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## WRITTEN STATEMENT BY THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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**TITLE**        **Wales' pathway to achieve net zero emissions**

**DATE**        **9 February 2021**

**BY**            **Lesley Griffiths MS, Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs**

Today I am laying regulations in the Senedd which will formally commit Wales, for the first time, to legally binding targets to deliver the goal of net-zero emissions. In advice Welsh Government received from our statutory advisor the Climate Change Committee (CCC) in 2017 and 2019, a net zero goal for the Welsh economy was not considered by their independent analysis to be credible, feasible or affordable. Now, on the basis of further evidence and analysis, this view has changed. Specifically, the CCC recommended:

- Carbon Budget 2 (2021-25): 37% average reduction with credit ("offset") limit of 0%
- Carbon Budget 3 (2026-30): 58% average reduction
- 2030 target: 63% reduction
- 2040 target: 89% reduction
- 2050 target: 100% reduction (net zero)

We welcome this change in advice. It is thanks to the CCC and all those who have contributed to their Call for Evidence, we now have the science to support our long held ambition of a net zero goal for Wales. It is only with the independent scrutiny of the CCC, working with business, academia and civil society in Wales, we can ensure climate goals set by Government are ambitious and evidence-based, creating a solid foundation on which to build a low carbon Wales.

The recommended emissions reductions pathway set by CCC in their advice would mean our goals in Wales would be consistent with meeting the Paris 1.5°C goal. Even this pathway, more ambitious than any previously agreed in international climate negotiations, carries a very significant degree of risk and we would continue

to see the impact of rising temperatures, intense weather events and extreme pressures on the natural environment for decades to come.

Furthermore, it remains the case our global trajectory is a way off such an outcome, recently reported by the United Nations to be more than 3°C – a level that could see even more destructive weather events than those which have devastated Welsh communities in the last 12 months, displacement of hundreds of millions of people around the world, and irreparable damage to the most iconic and vital ecosystems in Wales and globally.

In the Welsh Government declaration of a climate emergency in 2019, we stated our position that the seriousness of the threat to our society and our planet means we cannot afford to simply accept the advice we receive as the limit of our ambition but instead must see it as a starting point that we are required to make every effort to exceed. This reflects the principle of progression enshrined in the Paris Agreement as well as the goal of a Globally Responsible Wales enshrined in the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act.

In its most recent advice in December 2020, CCC confirm that the 2020s are the “decisive decade” and our plan for the second carbon budget to be published in 2021 should focus on the need to “outperform” the recommended 37% average reduction in emissions with a clear line of sight to a 58% average reduction through the third carbon budget up to 2030, in order to set Wales on the path to net zero by the middle of this century, as required of all richer, developed nations by the terms of the Paris Agreement.

The new targets will be extraordinarily challenging to meet. Our efforts as a Government must focus on making the transition to net zero a just transition, where the costs and benefits are shared fairly across our society. We have chosen to front-load action in the next 15 years to avoid the cumulative emissions which delayed action would incur, and to send a strong signal about the need to take action today rather than leaving the hard-work for others. A central challenge in this respect is to identify where jobs may be lost in Wales and how government can support workers, in social partnership with our trades unions and businesses, to become a part of the new low carbon workforce.

As well as climate change being a consistent theme in the papers that Ministers in every portfolio bring to Cabinet, I have reinstated the Ministerial Task and Finish Group to focus on the delivery of the next Low Carbon Plan, which will require an immediate and substantial increase in effort on an All-Wales basis.

As has continued to be the case over recent years, the analysis suggests the most significant potential to accelerate emissions reductions in Wales is based on evidence suggesting greater abatement is possible in the industry and power sectors. This reflects the presence of a small number of high-emitting point sources in Wales, such as Port Talbot steelworks.

Yet whilst highlighting the significance of technological and investment challenges, CCC also observe that the necessary change can only be delivered with changes in

the lives of every community in Wales, changes which if delivered effectively can bring benefits to every one of our citizens.

Last summer we published an engagement plan<sup>1</sup> explaining our approach to collaboration and involvement throughout 2020 and 2021, as to how we see every public body, business and citizen in Wales as being able to play their part in determining how we meet increasingly ambitious climate goals. Together, we will set out how we intend to deliver our new net zero ambition in our next All Wales Plan, which we will publish in advance of the United Nations climate summit, COP26, which is being held in Glasgow.

In this context, we welcome the news last month that Blaenau Gwent will host Wales' first Citizen's Assembly on Climate, an initiative which has received Welsh Government support as part of our drive to support the creation of exemplar low carbon communities in the course of expanding the provision of high quality social housing. Reaching more ambitious climate goals will require many more such local initiatives, meaningful and accessible to citizens, as part of our national effort.

Just as local efforts are essential to underpin our collective national effort in Wales, the actions we take here are an integral part of delivering net zero emissions across the UK. Just as support from Welsh Government enables local action within our borders, it is vital that to reach net zero emissions the UK must play its part. Today, I hope all members of the Senedd will join us in calling on UK Government to step up to the challenge and take the actions we need to ensure a swift, fair and equitable transition to our low carbon future.

I would urge all those who share our commitment to a world-leading response to the climate emergency in Wales to consider for themselves the CCC advice and the urgent challenges to Wales contained in it, to work with us to accelerate our action on climate and to work with us to identify those areas where through collective effort we can go even further.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://gov.wales/low-carbon-delivery-plan-2-engagement-plan>