Institute for Public Policy Research

IPPR

# SOUTH WALES VALLEYS CLIMATE AND FAIRNESS PANEL

## FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

**IPPR and the South Wales Valleys Climate and Fairness Panel**

March 2021

## ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE COMMISSION

The South Wales Valleys Climate and Fairness Panel was organised by the IPPR Environmental Justice Commission.

The recommendations of the panel will be presented to local politicians and decision-makers and submitted to the major national cross-party commission, as part of a more detailed report on the process the panel has gone through.

The Environmental Justice Commission was created in 2019 with the aim of working with people across the UK to develop policies and ideas that will tackle the climate crisis and restore nature as quickly and fairly as possible, and that put people and fairness at the heart of the response to the climate and nature emergencies. The commission is co-chaired by Hilary Benn MP, Laura Sandys and Caroline Lucas MP, leading politicians from the Labour, Conservative and Green parties.

## ABOUT IPPR

## The progressive policy think tank

# ABOUT THE PANEL

The South Wales Valleys Climate and Fairness Panel was commissioned by the Environmental Justice Commission to examine the question:

*"What practical steps should we take together in the South Wales Valleys to address the climate crisis and restore nature in a way that is fair for everyone?"*

19 residents of the South Wales Valleys came together online for over 20 hours of deliberation across eight sessions over six weeks. Collectively, they were representative of the area in terms of age, ethnicity, gender, locale (rural/urban), qualification level, and attitude to climate change.

The jurors heard from a range of speakers, providing a grounding in the climate and nature emergencies, the local context, and positive, ambitious proposals for action across four topics: 'work and industry', 'how we travel', 'how we make decisions', and 'fairly sharing the costs'. The panel also developed their own 'wellbeing framework' to help guide their recommendations.

These recommendations are presented here in the panel's own words.

# STATEMENT FROM THE JURORS

We believe that a fair response to the climate and nature emergencies in the South Wales Valleys must be inclusive and not leave areas behind.

The response should reflect that people have different needs. There are many people we don't hear from (even through this panel) and the solution has to be inclusive for all.

Education is going to be key. This starts in schools where people can learn about and understand the changing world they are growing into.

People need to feel that they are part of the change. We need to bring people with us and for it not to feel like we are having things done to us. We need to empower individuals and communities to take the action needed.

Awareness of the severity of the issue is essential. There are many people who aren't aware of the change that is needed. Much of the information we see is about the global situation. We need to hear more about the impact this will have locally and what role people can play in making change happen.

We should reward businesses and people who are taking action. Introduce climate ratings to make clear the impact of our actions and where it will have a negative (or positive) effect on the environment. This can't just be about pledges and words - it has to be tangible action.

We need to take a broad view of the changes needed – across every sector. From how we heat our buildings, to the products we use and how we move around. We need to make it easier for businesses to make these changes and reward them for being proactive in taking action. We've seen significant action on things like plastic and we need to take action for climate in a similar way.

There isn't just one plan that's needed or one great idea that will address this challenge. We need multi-dimensional solutions. We need to be joined up in our thinking - stop taking the actions that cause harm or making it harder for people to do the right thing for the environment. We need facilitators not barriers to action.

This is now the time for action. We are used to policy and plans taking a long time to come to fruition. For us to have hope we need to see faster action on these emergencies. We need to build momentum. Find the quick ideas that show we're on track to delivering the big change. Recognise that there have been big steps already taken - particularly in the energy sector.

Change needs to be well thought through. We need to get the timing right so people don't experience the negative impacts before they see benefits. If things are planned well and made clear, we believe people will act in the way needed.

Being able to do more locally is important. But people shouldn't feel trapped by the places they live and be limited by what they can access locally. We need to think of how the Valleys connects to the wider world too.

The cost of change - both financial and in how we live – has to be shared fairly.

# THE JURORS' WELLBEING FRAMEWORK

**We believe in a better life for all in the South Wales Valleys.**

This means a future where no one is left behind and everyone:

has **good physical and mental health**

is **safe, comfortable** and **well nourished**

is able to **access and enjoy recreational activities and be physically active**

has **the ability** to **move around**

is able to enjoy **green spaces and nature**

is able to meet and enjoy time with **friends and family**

has access to a **support network** and **connection to a close-knit community**

has **work** (both paid and unpaid) that is **purposeful and satisfying**

is engaged in **decisions about change,** and **has a voice** that is heard

is able to choose and have **independence**

has continued access to **lifelong learning, study and personal and spiritual growth**

We believe that the future should be inclusive and we recognise that those who have been historically left behind may need additional support to prosper. Place plays an important part in this future and it is important that we are able to achieve these outcomes in the South Wales Valleys. These principles are connected and support each other.

# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MAKING DECISIONS

## OVERARCHING PRINCIPLES

- **The people who are most affected by a decision should be at the core of the decision-making process.** This helps mitigate unfair, unintended, consequences.
- **More decisions should be made at a local level and the uniqueness of each place should be recognised in the decision-making.** In the South Wales Valleys, a few miles can make a real difference to the needs of a place and the people in it.
- **Decisions need to be joined up with different organisations working together to make the most of the resources and time we have.** We shouldn't be acting in silos.
- **Future benefits should shape decisions about the climate and nature crises.** These benefits should be visible and promoted.
- **Decisions should aim to create a better tomorrow for those after us.** Big changes won't happen in a week, or a year. We may need to wait 10, 20 or even 60 years to see the difference today's actions will make, but we need to start implementing them without a wait.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Use citizens' juries to create local action plans.**
   - People should be involved in the decisions about the places they feel connected to – and for many this is very local (the 'parish' rather than a political administrative district).
   - Local people should have more responsibility for the stewardship of their local environment.

2. **Local engagement should be mandatory in all local government decision-making.**
   - There needs to be ongoing dialogue within and across local authorities. There are so many different small groups within larger local authority areas – there can't be a 'one size fits all' approach.
   - Engagement shouldn't just happen at the point the decision is made. We need to set up citizen-led ways to hold authorities to account for the long term.

3. **People need to be educated from a young age in how to engage as citizens in more democratic processes than just voting.**
   - They should be enabled and encouraged to get involved in local decisions and taught about the tools they can use to hold leaders to account, such as the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act.

4. **There should be many more avenues for people to participate in decision-making processes.**
   - We should reduce barriers to engagement, eg consultations shouldn't happen at only one time (day/evening) or only in-person or online.
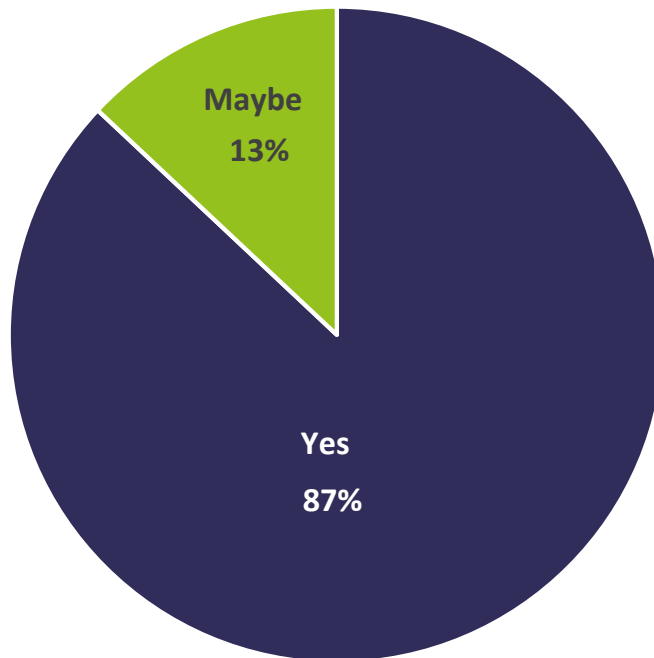
## WELLBEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS

The below quotes capture the responses of the jurors to the question: "What does the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act mean to you?". These have been grouped by IPPR into three thematic groups.

### What does the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act mean to us?

*"It gives me hope to know that my generation (I'm 17 years old) is being considered and thought about when thinking of ways to improve where we live, and are actively given a voice when changes are being made."*

FIGURE 1: WORD CLOUD OF JUROR RESPONSES TO THE QUESTION: "WHAT DOES THE WELLBEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT MEAN TO YOU?"



Source: Jurors' responses

### Hope for a better future

- "To me it means that my children's world and future have a chance, however small, at a better, more prosperous future."
- "The future and wellbeing of our children."
- "It's a start in the right direction for the future of the youth."
- "Very hopeful for the future and very proud of wales for leading the way."
- "How passionate people are about achieving positive changes and not just government ministers."
- "A commitment today to create a brighter future!"

### A framework for better social and environmental decisions

- "The act formalises our collective responsibility to properly manage our planet and resources in an environmentally and socially responsible way, and helps us to hold our leaders to account for delivering on these goals."
- "A stewardship approach to the natural environment which seeks to increase biodiversity and preserve the countryside as an inheritance for future generations."

- "It brings tangible commitment to a very broad spectrum of the things we want to achieve as a country."

**An opportunity that we need to use**
- "An opportunity to leave a positive legacy."
- "In principle good but how exactly is it applied, particularly around planning matters. Who is overseeing adherence?"
- "It's nice just to think that this is taken into account in future decisions/planning."
- "It could mean a recall from the public on things that local government may do or want to do on the future."

