

Welsh Government seeks views on a low carbon future for Wales

['Achieving our low Carbon Pathway to 2030'](#) presents a series of 'ideas for action' to reduce greenhouse gases, while maximizing the opportunities a low carbon economy will present.

The Welsh Government is required by law to reduce emissions in Wales by at least 80% in 2050, compared to levels in 1990, with interim targets for 2020, 2030 and 2040. The consultation focusses on key areas including agriculture, industry, power, transport and waste, to help reach the Welsh Government's proposed target of reducing emissions by 45% in 2030.

Recent years have seen growth in a number of new greener industries, including electric vehicle and battery manufacturing, low-carbon energy technologies, low energy buildings and heating and cooling systems.

However, a large proportion of Wales' energy still comes from fossil fuels, while a high share of the UK's heavy industry is based here. Many homes have solid walls, making them more costly to insulate, and many homes are 'off-grid'. The rural nature of much of Wales can make environmentally-friendly travel more difficult.

Cabinet Secretary for Energy, Planning and Rural Affairs, Lesley Griffiths, said:

"The Paris Agreement not only sets the context for tackling climate change, but for the decarbonisation of the global economy. Action on climate change will result in cleaner air and water and will not only improve our health and wellbeing, it will lift people out of fuel poverty and create new opportunities for green industries."

This consultation will open up a dialogue on how we tackle the challenge of climate change together in Wales."

Economy and Transport Secretary, Ken Skates, said:

"From embracing new modes and mechanisms of transport, to pioneering and manufacturing green technologies, there is huge potential for growth in a low carbon economy. That is why my Economic Action Plan has helping business to future proof, innovate and become carbon light, or carbon free, right at its heart.

We must ensure Wales takes advantage of the transition to a low-carbon society so we can continue to compete with the rest of the World and ensure that the benefits of low carbon economy are felt in communities right across Wales."

Kirsty Williams praises schools following year of major reforms to Welsh education

Last September, the Education Secretary announced a national mission to raise standards, reduce the attainment gap, and deliver an education system that is a source of national pride and public confidence.

At a conference held in Cardiff today, the Education Secretary explained how major changes to what pupils are taught, how they are taught and how their teachers are trained and developed are helping to transform schools as we know them.

One of the most significant and wide-reaching of these changes is the new curriculum to be rolled out from 2022. Over 200 pioneer schools across Wales are involved in developing six different Areas of Learning and Experience. This work includes embedding digital competence into all areas of teaching and learning and supporting teachers to develop the new curriculum.

A new independent report published today found that these schools strongly support the changes being made and are enthusiastic about their part in developing Wales' new curriculum.

Teachers' professional learning and development has been similarly instrumental to the national mission for education, with this school year seeing:

- New professional standards for Teaching and Leadership developed with the profession, for the profession;
- The establishment of a new National Academy for Educational Leadership to support all leaders in education at all stages of their careers;
- New accredited Initial Teacher Education programmes to be delivered in the academic year 2019/20;
- Plans for a new part-time PGCE and Employment Based Route into teaching from 2019/20.

Teachers and pupils will also soon begin to see the benefits of a £36 million fund to reduce infant class sizes, with the appointment of over 80 new teachers across Wales and a capital fund to build new classrooms.

Reducing unnecessary bureaucracy for teachers continues to remain a priority, with this year seeing a £1.2 million investment in the appointment of school business managers – helping headteachers to manage their workload and focus on raising standards and school improvement.

Kirsty Williams said:

“When I announced our national mission for education last September I said that we would never be able to achieve our ambitions if we just stayed still.

“That’s why the past year has been all about momentum – a drive for self-improvement that reaches right across our education system.

“We still have much work to do but I’m proud of the reforms that we have introduced in a relatively short space of time. I am also genuinely impressed by how everyone in the education system has responded.

“When I visit schools and talk to teachers and pupils, I am always struck about what they’re achieving and how they are improving – whether that’s in developing the new curriculum or discovering new ways of teaching and learning.

“In return, we are introducing the most comprehensive changes to teacher training and development in years, ensuring that our teaching profession are fully prepared and equipped when they start to teach our new curriculum.

“Our schools are changing, education in Wales is changing and I’m confident that our national mission is well on course to deliver the wholesale reforms that we need.”

Kirsty Williams announces £3.5m for promoting Welsh universities in a post-Brexit world

The new funding is for Global Wales, a partnership between Universities Wales, British Council Wales, the Welsh Government and the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales. The support is via the Welsh Government’s £50m EU Transition Fund to help business, public services and others prepare for the impacts of Brexit.

Established in 2015, Global Wales promotes Wales’ universities in priority overseas markets: Vietnam and the United States. This funding will see a significant increase in the scope and scale of the programme to deliver the Study in Wales brand globally, develop existing activity in the US and Vietnam, and to expand to other markets. The aim is to drive education exports and boost Wales’ profile as an outward-facing knowledge-economy.

Both Vietnam and the US have been identified as two increasingly important

markets for a post-Brexit Wales. The funding will reflect this by supporting a Wales-Vietnam scholarship programme, identifying areas for joint-research and promoting Wales as a distinct study destination for Vietnam, the United States and other key markets, including Europe.

