

TO: Bethan Davies

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Clerk of the Finance Committee

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A call for information – Welsh Government Draft Budget proposals for 2020-21

Thanks you for your invitation to comment on the Welsh Government Draft Budget proposals for 2020-21, at this early stage in the budget process. Extinction Rebellion is convinced that:

- What goes in the budget is the only real test of political commitment
- Corporate planning has to change from “business as usual” urgently
- Next year’s budget must support Climate Emergency priority action

Our “headline” response is based firmly on the three demands of the Extinction Rebellion, which have been communicated regularly to the Welsh Government:

1. Tell the Truth

Government must tell the truth by declaring a climate and ecological emergency, working with other institutions to communicate the urgency for change.

2. Act Now

Government must act now to halt biodiversity loss and reduce greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2025.

3. Beyond Politics

Government must create and be led by the decisions of a Citizens’ Assembly on climate and ecological justice

“Headline” response:

1. **The Budget must** show identified, dedicated resources (include staffing) to support the development, and work, of : **a Welsh Government Climate Emergency Committee**; a cross-party **Senedd Climate Emergency Committee to oversee that work**; and a **Citizen’s Assembly** to inform and oversee the whole programme of urgent change. This includes a **Welsh Government Climate Emergency Plan**, developing continuously.
2. The Budget must also allocate resources for **wide public communication** of the depth of the crisis; aims and progress of a Welsh Government Climate Emergency Plan, including through national and local People’s assemblies

3. The Budget must clearly show where harmful current policies have stopped – **ACT NOW** - and with funding removed from those harmful policies. And that this funding has now been **re-allocated** to “mend the damage” and resource new, positive policies and actions
4. The Budget must show where Welsh Government **allocations to Local Authorities** now support County Borough Councils in delivering the aims of the Wales Climate Emergency Plan

Examples of what could be done immediately on Point 3 above:

- Divest rapidly in fossil fuels and direct the investment into low carbon transition industries and businesses
- Change your corporate electricity contracts to a 100% renewables provider.
- Redirect sums allocated to the M4 Relief road to Active Travel budgets
- Change procurement contracts and suppliers to remove plastic packaging from the supply chain and generally specify low carbon approaches
- Negotiate a single application and tariff with the National Grid for connecting new renewable energy schemes, to all, Local Authorities, other public sector bodies and community organisations

For a more structural and longer term approach, the Ten Point Plan issued by the Wellbeing of Future Generations Commissioner sets out an approach to be considered and used as guidance:

Transport – £240 million in next budget (2020-21) – greater investment in active travel, public transport and electric vehicle infrastructure.

Housing & Buildings – £330 million in next budget (2020-21) – greater investment in a national housing retrofit programme – focusing initially on homes living in fuel poverty and those in social ownership could cost up to £1 billion.

Renewable Energy – £200 million in next budget (2020-21) – IWA estimate that to develop an energy system that enables Wales to become 100% self-sufficient in renewable electricity by 2035 requires around £30 billion of investment over a 15-year period

Land use & nature-based solutions – £221 million in next budget (2020-21) – Radically increase tree cover over the next two decades – requiring investment of approximately £16 million per annum over the next 10 years. Support adoption of low carbon agricultural practices and re-thinking land-use practice – £300 million per annum is currently provided to support agriculture and rural development.

Other levers – Ensure decarbonisation is a key principle and driver for decision making within planning, public sector procurement contracts and pension fund investments supported by a programme to train a carbon-literate public sector

Love and Rage

Extinction Rebellion Cymru