



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Climate Action Wales. Public Engagement Strategy. (2023–2026)

Short (main) version.

This strategy sets out a framework for the Welsh Government and its partners to take action on the climate and nature emergencies. We'll work together to support the people and communities of Wales, with fairness and equality at the heart of everything we do for the people of Wales and future generations.

There are three versions of this strategy, and which will shortly be supported by alternate versions e.g. for the visually impaired.

1.

This short (main) version, for a broad range of stakeholder audiences.

2.

A more detailed version of the strategy, including supporting background information and further context.

3.

A short film setting the context, (which will be made available soon on the new climateaction.gov.wales website).

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Ministerial foreword.

Climate Action Wales is part of our commitment to place the climate and nature emergencies at the heart of everything we do.

Climate change is not a future problem. We are already experiencing the impacts in our communities here in Wales, and across the globe.

We cannot consume endlessly and rely on technology to provide the solutions. We need to redesign the energy systems and transport infrastructure which currently drive our way of living. We must consume less, minimise waste, reuse and repair more, and safeguard nature and the environment. These actions will bring multiple benefits to the way in which we live our lives.

The focus must continue to be on action by Government, the public sector, and businesses. But we as individuals also have a vital part to play. Every single person in Wales can be part of the solution. We will support the people of Wales by making green choices easier, more convenient and more affordable.

The path towards a greener way of living must be driven by the guiding principle of leaving no-one behind. My priority is to ensure that this transition avoids creating or exacerbating inequalities in our society – and that we use this as an opportunity to reduce or remove them.

We will support those who need it most. We will continue to deepen our understanding of the barriers people are facing. We will continue to involve people in decisions we make, and to shape this strategy as it unfolds.

By working together, we can deliver a stronger, fairer, greener Wales for everyone.

Julie James MS
Minister for Climate Change



Introduction.

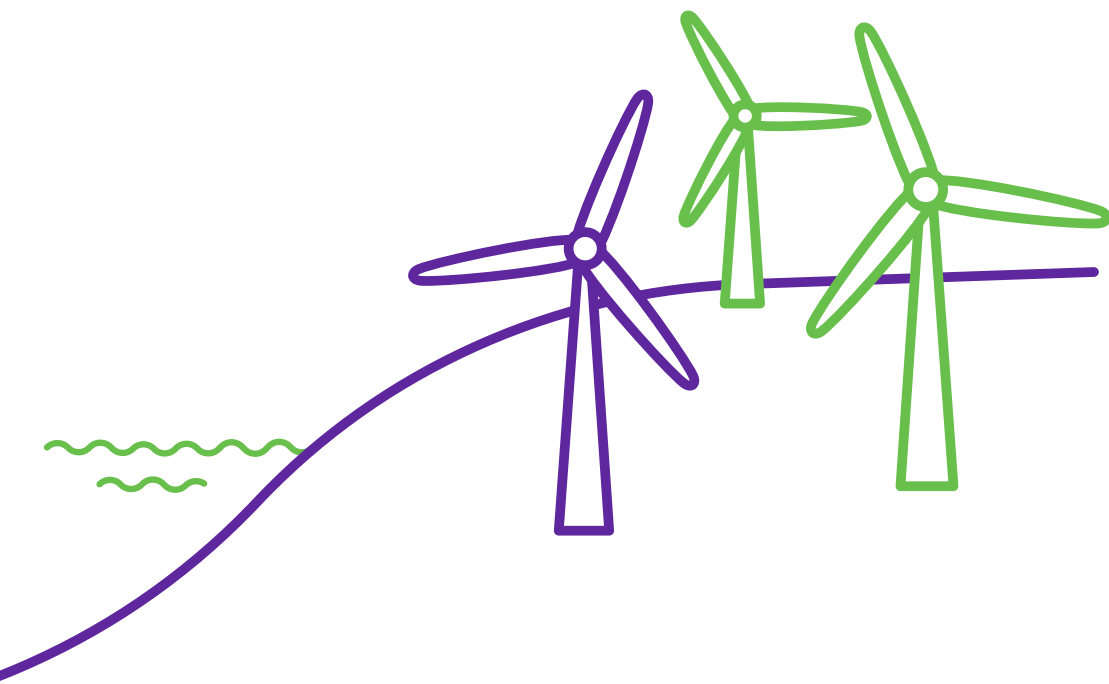
It's time to act.

The evidence is clear. Climate change is the biggest threat facing humanity. We need to act now. Globally, we must rapidly reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to the changing climate.

Some changes in the climate are natural. But human activity is speeding up the changes. We are already feeling the effects: increasingly frequent extreme heatwaves and storms, disruption to food systems, a rise in disease.

It's happening all around the world — including here in Wales. The climate emergency is threatening the communities in which we live. Our flood defences, our natural and historic environments, our food supply, our homes, the businesses which drive our economy — they're all at risk.

The world is simultaneously facing a nature emergency. These two emergencies are inextricably linked. We can't solve one without the other.



A globally responsible Wales.

In Wales we're fully committed to playing our part in the global efforts to tackle the climate and nature emergencies.

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act commits to Wales being a globally responsible nation. We'll always think about the impact of our own actions and support the people most vulnerable to climate change worldwide.

What exactly is Net Zero?

Where the greenhouse gases taken from the atmosphere are in balance with the greenhouse gases emitted.

