

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 Cyngor Celfyddydau Cymru | Evidence from Arts Council of 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?

We see the role of the Welsh Government to support public bodies to deliver on the five calls for action to be:

- Continue to provide strong leadership: In recent years Welsh Government has demonstrated strong leadership through an increased significant focus on climate change and decarbonisation including the current Programme for Government and Net Zero Wales. However, whilst the desired outcomes we all want to achieve are widely recognised as preventative and long term, and common to all, in our opinion the 'how' needs further development – particularly ways in which many of these initiatives can be brought together and aligned for organisations in a clear, collaborative action plan. This plan could then be supported by a common evaluation framework for organisations to adopt and used in measuring and monitoring their own progress against the required actions, providing consistency and uniformity in reporting.
- Explore the possibility of longer term financial forecasting: longer term financial forecasting is reliant on confirmation of funding levels from our Sponsor, Welsh Government and National Lottery ticket sales proceeds from the DCMS. Both of these are on an annual basis, therefore making longer term forecasting more challenging. Longer term financial forecasting programmes (e.g. 3 year cycles) if possible, would be beneficial.
- Improve alignment of key priorities: There are currently a number of legislative responsibilities and key priorities that we are required to deliver against. Improved alignment of these would allow organisations to develop fewer. More encompassing strategies and longer term plans.
- Provide access to additional financial resources: We agree with the finding in the Audit Wales report that our resources are stretched in delivering core services, and that as an organisation we lack specialist skills in carbon reduction. Lack of resources, both financial and physical, is an issue. As a WGSB we are required to keep our own operating costs to a minimum and as such, have seen a 25% reduction in our own workforce within the Arts Council over recent years. The funding we receive is already largely accounted for, through Welsh Government's Framework and annual Remit Letters, and the Lottery Policy Directions. We are the lead development body for the arts in Wales and dedicate our resources to delivering against the key objectives outlined in our Royal Charter and

Remit Letters. Therefore there is little resource left available to support our development of thinking and strategy for new or additional considerations. However, we also appreciate that more recently, increased focus on environmental considerations are now included in Welsh Government's Programme for Government and our Remit Letter, and we will explore with Welsh Government ways in which any additional financial resources may be available to help and support delivery of these targets.

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?

We welcome Welsh Government's route map for decarbonisation across the Welsh public sector which contains high level outcomes over 3 periods until 2030. Whilst detailing these outcomes is helpful to organisations it could be improved by including consideration of the following:

- Increased reference and promotion of this document,
- the document currently provides detail on the 'what' needs to be achieved but not the 'how'
- resources and opportunities vary significantly across organisations and between organisations and Welsh Government
- it does not include consideration of the current and newly adopted methods of operation organisations have introduced in the wake of the Covid pandemic. If we were all to build further on these in the initial steps (particularly 2021-22) this would provide a significant early progress and achievement of some of those actions referenced in the final stage 2026-30, for example: 'Buildings: 2026-2030 – The focus is no longer on buildings but healthy environments to live, work and visit.' And Mobility and Transport 2026-2030 – Citizen centred models of service delivery reduces the need for travel by staff, visitors and service users. Capitalising now on the current hybrid and work from home working arrangements adopted by many organisations in 2021-22 would make significant progress in the early achievement of these outcomes.
- Achievement of these outcomes requires involvement, action and support from all organisations, Accountability and responsibility of organisations in support of the achievement of these aims not currently referenced in the document.

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:

Arts Council of Wales are currently in the process of co-designing a Strategy for Climate Justice and the Arts in collaboration with the sector and a broad range of stakeholders, which will be launched in 2023, in alignment with our new Strategic Plan and the Investment Review of our Arts Portfolio. We have included climate justice via creativity and action that is socially, environmentally, and ethically sustainable, as one of the six principles of our Investment Review, and climate justice will correspondingly be represented in our new Strategic Plan, which is currently in development.

The Strategy for Climate Justice and the Arts will consolidate our commitment to embedding our response to the climate and nature emergencies in everything we do and pave the way for becoming carbon neutral ourselves by 2030 and supporting the sector to reach net zero by 2050. Framed by the Well-being of Future Generations Act, the strategy will take a holistic, internationalist and social justice centred approach to our role in tackling the climate and nature emergencies.

Through our Creative Nature Memorandum of Understanding with Natural Resources Wales, NRW are acting as a key partner in this process. We have contracted the Centre for Alternative Technology's Zero Carbon Britain Innovation Lab to lead on the strategy co-design process.

