

Principles and Tests for a Green and Just Recovery

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As Wales comes out of lockdown we have to adjust to a different way of living. Despite the ongoing public health crisis, we must still tackle the nature and climate emergency that was at the forefront of public attention after the floods in February. The majority of people now want the environment to be prioritised as part of an economic recovery from Covid-19¹.

Wales was one of the first nations to declare a nature and climate emergency and a world-leader in putting future generations at the heart of its decision-making. Our recovery from the current pandemic, preparations for an EU Exit, and the call to radical action on the nature and climate emergency in the next decade, require continued leadership. We must ensure that our short-term response to shock is translated into long-term structural change that builds the foundations for a society, economy, and natural environment that are more resilient to future shocks.

Nature, and the resources and services it provides, is the foundation of our social and economic well-being, and needs to be at the heart of our recovery. A green and just recovery for Wales will be crucial in realising the ambitions of the Well-Being Future Generations (Wales) Act and create the structural changes needed to allow people and nature to recover together.

Green recovery should:

1. address the nature and climate emergency, prioritising nature restoration as well as decarbonisation measures within the fiscal stimulus package;
2. be based on sound evidence, with collaboration to design solutions and support prioritisation;
3. move Wales towards a Well-being Economy² – an economic model that includes the value of, and invests in, nature and also includes circular economy principles;
4. ensure that social justice and equality is embedded in recovery to ensure discrimination is not built into the structural changes made, there is equality of opportunities for those currently disadvantaged, and the most vulnerable are protected; and
5. address intergenerational justice by putting young people's employment at the forefront of plans, as they are likely to suffer significant impacts throughout their life from early unemployment and also carry the cost of the Covid-19 recovery.

The Environment (Wales) Act has already put into the place the tools we need to adopt a place-based, evidence-based approach. However, we expect to see a wide-ranging package of policies to drive recovery from the Covid crisis across all sectors. **It is essential that this package of policies, when read together, does not increase carbon emissions, harm nature or harm social well-being.**

¹ <https://www.ipsos.com/ipsos-mori/en-uk/two-thirds-britons-believe-climate-change-serious-coronavirus-and-majority-want-climate-prioritised>

² <https://wellbeingeconomy.org/ten-principles-for-building-back-better-to-create-wellbeing-economies-post-covid>

To measure progress towards the type of recovery that we want to see, WEL believes that the package of policies towards a green recovery must, collectively, meet the following tests:

- reduces pollution
- improves adaptation to climate change and contributes to meeting net zero by 2045
- secures sustainable management of natural resources
- improves biodiversity and ecosystem services/resilience
- contributes to social well-being/ a just transition

Furthermore, each individual policy/action must contribute to at least one of these tests, whilst demonstrating no adverse impact on the other areas covered by these tests.

Wales Environment Link (WEL) is a network of environmental, countryside and heritage Non-Governmental Organisations in Wales. WEL is a respected intermediary body connecting the government and the environmental NGO sector. Our vision is a thriving Welsh environment for future generations.

This paper represents the consensus view of a group of WEL members working in this specialist area. Members may also produce information individually in order to raise more detailed issues that are important to their particular organisation.



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