**FIGURE 2: JUROR RESPONSE TO THE QUESTION "WOULD YOU SUPPORT THIS APPROACH TO DECISION-MAKING BEING USED IN OTHER PARTS OF THE UK?"**



Maybe
13%

Yes
87%

Source: Jurors' responses

# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FAIRLY SHARING THE COSTS

## OVERARCHING PRINCIPLES

- **Investment needs to take place over the next 10 years** to achieve government targets without negative impacts.
- **Funding must be targeted to ensure that people aren't left behind** because change is prohibitively expensive for them. Distribution of funding should be based on need; different areas will need different levels of investment.
- **Those who earn more should pay more**, whether they be individuals or businesses.
- **Approaches to funding needs to harness community spirit** and use the strong networks and cohesion already present. This could also have a positive impact on wellbeing, increasing community connection.
- **Funding decisions must be transparent** to justify the costs and demonstrate the benefits for nature, climate and wellbeing. This must include addressing the benefits locally to avoid the historic extraction of value from the South Wales Valleys.
- Recognise there may be tensions between nature, climate and wellbeing, particularly as we recover from the Covid-19 pandemic, but **seek to fund opportunities to address these issues in an integrated way** that do not have a negative impact on those most in need.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

5. **Invest in infrastructure ahead of need** to accelerate adoption of low carbon technology or behaviours.
   - Government investment in electric vehicle charging infrastructure is needed to increase confidence in buying electric vehicles.

6. **Increase the level of funding for housing retrofit and make its distribution fairer**.
   - Make green grant funding available in Wales.
   - Give powers to allocate funding to local areas to ensure that those most in need are able to access the funding.

7. **Increase the contribution of community funding to action on climate and for nature**, where appropriate.
   - There are many examples of successful community funding in the South Wales Valleys, these should be used as exemplars to build momentum in this area.
   - Provide more information about how to start community investment and about existing opportunities for investment.

8. **Ensure that people have a say in how funding is distributed locally**
   - Develop a clear set of principles for local authority spending.
   - Devolve some funding to local areas and create groups that are representative of the local population who can decide how this funding should be spent.

# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR WORK AND INDUSTRY

## OVERARCHING PRINCIPLES

- **Wales must receive a fair economic settlement.** That should include greater devolution of powers, including over taxation, and a fairer allocation of funding from the UK government.
- **Work should be more flexible and there should be more work of a better quality.** There isn't enough good work out there to support families. People should have choice in the work they do. We need more flexibility, recognising that people live complex lives and have differing responsibilities. We need good work standards, including time for breaks.
- **People must be able to work to live rather than live to work.** All work should pay **the real living wage**.
- **The key is to enable good jobs in local areas.** Covid-19 has demonstrated that digital or remote working is very possible for many businesses that may previously have been reluctant to use it. But remote working requires good internet and the local spaces (ie not just in your home because not everyone has the space) to enable this kind of working arrangement to be viable.
- **Recognise the variety of 'green jobs'.** Not all green jobs are specifically involved in the energy industry. Local jobs can be greener and jobs that aren't specifically in the low-carbon economy, such as caring, should also be regarded as green.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are ordered according to the level of priority given to them by the jurors as part of a final vote.

9.  **We need to introduce a framework of incentives, rules and laws for businesses to go green.** Businesses have to be encouraged to change with the right combination of carrots and sticks. Some will do it because it's the right thing to do, some will do it because it's better business and some will only do it when it's forced. There should be rewards for sustainable business practice and grants to help encourage the action we want to see businesses take. We should support businesses that are producing good, sustainable products by making people more aware of the environmental issues surrounding the things they buy.

10. **Develop a new economic strategy for the South Wales Valleys and for Wales that focuses on creating 'anchor towns'**, making the most of local assets and backing this up with investment that communities have a say in. To ensure the local economy is future-proofed **focus on support for the sectors that are essential for life** (the environment, health and care, food, energy, and homes). Within this there should be investment in natural assets and creating local jobs to maintain nature.

11. **Provide increased access to apprenticeships and colleges rather than emphasising universities.** We need to value different types of work and aspiration. We should not think of education and training as different – we should be bring together the strengths of both to be more modular and provide flexible qualifications. We should embed knowledge and skills and not be too focused on exams. New training opportunities are needed to ensure that local people have the opportunity to do the green jobs being invested in – for example installing heat pumps and electric vehicle infrastructure.

12. **Provide the opportunity for better work that is accessible and local.** Create local work hubs and allow people to work closer to home. These local hubs should enable people to work in the same places that they live and could make use of existing cafes or other local businesses. We should help local companies to learn from how other organisations, or countries, that have made this work. These changes will help bring town life back.

13. **Create a new strategy for local investment and local sourcing of goods and materials and staff, starting with the public sector through procurement.** This should be the linchpin of reducing $CO_2$ emissions for services and goods. This will create new opportunities for sustainable home-grown businesses that also buy goods and trade locally – keeping investment within the valleys, 'by Wales, for Wales'.