It's our duty.

In Wales we are legally committed (through the Environment (Wales) Act 2016) to reduce our carbon emissions to net zero by 2050.

Delaying action makes it more expensive and difficult to hit that target. Our current plan, Net Zero Wales, calls on people, communities, voluntary organisations, businesses and public sector bodies in Wales to embed the climate emergency in the way we think, work, play and travel.

We also need to deepen our relationship with nature and do all we can to tackle biodiversity loss. The Welsh Government has set a goal to protect at least 30% of the land and 30% of the sea in Wales by 2030. This is supported by Biodiversity Deep Dive Recommendations which detail the need to deepen our relationship with nature, improve education and awareness around the nature emergency, and the actions we can all take to tackle biodiversity loss.

The Welsh Government is committed to moving towards a circular economy to support both the regeneration of nature and reduction of carbon emissions. The Strategy, Beyond Recycling, sets out how this will happen,

keeping resources in use for as long as possible and avoiding waste – ensuring re-use, repair and recycling are the norm. More sustainable consumption benefits nature by reducing the amount of raw materials we use.

A complex, whole-system change is required, involving action from all levels of Government, business and communities to make it happen.

Social transformation.

Some of the solutions to the climate and nature emergencies rely on action by government and businesses, but social transformation is also needed.

The commitment from Wales to tackle the climate and nature emergencies is backed by the people of Wales. The National Survey (2022) finds that 76% of the population of Wales are ‘very’ or ‘fairly’ concerned about climate change, while 94% think that the general public have ‘some’ or ‘a lot’ of responsibility to tackle climate change.

We also know individuals *can* perform a positive and crucial role – individual actions all add up – from the number of items we buy, to the way in which we reuse and dispose of them, to our consumption of energy and food.

And we can enjoy the benefits of every green choice we make and by keeping things we use every day in use for longer: from improvements to our finances, health and well-being; better housing and lower bills; a more resilient energy system; improved air and water quality; green education, skills and employment opportunities; greater resilience to climate change within our homes; protection of our land and marine ecosystems; and feeling part of a team or community.

Doing the small things — and the big things.

In some ways, we’ve already started to do our bit. Wales is already a world-leader in household recycling. But the actions we all take at a household level have so far been comparatively simple, and while they have been very positive, they have not required much personal change.

Future changes may require more personal change and therefore may be more difficult to achieve – such as investing in green home energy solutions. Some of these choices are too costly for many, or are often perceived to be too difficult and currently not the easiest option to take. But others could save money, such as increasing the trend for a market in

second hand every day items, making clothes and other items used around the home cheaper to buy. The Welsh Government is working to make these options easier and more affordable.

An opportunity for positive change.

The climate emergency affects us all, but it doesn’t affect us equally.

The better-off tend to have higher carbon footprints. The less well-off tend to have lower carbon footprints but are more likely to be vulnerable to the negative impacts of climate change.

Not everyone has the same level of resources or opportunity to make energy, transport, food and consumption choices, let alone green choices.

The pathway ahead presents a major challenge to us all, but it also brings opportunity for positive change. The Welsh Government is committed to ensuring the transition to a greener future will reduce or remove inequality.

It’s built on a vision that is driven by improved well-being and the guiding principle of ‘leaving no-one behind’.

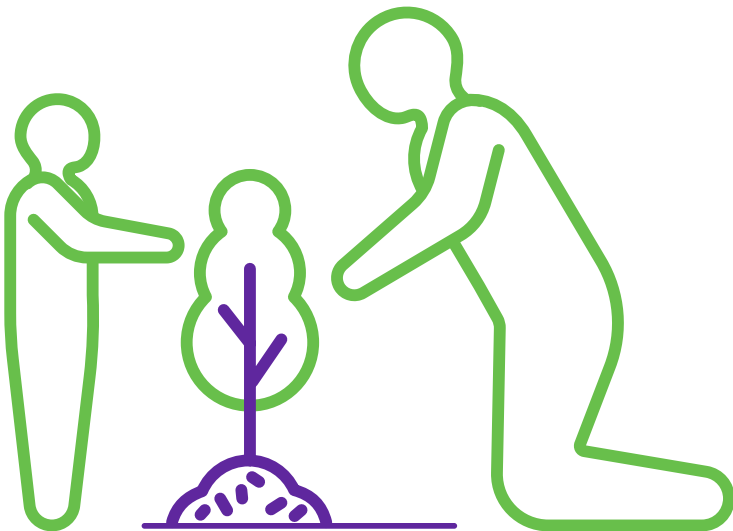


Purpose.

