

Meeting on the Six Principles
Meeting Note – 13 January 2021

Attending Officials

- (JO) [REDACTED] – Welsh Government
(TR) [REDACTED] - Welsh Government
(SL) [REDACTED] – XR Cymru Political Engagement
(CM) [REDACTED] – XR Cymru Political Engagement
(SJ) [REDACTED] – Centre for Alternative Technology
(PA) [REDACTED] – Centre for Alternative Technology
(TW) [REDACTED] – Catholic Agency for Overseas Development

Introductions

SL: Apologised that no officials were attending from the Future Generations Commissioner's office, Coed Cadw, and WDC.

JO: Opened the meeting but staying what he hoped to get out of the meeting; that being to make the meeting with MEERA and successful and productive as possible. He then explained that the Civil Service provides Ministers with briefings before their meetings and hoped the meeting would improve Welsh Government understanding and the briefing.

SL: Responded that they hoped to have productive meeting with MEERA, understand the role of the Senedd and influence political parties. She stated that the next few years are crucial for tackling climate change and keen to know whether Ministers would support the 6 Principles.

1 - Do what it takes to play our part in limiting global heating to 1.5°C, with much deeper and faster reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.

JO: Explained that the Climate Change Committee (CCC) was asked by the Governments of Wales, England, and Scotland to provide advice that would align with the Paris Agreement. The Welsh Government had not yet accepted this advice but a decision would be made soon. He then asked if it was the collective view that the CCC advice was not appropriate? He also asked if it was the collective view that Welsh Government should follow the advice or go further?

PA: Suggested that Welsh Government follow the CCC advice, but it should be the minimum level of ambition. He commented that Sir David King (was the permanent Special Representative for Climate Change from September 2013 until March 2017. Sir David was previously the Government's Chief Scientific Advisor from 2000 to 2007) said it was not ambitious enough.

JO: asked for clarification if that was the collective view.

SJ: Stated that these are overarching principles and therefore there is no collective view. She then asked CM if there should be a collective view.

CM: We accept the CCC advice as a baseline to aim for. She then stated that we haven't met climate targets so far. She then stated that she sees the 6 Principles as progress and wants them adopted into COP 26 and is willing to support Welsh Government with this.

JO: asked Extinction Rebellion (XR) officials if they are still calling for net zero by 2025? Then asking if it was their position that a 1.5°C could not be achieved by following CCC advice? He asked if it is the case that the 6 Principles are just principles and not to dig too deep into them?

SL: Stated she was not a scientist but 2025 has scientific backing, and the CCC advice only had a percentage chance of success. She stated the 2025 demand was based upon adopting a precautionary approach, but had now been dropped as a demand by XR. She then said the 6 Principles were broad ideas.

JO: Said that 2025 net zero still appeared on the XR website and asked for clarification.

SL: Said that that was outdated. She said that Prof Kevin Anderson has argued that long term targets are not effective, and instead that short term action is vital.

2 - Champion natural climate solutions to remove CO₂ from the atmosphere, halt the decline in wildlife, restore nature and help manage flood risk.

JO: Stated the he did not think anyone would argue against that. It is, however, a complex problem as increased tree planting and peatland restoration can have both positive and negative effects on biodiversity.

SL: Stated that this principle was influenced by WWF and Coed Cadw.

3 - Accept our entire global ecological footprint caused by all the goods we buy, the food we eat, and the supply chains we use.

JO: Explained the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 requires us to report on performance in each carbon budget. The data has a lag and therefore we will not be able to report on our first carbon budget until 2022. However, this report must also report consumption emissions alongside production emissions, so the legislation is already in place to cover this. He then stated that Governments tend to be criticised for focusing on production emissions, but we do in fact fully understand the issue, and are taking actions to avoid driving up emissions elsewhere in the world when lowering domestic emissions. He then however reflected the third principle does not state emissions. It states ecological footprint, which is a further order of complexity. Is this principle asking Welsh Government to consider the ecological effect in every country?

SL: Stated that she sees where JO is coming from, but it is about global responsibility for everyone, and we need to take responsibility for personal

consumption. She used the example of animal feed production that causes deforestation in the rainforests.

