

Change is Coming – is Wales ready?



Making the Welsh economy more resilient to climate change and rising oil prices

Radical action is needed from all political parties in Wales if they are to keep their promises on climate change and stop rising energy prices pushing people into poverty.

The Welsh Government has set itself some of the most ambitious targets in the world on greenhouse gas emissions reduction. It has promised a 3% decrease year on year, within areas of devolved competence, with the aim of reducing emissions by 40% on 1990 levels by 2020.

But current proposals on how to achieve that target are delivering neither the necessary scale nor speed of change that is desperately needed.

In the current financial climate we understand that there are difficult decisions to be made, but the failure to invest in measures now to halt climate change will cause irreversible economic and environmental damage in the future.

Stop Climate Chaos Cymru, a coalition of 14 influential Welsh organisations, in partnership with the Welsh Economy Research Unit at Cardiff Business School, have identified ways in which the Welsh Government can help Wales on its journey to a lower carbon future, while at the same time creating jobs, investing in better housing and improving health and wellbeing.

The journey to a low carbon future

Given the economic climate SCCC has identified three key priorities for investment by the Welsh Government which we believe are affordable, achievable, and will have long term health, social and environmental benefits.

A cultural shift from our dependence on the car to 'Smarter Choices'

Car use is a significant contributor to greenhouse gas emissions. Evidence shows that when people receive targeted information about alternatives to the car, take-up of public transport or cycling increases significantly. Long commutes are also minimised if people are aware of innovative business solutions such as remote working and videoconferencing. In three pilot areas in England, car use decreased by

9% while bus travel rose by 35% and cycling trips by 113%, simply by giving people the information they needed to help plan their travel.

For just £10 a head the 'Smarter Travel Choices' programme would cut emissions and benefit business, which loses £20m a year due to road congestion, as well as improving health.

The Cardiff Business School estimates the switch to non-motorised and public transport modes could, every year, benefit the Welsh economy by £11m and 300 jobs, whilst saving 170,000 tonnes of carbon.

The scale of Welsh Government investment needs to be increased significantly if we are to achieve emissions targets.

Investment in 'sustainability' skills

The Welsh Government's Green Jobs Strategy needs to be at the forefront of its economic renewal plans and incorporate the rising demand for expertise in renewable heat technology, retrofitting and sustainable new-builds. The skill level of the workforce drives both regional and firms' competitiveness, and a lack of training has been shown to restrict growth. Yet smaller firms train less, and this is a real problem for Wales with its large business population of SMEs, especially in construction.

Investment is needed in training that provides people with the skills they need to work in the developing field of sustainability. In the con-

struction sector alone, Wales will soon experience an upsurge in the need for skilled builders, micro generation installers and tradespeople, who are equipped with knowledge of new environmental regulations and policy changes.

As part of the Welsh Government strategy, training centres should be created around the country targeting areas of high unemployment and offering opportunities for the people of Wales to be at the forefront of the latest developments in green technology.

Having a network of suitably trained professionals in Wales will also be essential to support the delivery of multiple climate change interventions, including those contained in this document, and will make Wales competitive in the UK and European jobs markets.

Stop Climate Chaos Cymru membership

Oxfam Cymru,
Unison,
National Union
of Students,
Friends of the
Earth Cymru,
RSPB Cymru,
Sustrans Cymru,
WWF Cymru,
CAFOD,
Christian Aid
Wales,
Coed Cadw –
The Woodland
Trust,
Tearfund,
National Federation
of Women's
Institutes Wales,
the Wildlife
Trusts Wales &
the Centre for
Alternative
Technology

Nationwide home energy refurbishment

Housing is responsible for about a fifth of Welsh national emissions. Through the implementation of a nationwide home energy refurbishment programme, existing housing in Wales offers the potential to make deep and immediate cuts in emissions. This programme will not only reduce energy use and cut carbon but also reduce fuel bills, helping thousands out of fuel poverty, as well as creating new jobs.

A start could be made by bringing homes rated as E, F and G on a standard A-G scale up to a D rating. Over 700,000 homes in Wales could benefit, with potential CO₂ savings in the region of 2 MtCO₂/year. This would bring carbon emissions from housing to 40% below the 1990 level, taking into account reductions already achieved.

The work would require an investment of £2.1bn, most of which could come from the private sector through the UK Government's Green Deal initiative, which allows owner-occupiers and tenants to make energy efficiency improvements without paying up-front. The cost would be paid back through energy bills, which would be lower than before the improvements.

We therefore call on the Welsh Government and Local Authorities to integrate their home refurbishment initiatives with the Green Deal, thereby generating significant economies of scale.

It is sensible to aim for better than a D rating where feasible. A programme to improve one third of Welsh homes by 60% would create tens of thousands of jobs and be a major step on the way to a planned 80% reduction in Wales' greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

Supported by:

The **co-operative** membership 
Cymru/Wales