The strategy is being developed through a process of conversation and co-design with individuals and organisations from the arts and environmental sectors. The architecture is being developed around the following five strategic pillars:

- **Decarbonisation:** An arts sector which meets key Welsh Government targets including a carbon neutral public sector by 2030 and a net zero arts sector by 2050 as part of a Net Zero Wales.
- **Nature and Biodiversity:** An arts sector which actively plays its part in preserving nature and biodiversity, both through management of its own resources and through utilising the power of the arts to affect change.
- **Ethical Choices:** An arts sector which considers its impact on people and planet locally and globally in all its decisions.
- **Creating Change:** An arts sector which fully realises the potential of the arts to imagine, connect, communicate and affect change in Wales and the world through values of empathy, solidarity and healing.
- **Supporting Artists:** An arts sector where artists feel empowered, safe and supported to undertake work relating to climate justice.

The priorities set out for immediate action in the route map will be addressed through these five pillars, which will have corresponding action plans attached. Sustainable procurement will be addressed through the Ethical Choices pillar. Mobility and transport will be addressed through the Decarbonisation pillar. Arts Council of Wales has less direct action to take around Net zero buildings and Land use in relation to our own organisation as we do not own buildings or land, but our action in these areas will be focused on supporting the arts sector to minimise their own impact in these areas.

We are exploring the power of the arts to connect people with nature as a key focus of our Creative Nature Partnership with Natural Resources Wales moving forwards.

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

See response to q10.

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

Other actions we have taken which contribute more broadly to our progress in relation to Sustainable procurement; Net zero buildings; Mobility and transport, and Land use are as follows:

- Introduced a Future Generation Committee, chaired by a Council Member and includes representation from Council, Senior Leadership and staff across the organisation as well external expertise. The Committee reports directly to Council, and considers and monitors our internal and external objectives and arrangements in response to our commitment and obligations to the WFGA. This Committee publishes an Annual Report on its work and contributes to our Trustee Statement in our published Annual Accounts.
- Collectively all members of the Senior Leadership team including the Chief Executive and Directors have responsibility. The Director of Arts Development, a member of the Senior leadership Team, has specific responsibilities to ensure the Arts Council delivers in its commitment and responsibilities to the WFGA. Similar supporting responsibilities are also included in designated Portfolio Manager roles that report to the Directors.
- Introduced changes in our office and operational arrangements that have resulted in achievement in 2014 and retainment of Green Dragon level 5 accreditation
- Environmental Improvement Plans in place since 2009
- Monitoring and reporting of our own carbon footprint generated through our activity in the delivery of our objectives and ensuring our internal policies support its reduction (e.g. staff Travel and Subsistence and Agile Working Policies).
- Building on our working arrangements in response to the Covid pandemic where all staff were equipped to work from home, we have now implemented hybrid working arrangements for staff and reconfigured our current office premises to support these arrangements. This will result in a reduction of staff travel requirements and resources (including utilities, office consumables etc) used to facilitate office space and office based working.
- Through external and internal engagement we are currently developing a framework which will allow us to develop and measure the impact of our international activities against the WFGA and all seven goals.
- Engaging in conversations with NRW, Welsh Government, Future Generations Commissioner, and the 4 Nations International Liaison Group to develop our response to the Climate and Nature Emergencies.
- Through our commitment to the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act (WFGA) we have, over recent years, taken direct action to monitor and reduce our own carbon footprint. Many of these actions are detailed in and reported through our annual Operational Plans.
- Leading on the development of the Welsh Government's Cultural Contract, for which one of the four principles is Environmental Sustainability
- We have developed and introduced a Funding Agreement for our core funded Portfolio clients that includes their actions in response to environmental considerations through their own WFGA and Cultural Contract commitments and responsibilities. Portfolio Members monitor and report progress to their own Boards and our Officers.

- We are exploring what measures, training, and support we might introduce to assist us and our funded organisations in the goal to reduce environmental impact. Organisations we have identified who may offer options for support include Carbon Literacy Trust, Julie's Bicycle, Creative Carbon Scotland, Cynnal Cymru, Centre for Alternative Technology.

- Working with the 4 Nations Arts Councils in England, Northern Ireland and Creative Scotland on policies relating to Climate Emergency and introducing slower and greener touring approaches for the Arts across the UK and Ireland.
- WAI is involved in international networks discussing Climate Emergency and the arts such as On the Move and IETM.