The people of Wales are at the heart of this strategy. It sets out a framework and guiding principles on how the Welsh Government and its partners will —

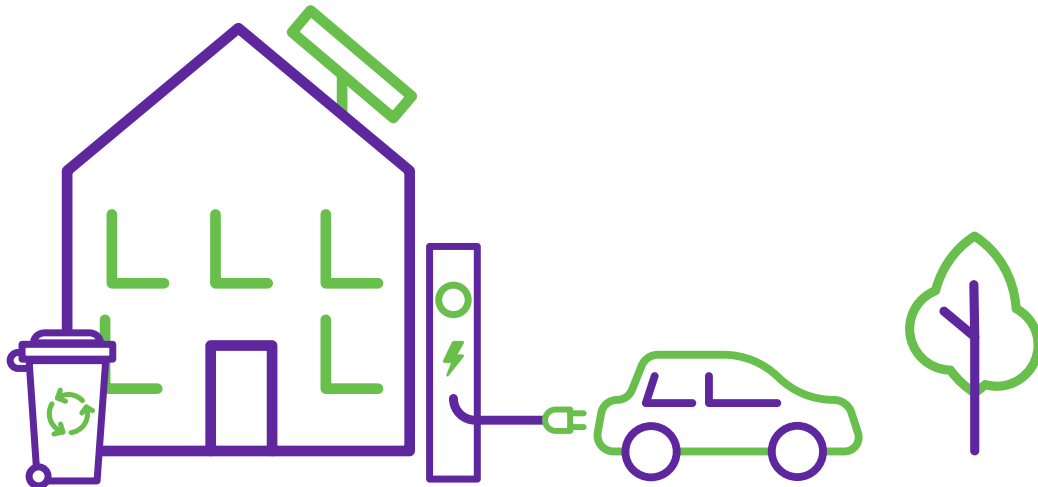
1. **Engage people in decision-making (including policy-making) about how to tackle climate change.**
2. **Engage people in action necessary to tackle climate change.**

These two aspects of public engagement are interlinked. If people are more engaged in decision-making, people are more likely to engage in action.



Scope.

The main scope of this strategy (based on the programme methodology led by the Behavioural Insights Team (BIT)) is on 4 Green Choices themes, covering actions associated with cutting our carbon emissions. While those with greatest resources will have greatest choice, all 4 Green Choice themes have elements to assist the less well-off in playing their part and realising personal benefit. The Welsh Government will focus on making these choices easier, more affordable and more convenient.



Green Home Energy Choices

- Reducing energy consumption.
- Home upgrade choices.

Green Transport Choices

- Driving less; taking up active travel and public transport.
- Electric vehicle adoption.

Green Food Choices

- Reducing food waste.
- Healthier eating and sustainable food choices.

Green Consumption Choices

- Shopping sustainably.
 - Using less, reusing, repairing and recycling.
-

Related actions.

The strategy also extends to other important actions linked to tackling the climate and nature emergencies such as—

Climate adaptation

Protecting our health, homes and communities from the impacts of climate change.

Nature emergency

Supporting our wildlife and green spaces.

Circular economy

Valuing and keeping resources and materials in use for as long as possible.

Environmental protection

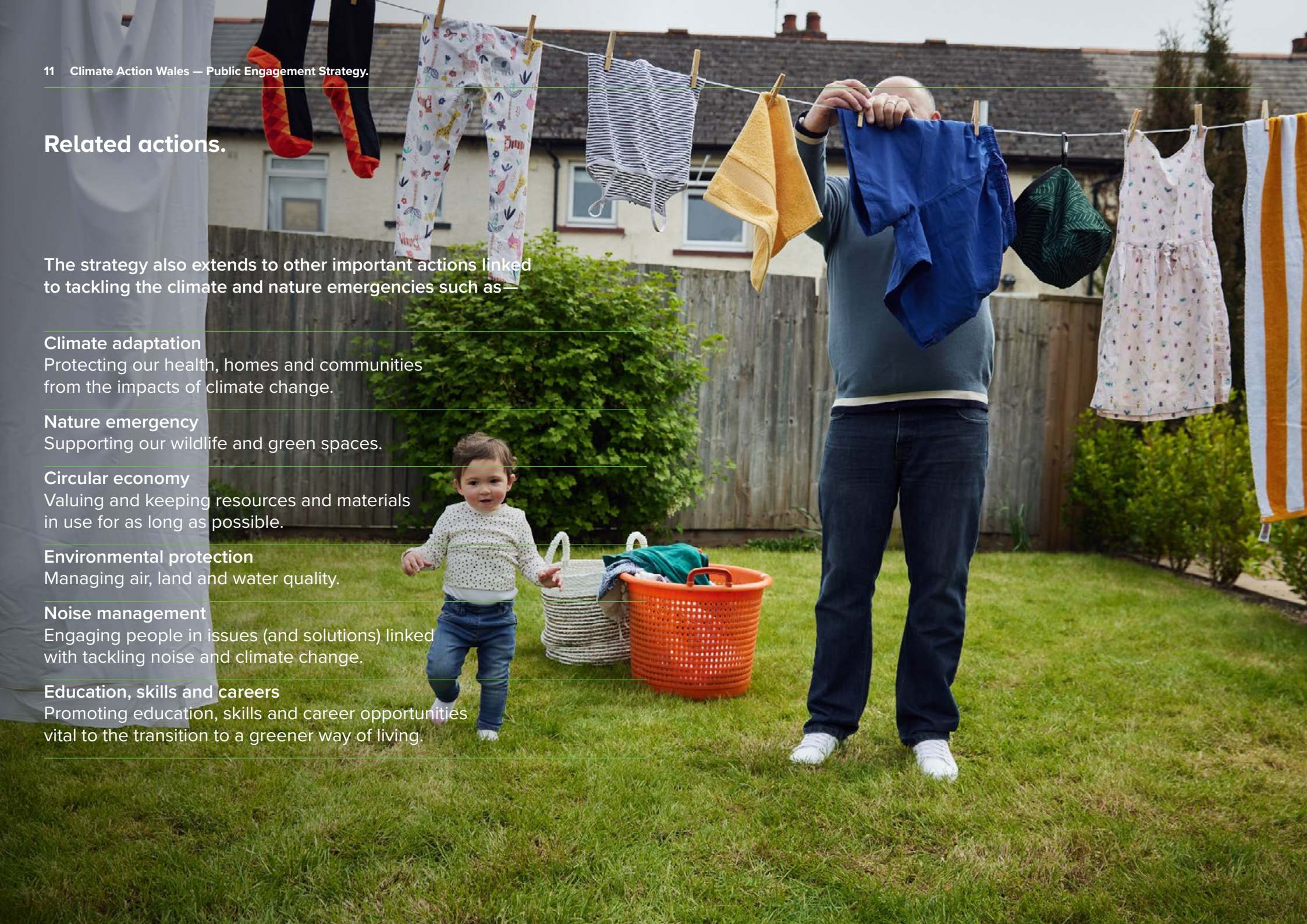
Managing air, land and water quality.

