

# A DECADE TO TURN THINGS AROUND

A BRIEFING FOR ASSEMBLY MEMBERS OF WALES

FEBRUARY 2020





## A decade to turn things around



**The world is hitting record-breaking temperatures, and the poorest communities are being affected the most. The devastating decline in biodiversity is set to wipe out a million species. Our oceans are choking in plastic and our children are breathing toxic air. The science is clear, and Wales is feeling the impacts.**

**The political response needs to be stronger and faster.**

**This is not a future problem: the time is now.**

### **The impact of climate change in Wales and globally**

- ♥ Recent research named Cardiff one of the world's most at risk cities globally from global warming.<sup>i</sup>
- ♥ Wales' consumption of natural resources is far beyond what its population size can justify; Wales exceeds safe limits for the consumption of CO<sub>2</sub> by 455%.<sup>ii</sup>
- ♥ Climate-fuelled disasters were the number one driver of the internal displacement of people over the last decade –forcing an estimated 20 million people a year from their homes. 1 person is displaced every 2 seconds as a result of climate-fuelled disasters.<sup>iii</sup>
- ♥ The World Bank estimates that without immediate action, climate change could push 120 million more people into poverty by 2030.<sup>iv</sup>

### **2020: Wales' place in the year for climate action**

The [latest IPCC report](#) made it clear that rapid, transformational action in the next decade is crucial. Wales' recent declaration of a climate emergency must be matched with an appropriate response.

This year the 2015 Paris Agreement comes into force; the UK prepares to host COP26 in Glasgow in November, the biggest conference since the Paris Agreement; and Welsh Government comes to the end of its first carbon budgeting period (2016-20) under the Environment Act 2016 and will be developing its low carbon plan for 2021-25.

Over the coming year, we need to see a Wales which:

- ♥ acts in its domestic policy to do its fair share in the global picture to achieve equitable and rapid emissions reductions, both domestic and consumption.
- ♥ acts to ensure that wellbeing, sustainability and principles of global equity are the forefront of its international policy.

## Wales' track record

Wales has a strong track record of legislation and regulation like the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 which enshrines Wales' carbon emissions targets in law (80% emissions reduction by 2050). In April 2019 the Welsh Assembly became the first Parliament in the UK to vote on a climate emergency motion. This was followed by news that Welsh Government accepted the recommendation of the UK Committee on Climate Change for a 95% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 but also announced its ambition to go further and bring forward its ambition to reach net-zero emissions by 2050.

If our legislation and regulation were to be actioned effectively, these could be strong tools to propel Wales towards a zero-carbon future. However, our stated ambitions fall far short of reality. Wales backtracked on its carbon emissions targets following advice from the UK Committee on Change (scaling back to 27% the original target of 40% reduction on 1990 levels by 2020); and overall, Wales' emissions have been rising rather than falling since 2009.



## Stop Climate Chaos Cymru asks for 2020

Wales must act with greater **depth and speed** towards the goal of Net Zero over this critical decade. And with COP taking place in Glasgow in November 2020, Wales needs to ensure it has an authentic leadership position within the UK and globally.

To meet the climate emergency, Wales must ensure its emissions targets are in sync with its climate emergency declaration. This must be supported by government spending of 2% of GDP (in line with the Future Generations Commissioner's 10-Point Plan) and a ten-year programme of action to put us on the path to net zero emissions.

### 1. Ensure greenhouse gas emissions targets are in line with climate science and principles of global equity and responsibility.

Wales' emissions targets are out of sync with climate science, global emissions limits and our duty to be a globally responsible nation. To limit global warming to around 1.5 °C (in line with the Paris Agreement), we need to take action urgently by 2030.

- ♥ Wales must legislate to move at pace towards net zero by 2045 at the latest, with significant progress by 2030.

### 2. Ensure public spending is in line with plans to reduce emissions.

Currently Wales has an overarching plan to reduce emissions (in Prosperity for All: Low Carbon Wales). However, this doesn't outline how Wales will spend, or plan to spend on specific policy areas and initiatives to achieve this plan.

- ♥ Welsh Government must commit 2% of GDP to invest in our zero-carbon future; and must commit to both an immediate and a long-term plan for spending to ensure Wales meets its carbon budgets beyond 2020.
- ♥ Welsh Government should move at pace to report on the impact of all spending on climate change by embedding Carbon Impact Assessments across the public sector. This should be done at each annual budget.

## Next steps for AMs

Please do everything in your power to maximise action for our climate, nature and people, in Wales and globally.

### 1) Call for immediate regulation towards net zero by 2030:

- ♥ 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.
- ♥ 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% 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.

### 3) Do all you can in the run up to COP in Glasgow to increase momentum towards net zero:

- ♥ Engage with Stop Climate Chaos Cymru and communities in the low carbon development plans.
- ♥ Call on Welsh Government to engage with sectors on how they'll deliver the low carbon plan 2021-25.
- ♥ Call on Welsh Government to convene civil society in the run up to COP.
- ♥ Convene a meeting in your constituency or region ahead of COP.

**Share your pledge to work towards achieving net zero at pace in 2020 on social media: #thetimeisnow @SCCCymru**



We are a coalition of influential organisations based in Wales, who work together to mobilise our supporters and others across Wales, to bring about changes to help tackle climate change. The organisations include: CAFOD, Centre for Alternative Technology, Christian Aid, CHASE Group (Church in Wales), Friends of the Earth, Oxfam Cymru, NUS Cymru, RSPB, Size of Wales, Sustrans, Tearfund, Wales Wildlife Trust, Welsh Centre for International Affairs, Woodland Trust, Women's Institute, WWF.

*Views included in this briefing may not be representative of each individual coalition member.*

<sup>i</sup> Nestpick, 2050 Climate Change City Index <https://www.nestpick.com/2050-climate-change-city-index/>

<sup>ii</sup> Oxfam Cymru (2020) 'The Welsh Doughnut: A framework for environmental sustainability and social justice'

<sup>iii</sup> Oxfam International (2019) Forced from home: Climate-fuelled displacement media briefing

<sup>iv</sup> World Bank, Shock Waves, p. 12