The Education Secretary's announcement coincides with the visit to Wales by His Excellency Tran Ngoc An, Vietnamese Ambassador to the UK, which will see discussions on strengthening educational links between the two countries.

Kirsty Williams said:

"I am very pleased to announce this funding for Global Wales so that they can strengthen the developing relationships we have with both Vietnam and the US.

"In a post-Brexit world we need to make sure that our HE sector continues to reach out to new and emerging markets.

"Our universities have so much to offer so we need to make sure that we look further afield to capitalise on the growing demand for higher education globally.

"I'm proud to welcome His Excellency Tran Ngoc An to Wales and hope that this announcement will be the beginning of a very productive partnership between our two countries."

Ambassador Tran Ngoc An said:

"As Ambassador of Vietnam to the UK, I highly appreciate the announcement of the Welsh Government to establish a fund for promotion of education co-operation between Wales and Vietnam. I am confident that with strong political will and joint effort, our education co-operation will certainly be further developed.

"Our Minister of Education and Training is looking forward to welcoming HE Mrs Kirsty Williams, Cabinet Secretary of Education to Vietnam to lay a foundation for our education co-operation."

Prof. Iwan Davies, Chair of the Global Wales Board, said:

"I am delighted that the Welsh Government is making this significant new investment in Global Wales. The announcement today represents an important vote of confidence in our world class universities and the role that they, along with the Global Wales partners, play in helping to underpin the economy of Wales.

"Overseas students, international research collaboration and global institutional partnerships all help build trust and goodwill for Wales around the world, which in turn, has the potential to have a

transformational impact on the Welsh economy. In the uncertain context of Brexit, this new investment in Global Wales will strengthen the major contribution that higher education plays to Wales' international engagement and reputation for years to come."

Creative Wales to build on successes of Cadw and Visit Wales

Speaking at the Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee, Lord Elis-Thomas outlined his plans for the body, which will sit within Welsh Government but have the autonomy to make its own commercial decisions based on an expert understanding of the industry and its needs.

Lord Elis-Thomas said:

"Our Creative Industries have enjoyed unprecedented success over recent years, with Welsh Government support helping attract and produce award winning TV dramas, films and a whole host besides, showcasing Wales to the world whilst supporting local jobs and boosting the economy.

"We are now at a crucial point where opportunities are converging and, with the right support over the coming years, the industry's successes could become even more significant, and therefore the rewards for Wales even greater. This will require bespoke support to aid business growth in the sector as part of a wider, more rounded approach, allowing us to respond more flexibly to businesses and an industry that moves and changes quickly. Creative Wales will help achieve this.

"A Government vehicle offering a streamlined, dynamic and innovative service to this sector, Creative Wales will provide tailored support for indigenous Small and Medium Enterprises, productions and freelancers as well as supply chain companies. It will also continue to provide funding through the Media Investment Budget and bespoke access to our new Economic Futures Fund.

"I'm fortunate to already have as part of my portfolio two bodies within Government with the flexibility and know-how to act and react quickly to the needs of the industry, Visit Wales and Cadw. These are well trusted, well equipped and well-structured bodies providing a dedicated voice for the sector and adding hundreds of millions of pounds of value to our economy through targeted investment and innovative working.

“My ambition is for Creative Wales to follow a similar model, providing the support the sector needs and has called for to compete with the World’s best, but with a level of accountability which ensures tax payers money is being wisely and purposefully spent. This will provide the best possible platform to build on the hard work we’ve seen to date – further raising skill levels, strengthening the supply chain and improving networks in order to help this now well established industry to take its next steps. I hope to have it up and running as soon as possible.”

The Minister added that he envisaged Creative Wales to be structured to include an external Board and Chair, and operations led by a Chief Executive or equivalent role.

New members of Brexit advisory group announced

The group, which is chaired by Mr Drakeford, provides advice to the Welsh Government on the challenges and opportunities arising from the UK’s withdrawal from the EU. It was established in July 2016, following the EU referendum result in June and the first meeting took place in September 2016.

The European Advisory Group brings together people with experience and a detailed understanding of European issues, including Members of the European Parliament, business leaders and representatives from universities, colleges, trade unions, agriculture, public services and the third sector.

The following new members have been announced:

- Rebecca Evans AM, Minister for Housing and Regeneration
- Dr Chris Jones, Chair of the Health Education and Improvement Wales
- Lord Thomas of Cwmgiedd; Former Lord Chief Justice
- Alison Lea-Wilson co-founder Halen Môn/Anglesey Sea Salt
- Alec Don, CEO of Milford Haven Port Authority
- Dr Jo Hunt, Wales Governance Centre, Cardiff University
- Baroness Ilora Finlay of Llandaff, House of Lords

Mark Drakeford said:

“The new members were recruited for their expertise in areas that will inevitably be affected by our withdrawal from the EU. The issues raised by the UK’s departure from the European Union go far beyond the interests of any particular party or Government. No single individual or party has a monopoly on good ideas, and we

look forward to further benefitting from this group's advice."