Noise management

Engaging people in issues (and solutions) linked with tackling noise and climate change.

Education, skills and careers

Promoting education, skills and career opportunities vital to the transition to a greener way of living.



Strategy at a glance.

Guiding principles. (Well-being of Future Generations Act 5 ways of working)



Long term

Balance the need for creating early momentum where we can and focus on addressing more of the long-term challenges where we can't.



Integration

Adopt a whole systems approach to problem-solving and delivery of mutually beneficial solutions.



Involvement

Actively listen to and involve people in shaping solutions that will affect them.



Collaboration

Ensure openness and transparency over the way in which the programme is delivered.



Prevention

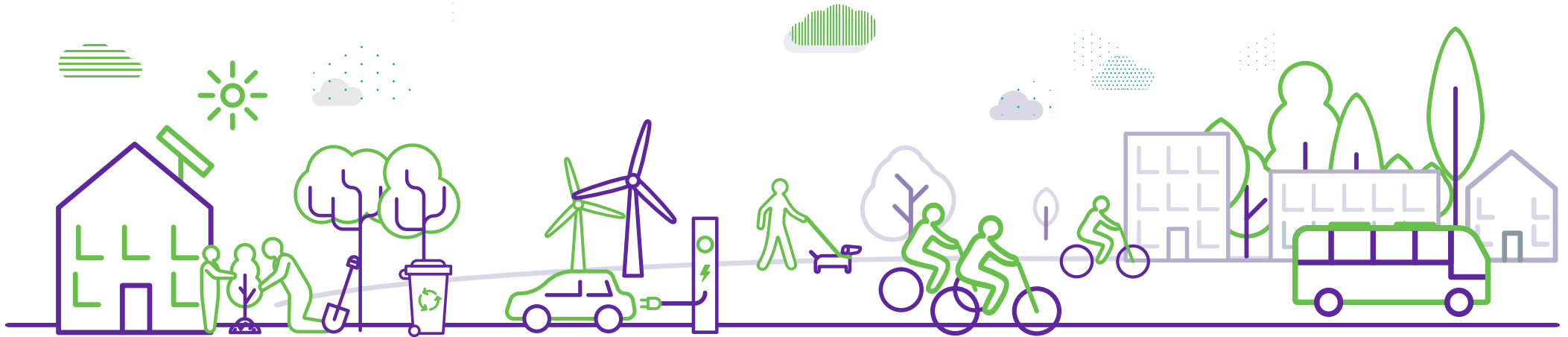
Prevent problems occurring or getting worse by preparing people for the changes ahead, ensuring fairness is embedded in the approach and building greater resilience to climate change within our communities.

Our Vision:

Our vision is to ensure a fairer, low-carbon and climate-resilient society. We'll take responsibility for climate action, creating lasting cultural change towards a more sustainable, equal and inclusive society. Together we can make a positive contribution to global and local well-being.

The principles behind this strategy are designed around the 'Well-being of Future Generations Act Sustainable Development Principle and 5 ways of working which aim to help Wales work together better—

Aims of the Strategy.



Convey an equitable and inclusive transition towards a more sustainable way of living, keeping resources in use for as long as possible and reducing waste, resulting in benefits to the people of Wales now all and in the future.

Increase people's knowledge on green choices and the co-benefits these will bring, encouraging action in areas where people are more willing and able to act, and preparing us all for the more impactful changes ahead.

