

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 Oxfam Cymru | Evidence from Oxfam Cymru

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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?**

**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 route map provides a strategic overview of the key priority areas for action and milestones for the public sector to reach net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2030. It does not set out the 'how' or the actions needed to achieve these milestones, instead acts as a strategic framework to help assess what is already in place and what is required to get to where we need to be.

The four areas set out in the route map are they key ones to achieve our collective net carbon reduction ambition, however many organisations will likely include other priority areas.

The route map is a necessary but insufficient framework for Welsh public sector action on climate change. Whilst the public sector's own operational emissions are important and provide a leadership example, a place-based approach is crucial if Wales wishes to meet its wider climate goals. The Public Sector Net Zero goal is just one part of the role that councils need to play.

The Climate Change Committee found that more than half of the emissions cuts needed 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 have powers or influence over roughly a third of emissions in their local areas .

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

A focus on operational decarbonisation alone is a missed opportunity for Wales. As Welsh Government lead the world in declaring a climate emergency, so could the public sector in Wales by meeting its potential to lead society-wide emissions reduction.

The UN-backed Race to Zero is leading net zero initiatives to raise climate ambition in line with the Paris Agreement. It is a rallying call to nations, cities, regions, councils, businesses, and universities in the shared endeavour of driving down emissions and tackling climate change for the good of both people and planet.

Oxfam Cymru are working with Climate Cymru and other civil society partners to co-ordinate the Race to Zero approach across Wales. With the facilitation of the Welsh Local Government Association, Oxfam Cymru held a successful information session with over 100 participants across every local authority in Wales alongside Brecon Beacons National Park and Real Dania's DK2020 project.

<https://realdania.dk/projekter/dk2020>

Wales as a nation is a member of Race to Zero, with Cardiff Capital region (representing 10 of our 22 local authorities) and our 3 National Parks are in the process of joining. There is a very strong case for all 22 local authorities in Wales to join race to Zero and 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:**

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

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

Whilst recognising a focus on the public sector's own footprint provides a leadership role that influences societal behaviour change, the scope of the enquiry should be widened to the public sector's role in achieving Wales' climate goals, rather than the limited overall outcome should the public sector achieve its net zero target by 2030.

Doughnut Economics

The current cost of living crisis, coupled with ever increasing global catastrophes like the Pakistan floods have given us a stark reminder of the interrelation between social justice and climate change. Further discussion on incorporating the Doughnut Economics model into local authority climate plans will enable those communities bearing the brunt of climate change to participate in and co-produce coordinated action to ensure a fair transition to a zero-carbon Wales.

<https://policy-practice.oxfam.org/resources/the-welsh-doughnut-2020-a-framework-for-environmental-sustainability-and-social-620979/>

<https://gov.wales/greenhouse-gas-emissions-infographic>

Alignment of local authority action under Race to Zero with the Welsh Doughnut provides an opportunity for co-ordinated action in approaches to tackle both climate and social inequalities. The model is consistent with Race to Zero allowing members to design plans that can prioritise societal

needs for prosperity and equality whilst contributing to climate reduction targets, securing local and global climate justice.

<https://www.mrfcj.org/principles-of-climate-justice/>