

Welsh Carbon Budgets – Call for Evidence Response

Organisation

NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership - Specialist Estates Services

Question 1: Does the Paris Agreement mean that Welsh emissions targets should keep open a deeper reduction in emissions than 80% by 2050? Are there implications for nearer-term targets?

Principal implication for the NHS is a carbon neutral by 2030 target for the public sector would over-ride this?

Question 2: Do you think that leaving the EU has an impact on the targets or how they can be met?

No opinion

Question 3: In the area(s) of your expertise, what are the opportunities and challenges in reducing Welsh emissions in the nearer term (e.g. to 2030)?

Thinking specifically about the NHS and the NHS estate:

Opportunities – The Welsh Government Re:Fit programme is an opportunity for organisations to access funding for significant infrastructure improvements to the current estate and in theory accessing the expertise of the private sector to deliver the investment. A further opportunity is to target investment in new facilities. To achieve the long term targets will require a step-change in how we design our healthcare buildings, achieving current policy targets such as a BREEAM Excellent design rating, is a long way short of the 80% reductions or indeed the carbon neutral public sector aim. Therefore any future major new build developments would need to be built to an extremely low carbon design, and given the lead in time on such developments, these kind of decisions need to be enacted in the near future.

Challenges – The point above about new facilities is both an opportunity and a threat. Linked to this is the fact that the majority of the NHS estate in Wales is now quite old and even with significant investment this will remain the case. The challenge therefore is how to achieve significant carbon reductions in an estate which is already under pressure. Further challenges lie around other scopes of emissions (assuming that they are included?). Significant emissions arise from indirect sources such as procuring goods and services, travel and transport and indeed grid electricity. These are challenging because much of the responsibility / opportunity etc lies outside of our direct control or influence.

Question 4: What is required by 2030 to prepare for the 2050 target for an emissions reduction of at least 80% on 1990 levels, recognising that this may require that emissions in some areas are reduced close to zero? Is there any impact of the need to go beyond 80%, either in 2050 or subsequently?

Again a carbon neutral by 2030 target for the public sector would over-ride this?

Question 5: What are the respective roles of UK Government, Welsh Government, the wider public sector, business, third sector and individual or household behaviour in delivering emissions reductions between now and 2030? And, separately, between 2030 and 2050?

Role of NHS Wales is to be a public sector exemplar given that our emissions in the public sector are only approximately 1% of the national total so our real “impact” is minor but our role is still significant. The requirements of the Well-Being of Future Generations Act will also act as a driver for this and in hopefully driving collaboration across the public sector.

Question 6: As a business, as a Public Sector Body, or as a citizen, how do emissions targets affect your planning and decision-making?

Within the NHS, emissions targets will have an impact (particularly where they are built into mandatory policies). However, for the NHS there will always be a “balancing act” as clearly our over-riding priority is delivering healthcare and we are in an era where funding is scarce and therefore frontline services will rightly take priority. This is why making such targets mandatory ensures that they retain a high enough profile to compete with the other demands on our NHS.

Question 7: In your area(s) of expertise, what specific circumstances need to be considered when setting targets and budgets for Wales and how could these be reflected in the targets?

As above

Question 8: The power and industry sectors in Wales are dominated by a small number of large emitters. What are the key challenges and opportunities that this presents in setting the levels of carbon budgets and how should the process of setting them reflect these?

No opinion on this other than to observe that the public sector is estimated to contribute just 1% to Wales' overall emissions, however it is acknowledged that we do need to play our part and to comply with policy requirements.

Question 9: What evidence should the Committee draw on in assessing impacts on sustainable management of natural resources, as assessed in the state of natural resources report?

No opinion on this.

Question 10: What evidence regarding future trends as identified and analysed in the future trends report should the Committee draw on in assessing the impacts of the targets?

No opinion on this.