

Senedd Cymru | Welsh Parliament

[Pwyllgor Newid Hinsawdd, yr Amgylchedd a Seilwaith](#) | [Climate Change, Environment and Infrastructure Committee](#)

[Datgarboneiddio'r sector cyhoeddus](#) | [Decarbonising the public sector](#)

Ymateb gan Tirweddau Cymru | Evidence from Landscapes Wales

Building on Audit Wales' work, the Committee would welcome your views on any or all of the following:

1. What are your views on the role of the Welsh Government in supporting public bodies to deliver on the five 'calls for action' identified in the Audit Wales' report?

Tirweddau Cymru Landscapes Wales (TCLW) is a partnership of the eight designated landscapes of Wales, the five AONBS: Anglesey, Clwydian Range and Dee Valley, Llŷn, Gower and Wye Valley; and the three National Park Authorities: Brecon Beacons National Park Authority, Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority and Snowdonia National Park Authority.

Designated landscapes have a critical role in taking action on the climate and nature emergencies and designated landscapes are committed to playing their part in delivering on these declarations.

The establishment of the TCLW, supported by Welsh Government has elevated the ability of the designated landscapes to deliver against key Welsh Government policies.

TCLW is helping to develop a robust culture of collaboration and is fostering a more structured and supportive relationship across landscape bodies, Welsh Government and Natural Resources Wales. TCLW acts as a collaborative vehicle for the designated landscape management bodies to address key challenges, particularly climate change and decarbonisation, nature recovery, sustainable tourism and other key themes.

Welsh National Park Authorities and AONB units are small organisations – in terms of budget and staff resources - when compared with other public bodies such as Local Authorities and Health Boards. While we have a good record of delivery especially when available resources are considered, in some cases it is becoming challenging to meet some of the governance and key strategic challenges that are required to meet national and local aspirations.

In recognition of this Welsh Government has also supported the establishment of a team of strategic landscapes coordinators working across Wales to deliver on nature, climate and governance issues.

The Welsh Government has developed the Sustainable Landscape Sustainable Places (SLSP) fund, which provides designated landscapes with a source of capital funding to undertake work on decarbonisation, along with nature recovery and sustainable tourism.

The SLSP fund has enabled the eight landscapes to undertake a range of decarbonisation projects including:

- reducing the carbon footprint of our operations: including green building projects - retrofitting buildings, renewable energy, and commissioning baseline reviews and replacing equipment with zero-emission electric alternatives
- taking action on the recommendations from collaborative carbon baseline studies and carbon action plans to give us the pathways to net zero
- delivering peatland restoration and protection
- land purchase and land management for carbon sequestration
- developing native tree species nurseries
- working collaboratively as Prosiect Nos; reducing light pollution and reducing carbon emissions
- engaging with Local Government Decarbonisation Strategy Panel and contributing to the Decarbonisation Route Map
- implementing sustainable travel actions and programmes
- collaboratively working with local authorities to provide a coherent EV charging network.
- working to link travel options to existing attractions
- supporting local travel trusts and discussing opportunities with Local Authority Transportation Department

2. What are your views on the Welsh Government's Net zero carbon status by 2030: A route map for decarbonisation across the Welsh public sector as a means of providing strategic direction to public bodies?

The Welsh Government Net Zero by 2030 route map is a necessary but insufficient framework for Welsh public sector action on climate change.

The Welsh public sector's own operational emissions are important and must be cut not only for the direct carbon saving, but also to set an example, to drive technological innovation and help shape low-carbon markets, for example in electric vehicles.

That said, the Climate Change Committee found that more than half of the emissions cuts needed in the UK rely on people and businesses taking up low-carbon solutions – decisions that are made at a local and individual level. Many of these decisions depend on having supporting infrastructure and systems in place. Local authorities are unique in having powers or influence over roughly a third of emissions in their local areas.

Local authorities coordinating systematic local action - to make the doing the right thing the easy thing to do across society - is therefore crucial to Wales achieving the carbon reductions needed.

This wider place-based role of the public sector is important for designated landscapes in Wales. For example, the Welsh National Parks have been asked by the Minister in their Term of Government Remit letter (May 2022): "In particular, I want to see National Parks become exemplars in responding to the climate and nature emergency. You are uniquely placed to engage with the

communities within your boundaries to develop solution which deliver benefits for people and the environment.”

