

**Statement by the Deputy Minister for Climate Change: Roads review, [Plenary](#)
[22 June 2021](#)**

Diolch, Llywydd. The world's scientists are telling us in very clear terms that we urgently need to cut our greenhouse gas emissions. Since 1990, Welsh emissions have fallen by 31 per cent, but to reach our statutory target of net zero by 2050 we need to do much more. As the UK Climate Change Committee reminded us last week, if we're going to keep temperature rises within safe limits, in the next 10 years we need to more than double all the cuts we've managed over the last 30 years.

To hit the 2050 target, the Climate Change Committee has told us we need to cut emissions in the next decade by 63 per cent, and by 2040 they need to fall by 89 per cent. On our current trajectory, we will not achieve net zero until around 2090. The challenge is stark and will require everyone, including the Government, to consider the impact of their choices.

Transport makes up some 17 per cent of our total emissions and so must play its part. Earlier this year I published the Welsh Government's new Wales transport strategy, 'Llwybr Newydd'. It sets out a bold vision for transport in Wales over the next two decades. It included, for the first time, a modal shift target, which requires us to aim for 45 per cent of journeys to be by sustainable forms of transport by 2045, up from 32 per cent currently. To achieve these targets we need a shift away from spending money on projects that encourage more people to drive, and invest in real alternatives that give people a meaningful choice.

Our programme for government commits to introducing a far-reaching bus Bill in this Senedd term to make it easier to integrate the timetables of buses and trains. Bus operators have said that the main barrier to increasing patronage is reliability and journey times, so we will take action to give buses greater priority on our roads and we will look too at bus fares.

This year we'll be spending more than any other part of the UK per head on active travel investment to encourage people to walk or cycle for local journeys. Two out of three journeys in Wales are under five miles in length.

With the right investment, and with encouragement, there's huge potential to get most people using sustainable transport for most everyday journeys—not all journeys, not all people, but the majority. It's do-able, and there are many countries where it is already done.

Understanding the data in relation to transport also gives us headroom to make choices, and, as the data and the science change, the choices we have to make alter. We must use the headroom we have wisely if we are to meet our climate change targets. To this end, we are announcing a pause on all new road schemes while we review our existing commitments.

Officials are in the final stages of establishing a roads review panel, which will include some of the UK's leading experts on transport and climate change. The panel will consider setting tests for when new roads are the right solutions for transport problems, in line with the new Wales transport strategy. And I want the review to consider how we can shift spending towards better maintaining our existing roads, rather than building new ones, as was recommended by the cross-party Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee in the last Senedd.

We'll publish the full terms of reference for the review and the full membership in due course. It'll be for the panel to review all of our proposed road investments, whether funded directly by the Welsh Government on the strategic road network, or indirectly, by grants, on the local road network, so that all future projects align with the three priorities of the new transport strategy: to reduce the need to travel, to allow people and goods to move more easily from door to door by sustainable forms of transport, and to encourage people to make the change.

The new Wales transport strategy embeds the use of sustainable transport planning hierarchy, and the panel will use this to make sure we are encouraging travelling by walking, cycling and public transport ahead of private motor vehicles. To make sure this approach is fully embedded in our investment decisions and those taken by other delivery partners, we're also reviewing Welsh transport appraisal guidance, our decision-making framework for transport projects, so that it is consistent with 'Llwybr Newydd' and uses the five ways of working set out in the Well-being of

Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. The review will provide an initial report to Ministers within three months of appointment, setting out how it'll go about its task, and the final report shall be provided within nine months of that, setting out the findings of the review.

All parties in this Senedd have committed to taking the threat posed by climate change seriously, and that means acting now to reduce emissions. This will not always be comfortable or easy, Llywydd, but it's what the science requires us to do and what future generations demand of us. Diolch.

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