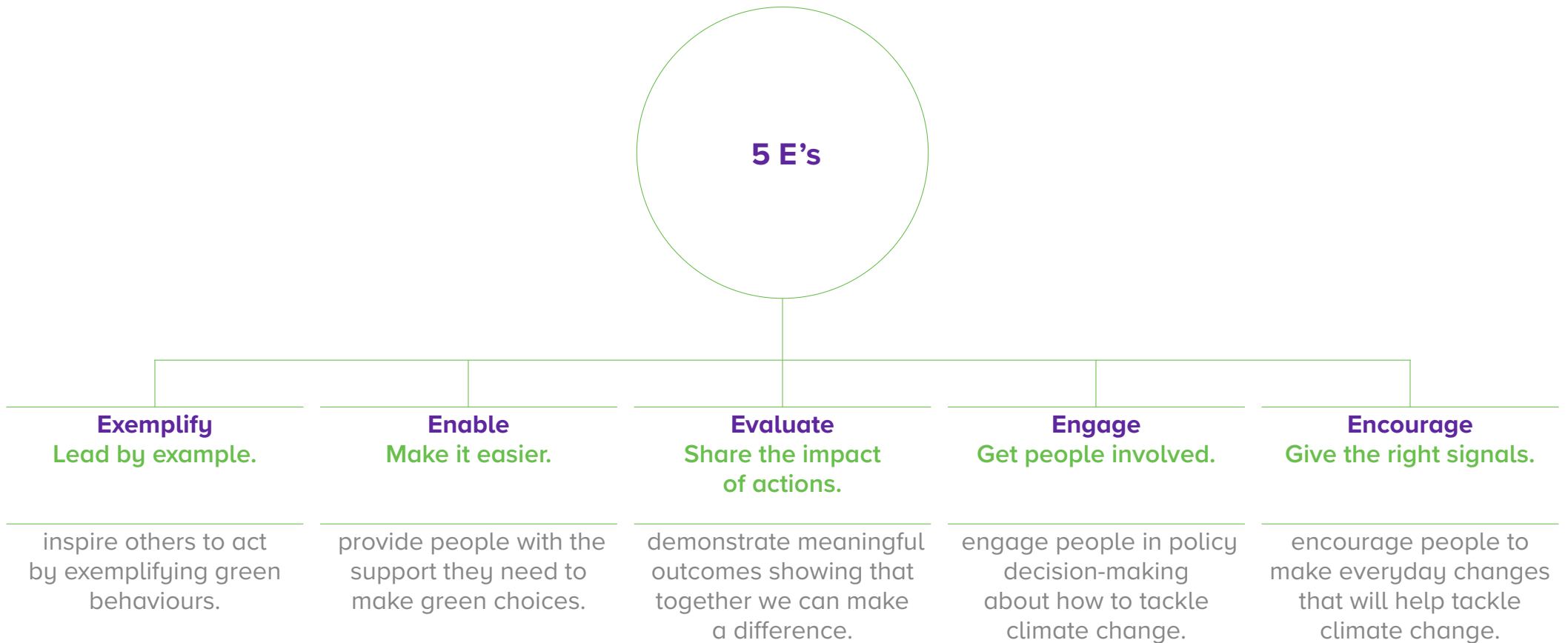
Build knowledge and encourage action in related areas such as adapting our homes and communities to the impacts of climate change, tackling the nature emergency, saving water and protecting the quality of the environment in which we live.

Support the delivery of actions detailed in the [Net Zero Skills Action plan](#) to address green skills gaps and shortages and promote green education and careers as a key enabler for change, ensuring these are opportunities available to all.

Convey how together we can make a difference by publicising actions being taken across Wales by the Welsh Government, the broader public sector, businesses and within our communities and by communicating the impact people are having through the adoption of green choices.

Build collective understanding of government policies designed to make green choices easier, more convenient and more affordable, through transparent engagement mechanisms that involve people in shaping the solutions. This includes harvesting feedback as the strategy is implemented over time.

Green choices framework. (how the aims will be delivered)





Exemplify.
Lead by example—
Inspire others to act by exemplifying
green behaviours.

There needs to be visibility around how the Welsh Government and others are leading by example and acting with openness, honesty and integrity. This will enable people to visualise how individual actions matter as part of the bigger picture.

The Welsh Government and its partners will deliver multi-layered communications explaining what action they are taking to demonstrate leadership at every level throughout their own organisations.

This is vital in building understanding that we're not being asked to tackle the climate challenge alone. It also shows that the scale of action being undertaken by government, local authorities and businesses matches the seriousness of the issue.

