

12 November 2021

Dear Senedd Climate Change, Environment and Infrastructure Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide our initial views on Welsh Governments 'Net Zero Wales' Plan ahead your scrutiny session with the Minister for Climate Change next week. We welcome the publication of the Plan as well as additional commitments from Ministers at COP26 and look forward to more detail on the Team Wales approach at the forthcoming Wales Climate Week. A summary of our initial views on the Plan is below. We would be happy to provide the Committee with further detail if required.

Presentation of the carbon budget

From a simplistic point of view, the presentation of the carbon budget could be clearer. We would like to see the estimated or anticipated carbon / GHG savings of the actions detailed in each section of the Plan as a contribution to the overall 2021-26 budget cycle. For example, this is how much GHG we are emitting today, this is the reduction we need to make by x date, this is the reduction from each of our actions in this Plan, this is how much we will have left to do by x date. A simple sum like this would enable a primary aged child to understand where we need to get to and how we plan to get there facilitating the 'Team Wales' approach.

Public engagement

We are pleased that Welsh Government intends to consult on a Public Engagement strategy in Spring 2022. Through WCIA's partnerships with other organisations, it is clear that Welsh Government needs to improve in the way it seeks to collaborate and engage others on climate change mitigation and adaptation. We would have liked to see a much deeper engagement with people, communities and organisations across Wales in the development of the Plan. We appreciate the decarbonisation team are open to dialogue with external stakeholders but in practice this puts the onus entirely on organisations that are already overstretched and have little capacity to proactively lobby Welsh Government on the breadth of this agenda. In addition, organisations are only gatekeepers for the wider community who have little or no opportunity to engage with Welsh Government on climate change. This needs to be urgently addressed. Only by proactively reaching into communities across Wales will Welsh Government start to better understand how climate change is and will affect diverse groups and in turn, how best to shape solutions to mitigate and adapt.

Global responsibility

While the Plan includes references to international impact, there is a lack of detail on how Welsh Government will ensure all actions contribute to the globally responsible Wales goal. For example, we are pleased that consumption emissions are mentioned in the Plan, but the commitment to provide a statement on consumption emissions from 2016-2020 in 2022 is already a legal requirement under the Environment Act. Data on Wales' consumption emissions is woefully out of date. Without a consistent and more frequent mechanism for measuring consumption emissions we cannot track our global impact and without a plan to reduce them we risk offshoring our climate responsibilities to other nations which not what Welsh Government want.

Similarly, we applaud the ambition for systemic change in consumption with Wales only using our fair share of the earth's resources by 2050 but there is no clear detail on how this will be achieved in practice. Despite the fact that achieving this ambition will require transformational changes in the way we produce and consume, we still believe a 2050 timescale is too long. We will exceed our fair share for almost 30 years, effectively using resources that should be available to people in lower income countries who do not currently have access to sufficient resources to sustain themselves or their families. In addition, using more than our fair share of the world's resources over the next 30 years will significantly impact on future generations and their ability to access sufficient resources.

Focus on behaviour change

We agree that a 'Team Wales' approach to tackling climate change is needed, however, we are concerned that the core media narrative arising from the launch of the Plan was that taking action for climate and nature requires personal sacrifice for the collective good. This narrative is not helpful and incorrect on several levels. In practice, effective action for climate and nature actually improves both our collective and personal wellbeing. This detail is reflected in the Plan itself but failed to reach communications messaging. We might have a better chance of inspiring change if we focus narratives on a compelling story of a better future. In addition, the current narrative fails to address existing deep inequalities in our society and economy where the poorest people have contributed least to climate change and yet will be impacted most. For example, carbon emissions of the richest 1% of people globally are set to be [30 times higher](#) than that required to meet the 1.5 degree limit by 2030. These are the people that need to make significant lifestyle changes which will not happen without a push from government and transformative changes to our current economic system.

Education

We are pleased to see a focus on education and the new curriculum in the Plan but would like to ensure this is delivered within the broader auspices of Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship. In line with aspirations under the new curriculum for Wales to support 'ethical and informed citizens of Wales and the world' and understanding of the local, national and international context, it is essential that climate education in schools includes a broader understanding of global citizenship so learners can understand the other factors that interlink with climate such as inequality, poverty, conflict and infrastructure. This is true for adult learning and professional development too. Climate education has a significant role to play in supporting people across Wales gain a better understanding of the implications of climate change both here in Wales and globally, empowering communities to develop solutions and supporting climate action.

Public Sector

A life-long learning approach to global citizenship and climate education will be needed in order to deliver the Public Sector Route Map which tracks citizenship behaviour culminating in zero tolerance of unsustainable behaviour by 2030 as it is socially unacceptable. This has to start with the public sector workforce and there are existing training packages for example Public Health Wales training developed by WCIA and Oxfam Cymru, that could be adapted for this purpose. In addition, a wellbeing indicator and milestone to measure active global citizenship in the general population could be used to help measure delivery.

Cross party working

The Plan mentions the launch of the UK Government Net Zero Plan on 19 October and the fact that Welsh Government had no sight of the UK Plan until it was launched. We would be interested to know how much cross-party collaboration there was in the development of the 'Net Zero Wales' Plan? When we are facing a 'code red for humanity' party politics must be put aside. A single political party does not have all the answers. We absolutely agree that Welsh Government must be scrutinised, held to account and pushed to take deeper, faster action on the climate and nature emergencies but, in the coming years, all parties have a moral duty to support Welsh Government in the bold and difficult decisions it will need to take.

Yours sincerely



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