

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 TUC Cymru | Evidence from Wales TUC

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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?

In relation to Audit Wales' first point ("strengthen your leadership and demonstrate your collective responsibility through effective collaboration") we would like to see more co-operation between public sector managers and trade unions to ensure a just transition to net zero. The Net Zero Wales plans commits the nation "Achieving a just transition requires us to approach decarbonisation to deliver our commitment to social and economic justice, consistent with our commitment to fair work and Social Partnership"

To realise this approach, we would like to see public bodies regularly consult on their net zero plans with trade unions. There is a case for every public body to be required to have a joint union/employer decarbonisation committee, akin to the health and safety committee.

Furthermore, to demonstrate their commitment to partnership working with their workforces, Welsh public bodies should be required to promote the role and provide reasonable and proportionate additional facilities time to all recognised unions for the recruitment, training, and conducting of the Green Rep role. Green reps can ensure that efforts to reduce an organisation's environmental impact are developed collaboratively and in full consultation with workers. Involving green reps and workers can make sure that changes are fair, effective and have the full support of people in the workplace.

It should be mandatory for workers to be actively involved in decarbonisation plans and the formulation of transition agreements with employers. Welsh Government, employers and unions should agree shared expectations of joint ways of working.

In relation to Audit Wales' fourth point ("know your skills gaps and increase your capacity")

It would certainly be helpful if the Welsh Government could provide more support to public bodies to better understand their skills gaps to provide training to their employees which can sustain them in employment. Trade unions can play a key role here in helping assess the skills gaps and in jointly organising training through our network of union learning reps and Wales Union Learning Fund project managers.

We are looking forward to the publication of the Welsh Government's green skills plans and we are hopeful that this will provide important guidance and support to public bodies on this matter.

Based on the information provided in public bodies net zero plans there is clearly a need to identify skills gaps and provide additional training. For example, Wales TUC has studied the net zero plans published by the twenty-two local authorities. For the most part, there is very little reference within these documents to skills plans. Nor, sadly are there many references to consulting with unions on re-training.

In general, we are concerned at the lack of engagement between public bodies and their workforce, represented by their unions, to date. There is a great opportunity for senior leaders in the public sector to sit down with trade unions to work together on these matters.

Wales TUC believes in a just transition, where workers do not pay the price of decarbonisation and that they are consulted on the changes and provided with sufficient opportunities to retrain to move into green jobs. Therefore, we would like to see every public body in Wales adopt a transition agreement between unions and managers. These transition agreements should have key elements relating to decarbonisation and the workforce, including:

- Employers should consult regularly with unions on net zero planning and the impact on workforce related issues
- No worker is displaced as a result of net zero planning
- Workers must be supported and offered re-training if their posts are significantly affected or at risk due to decarbonisation plans
- Employers should consult regularly with unions on future skills needs and skills gaps.

ANSWER TO Q 10 CONTINUES BELOW

## 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?

THIS IS THE ANSWER TO Q 10 CONTINUED

- Employers should be required to conduct regular equality impact assessments, at the start of a new decarbonisation project with regular reviews in between, which should be discussed with unions

### Training – re-skilling

There are positive examples of what can be achieved when unions and managers work together on these matters. Unions have an excellent history of working with councils and drawing down funds from the Wales union learning fund and elsewhere to retrain workers to sustain their jobs in a changing world. One good example of this is the cooperation between Swansea council and unite.

Swansea council currently has 60 electric vehicles in its fleet. It will introduce a further 200 to 300 in the next few years. When electric vehicles were first introduced into the fleet, maintenance was subcontracted out, but the pandemic revealed that this was not a resilient strategy<sup>7</sup>.

The fleet manager of the central transport unit at Swansea council realised that workers urgently needed training for electric vehicle maintenance and contacted the Unite branch for help.

Unite officials secured funding and training places through their working relations with Gower College Swansea. As a result, all technicians at Swansea council have been trained in electric vehicle maintenance. Workers now have the green skills to reflect the changing profile of the fleet and the increase in house vehicle maintenance has also safeguarded their jobs in the shift to a green economy.<sup>8</sup>

In order to support such efforts, it would be helpful if the Welsh Government could introduce an accessible resource for public sector workers to get advice on reskilling or upskilling, similar to the a service available in Scotland, called the Green Jobs Workforce Academy.

#### Training – carbon literacy

It would be beneficial if a programme of carbon literacy was available to public sector workers. It is good to see that many of the better local authority net zero plans contain this pledge. The Wales TUC will also play its part with its green reps training. This is part of our commitment to improve the general understanding of these issues. Carbon literacy training was also one of the recommendations of a Cardiff University expert panel on mainstreaming equality in the transition to net zero. This report also made some important recommendations regarding Black, Asian and minority ethnic workers – to ensure that they and other groups with protected characteristics do not miss out in the move to decarbonise.

**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?**