Department for Energy Security & Net Zero

Net Zero Government Initiative

UK Roadmap to Net Zero Government Emissions

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Acknowledgements

This Roadmap is a product of collaboration between the UK Government and the Devolved Administrations of Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of this document

In November 2022, ahead of COP27, the UK joined the Net Zero Government Initiative as a partner and signatory. This Initiative is led by the United States and participants agreed to develop and publish a roadmap laying out how they would bring their government emissions to net zero by 2050.

This roadmap draws from existing strategy documents including the Heat and Buildings Strategy, the Scottish Heat in Buildings Strategy, Net Zero Carbon Status by 2030: Public Sector Route Map for Wales, and the Energy Strategy for Northern Ireland. It covers the policies and interim targets that are central to decarbonising the UK's governments.

1.2 Introduction to the UK context

In November 2008, the UK passed the Climate Change Act with an overwhelming majority across political parties.

The 2008 Climate Act committed the UK to reducing its greenhouse gas emissions by 80% by 2050 compared to 1990 levels, formed the Committee on Climate Change, and established UK carbon budgets. In June 2019, this was strengthened,[1] committing the UK to bring all greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050. This is referred to as the UK net zero target.

The UK was the first country to set legally binding carbon budgets, which place restrictions on the total amount of greenhouse gases the UK can emit over five-year periods. To date, six carbon budgets have been set, up to 2037.

For the purposes of international reporting, emissions are measured and reported on a 'whole of UK' basis through the UK's Greenhouse Gas Inventory. This is also the basis for the UK's Nationally Determined Contributions[2], which give a single, economy-wide emissions reduction target for England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland together.

However, most aspects of climate change and decarbonisation policy are devolved matters. There are complexities within this, as some related areas (including energy security, and some aspects of energy efficiency) are reserved matters with policy made on a 'whole of UK' basis. However, for the most part decarbonisation of the 'government' sector in the UK is a collective effort, with differences in approach between the administrations at Westminster, Holyrood, Stormont and the Senedd.

[1] The Climate Change Act 2008 (2050 Target Amendment) Order 2019
[2] National Determined Contributions (NDCs) are international emissions reductions commitments made under the UNFCCC framework.

There are a number of policies in place to reach the UK net zero target, which for England are summarised in the Net Zero Strategy (Build Back Greener) 2021, updated in 2022, which builds on the 2020 Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution. Further updates were made in the 2023 policy paper Powering Up Britain.

The Scottish Government has set a target date for net zero emissions of all greenhouse gases by 2045[3]. This includes the Scottish public sector.

The Welsh Government has set out the ambition for the public sector in Wales to be net zero carbon by 2030. In 2021, Wales published its Net Zero Carbon Status by 2030: Public Sector Route Map which provides an overview of the actions and milestones needed for the Welsh public sector to reach this ambition. Net Zero Wales sets out the target for Wales to be net zero by 2050.

In Northern Ireland, The Energy Management Strategy and Action Plan to 2030[4] was formally adopted by the NICS board in January 2019. This strategy sets a target for Central Government to reduce net energy consumption by 30% (from a 2016/17 baseline) by 2030. Since the strategy launch, Northern Ireland has passed its first climate legislation, The Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022[5], mandating a net zero emissions target for 2050. This Act also identifies 'Public Buildings' as a specific sector.

1.3 Overview and scope

For the purposes of the NZGI work and in line with our international NZGI partners, this document defines 'government' as central government departments across the governments of UK, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. When 'government departments' are referred to throughout, it denotes these organisations. This does not include local government. However, many of the policies included in this road map also apply to the wider public sector.

Government departments have responsibility for their own emissions, and with a few exceptions they can choose their own approach on how to manage their buildings' energy consumption, travel or procurement policies, or other measures.

In addition, departments may lead on policies to reduce emissions from specialised government operations, such as from defence or from government laboratories. Those policies are not covered here: this roadmap focuses on measures to reduce cross-cutting government emissions. In particular this roadmap focuses on buildings, transport, procurement, and skills development.

The governments of Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, and the UK each take slightly different approaches to government decarbonisation, drawing on the range of powers at their disposal

[3] https://www.gov.scot/policies/climate-change/
[4] Energy-Management-Strategy-March-2019.pdf (sibni.org)
[5] Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 (legislation.gov.uk)

and adapting approaches to local circumstances. However, there is also much in common, with parallel schemes, common challenges, and opportunities for shared learning.

