# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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| **TITLE** | **Climate Change** |
| **DATE** | **4 December 2023** |
| **BY** | **Julie James MS, Minister for Climate Change** |
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As we transition to a net zero economy, the potential for both positive and negative impacts will vary across Wales. Impacts will be felt by different people, groups and places, much like the impacts of climate change itself. It is therefore hugely important that as a nation we plot a path to Net Zero which anticipates the benefits and negative impacts and find ways of making their distribution equitable.

To aid this, today I have published the [Just Transition Framework Consultation](https://www.gov.wales/just-transition-framework). This consultation is the next step in developing our approach and builds on our Call for Evidence, which concluded in March this year. The Consultation recognises the breadth of action required by a whole host of people and organisations to plan and execute a Just Transition for Wales. The aim is to publish a final Framework in 2024, which will help inform the next Net Zero Wales Plan, which will be published in 2026. The Framework is intended for all stakeholders involved in developing plans and actions for decarbonisation.

The Consultation has been launched to coincide with Wales Climate Week 2023. This year’s event will continue until 8 December and will examine the theme of ‘fairness’. The event will seek to address how we can ensure benefits associated with climate policies are distributed fairly across society. Over the week, there are diverse sessions and events being held by Welsh Government, businesses, public sector, third sector and communities. I urge Members of the Senedd to register for the event and participate.

Today also marks the final publication for Carbon Budget 1 (2016-20) and thereby concludes our statutory obligations for the Carbon Budget period. In December of last year, I laid before the Senedd, the Welsh Government’s Final Statement for Carbon Budget 1, setting out that we had met the carbon budget target and the 2020 interim target. The Final Statement also assessed the reasons the targets were met and the contribution of Welsh Government. The Environment (Wales) Act requires the Climate Change Committee (CCC) to publish a progress report for Wales within six months of the Final Statement. The CCC’s ‘*Progress report: Reducing emissions in Wales*’ was published on 6 June. We must then respond to the progress report within six months.

The CCC acknowledged that Wales had met its 2020 target and its first carbon budget (2016-20), and that “some positive steps have been taken in Wales, with a welcome focus from Ministers on skills, jobs and public engagement for the Net Zero transition.” However, the CCC also set out that emissions reduction would need to accelerate to ensure Wales meets its current and future carbon budgets and net zero targets.

Today I therefore lay the [Welsh Government’s response to CCC’s progress report](https://www.gov.wales/reducing-emissions-wales-progress-report-2023-welsh-government-response). Our response addresses each of the CCC’s 58 recommendations, and a further 19 ‘issues to be addressed’. We also commissioned the UK Government to respond to the CCC’s assessment of areas in which progress was at high risk due to UK Government action. The response therefore fulfils our responsibilities under section 45(7) of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.

Today’s publications and Wales Climate Week coincide with the UN’s Conference of the Parties (COP28), taking place in Dubai this week and next. It will be attended by senior Welsh Government officials. COP28 will take stock of global progress in delivering the Paris Agreement providing an opportunity for course correction and the opportunity to commit to further action, where it has been insufficient to date and avoid the worst impacts of climate change, which will not be felt equally on the global population. The conference will therefore provide additional focus on how social justice can be served as we tackle the climate emergency.

There is still much work to be done internationally, the globe as a whole is still not a Net Zero trajectory for 2050, which we consider to be essential to limit climate change to 1.5°C as set out in the Paris Agreement. Even where the targets do exist, action often lags behind ambition, and the science continues to send ever increasingly stark signals. Global geopolitical, social and economic challenges risk deflecting our attention away from the need to address climate change. We cannot allow this to happen. We must strive to deliver the low carbon economy that will sustain future generations, not retreat from the task and burden future generations. This includes the imperative of reducing the global dependence on fossil fuels.

At COP26 in Glasgow, the Welsh Government joined the Beyond Oil and Gas Alliance, which is committed to delivering a managed and just transition away from oil and gas production. In doing so Wales became one of eight ‘core’ members, and the only member from the UK. This alliance continues to show the global leadership needed to bring to a managed end the extraction and use of fossil fuels. I am pleased that the alliance continues to grow as other governments and nations share our ambitions to meet the Paris Agreement.

At COP and through our ongoing relationships with colleagues from other states and regions and through my leadership as Steering Group member of the Under2Coaltiion, Wales will continue share our experiences on the global stage, where others are keen to learn from our successes. Likewise we will continue to learn from others. It is through collaboration that we will not only deliver a Net Zero, fairer and healthier nation. It is how we will achieve the same for all earth’s citizens.