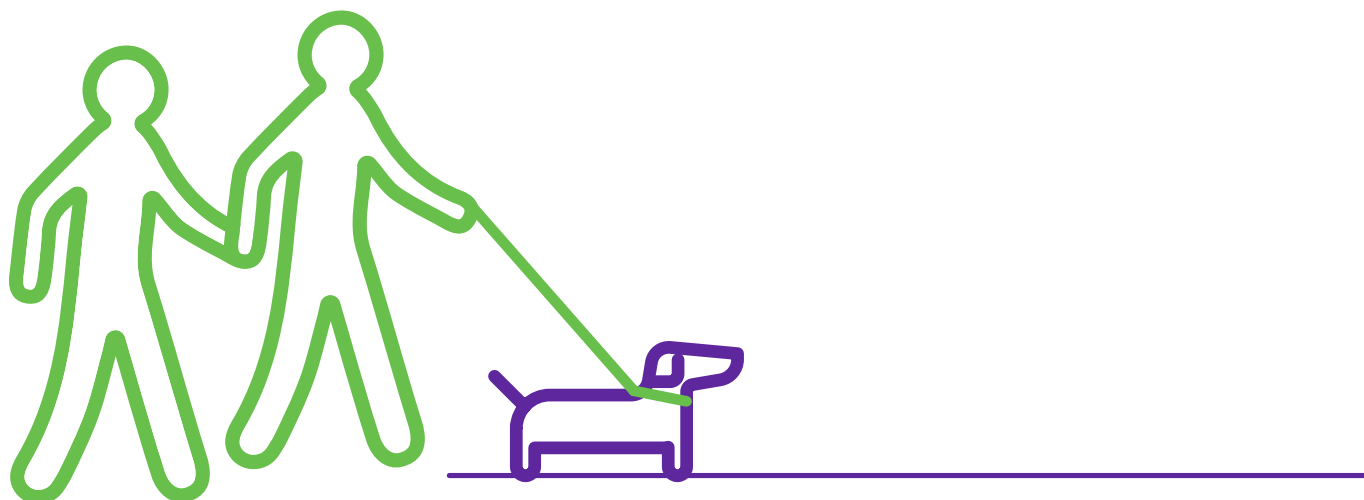
Actions

The Welsh Government has already gathered over [150 pledges](#) to galvanise action across the public sector, businesses, within schools and communities.

In 2022, the Welsh Government began a new national digital campaign promoting commitments and action on climate change within the public sector, by businesses and across the communities of Wales.

Commitments

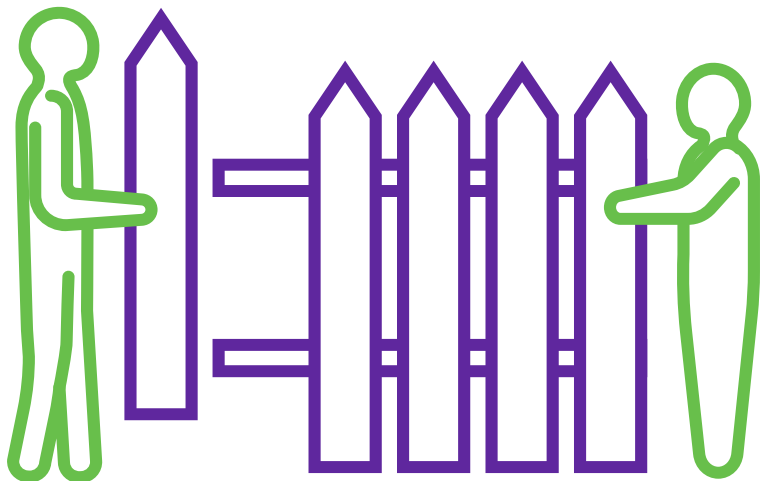
The Welsh Government will continue to encourage and publicise pledges and case studies demonstrating commitments and action being taken across all corners of Wales.



Engage.

Get people involved—

Engage people in policy decision-making about how to tackle climate change.



The Well-being of Future Generations Act places a legal obligation on public bodies to consider and involve people of all ages and diversity in decision-making. The sheer extent of change needed to tackle climate change can't be achieved without opening up the discussion. The people of Wales must be provided with ample opportunity to have their legitimate interests heard and considered; to be agents (and not objects) of change; to feel that policy is fair, justified and likely to be effective.

The Welsh Government has committed in Net Zero Wales to a two-way dialogue on climate change, particularly with people and communities most likely to be affected by future policy decisions. The Welsh Government will prioritise conversations with the seldom heard, young people, ethnic minorities, the more vulnerable and older people and marginalised groups to ensure their views are heard and they are fully supported through the transition.

Involving people in shaping policies and solutions will also provide a stronger basis for people to understand the complexities involved in shaping them, and this greater understanding also increases the likelihood of this leading to changes people make in their own lives.

Actions

The Welsh Government website currently includes [142 published consultations](#) on the environment and climate change.

Among these is the [consultation on this strategy](#) and a [call for evidence](#) to inform the development of a new Just Transition Framework for Wales.

Commitments

The Welsh Government will undertake a review over the next 12 months to determine the extent to which deliberative public engagement on the climate and nature emergencies is already being undertaken across Wales (and by whom).

The Welsh Government will use the findings from this review to consider solutions for a more joined-up approach to public engagement on the climate and nature emergencies across Wales.

Enable.
Make it easier—
Provide people with the support
they need to make green choices.



The action needed from everyone in Wales can't happen without substantial support to help us all to make green choices. At present many of these choices may be (perceived or actually) too expensive, too inconvenient, too unappealing – or simply not the default or norm we are used to.

Communications can help to address some of these barriers, but on their own they'll only lead to modest shifts in behaviour. The Welsh Government's priority will be to deepen understanding on the main barriers and motivations to action – and overcome them using all levers at their disposal. This largely means developing policies which make the green choices easier, more convenient and more affordable.

The sheer extent to which interventions are needed to help people make green choices mean that the Welsh Government plays an important role in coordinating action at all levels. This includes bringing together policy, innovation, technology improvements, incentives, standards, labelling and public information to drive action as quickly as possible. Many solutions also lie at a community level. Different solutions will be needed for different regions of Wales, making a place-based approach essential.

Actions

The Welsh Government website currently includes [849 published announcements on the environment and climate change](#). These are just some of the new policies and programmes being developed and delivered to support people in making green choices:

- [A new publicly-owned energy developer](#)
- [The next iteration of the Warm Homes Programme](#)
- [The Roads Review](#)
- [20mph speed limits](#)
- [A Healthy Weight, Healthy Wales delivery plan](#)
- [Legislation against single-use plastics](#)
- [Retail sale of peat in horticulture to end](#)
- [A tree for every household](#)
- [Record levels of funding for flood defences](#)
- [New Air Quality Bill](#)
- [Funding redistribution of surplus food: FareShare](#)
- [Food waste collected separately by all local authorities in Wales](#)
- [Funding Repair Café Wales and Benthgŷg](#)
- [Deposit Return Scheme](#)

Commitments

The Welsh Government will develop an outline timeline for the introduction of government policy levers centred around the 4 Green Choices themes.