1.4 Position on offsetting

Offsetting can help to address any residual emissions that are particularly hard to abate, for example from Ministerial air travel to essential meetings. However, the use of offsetting is not common across government departments. Its more widespread application would be subject to cross-Whitehall agreement that would take into account value for money and the environmental integrity of the carbon credits (which can sometimes come into conflict), among other measures. In the meantime, government departments are focussed on reducing their emissions as quickly as feasible.

2. The Path to Net Zero

2.1 Targets

The UK government aims to reduce all direct emissions from public sector buildings by 50% and 75% by 2032 and 2037 respectively, against a 2017 baseline. All UK emissions are to reach net zero by 2050.

There are also ambitious targets within each of the four nations. Scotland aims to reach net zero from all emissions by 2045, Wales has an ambition to reach net zero emissions in its public sector by 2030, and Northern Ireland aims to reduce its government emissions by 30% by 2030 (from a 2016/17 baseline year).

These key targets demonstrate the UK-wide commitment to reaching net zero goals within government and beyond.

2.2 Monitoring and reporting

Monitoring and reporting of public sector and government emissions is the tool that allows the UK to ensure it is on track to meet its climate commitments.

Each nation is approaching measurement and reporting requirements for government differently. England has Greening Government Commitments (GGCs) which apply to both central government departments and their executive agencies, non-ministerial departments, and non-departmental public bodies and has recently published a timeline for creating wider public sector monitoring and reporting guidance. In Scotland, 180 public bodies are required to report annually on compliance with their statutory climate change duties. Wales has emissions reporting requirements in place for its public bodies and has published guidance to assist public sector bodies in meeting these. In Northern Ireland, requirements for certain public sector bodies to report on climate change are due to be in place by the end of the year.

England

The GGCs set out the actions government departments in England and their agencies will take to reduce their environmental impact, in line with the 25 Year Environment Plan[6]. The commitments are updated every five years, with the latest version being the 2021-2025 GGCs Framework. The GGCs provide a sustainability reporting and target setting framework, covering a range of sustainability metrics.

[6] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/25-year-environment-plan

- In financial year (FY) 2020 to 2021 (the most recent year with published data[7]), government reduced its greenhouse gas emissions by 57% from the baseline year (then 2009-2010, this has since changed to 2017-2018), exceeding the 43% target.
- This follows the achievement of a 50% reduction from the baseline year in FY 2019 to 2020.
- The reduction in energy use across the government estate collectively saved departments an estimated £182 million in FY 2020-2021.

A public sector emissions monitoring and reporting guidance timeline[8] was published in August 2023. This provides a timetable for issuing consistent standards for measuring and reporting emissions that is applicable to the entire public sector. This will allow the department to deliver upon its Net Zero Strategy commitment to provide guidance to support coherent and consistent emissions monitoring and reporting across the public sector.

The UK is also considering how developments in international reporting frameworks should be reflected in public sector reporting. In 2022, the Chief Secretary to the Treasury agreed to commence a phased implementation in central government annual reports and accounts of Task force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures (TCFD). Within the implementation strategy for these disclosures, the GGC 21-25 emissions reporting requirements are seen to fulfil the TCFD metrics and targets recommendation that organisations “disclose Scope 1, Scope 2, and, if appropriate, Scope 3 greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, and the related risks”. Continued alignment with requirements will be assessed as the new GGC 2025-30 framework is developed.

Scotland

The Scottish Government and its 10 Executive Agencies are among around 180 public bodies in Scotland (including local authorities, National Health Service, colleges and universities, Scottish Water, and a wide range of Non-Departmental Public Bodies) who have been required since 2015-16 to report annually on compliance with their statutory climate change duties.

Wales

The Welsh government published a Public Sector Net Zero Carbon Reporting Guide in 2021 (last updated in 2023) along with a spreadsheet for public sector bodies to calculate and report emissions. This details the principles and priorities for the Welsh Public Sector Net Zero Carbon reporting, its operational and organisational scope and the data which public bodies in Wales will need to assemble annually in order to fulfil the reporting requirements. The reporting guide is to be used in conjunction with the Net Zero Carbon Status by 2030: Public Sector Route Map which sets out the actions needed within the public sector in Wales to meet the ambition of being net zero by 2030. It is important to note that this is a collective ambition

[7] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/greening-government-commitments-2020-to-2021-annual-report
[8] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/public-sector-emissions-monitoring-and-reporting-guidance/public-sector-emissions-monitoring-and-reporting-guidance-timeline

across the whole public sector. The route map covers four key areas: decarbonising transport, buildings, procurement and land use.