Therefore, there is a need to take a place-based approach to leading emissions cuts across designated landscapes, and not just focus on our own emissions.

“Exemplary” must mean maximising effort toward or beyond our fair share of action to halve global emissions by 2030, in line with the Paris Agreement goal of limiting global temperature rises to 1.5 degrees. All UK National Parks have had expert advice about the carbon footprint of each area and the emissions reduction trajectory needed in that area to be aligned with the Paris Agreement. In order to achieve the emissions reductions set out in that advice, we need to work with the public sector, and especially local authorities, to coordinate place-based solutions.

With many AONB host authorities having taken the step of declaring a Climate Emergency, AONBs are demonstrating readiness to act to redress declines in species and habitats within the context of a wider response to climate change. This includes a commitment to ensure all AONB management plans include meaningful measures around climate change mitigation and adaptation, including clear, measurable targets to support Net Zero by 2024.

TCLW believes that the focus on operational decarbonisation for the public sector is therefore:

1. A missed opportunity because the public sector has a much bigger potential role in leading society-wide emissions reduction
2. A problem for designated landscapes because we need a common framework for area-based emissions reduction if we are to work successfully with other parts of the public sector to cut emissions in our areas.

There is a need for clarity on how organisations achieve the net zero ambition by 2030. A number of the Designated Landscapes in Wales have commissioned a report through TCLW, that provides a route map on how they can meet the 2030 aspiration. Through this process they are developing plans and projects to undertake work over the next eight years.

In addition, all eight designated landscapes as TCLW have commissioned carbon base line studies of the designations. Through this work they will be able to discuss how the wider communities and businesses of the designated landscapes can undertake decarbonisation activities.

There is a strong case for all 22 Welsh local authorities to join the UN backed Race to Zero (individually or through Corporate Joint Committees) and to be part of a coherent Team Wales approach to achieving Wales’ climate goals.

3. What are your views on the progress made by public bodies in the priority areas for action set out in the route map - Sustainable procurement; Net zero buildings; Mobility and transport, and Land use:

No comment

4. What are your views on the support provided by the Welsh Government to deliver progress in the priority areas, including any gaps?

TCLW is delivering projects supported by the Sustainable Land Sustainable Places (SLSP) programme, a Welsh Government capital investment fund split across each landscape that also includes funding for collaborative projects across multiple landscapes.

SLSP works on four themes:

- Promoting Biodiversity and nature recovery - including projects that improve connectivity and resilience of ecosystems in designated areas, and/or use nature-based solutions to mitigate against the impacts of climate change
- Accelerating Decarbonisation – through decarbonisation of Authority activity and assets towards net zero, schemes to enable decarbonisation in communities including appropriate renewable energy, and carbon sequestration schemes in the landscape
- Supporting Resilient and Green communities - enabling designated landscape bodies to deliver social, environmental, cultural or economic outcomes for their communities
- Delivering Sustainable tourism - including mitigating the negative impacts of over-tourism, upgrading visitor facilities and infrastructure where local priorities and sensitivities support this and in an environmentally sensitive, resilient and durable way, helping landscapes recover from and adapt to changing tourism patterns during and following Covid; and improving and protecting valued cultural and heritage assets.

The SLSP fund has recently moved from a single year project fund to a three year funding programme. This helps us to build on the two preceding single year funding rounds and allows Designated Landscapes to plan more strategically and deliver longer term programmes with stronger partnerships over a three year period.

The Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) has supported innovative and proactive community led energy projects. Where the SDF fund has been targeted to support action on climate change it has been oversubscribed.

TCLW is contributing towards targets for expanding renewable energy generation by public bodies and community groups.

Welsh Government should fund the Welsh Local Government Association to develop a package of peer support, knowledge and skills training, and coordination for area-based action on climate change – wider than the current focus on operational emissions.

The support should draw on existing tried and tested resources developed for local government members of Race to Zero from around the world – learning from the most advanced examples and applying relevant lessons to the Welsh context.

5. Do you have any other points you wish to raise within the scope of this inquiry?

The scope of the enquiry should relate to the public sector's role in achieving Wales' climate goals – not focus solely on the success or otherwise of the Public Sector Net Zero by 2030 target.

References:

Climate Change Committee: Local Authorities and the sixth carbon budget

<https://www.theccc.org.uk/publication/local-authorities-and-the-sixth-carbon-budget/>

Colchester Declaration National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

<https://landscapesforlife.org.uk/projects/colchester-declaration>