

Pwyllgor Newid Hinsawdd, yr Amgylchedd a Seilwaith /
Climate Change, Environment and Infrastructure Committee
Datgarboneiddio'r sector tai preifat / Decarbonising the private housing sector
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Ymateb gan / Evidence from Cwmpas

Climate Change, Environment, and Infrastructure Committee



About Cwmpas

Cwmpas is a development agency working for positive change.

We are a co-operative, and our focus is on building a fairer, greener economy and a more equal society, where people and planet come first. The current economic system is failing to tackle the key challenges our communities face today, from climate change to economic hardship. It does not have to be this way.

Our economy and society could – and should – work in the interests of people and the planet. Established in 1982 as the Wales Co-operative Centre, at Cwmpas we've made it our mission to change the way our economy and society works.

Decarbonisation of housing: decarbonising the private housing sector

In this response, we would like to focus on the benefits of ensuring social enterprise plays a key role in the decarbonisation of the private housing sector in Wales. Social enterprises operate on the principles of the Triple Bottom line; people, planet, profit. This ensures that their social, environmental, economic purpose is at the heart of what they do. Many have environmental objectives and improving the local area at the heart of their social aims. It is also worth noting that many social enterprises have embedded circular economy principles within these environmental objectives.

The Welsh Government has set out its legal commitment to achieve net zero emissions by 2050, with an ambition to get there even sooner. Achieving this will take specific investments to decarbonise existing infrastructure in Wales, in areas such as housing and transport.

Welsh Government policies relating to decarbonisation should promote social enterprise as the business model of choice for organisations working and wanting to work in this area. There is also an opportunity to build more resilient communities and local economies, through scaling up social enterprises and community and locally-owned businesses with training and skills development in local communities as part of a just green transition.

Maximising the role of the social enterprise sector in decarbonisation: Social Value

The Government can play a key role in supporting the development of this sector in Wales by ensuring procurement practices for the decarbonisation of social housing prioritise social value to the same extent as economic cost. Facilitating the opportunities for social enterprise to scale up and

deliver these contracts would further their ability to play a key role in decarbonising the private housing sector. We would also welcome further exploration of the role of the Government in nurturing the market to take advantage of this significant investment. The 2020/21 Social Enterprise Mapping exercise highlighted that many social enterprises would like to do more trade with the public sector but lack the knowledge, capacity or skills to do so.

However, we have seen examples across Wales of social enterprises stepping up to provide innovative solutions to social and environmental challenges in sustainable ways.

Case Study – Creating Enterprise, Conwy

Creating Enterprise is a social enterprise in Conwy. A subsidiary of Cartrefi Conwy, it started trading in 2015 and has quickly grown into the social contractor of choice for North Wales. It builds environmentally friendly homes using sustainable materials and is innovative in finding new ways to lower its carbon footprint, such as by sourcing eighty percent of its timber from Wales and constructing its frames onsite. As well as having an environmental mission, it has a social mission to create well-paid, full-time employment opportunities for the local community it serves. Its Creating Futures Academy helps local people find and access training, volunteering, and employment opportunities. In November 2020, it was named as the Fastest Growing Company in Wales. As a subsidiary of a housing association, it is a fantastic example of the innovative thinking that can embed social value and social enterprise in the housing sector in Wales. This team is the perfect example of how social enterprise can deliver on its three ambitions: business success, environmental sustainability, and helping people.