

Julie James AS/MS
Y Gweinidog Newid Hinsawdd
Minister for Climate Change



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

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Susie Ventris-Field
Chief Executive
Welsh Centre for International Affairs

SusieVentrisField@wcia.org.uk

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Dear Susie,

Thank you for your letter of 10 December 2021 providing feedback on Net Zero Wales and COP26 and for your help and support in the run up to and during COP26. I think even though we are a small nation, our stature has been reinforced, globally. Below I respond to the points raised in your letter.

Presentation of the Carbon Budget

Net Zero Wales, is a plan for Wales, not just for Welsh Government. Consequently we have a tool to measure emissions at the national level, which takes account of national actions. The use of a national emissions model is consistent with other administrations across the UK. In Part 4 of the plan, we have set our approach to measuring emissions recognising that to deliver the ambition of our second carbon budget, action from Welsh Government, UK Government, citizens, communities, business, public and third sector organisations will be required. This is why we look at it from the national level. The plan also outlines how we are trying to improve our measurement of carbon to inform and improve our decision-making.

Global Responsibility

Welsh Ministers will report on our consumptions emissions in 2022, after the end of our first carbon budget period (2016-2020). The legislation was deliberately timed to enable reporting at the same time as a territorial emissions to allow us to assess our full emissions impact. Doing so will enable us to take a comprehensive view of changes to Wales' total GHG emissions over time, and help to understand and fulfil our commitment to being a globally responsible nation.

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:
0300 0604400

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1SN

Gohebiaeth.Julie.James@llyw.cymru
Correspondence.Julie.James@gov.Wales

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

Behaviour Change

We have committed to a consultation on a Public Behavioural Change Engagement Strategy for Net Zero to be published in the summer 2022 (Policy 16 in Net Zero Wales). Supporting society to make the necessary changes to transition to Net Zero in a fair way will be the crucial challenge we face during the decade of action. That is why we need to develop a strategic approach where the factors of carbon, benefits, the wellbeing and costs to society are carefully understood and considered together. The consultation will allow experts and practitioners in the field to help shape our approach. I encourage you to work with your stakeholders and contribute to this consultation.

I welcome your proposals to focus public narratives on a compelling story for a better future, and agree people will be inspired to act if they understand the positive benefits tackling climate change will bring to them as individuals as well as their communities. For the approach to be successful however, it will be critical that we develop a clear understanding of people's values and needs to ensure interventions are targeted at the right time and deliver co-benefits. It also relies on a robust understanding of where undesirable impacts will be felt so we can work to ameliorate them.

Achieving a just transition to net zero is essential, this is why it is our first policy action within Net Zero Wales. We must take every Welsh citizen with us and leave no-one behind as we move to a greener, fairer future. We are working to understand the full impact of the transition to a net zero society. Reaching net zero emissions by 2050 is going to entail different levels of change for different people. There are significant benefits for Wales in leading the transition to a low carbon future. We have the ability to develop new skills and business opportunities, improve health outcomes and create a more equal nation. Maximising these benefits requires leadership to ensure Wales is at the forefront of the global transition to a low carbon economy. The Climate Change Committee (CCC) estimate around 80% of these changes can be achieved through a combination of government action and behaviour change, but the final 20% will require changes that need to come from individuals, for example choosing what to eat and when and if to fly.

Education

We must educate our children and young people about climate change, its causes, impact at home and globally and the required action. In the new Curriculum for Wales, learning on the climate and nature emergency will be assured, through mandatory 'statements of what matters'. Learning about different aspects of the environment will form part of every learner's education including sustainability, understanding the impact of our decisions and care for the environment.

Welsh Government has and continues to support two key climate and environmental educational programmes for schools across Wales, £420,000 in annual funding for Eco Schools and £150,000 annually for Size of Wales. All schools in Wales are able to engage with these programmes at no cost. These programmes empower children to drive change, improve their environmental awareness, take action and learn about climate change and the importance of forests and nature. Through the 21st Century Schools and Colleges Programme, Welsh Government encourage delivery partners and project teams to develop teaching resources that will provide an insight into the net zero agenda, which is both linked to the curriculum and provides a tangible link between the technology in their new school and how this affects the environment around them.