TW: Stated that leadership needed to be shown to change individual action, and that Welsh Government needed to lead this change. She then stated that Welsh Government needed to take responsibility for historical emissions.

CM: stated that Government needed to lead action, and buy in from all levels of society would be required and that NGOs could help achieve this. She stated her concern that local authorities are ambitious for their direct emissions but not wider emissions.

PA: Said that CAT was there to help and support but innovation and training are needed. He then move on to say that those writing their manifestos should be considering the 6 Principles.

JO: Responded that manifestos were probably already written and therefore influencing the delivery of manifestos after the election was likely to be more realistic.

SL: Stated that she did not disagree, but was happy to spend time to try and influence politicians and civil servants. She commented that they have a meeting with Plaid Cymru and hope to have meeting with more groups. She then stated that the CCC advice had useful information within it.

4 - Help politicians to take bold decisions by holding Citizens' Assemblies and other forms of public participation, to get to net zero faster and with fairness for all.

JO: Asked for an update as to where XR had got to on this point, stating that he was aware that they had spoken to Dan Butler on the matter, and the First Minister had said that it should be driven by the Senedd not Welsh Government.

CM: Replied that the Senedd had been very focused on Covid and Brexit in recent months. XR had formed their own group and it would be possible to incorporate Senedd needs as soon as possible. She then argued that citizens' assemblies would help with wider public buy in, but need support by Government to create actions.

SJ: said that public polls show a clear desire for action, but to keep the public on board for more difficult decisions would require wider buy in from them. She stated that there was an internal discussion within CAT but they are committed to co-creative processes. She then put forward innovations labs as an opportunity to create wider public buy in.

JO: Acknowledged more needed to be done on public engagement to support the public in making decisions they are willing and able to make.

SL: Highlighted that the CCC said public engagement was useful, and that public information must be part of this shift. She remarked that Climate Assembly UK made this their first priority.

TW: Said that public agency allows vital decisions to be made by them. She highlighted that the Pope had supported citizen assemblies, and that they allow the public to be drip feed information.

JO: Clarified that there is a legal obligation on public bodies in Wales to involve citizens and various groups in the process through the Well-being of Future Generations Act (2015). He then asked what was missing?

CM: Stated that she wanted a bottom up approach as well, and that XR was willing to work with local communities.

PA: stated that problems are deeply ingrained, that wicked solutions are necessary. He Stated the CAT had done training for Future Generations officials and would be willing to do so for The Welsh Government.

5 - Make the future well-being of young people, and the generations to come, the centre of our concern, and the focus of our plans.

SL: stated she would have liked to have members of the Future Generation Commissioner's office. She then asked if JO had seen the Future Generation Manifesto. She stated that she recognised that Wales was a world leader, and had paid attention to legislation but wanted to see what can be done with legislation.

JO: Remarked that the team and Welsh Government more widely was in regular contact with them. The fifth principle is engrained in the WfG Act.

6 - Support economic sectors which create green jobs in a low carbon revolution that will improve our environment, homes and communities and safeguard our health.

JO: Highlighted that Welsh Government was attempting to use all levers possible to get engagement, appropriate decision making, better budget linkage, and to present Ministers with important decisions. He highlighted that the Well-being of Future Generations Act requires the Welsh Government to evaluate a range of objectives in developing policy, and we must balance difficult choices. He stated that while the principle talks about investing in green jobs, which is well made, it would perhaps have been better to emphasis on choosing not to invest in economic action which increases carbon emissions.

SL: Commented that JO remarks were of use. She then highlighted that public buy in as to why things need to change and the speed at which they must happen.

TW: stated that disinvestment was very important for the Catholic Agency for Overseas Development.

PA: Put forward a paper published by Challenging Ideas 'ReCosting Energy – Powering for the Future' which talked about carbon bias.

JO: Commented that historic economic growth had been founded on cheap labour and cheap fossil fuelled energy. He remarked that this would be a large shift, but that he is optimistic about it.

AOB

CM: asked if further discussion on cooperation around COP 26 could be had.

JO: Stated that we don't know what form COP 26 would take, but that he would be open to that.

SL: Stated her agreement on the issue.

JO: Said he would refer back to colleagues with more regular work on the matter.