

Response submitted via email

Committee.AgriEnvRural@niassembly.gov.uk



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EAUC

University of Gloucestershire,
The Park, Cheltenham,
GL50 2RH

Office Tel: 01242 714321

info@eauc.org.uk

www.eauc.org.uk

Dear Sir/Madam,

Please find below our response on the following consultation.

- Call for evidence and views on the Climate Change Bill

EAUC – The Alliance for Sustainability Leadership in Education:

Response on behalf of our Members (United Kingdom and Ireland)

About the EAUC

Our passion is to create a world with sustainability at its heart. That's our vision. We exist to lead and empower the post-16 education sector to make sustainability 'just good business'.

The membership of the EAUC comprises higher and further educational institutions, with a combined budget of some £43 billion, responsible for educating over 4.5 million students supported by over half a million staff.

We have regional and country chapters, with member institutions connected deeply with business, industry, health and civic bodies at local levels, with reach internationally via their research, innovation and student mobility.

We believe

- That UK and Irish education should be a global leader in sustainability
- That educational institutions have a responsibility as anchors in their communities to be agents of change
- That education has a unique opportunity to transform lives and communities
- That education is at the heart of global sustainability
- That every student should have access to sustainability education
- That education should reflect best practice in operational sustainability
- In being flexible and adaptable to find solutions for a resilient future
- In the value of international collaboration

Our values

- Pioneering - driving sustainability through innovation
- Independence - our own unique voice
- Collaboration - together we go further
- Role Model - leading by example
- Empowering - supporting and inspiring our members

Response to the consultation:

Call for evidence and views on the Climate Change Bill

We submitted responses to the Northern Ireland Assembly DAERA on the Northern Ireland Environment Strategy (February 2020) and the DAERA Northern Ireland Climate Change Bill (January 2021) and would encourage you to read our responses.

While we are not able to respond to all the proposals individually we have provided feedback on those we feel most relevant.

The Policy Objectives and Net Zero Targets

We support the policy objectives but as stated in our response in January 2021 we believe targets and interim targets in order to be achievable should be based on the advice, evidence and data provided by the Climate Change Committee. There also needs to be transparency with how these policy objectives are to be met, for example the financial contribution required, the role of the Further and Higher Education sector and offsetting. With regards to allowances for revised timescales due to circumstance changes we suggest following the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 wording which allows flexibility but does not dilute the legislation.

Declaration of a Climate Emergency

We welcome the declaration and we hope moving forward that policies, procedures and targets will reflect this and the climate crisis (it is beyond an emergency) will be at the forefront of all decisions made nationally.

Office of a Climate Commissioner

We are in favour of the establishment of the Office of a Climate Commissioner and we would encourage the Assembly to examine Scottish and Welsh advice bodies / agencies, for example Scotland's Citizen Assembly.

Sectoral Plans

Consideration should be given as to whether public sector carbon reduction targets should be aligned with those for the country as a whole, and the role of individual public sector bodies within that. There needs to be a discussion with a wide range of public bodies on how various sectors can be enabled and encouraged to effectively play their vital role in the transition to a low carbon economy. The Higher and Further Education sectors will be a key player here given their research, green-skill and civic potential.

Responsibility on Public Bodies

The Public Bodies Climate Change Duties in Scotland is an example of best practice.

Access to Specialist Advice

As well as the Committee on Climate Change and the Public Bodies Climate Change Duties in Scotland, post-16 education plays a crucial role in driving environmental changes. Emissions reduction targets and the decarbonisation of Northern Ireland must be accompanied by education and skills. Many people in the current workforce will need to be upskilled or retrained for a low carbon world, and those in education institutions must receive an education that equips them with the viable skills and knowledge needed to gain employment. We would urge the Northern Ireland Assembly to work closely with its universities and colleges.

We hope you find this information useful and we would be keen to discuss the role of Further and Higher Education moving forward.

Yours sincerely



Iain Patton
CEO