Public Sector

I also agree a life-long learning approach to climate education within the public sector is a priority, and that as well as removing carbon from its own estate, the public sector needs to demonstrate leadership in both understanding and tackling the climate emergency through all actions. In publishing the public sector net zero reporting guide in 2021, we are asking public bodies to better understand their emissions. This includes induced emissions, such as through its procurement and staff commutes. It is only by truly understanding the full carbon impacts of the operations of the public sector can we hope for the appropriate leadership.

I also hope and expect learnings from this process to educate and inspire the workforce in the public sector to take action, achieving broader engagement with the public on behavioural change.

Public Engagement

In addition to Policy 16 focused on behavioural change, we have also committed to publish a new Stakeholder Engagement Plan in spring 2022 (Policy 15 in Net Zero Wales). We published our Engagement Approach towards the development of Net Zero Wales in July 2020 promoting 16 consultations relating to policies across government with at least 3,500 contributions. Consultation took place on dozens of aspects of the plan, from our coal policy, to EV charging strategy, Part L building regulations and our Agricultural White Paper, to name just a few examples. The existing policies captured within the plan have all been through rigorous engagement processes, alongside our comprehensive Integrated Impact Appraisal process. This planned approach enabled important engagement to continue throughout the plan development despite the pandemic restrictions. The detailed consultation on policies within the plan culminated in the opportunity for broader consultation through Wales Climate Week 2020, where for the first time thousands of citizens were able to join important discussions related to how Wales should tackle the climate emergency.

Since the publication of the Net Zero Wales plan in October, COP Cymru 2021 (through its 38 sessions) offered the first important opportunity for stakeholders, communities and citizens across Wales to discuss how we now need to further work together to deliver the policies and proposals contained within the plan.

Looking ahead, we are keen to continue this engagement and learn lessons as to how we work together. We understand the challenges faced by stakeholders in engaging with Government on shaping and influencing policy. That is why I am committed to a Team Wales approach where leadership is collective and dispersed. Only through collective action can we ensure that Wales meets its targets and continues to contribute to tackling the global challenge of climate change. My officials continue to meet with stakeholders from across Wales to gather their views as to how we work together. My officials will be touch with you in the coming weeks.

It is right we all feel the responsibility for tackling climate change. This not about one sector of society feeling burden and another not. We will take an All Wales approach where my Cabinet colleagues, local government, individuals, businesses and communities must step up and play their part and I would welcome continued help in taking this Team Wales approach forward.

The Plan is a snapshot in time, and a fundamental tenet within it is engagement to power collective action. This recurrent theme throughout the document is perhaps best reflected in

Part 2, where we specifically commit to further engagement and collaboration. Finally, in Part 5, we offer a look ahead to major milestones over the coming months and years to support partnership and aid transparency.

Cross Party Working

The cross party working that has feed into the development of Net Zero Wales has taken place through the scrutiny and collaboration the Senedd provides. This take place through the regular scrutiny Senedd Committees, such as the Climate Change, Environment, and Infrastructure Committee provide, as well as exchanges in Plenary sessions in the Senedd. Additionally, cross party engagement frequently takes place in the form of formal and informal meeting between Ministers and Senedd Members. There is strong support for action on climate change within the Senedd. There are of course contrasting views on approaches and priorities, but this will always be the case and I welcome the challenge and value the Senedd brings to our policy development. You will be aware as part of a cooperation agreement with Plaid Cymru ,we have committed to commission independent advice to examine potential pathways to net zero by 2035, looking at the impact on society and sectors of our economy and how any adverse effects may be mitigated. This is an example of how working with other political parties we will continue to challenge existing approaches and where possible accelerate ambition and action.

Yours sincerely,



Julie James AS/MS

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