14. **Make education and training more affordable for all.** Education has become too expensive for those of any age. We should make sure that learning is available for everyone, especially those who are out of education now and older workers who are looking to retrain or for a new path.

15. **Ensure that education has stronger links to end-goals and job opportunities.** Rather than dealing with subjects in the abstract link it to real life opportunities for careers in those areas. This will include introducing support from careers services at an earlier stage in people's education. We need to help people have clear purpose in life by providing training coming out of school or university. We can show people what their options are for the future, especially through local industry.

16. **Invest in lifelong learning to support older generations.** Provide more flexibility and a viable option for all ages to learn and get a job in new, greener industries. Lifelong learning means having the ability to adapt and evolve, this is key to ensuring a learning culture for Wales.

17. Change working practices so that they are more flexible and **allow for part-time work and part-time education** at the same time. We should make sure that the tax and benefit systems doesn't stop people from being able to take on part-time education.

18. **Address the issue of invisible work ensuring that care, childcare and support for elderly and community is paid** – these are crucial contributions to society, particularly coming out of the Covid-19 pandemic, but go unrecognised and unpaid. We should also think about an increased role for community organisations and social services in supporting those who care for others.

19. **Establish 'decent work' standards** and strong regulations across different sectors. We should involve workers and the businesses affected by these regulations in designing and advocating for them. We shouldn't have regulations that aren't needed and where we are asking more of businesses (particularly small ones or entrepreneurs) we should try to find ways to make things easier for them too. By involving everyone in the process you help ensure we get the kinds of good, green businesses we want.

20. **Support all businesses to adopt the real living wage**. An extra pound matters to a lot of people and we need to make sure that all work pays enough to live on. To make this possible there needs to be strong support for businesses who provide decent jobs – from the public and government.

21. **Treat digital infrastructure as a basic human right** to enable remote working and make sure that children have access to laptops and tablets to facilitate remote learning. This could be linked to incentivising people working from home after the pandemic (and not taxing people more to do so).

22. **Introduce environmental ratings for all products.** We need to make people more aware of the environmental issues surrounding the things they buy. Introduce a recycle rating that would include things like the amount of meat used, chemicals used, electricity used, and the amount of materials or plastics used. This should extend to the public sector, for example introducing low-carbon menus in schools so that they can make their own decisions. This could also include the carbon footprint of food within the hospitality sector.

# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HOW WE TRAVEL

## OVERARCHING PRINCIPLES

- **Reduce the need to travel as far** – more people should be able to get what they need locally.
- **Travel should be a positive choice not a burden.** We don't want to stop people being able to get outside of our neighbourhoods, and become insular. However, we also don't want to have to travel outside of our communities for what we need.
- **Electric is only part of the answer**; we also need fewer car trips overall, so a move to electric vehicles must only happen in combination with public transport improvements and a reduction in journeys.
- **We should think about rural and urban areas differently** when it comes to transport.
- **We don't want to punish anyone for where they live**, so benefits and subsidies are better than sanctions and penalties for encouraging greener travel.
- **We should have a strategic focus on popular routes** – put energy into improving public transport where we know people are travelling.
- **We need a joined-up approach** that thinks about the connections within journeys.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are ordered according to the level of priority given to them by the jurors as part of a final vote.

23. **Invest in public transport** – public transport should be greener, affordable and efficient. The connections need to work for people.
    - Public transport should connect people with popular destinations, whether for leisure and tourism or work.
    - We should look to other countries for inspiration for how to do public transport better.
24. **Invest in regenerating our high streets** – local councils should invest in small businesses being able to set up on our high streets. They are the heart of the community and mean that people can stay local, reducing the need for trips.
25. **Streets should be greener and more nature friendly** – we should plan for benefits to nature as well as people.
26. **The South Wales Valleys should be prepared for electric vehicles by investing in job creation and training in this area.** There should be a focus on skills development in electric vehicle repair and associated infrastructure.
27. **It should be mandatory to build communities, not just cheap homes.** Planning permission should be dependent on plans for living space, workspace and transport being joined up.

- Developers should not be able to get away with not adhering to their commitments. Local authorities need to hold them to account, and need to be held to account themselves.
- New developments should include community essentials, such as doctors surgeries, (Welsh) schools, banks and shops.

28. **City centres should be car-free** except when essential, eg for disability.
29. **Invest in cycling and walking infrastructure** to make these safer and more accessible options for shorter journeys or as a connection to public transport.
30. **Stop building new roads** unless there is a clear public benefit justification. The Wellbeing of Future Generations Act provides a good test.

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Public Policy Research, please go to www.ippr.org

You can also call us on +44 (0)20 7470 6100,
e-mail info@ippr.org or tweet us @ippr

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