

Press Release

Friday, 28th June, 2013 - Embargo: For immediate release

Scottish Government attempts to ‘keep quiet’ on it’s Climate Change Adaptation Strategy

The Scottish Government today launched, without any fanfare, the ‘Scottish Climate Change Adaptation Programme’. Government is required to produce this Programme by the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009, and it sets out the policies and proposals that Government believes are needed to help Scotland adapt to huge changes in our climate.

The vitally important plan was not accompanied by a media release, and was launched in the shadow of the Government’s updated climate plan (RPP2), which was published only yesterday, and widely criticised by climate change campaigners.

Both reports were published at the end of the last week of the Holyrood session and will receive no Parliamentary scrutiny until after the long summer recess.

Jim Densham, Convener of Scottish Environment LINK’s Climate Adaptation Task Force said – “We are disappointed that the Scottish Government seems to be keeping quiet its plans about preparing Scotland for a changing climate. This is a shame as there are some positive and forward-thinking ideas within the document that the public should know about and could help make Scotland a better place.”

Scotland’s iconic and special wildlife is already feeling the impacts of climate change. Seabirds, such as kittiwakes are struggling as the climate warms the oceans and the foodchain is affected. The low-lying, flower-rich, coastal machair of the Western Isles, is under threat from sea-level rise. We need to act, therefore, to halt the emissions of greenhouse gases - but in addition it is essential that we prepare for, and adapt to the inevitable changes that climate change will bring.

Scotland’s climate is predicted to change and this means we will experience drier summers and wetter winters. However, we also need to expect more weird weather and its impacts - more intense storms and flooding, and unseasonal weather, like the cold spring this year. These alterations in our climate will affect our way of life, our economy and our environment.

The actions outlined by Government in the Programme are limited to the next 5 years and respond to risks identified in the UK Climate Change Risk Assessment 2012.

Jim Densham, Convener of Scottish Environment LINK’s Climate Adaptation Task Force said:

"We welcome the release of the Adaptation Programme because we recognise the need for coordinated action to prepare Scotland’s communities and wildlife for the journey into a new climate.

"LINK is seriously concerned however, that this Programme sets us off with only the bare essentials in our suitcase - enough only for the first few years of a decades long journey. Its 5 year time frame is seriously inadequate.

"We will be calling on Government to improve the Programme. It must set Scotland off in the right direction with a long-term plan to develop the skills and resources which are needed to overcome the challenges we face. Working with the natural environment requires a vision over decades rather than years so we need to invest for the long-term in nature and our green assets with plans that are flexible.

We want to see Scotland taking action to work with nature to solve the problems of today and tomorrow caused by climate change. River floodplains and saltmarsh along our coasts can help to prevent homes and businesses being flooded. Trees and attractive greenspaces in our towns and cities can keep us cool and give us a feeling of wellbeing.”

Ends

Contact details

Jim Densham, Convener of Scottish Environment LINK's Climate Adaptation Task Force

On 07738 648977 or via e-mail on Jim.Densham@rspb.org.uk

or the LINK Parliamentary Officer, Andy Myles

on 0131 225 4345 or via email on andy@scotlink.org

Editors' Notes

(1) Scottish Environment LINK is the forum for Scotland's voluntary environment community, with over 30 member bodies representing a broad spectrum of environmental interests with the common goal of contributing to a more environmentally sustainable society.

LINK is a Scottish Charity (SC000296) and a Scottish Company Limited by guarantee (SC250899). LINK is core funded by Membership Subscriptions and by grants from Scottish Natural Heritage, Scottish Government and Charitable Trusts.

www.scotlink.org

(2) The Scottish Climate Change Adaptation Programme documentation including the consultation document is at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/Recent>

(3) The Scottish Government's existing Climate Change Adaptation Framework <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Environment/climatechange/scotlands-action/adaptation/AdaptationFramework/TheFramework>

(4) The entire Executive Summary of the proposed Adaptation Programme is reproduced here.

“EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is a draft of the first Scottish Climate Change Adaptation Programme as required by section 53 of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009.

It addresses the impacts identified for Scotland in the UK Climate Change Risk Assessment (CCRA) published under section 56 of the UK Climate Change Act 2008. It sets out Scottish Ministers objectives in relation to adaptation to climate change, their proposals and policies for meeting those objectives, and the period within which those proposals and policies will be introduced.

The Programme also sets out the arrangements for wider engagement in meeting those objectives.”

LINK is a Scottish Charity (SC000296) and a Scottish Company Limited by guarantee (SC250899). LINK is core funded by Membership Subscriptions and by grants from Scottish Natural Heritage, Scottish Government and Charitable Trusts.

Registered HQ office: 2 Grosvenor House, Shore Road, Perth PH2 8BD tel 01738 630804 email enquiries@scotlink.org
Parliamentary office: 3rd Floor, Gladstone's Land, 483 Lawnmarket, Edinburgh EH1 2NT tel 0131 225 4345 email parliamentary@scotlink.org