Encourage.

Give the right signals—

Encourage people to make everyday changes that will help tackle climate change.



Communications can be a powerful tool in encouraging people to subscribe to a positive national narrative, understand what government is doing to help people make changes, and feel that these changes are fair, justified and likely to be effective.

In 2023 a national Climate Action Wales communications programme will begin. The programme methodology led by BIT identifies the role of communications in encouraging green choices, both directly – asking people to make greener choices now; and indirectly – ‘warm ups’ in readiness for future changes. It was designed using BIT’s principles of successful behaviour change communications EAST (Easy, Attractive, Social & Timely) framework. [Summary of research into the ‘asks’ of the Welsh public detailed in the Net Zero Wales plan.](#)

The methodology recognises where communications can play a role in helping to build people’s trust, awareness, knowledge and motivation to act on climate change and the need for tailored communication to meet different people’s needs.

Actions

Many national and regional campaigns are already being implemented by the Welsh Government and other organisations across Wales to support people to make green choices. For example:

- [Be Mighty. Recycle campaign](#)
- [Claim What’s Yours campaign](#)
- [Food Waste Action Week](#) and [Love Food Hate Waste](#)
- [Transport for Wales–Real Social Network](#)
- [NHS Wales: Healthy Weight Healthy You](#)
- [Food & Drink Wales: Sustainable Eating Toolkit](#)
- [Net Zero Skills Wales](#)

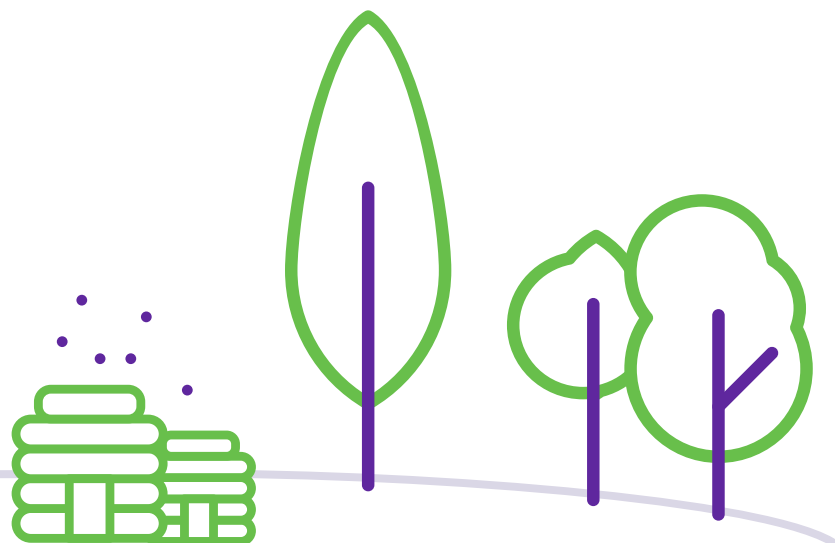
Commitments

The Welsh Government will launch a new national Climate Action Wales campaign and website in Summer 2023 building on existing campaigns and encouraging people to make green home energy, transport, food and consumption choices in the [Net Zero Wales plan](#).

The Welsh Government will also engage with other national, regional and local communications networks to encourage a community of campaigns delivered under the Climate Action Wales brand.

Evaluate.

**Share the impact of actions—
Demonstrate meaningful outcomes
showing that together we can make
a difference.**



Net Zero Wales accepts the recommendations from the Climate Change Committee (CCC) about what Wales' emissions targets should be, but sets our own path about how to get there. This includes setting 5-yearly carbon budgets and using the CCC's solid base for monitoring progress (measured mainly on the economic sectors). Beyond these sectors, the CCC monitoring framework also measures important cross-cutting themes such as public engagement. Similar methods will be used to evaluate the overall impact of Wales' public engagement programme.

The Climate Action Wales communications activity will be measured using the GCS Evaluation Framework 2.0, and against a set of specific and measurable campaign objectives. The broader impact of the communications will be measured against baseline and on-going tracking research to determine shifts in public awareness and knowledge on climate change, the impact of green choices, and barriers and motivations to action.

The new Just Transition Framework to be developed in 2023 will also be used as a basis for measuring how effective the programme has been in benefitting marginalised groups and those disproportionately affected by climate change.

Actions

Since April 2014, the Welsh Government's National Survey for Wales has been asking people a range of different questions about their views on climate change.

Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, the Welsh Government also conducted research into the perceptions and awareness of people in Wales on the topic of the environment and climate change via the Daily Life Survey (working with UK Government Department for Business, Energy & Industry Strategy (BEIS) and Scottish Government) and the effect of the pandemic on lifestyle behaviours that impact the environment.

In December 2022 the Welsh Government published a call for evidence to inform the development of a new Just Transition Framework for Wales.

Commitments

In 2023 the Welsh Government will introduce a new 3-year Net Zero Behaviours and Attitudes Survey as a repeatable method for tracking people's attitudes and behaviours connected to action on the climate and nature emergencies.



