

# Legislating for the 6<sup>th</sup> Carbon Budget

April 2021



## Context

The sixth carbon budget, required under the Climate Change Act, is a legally binding limit on the volume of greenhouse gases the UK can emit during the period 2033-2037. It marks a significant moment on the path to the UK's target to reach net zero emissions by 2050, as the first carbon budget to be set into law following that commitment.

## Our position

Green Alliance believes the government should accept the independent Climate Change Committee's (CCC) advice, as set out in their [sixth carbon budget report](#) of December 2020. The CCC recommended that the 6th Carbon Budget be set at 965MtCO<sub>2</sub>e, reducing emissions 78% from 1990 to 2035, including international aviation and shipping emissions.

Accepting the CCC's recommendations would send a strong message domestically and internationally, that the UK is starting to take its net zero emissions target seriously. In the year the UK is hosting the Glasgow UN climate summit (COP26), it would send out the right signals to the international community about the need for urgent and rapid action in this decade.

It is particularly crucial that the government includes emissions from international aviation and shipping when legislating for the sixth carbon budget. These emissions are not currently included in carbon budgets and the UK relies on the unambitious international [CORSIA](#) mechanism to reduce emissions, which encourages airlines to rely on carbon offsets.

Whilst it is right that the UK should push for stronger action globally, including international aviation and shipping emissions in its carbon budgets would create incentives for decarbonisation in the UK aviation sector, driving the market for low carbon technology, like sustainable aviation fuels.

## Becoming law

The 6<sup>th</sup> Carbon Budget requires secondary legislation to become law – it is unclear what Parliamentary time will be available to debate the legislation – but any such time is likely to be limited, perhaps even to small 'Delegated Legislation' committees. There will likely be several Statutory Instruments needed for the 6<sup>th</sup> Carbon Budget to be fully adopted – including a regulation amending the Climate Change Act to include international aviation and shipping.

## Climate policy delivery

Acting on the sixth carbon budget will require comprehensive policy to ensure there is no gap between UK targets and current policies. Green Alliance's [Net zero policy tracker](#)

[\[PDF\]](#) shows that the UK will have greenhouse gas emissions nearly 40 per cent in excess of its carbon reduction targets in 2030, based on current policy.

To meet the sixth carbon budget, the government will have to close the existing £22.4 billion gap in net zero spending per year for the duration of this Parliament. This is vital, not only to turn the net zero target into real action on climate change, but also meet the jobs and investment needs for a green recovery.

Setting targets is one thing, but delivery is another. It is vital that ambitions are backed up by credible plans, laws and policies to get there. It is now the job of every Government Minister and every Department to get the UK on track to the 6<sup>th</sup> Carbon Budget target.

Over the coming months, and well in advance of the Net-Zero Strategy in the Autumn, the Government must publish credible, fully-funded and people-centred plans for decarbonising transport, housing, land-use, waste and resources, and the power sector.

**For more information contact**

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