing service provisions, resources and ensuring compliance (due to the number, complexity and condition of existing properties) will require additional funding to adequately service such a proposal.

**The Bill confers powers on the Scottish Ministers to make regulations providing for the assessment of (a) the energy performance of non-domestic buildings; and (b) emissions of greenhouse gases produced or associated with such buildings. The provisions are enabling in nature and the Policy Memorandum provides further information on the Scottish Government's thinking in this area.**

**What are your views on this approach?**

Falkirk Council in principal supports the twin objectives. The proposals could be enshrined within the Building Standards (Scotland) Regulations and administered through local authorities, again raising concerns over resources and funding. However, the number of properties this would impact on and the mechanisms for compliance require further development, before any direct comment could be offered. In this instance it may be that an incentive based scheme (tax based, rather than at a local level) to encourage owners / occupiers to engage with energy efficiency would be of greater benefit rather than relying on enforcement protocols and placing additional burdens on owners and local authorities given the impact of the economic downturn and the rate of recovery.

**The Bill places a duty on the Scottish Government to take such steps as it consider appropriate to promote the use of heat from renewable sources. The Scottish Government has indicated this provision will enable it to introduce measures it deems appropriate to incentivise the production of heat from renewable sources.**

**What are your views on this proposal?**

Falkirk Council supports the proposal in principle, but would highlight that the initial increased cost and the time frame for a return on the initial investment may preclude people from adopting new technology in this area.

**The Bill sets out measures aimed at improving waste and recycling. The Bill gives powers to the Scottish Government to make regulations in the following areas:**

- **Waste prevention and management plans;**
- **Waste data;**
- **Deposit of recyclable waste;**
- **Procurement of recyclate;**
- **Reduction of packaging;**
- **Deposit and return schemes;**
- **Charges for carrier bags.**

**What are your views on these proposals?**

Falkirk Council welcomes the inclusion and recognition of the key role that these issues play in terms of the contribution to climate change, but are cautious until supporting legislation detailing the roles and responsibilities of each key stakeholder are available for further review.

**What are your views on the adequacy of the Scottish Government's consultation in advance of publishing the Bill?**

Falkirk Council considers that consultation in advance of the bill was adequate.

**Do you have any views on the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) which was carried out by the Scottish Government out on the consultation proposals?**

Falkirk Council considers that the SEA on the consultation proposals was adequate.

**Does the Bill raise any equalities issues you would wish to highlight?**

No

**Do you have any comments on the impact of the Bill on sustainable development?**

The bill should include a sustainability duty to ensure that measures taken in pursuit of its objectives do not lead to perverse environmental, social or economic consequences. This sustainability duty should be firmly based on the definition provided in the Scottish Sustainable Development Strategy.

**Do you have any other comments on the Bill?**

No