

# Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs Voluntary Sector Planning Meeting briefing: Calls for a Green Recovery

## INTRODUCTION

Several bodies have written both publicly and direct to Welsh Government and Central Government calling for a Green Recovery to address the economic damage caused by Covid-19.

Similar themes and asks appear across different calls for a green recovery. Size of Wales, who have prepared this paper, were directly involved in two such calls. Firstly, in their role as Chair of Stop Climate Chaos Cymru (SCCC) and secondly, as part of a UK wide virtual mass lobby that took place in June 2020, led by The Climate Coalition.

This paper summarises the key asks from these two papers and the relevance for Wales. The EERA Planning Group supports these asks.

### **Top three asks that bring together the different recommendations from across bodies.**

1. Introduce regulation to ensure that by 2030 Wales is on a clear track to net zero, with commitment to increasing investment in the Green recovery through natural based solutions and green infrastructure.
2. Introduce a food bill in Wales that tackles our agricultural impacts both at home and overseas, including commitments to zero deforestation.
3. Set world-leading targets for nature's restoration in the Environment Bill, deliver ambitious and invest in a nature recovery network that will increase everyone's access to wild space.

## STOP CLIMATE CHAOS WALES - ASKS

SCCC submitted a response to the Welsh Government's call for views on the Welsh recovery to Covid-19. In the paper the coalition echoed the calls of NGOs, companies and members of the public from around the world in calling for a green and just economic recovery that puts the needs of people and the planet first. They highlighted that:

*'With reports of 91 per cent of the British public wanting life to be different post covid-19, there is no better time than now to make these changes. COVID-19 has shown us that when our society is facing an emergency, we can bring about dramatic change. 48 per cent of the public agree that the government should respond with the same urgency to climate change, as it has with COVID-19, with just 28 per cent saying it should not. A green and just recovery must address the climate crisis we are facing by putting nature as well as people at its centre.'*

SCCC called on the Welsh Government to ensure that:

- The recovery meets all our obligations and responsibilities under the Well-being of Future Generations Act.
- All investments made in infrastructure projects, technology and education contribute towards the goal of sustainability.
- Avoid investment in unsustainable companies and industries, such as fossil fuels and focus on renewable green energy production.
- Utilise this behaviour change moment to increase cycling and walking.
- Support sustainable agriculture with a focus on building resilience to local food supplies.
- Put in place clear due diligence processes in procurement of goods and services that ensure that unsustainable practices are tackled.
- Restoration and protection of ecosystems and biodiversity are prioritised in any recovery programme.

To achieve this, they called on Welsh Government to:

**1. Introduce immediate regulation to ensure that by 2030 Wales is on a clear track to net zero.'**

- to end Wales' contribution to climate change: rapidly put in place ambitious policies to slash emissions now to get us on track to net zero within this decade, and to ensure all future investments are made to promote sustainability.
- Implement the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act.

**2. Call for a scaling up of investment to tackle the climate emergency:**

- Ensure Wales is spending at least 2 per cent of GDP (in line with the Future Generations Commissioner's 10-point plan) per year for climate action, starting immediately.
- Ensure Wales introduces Carbon Impact Assessments of the fiscal budget and spending decisions across the public sector.

This similarly echoed **The Climate Coalition's** Virtual Lobby which called on the UK Government to support this by undertaking the following:

**1. Unleash investment in jobs-rich climate and nature-friendly infrastructure supporting millions out of the recession - including through:**

- Ensuring Wales receives adequate funding from the UK Treasury to enact a just and Green Recovery. Given the scale of this task it is vital this funding is based on the needs of Welsh society and the Welsh environment, and not based on the pre Covid-19 funding mechanisms that are dependent on funding in England (aka the Barnett Formula) and which are likely to result in inadequate resources being allocated to Wales.
- Increasing investment in cycling and walking infrastructure and public transport and bringing forward the phaseout of new petrol and diesel cars and vans to 2030 to protect our health and make our air cleaner.

- Protecting key workers and the most vulnerable from ill-health next winter and beyond by launching an infrastructure programme to decarbonise our homes. The Government can start by delivering on the energy efficiency funding for buildings promised in its election manifesto and build on this to make all homes energy efficient by 2030.
  - Ensuring that any Covid-19 financial rescue packages for companies are granted on strict conditions that align to the 1.5-degree commitment in the Paris Climate Agreement – putting people and workers first.
  - Building economic resilience by applying a net-zero test to all spending and taxation measures.
  - Creating training and employment opportunities that will contribute to the recovery of natural habitats and as well as carbon-neutral economy. Investing in the delivery of Nature-based Solutions, such as restoring peatlands and creating new woodland that tackle climate change and help store water, will also create green jobs and should be prioritised.
2. **Set world-leading targets for nature’s restoration in the Environment Bill, deliver ambitious UK Agriculture and Fisheries Bills and invest in a nature recovery network that will increase everyone's access to wild space.** Ensure Wales continues to receive adequate funding to deliver its own, devolved sustainable farming, land management and marine policies. Provide a replacement for the EU’s LIFE Fund to secure major ecological restoration projects across landscapes, seas and countries.
  3. **Guarantee in law that all food imports will meet the same environmental, food safety and animal welfare standards as food that is produced in the UK.** Provide safe, sustainable, healthy food for all by ensuring UK supply chains aren't destroying the planet. Restoring nature across the world will be a key part of building resilience against future pandemics.
  4. **Champion debt cancellation and an increase in grants to the world’s poorest communities to enable them to build their resilience to both the COVID-19 and climate crises.**
  5. **End all UK public finance for fossil fuels overseas shifting instead to renewable, efficient energy and energy access for poor communities – developed in harmony with wildlife and the natural environment.**

## **SIZE OF WALES - ASKS**

Finally, as part of these calls, **Size of Wales** has highlighted the need to ensure that a real commitment to zero deforestation is also part of any green recovery. This is to ensure that we simply do not outsource our emissions and environmental impacts in a drive to reduce our own. Therefore, Size of Wales is also calling for:

1. Include emissions for imported deforestation in their analysis and target setting to move Wales towards a zero emissions nation.
2. Lead the way in Europe by introducing zero deforestation targets and due diligence of company practices.
3. Introduce zero deforestation targets in procurement policy in Wales as part of our transition to utilising locally produced and sustainable goods.
4. Introduce sustainable farming practices that end the reliance on soy animal feed that originate from forest risk areas and strengthening nature and climate friendly farming methods such as organic farming.
5. Introduce a sustainable Welsh food strategy that promotes local sustainable supply chains, thereby reducing the importation of commodities that are causing global deforestation.
6. Work with the UK Government to ensure that new trade agreements will guarantee environmental and human rights standards, particularly around deforestation, accompanied by strict enforcement measures.
7. Work with non-traditional partners such as NGOs to further strengthen teaching on climate change within the new curriculum and support educators towards achieving this goal.
8. Ensure vulnerable countries and communities suffering the effects of climate change and deforestation are supported to help them adapt and prosper as part of Wales' ambition to be a globally responsible nation.

*Size of Wales, on behalf of the Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs voluntary sector planning group*

*July 2020*