

1. How and when would you achieve net zero carbon emissions and avert an irreversible climate change tipping point?

Scotland is world-leading in our action to tackle climate change. We have almost halved greenhouse gas emissions since 1990 and the SNP Government's landmark Climate Change Act is the toughest, most ambitious legislative framework in the world.

That Act establishes a new 75% target for 2030, going far beyond what the IPCC Special Report says is needed globally to prevent warming of more than 1.5 degrees. And the end target of net-zero emissions of all greenhouse gases by 2045, five years ahead of the UK, will end Scotland's contribution to climate change within a generation.

However, as major parts of policy and infrastructure are still controlled by the UK Government, we can only do so if it plays its part and meets its targets. SNP MPs will continue to hold the UK Government to account.

2. By 2050 our oceans could contain more plastic than fish, with plastic production set to quadruple, accounting for 13% of our global carbon budget. How will you solve our plastic pollution problem?

Under the SNP, Scotland is helping to lead the way in action on single-use plastics. We are determined to tackle our throwaway culture.

We have taken action on single-use plastics and aim to meet or exceed the standards set out in the EU's Single-Use Plastics Directive. In June 2018, we banned the manufacture and sale of personal hygiene products containing plastic microbeads, and we are the first UK administration to introduce similar regulations banning plastic stemmed cotton buds. Scotland was the first part of the UK to announce that it is bringing in a deposit return scheme for drinks packaging. We're rolling out the scheme nationwide, contributing to a more circular economy and preventing plastic and other materials polluting our rivers, oceans and countryside.

We have just introduced a Circular Economy Bill which will continue to advance Scotland's ambitions to encourage the re-use of products and reduce waste. The provisions in the Circular Economy Bill will enable charges to be applied to single-use drinks cups and other items that we know cause environmental harm, including in our seas. We are already leading by example: our decision in 2018 to remove single-use cups for hot drinks from Scottish Government buildings has been a success, and we welcome the decision taken by Parliament to introduce a charge on cups.

We will take further action by restricting sales on other problematic single-use plastic items, such as cutlery, plates, and food and drink containers, by July 2021.

In taking forward these measures, we will very carefully consider their potential impacts on equality, in particular for people with disabilities, and will apply exemptions where appropriate.

We also support the Fishing for Litter project which involves 230 vessels and 20 harbours all around Scotland in tackling marine litter. To date, more than 1400 tonnes of litter has been removed from the seas around Scotland.

3. What steps would you take to ensure agriculture, infrastructure developments and industry contribute to nature's recovery?

In this year's Programme for Government, we announced a new Green Deal for Scotland. The deal will deliver billions of investment in our net zero future, including a Mission Zero approach to transport.

The Infrastructure Commission will give us the opportunity to bring a low or zero carbon focus to all of our future infrastructure investments. And a Green Growth Accelerator,

combining public and private investment, will unlock additional investment for emissions reductions to transform cities and regions.

We will bring to market a £3 billion portfolio of projects over the next three years. These projects, which will all be ready for investment, will include renewables, waste and construction, and we will look at expanding into other sectors.

The SNP Scottish Government has also announced the commencement of a new long term agricultural transformation programme. This is now underpinned by statutory measures in the Climate Change Act.

Work has begun on a range of actions such as pilots aimed at reducing agricultural emissions, encouraging the integration of trees on our farms and crofts and support for the strategic development of organic farming. This is additional to action already underway through projects funded by the Agri-Environment Scheme to make environmental improvements, through the Beef Efficiency Scheme which also requires participants to undertake carbon audits and innovative projects like the Green Cow project which involves research to determine how we might reduce livestock emissions.

We have also committed to seeking independent advice on how to optimise land use at a national level and to developing the regional land use partnerships.

4. How would you ensure that any change in regulation is beneficial to the environment and animal welfare?

We recognise the central importance of biodiversity and the challenges that tackling its loss present. We know that biodiversity loss and the climate emergency are inter-connected and that, as on climate change, we need to raise the bar of global leadership.

Scotland has been working hard to meet the international Aichi targets for halting and restoring biodiversity loss. The Aichi targets were challenging, but in meeting 7 out of 20, we are significantly ahead of the global picture of progress on only 4 out of 20. We are aiming to play an active role in the development of a post-2020 framework.

We have already announced that we will hold a biodiversity conference in Scotland in April 2020 which will contribute to the post-2020 framework.

Our peatlands need to be healthy to realise the benefits of reducing emissions and to air and water quality, biodiversity and flood alleviation. We will seek to phase out the use of horticultural peat by increasing uptake of alternative growing media substrate.

We have already restored almost 20,000 ha of peatland through our Peatland Action initiative, and this year we are investing a total of £14 million, through our delivery partners, SNH and Forestry Land Scotland to restore up to a further 11,000 hectares.

Our Programme for Government includes measures to continue to address the loss of biodiversity in Scotland, including, increasing and extending the Biodiversity Challenge Fund by a further £2 million over the next 2 years, continued support of the Central Scotland Green network - Europe's largest greenspace project - and a commitment to a Central Scotland Green network 'blueprint.' The 'blueprint' will be a targeted map that identifies where greenspace projects could bring the biggest climate change and biodiversity benefits.

SNP MPs at Westminster will continue to push the UK Government to match Scotland's ambition in this crucial area and to ensure there is no backsliding on environmental protections as a result of the UK leaving the EU.

5. How would you improve animal welfare protections in law and in new trade deals?

The SNP is absolutely committed to the highest possible welfare standards for animals and to ensuring they are treated humanely and with respect. We also expect animal owners to care appropriately for their animals and to adhere to all legislation and standards.

We have just introduced a bill in the Scottish Parliament which will increase the maximum penalties available for the most serious animal welfare and wildlife offences, ensuring those who carry out these terrible acts will rightly face the full force of the law, as and where appropriate. We have also begun a review of the Animal Health Act which covers the care of kept and farmed animals.

The Scottish Government is setting up an Animal Welfare Commission to provide expert advice on the welfare of domesticated and wild animals in Scotland.

Scotland led the way in addressing animal welfare concerns when the Scottish Parliament banned fox hunting in 2002. The SNP now plans to introduce a new limit of no more than two dogs to be used to find or flush foxes. The aim of the limit is to ensure that a pack of dogs cannot be used to kill foxes, accidentally or otherwise.

Given there is also a significant body of European Union legislation on animal welfare, the SNP will also be working to ensure that the government ensures the protections that this offers are maintained and that there is no lapse in standards in this area if Scotland has to leave the EU as part of the UK .

6. What would you do to enhance opportunities for all people to access wild, green and blue places?

Scotland's distinctive and diverse range of landscapes are a significant part of the country's natural and cultural heritage and our progressive legislation builds on the centuries' old right to roam, allowing people the right to access most land and water. This is significantly different to the access permitted in England and Wales, where even under the new legislation, which limits access and the type of activity that can be carried out.

In 2020 we'll be celebrating The Year of Scotland's Coasts and Waters, which will promote opportunities to experience and enjoy Scotland's unrivalled Coasts and Waters. A key aspect will be encouraging people to enjoy access to the marine environment and improve their understanding of the diverse eco-systems through festivals, events and local activities, many of which will be free for people to attend.

At our conference this year, the SNP committed to an Urban Green Deal which commits to turning built space into green space. The green space could be used in a variety of ways - for example, growing food, creating parks and playgrounds, and growing and maintaining urban woodlands - to enhance and improve people's lives, as well as helping our environment.