Northern Ireland

The Northern Ireland government has been recording annual energy use across over 3,000 central government assets since 2016 and reporting since 2019. To date reporting has been carried out manually, however, a major project to digitise and automate data collection processes through the implementation of energy data software commenced in September 2023. This process aims to unlock greater efficiency in collection and analysis of energy, carbon, and cost data to facilitate more informed and timely decision-making and to enable standardised reporting against forthcoming statutory obligations for specified public bodies. In line with the requirements of the Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022, these obligations are due to be in place by 6th December 2023.

3. Net Zero Assisting Policies by Government Sub-Sector

3.1 Government buildings

Direct Emissions

In the Net Zero Strategy the UK set a target to reduce emissions from public sector buildings by 50% by 2032 and 75% by 2037 against 2017 levels.

Direct emissions from public sector buildings are responsible for 2% of UK emissions[9]. These direct (scope 1) emissions from public sector buildings primarily come from heating. Heating for homes and workspaces make up almost a third of all UK carbon emissions[10]. Therefore, heat decarbonisation will be critical in reducing emissions from the UK government's building stock. Each administration has identified that their public sector will need financial support from government to decarbonise their built estate and, so far, they have together provided over a billion pounds in grant and loan funding, with more than a billion pounds more committed.

England

The Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS) provides grant funding for heat decarbonisation and energy efficiency measures to public sector bodies. Many organisations have used PSDS funding to replace old fossil fuel boilers and upgrade their buildings. Phase 3 of the PSDS will provide £1.425 billion of grant funding over 2022-2025. Phase 2 provided £75 million, and Phase 1 provided £1 billion.

The Low Carbon Skills Fund (LCSF) provides funding for skills and expertise to develop heat decarbonisation plans for public sector bodies. Having a robust heat decarbonisation plan will put organisations in a strong position to take the next steps in decarbonising, including by enabling them to develop detailed project proposals that will help them to apply for any future grant funding for capital decarbonisation measures such as PSDS. This means organisations can think more strategically and be better prepared for future decarbonisation opportunities. Phase 4 of the LCSF provided up to £17 million of grant funding over 2023 to 2024. Phase 3 provided up to £17 million, phase 2 provided up to £15 million and phase 1 provided up to £32 million.

The Department for Energy Security and Net Zero has also sponsored a suite of guidance[11], designed to help public sector organisations identify and deliver emissions savings across their estates.

[9] https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm5803/cmselect/cmpubacc/39/report.html
[10] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/net-zero-strategy
[11] https://es.catapult.org.uk/tools-and-labs/public-sector-decarbonisation-guidance

Scotland

The Scottish Green Public Sector Estate Decarbonisation Scheme is the main government-led capital funding mechanism to support leadership on decarbonisation of buildings owned by the public sector in Scotland. This scheme offers zero-interest loans to facilitate energy efficiency improvement projects that result in financial and carbon savings and contribute towards achieving their net-zero aspirations. £200 million has been committed to the public sector for energy efficiency and renewable heating over this parliamentary term.

On 25 October, the Scottish Government launched a new grant scheme for local authorities and universities. Scotland's Public Sector Heat Decarbonisation Fund will provide up to 80% of grant funding for energy efficiency and heat decarbonisation projects. In addition, the Scottish Government provides a procurement framework for the public sector to enable the development of energy initiatives supported by a technical project support unit.

The Scottish Government achieved Carbon Trust Route to Net Zero Standard - Taking Action in July 2023.

The Scottish Government and Scottish Green Party Co-operation Agreement Shared Policy Programme commits to all publicly owned buildings to meet zero emissions heating requirements by 2038.

Wales

In 2023/24 the Welsh Government launched a £17m Low Carbon Heat Grant scheme to support local government decarbonise their buildings.