Delivery partners.

Government and public sector action

The main focus of this strategy is on the role of government in providing leadership, and how it will work with local authorities and other public service bodies in an integrated delivery approach.

This begins with the Welsh public sector's own ambition of being collectively net zero by 2030 and radically reducing emissions from over 780 public organisations to transform their relationship with nature.

Actions

In December 2022 the Welsh Government published its plan to achieve net zero as an organisation by 2030.

Commitments

The Climate Action Wales communications programme will publicise to the people of Wales examples of action being taken by the Welsh Government, its staff and by the broader public sector across Wales.



Business, innovation and skills

Businesses also play an important leadership role. [Net Zero Wales](#) states that emissions from Welsh industry and businesses decreased by 36% between 1990 and 2019. This is great news, but there is still much more that businesses can do to decarbonise their operations. Businesses also hold many of the cards to enable us to make green choices.

Innovation and skills are also critical in ensuring we can all make the more difficult changes ahead. The new [Innovation Strategy for Wales](#) sets out how innovation will be used to improve the lives of everyone in Wales, while the new [Net Zero Skills Plan](#) addresses the challenges we are facing around current green skills gap and shortages.

Actions

[Net Zero Wales](#) asks Welsh businesses to commit to net zero targets and introduce responsible business practices as part of their corporate social responsibility, and that the industrial sector decarbonises industrial processes.

Commitments

The Climate Action Wales communications programme will encourage people to use their buying power to support businesses which are leaders in tackling climate change.

The communications programme will also promote education, learning, and green skills and career opportunities.

Collaboration and partnership

Team Wales

There's a lot to do, and it can't be done through government action alone. This strategy provides the foundations for a collaborative approach to delivery involving a broad network of Team Wales partners: public service bodies, businesses and third sector organisations across Wales.

Place-based approach

Different communities require different approaches. We need a place-based approach, involving tailored solutions for different parts of Wales, with leadership taken by local authorities using their local climate networks to understand regional issues and opportunities.

Communities

Active engagement must continue with third sector and community networks to explore existing community-led initiatives and opportunities for capacity building and scalable solutions. Support is also needed for people in the community who want to take action to help their community make changes.

Creativity

The social transformation towards a greener way of living will need cultural transformation. The creative, arts and culture sectors will play an important role in helping to make engagement on the climate and nature emergencies more accessible, and to build a movement for positive change and renewed sense of Welsh identity.

Actions

In 2022 the Welsh Government published a [Stakeholder Engagement Plan](#) to strengthen the coalition of Team Wales to tackle the climate emergency.

Since 2019 the Welsh Government has hosted an annual [Wales Climate Week](#) to coincide with the Conference of the Parties (COP) to facilitate a national climate conversation between the public, private, academic and voluntary sectors.

Since 2022, Natural Resources Wales has been hosting a ['Nature and Us'](#) national conversation to develop a new shared positive vision for the year 2050.

Commitments

The Welsh Government will work closely with national and regional partners (from local authorities, to third sector organisations, civil society and climate activists) to deliver the public engagement programme, recognising the important role of regional partners in unlocking many of the solutions and encouraging peer-to-peer community-based learning.

The Welsh Government will hold at least one blended engagement event annually to build on the success of [Wales Climate Week](#) and will explore the opportunity to develop more year-round opportunities for climate conversations, particularly with the seldom heard, marginalised and vulnerable groups.

Theory of success. (evidence-based approach)

The theory of success for this strategy is based on the need for continued learning by the Welsh Government to build evidence-based insights on the different barriers that different people face in adopting green choices, and the design of effective solutions to help overcome them.

As well as drawing on evidence-based behavioural science models and frameworks, this also extends to monitoring external influences that are likely to hinder progress, recognising the importance of timing, reviewing and learning from successes and failures of previous government policies, and identifying opportunities to scale-up projects already being successfully delivered within our communities.

Actions

The Welsh Government commissioned an expert panel of researchers, behavioural science practitioners and climate communications specialists led by the BIT to develop the communications methodology for this programme. The project resulted in a series of recommendations which formed the basis of this Strategy. See: [Summary of research into the 'asks' of the Welsh public detailed in the Net Zero Wales plan.](#)

Commitments

The Welsh Government will continue to invest in social research and use behavioural science models and frameworks to ensure that an evidence-based approach is taken towards the delivery of this programme.



Conclusion and take-aways.

This strategy provides a framework for the Welsh Government and other delivery organisations to work together support the people of Wales in the journey towards a more sustainable way of living.

1.

It recognises that government and business must lead the way, but that a place-based approach which capitalises on working with local authorities and community-based organisations is central to success.

2.

This strategy provides a 5 Es framework setting out how the aims will be delivered, and a number of practical commitments which must be delivered at pace. The longer action takes, the more difficult it will be to deliver.

3.

Wales' commitment to tackle the climate and nature emergencies is backed by public support. People want this change in their own lives. There's growing public concern around over-consumption, and a call for solutions to more sustainable ways of living.

4.

The recommendations made in this strategy are the result of extensive consultation, research and views expressed by individuals and organisations from across Wales.

5.

This strategy is only the start, and is intended to provide guidance, ideas and insights for us all, and to illustrate how together we can make a difference.



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government