

Pwyllgor Newid Hinsawdd, yr Amgylchedd a Seilwaith /
Climate Change, Environment and Infrastructure Committee
Blaenoriaethau ar gyfer y Chweched Senedd / Priorities for the Sixth Senedd
PR06

Ymateb gan unigolyn/ Evidence from individual

Dear Sir/Madam,

Please find below my consultation comments in the WG climate priorities. I am commenting as an individual and do not want my name or email address to be published.

Below I set out what I think the priorities should be and some issues that need consideration.

1) Energy. The WG move to renewable energy is fully supported, however three things are needed:

- a) network providers eg Western Power must improve opportunities for grid connection, be less risk averse, and make connection quicker and easier.
- b) national planning policy must be braver and set renewable energy as a clear priority over other considerations. At the moment it tries to be all things to all people and there is still too much ambiguity about which policy takes priority, e.g. BMV agricultural land, landscape or energy. Outside of National Parks and AONBs, energy policy should be the clear priority.
- c) planning policy and/or building regs should require the provision of roof mounted solar pv on all new builds. This reduced the need for grid capacity and large scale solar farms, and reduces the cost of living helping address fuel poverty.

2) New buildings. The WG moves to tighten Building Regs are welcomed and where possible should go further. Building Regs has the advantage of providing national consistency and avoids locally based policy debates with developers.

3) Transport. The 30% target for home/agile working is welcomed and will help reduce the need to travel. Traditional ways of measuring employment land and job creation in LDPs needs to be updated to reflect the fact that job location (HQ) might not equate to where workers go/commuting.

If we're really going to get people out of their cars, huge public sector overhaul and investment is needed in public transport. Current transport policy seems to be written by people who have not left Cardiff. There are huge challenges in rural areas where some growth is still needed to sustain rural communities socially and economically but where bus services are not viable. TfW's Flecsibws offers a real opportunity here. The proposed Metro schemes need to be more ambitious and wider reaching (extending beyond the valleys). Trains need to be far more frequent

(every 10 minutes) and much cheaper (needing public subsidy) if they are going to be a genuine alternative to the private car. The Burns Commission new train stations are welcomed and need to be delivered at pace.

A Wales-wide approach to on street EV Charging is needed to ensure the ability to move to electric vehicles is not restricted to the wealthy with private driveways and garages. The requirement for all new homes to have EV Charging (via BRegs) is fully supported.

The move to EV fleet e.g. refuse vehicles and buses, is fully supported but at present the size of the vehicles or range presents challenges to the majority of Wales which is more rural in nature. Are there opportunities for WG to lead on R&D into smaller EV fleet better suited to Wales rural areas? This could be a gamechanger.

4. Roads. The current pause on road building demonstrates brave leadership and has challenged my own thinking. Consideration should be given to the need for new roads that address demonstrable air quality issues, or better still investment in a rail alternative (e.g. a direct rail link from Chepstow to Bristol).

In a more general sense, good quality and safe roads are vital for cyclists and pedestrians, so increased investment is needed to maintain existing roads in good condition. Potholes are a bigger danger to cyclists than to motorists. So please avoid the temptation to think roads are inherently bad.

5. Tree planting. The ambition for tree planting including a national forest is welcomed but it is unclear how this will be achieved (land owners incentivised?). There is an opportunity to combine some of this planting with natural flood mitigation reducing upstream flows.

Some clarity is needed about the national forest. Is it for amenity and ecology benefit (as well as climate), or is it plantation for future building materials? The nature of the woodland, species etc will be different for these two options, and clarity and honesty is needed from the outset about whether the woodland will be felled for construction in future years or will be permanent, or there will be significant challenges in the future.

Thanks for taking the time to consider my ideas.