The Wales Funding programme is available to support public sector bodies decarbonise. This offers interest-free loans to public sector organisations to fund energy efficiency measures, covering 100% of the project costs. In 2023/24, £11.25m of new capital funding was provided through the Wales Funding Programme to support decarbonisation projects.

The Welsh Government Energy Service has been established to provide technical advice and assistance to support public sector organisations in Wales to decarbonise. This covers regional energy planning, energy efficiency, renewable electricity and ultra-low emission or electric vehicles.

As of 1 January 2022, all new-build and major refurbished school and college buildings delivered under the Sustainable Communities for Learning (SCfL) Programme are required to be Net Zero Carbon. The route map for the SCfL Programme contains incremental reductions in embodied carbon in line with the Welsh Government's statutory commitments.

Northern Ireland

The Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 identifies 'Public Buildings' as a distinct sector, with 77% reduction in scope 1 emissions from 1990-2021.

The Northern Ireland Energy Invest to Save fund was established in 2021 as one of the key recommendations of the Energy Management Strategy and Action plan for Central Government. This targeted funding offers 100% support for organisations to deliver energy capital projects that otherwise would not be taken forward with the overarching aim of mitigating and minimising the impact of energy price fluctuations on public service delivery.

Successful projects to date have covered areas such as energy efficiency, renewable energy, energy storage, EV charging infrastructure and automatic metering. Now into its thirds year there is a greater need to focus on heat decarbonisation.

To facilitate this shift in emphasis work has been taken forward to embed key value demonstrators in the government estate such as the South-West College Erne Campus[12] development, which was the world's first educational, and currently the largest, Passivhaus Premium rated building. Along with being the first UK building to achieve Passivhaus Premium and BREEAM outstanding certification, the college provides a blueprint for exemplar building standards in the government estate. Additionally, the GeoEnergyNI[13] project has launched feasibility studies, to inform the design of geothermal heat networks, to decarbonise the operation of public buildings on the Stormont and CAFRE Greenmount estates respectively.

Scope 2 emissions from electricity consumption

Scope 2 are emissions that an organisation causes indirectly, for example, the emissions caused when generating the electricity used in a building would fall into this category. These are measured separately to scope 1 emissions, which are the emissions an organisation causes directly for example when heating a building or running a vehicle, and scope 3 emissions, which are emissions an organisation causes indirectly via its supply chain.

There are policies in place to support installation of renewable electricity and reduce electricity usage in many parts of the UK government sector, against a backdrop of rapid decarbonisation of electricity from the national grids in both Great Britain and the island of Ireland. As the UK's electricity grid becomes greener, the scope 2 emissions of an organisation connected to this grid will reduce. If an organisation has on-site renewable generation such as photovoltaic panels, this will also have a positive impact. Electrical energy efficiency can also reduce scope 2 emissions through reducing electrical demand.

Across Great Britain (England, Scotland, and Wales) there is a target to decarbonise the electricity system by 2035[14]. Northern Ireland has set a goal for their electricity supply to be 80% renewable by 2030.

In Northern Ireland, the emission content and projected reduction in emissions resulting from electricity generation differs to those in Great Britain. This is due to the operation of the Single Electricity Market. SONI is the independent Transmission System Operator for Northern Ireland who hold emissions data resulting from electricity generation in Northern Ireland.

[12] Project Gallery (passivhaustrust.org.uk)
[13] GeoEnergy NI - Unearthing The Heat Beneath Our Feet
[14] https://www.gov.uk/government/news/plans-unveiled-to-decarbonise-uk-power-system-by-2035

England

The PSDS can include some electrical efficiency measures, for example LED lightbulbs, which help to reduce an organisations scope 2 emissions.

Scotland

Public sector scope 2 emissions fell by 58.5% from 2015-16 to 2021-22 across around 180 public bodies required to report annually on compliance with their statutory climate change duties.

Wales

Public sector scope 2 emissions are included in the public sector emissions report produced annually. In 2021-22 the Welsh public sector consumed 781,579MWh of electricity (scope2). but also generated a total of 42,789 MWh of electricity and purchased 326,380 MWh through Green tariffs, REGO tariffs and purchase agreements. This equates to 200ktCO2e.

Northern Ireland

For the 12-month period from July ’22 to June ’23, 45.5% of total electricity consumption was generated from renewable sources with the legislative target of reaching 80% by 2030. The Energy Invest to Save fund has enabled projects to both reduce electricity demand and to deploy renewable energy generation and storage. This aims to further explore the role of government in supporting growth in grid flexibility and capacity whilst also generating revenue on the path to lowering Scope 2 emissions.

Support for analysis: the Property Emissions Reduction Calculator

The Property Emissions Reduction Calculator (PERC) is a new tool developed in partnership with Energy Systems Catapult and is designed to help government departments and the Office of Government Property (OGP) to analyse and strategize the estate decarbonisation path to net zero 2050.

It has been designed with flexibility and adaptability in mind and allows users to assess and compare scenarios based on different building interventions with cost projections. The tool has the ability to analyse scenarios at building and site level up to cross-departmental and can therefore provide both big-picture and building specific evaluation.

Departments have different interim decarbonisation targets which the tool can be used to gauge progress towards. Annual reporting to OGP will provide strategic oversight of net zero progress of the government estate.

Following the development phase, the PERC has been pilot tested by two departments and is currently undergoing final amendments in preparation for launch in the coming months.

3.2 Government Transport

Transport is one of the UK's largest emitting sectors, responsible for 26% of domestic emissions in 2021[15], and its accelerated decarbonisation is central to delivering against legally binding and international economy-wide commitments.

Emissions from central government make up a portion of this. The UK Government has set out a holistic, cross-modal approach to reducing transport emissions in successive publications in recent years, including the 2021 Transport Decarbonisation Plan, with the widespread adoption of zero and low emission technologies and travel choices at their core. In scope of this roadmap, government travel can be divided into government car fleets, air travel and commuting.

Fleets

- To lead by example in England, the target of 25% of government car fleet being ultra-low emission by December 2022 was surpassed three months early.
- By 2027, 100% of the central government car and van fleet in England will be zero emission.
- The Scottish government has set a target to phase out petrol and diesel cars from the public sector fleet by 2025.
- Wales is also aiming for new public sector cars and light good vehicles to be ultra-low emission by 2025, with all new heavy goods public fleet vehicles to be ultra-low emission by 2030 where possible.
- In Northern Ireland, all department owned or leased cars and vans will be zero-emission by 2035.

Across the wider landscape, ambitious targets have been set which will lead to overall commuter emissions reduction, and across the UK, the number of EV options on the market continues to increase, providing public and private sector fleet operators with more choice of vehicles.

The UK Government has committed to all new cars and vans sold being zero emission by 2035, and in September 2023 announced – in conjunction with the Welsh Government, the Scottish Government, and the Northern Ireland Department for Infrastructure – that a zero-emission vehicle mandate will be introduced from January 2024. This will set annual minimum targets for the number of new zero emission cars and vans sold in the UK starting from 22% for cars and 10% for vans in 2024 and rising steadily to reach 80% of cars and 70% of vans by 2030.

15 https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1134664/greenhouse-gas-emissions-statistical-release-2021.pdf

Scotland

The Scottish Government is committed to phasing out petrol and diesel cars from the public sector fleet by 2025 and replacing fossil-fuelled vehicles with plug-in or fully electric vehicles where appropriate. The Scottish Government increased investment in ultra-low emitting electric vehicles, which made up 70% of the overall current fleet and 100% of the current government car service fleet by 2023.

Wales

Work has been conducted to gain a good understanding of the nature and use of the government fleet, future patterns of usage, and a feasible technological pathway for an ultra-low emission transformation.

The Welsh government has also set clear goals:

- New cars and light goods vehicles in the public sector fleet to be ultra-low emission by 2025.
- Where possible, all new heavy goods vehicles in the public fleet to be ultra-low emission by 2030.

Northern Ireland

In 2021 the Minister for Infrastructure signed the Glasgow Declaration on Zero Emission Cars and Vans on behalf of the NI Executive. In signing the declaration, the Executive agreed to work towards all departmentally owned or leased cars and vans being zero-emission by 2035.

To date, the Energy Invest to Save fund has supported a small number of Electrical Vehicle Infrastructure Projects. DfI is establishing two working groups, one for the NI Civil Service and the other NI local Councils, to bring forward roadmaps towards fully zero-emission fleets.

Flights

England

The Greening Government Commitments (GGCs) 2021 to 2025 included a commitment to report the distance travelled by international business flights with a view to better understanding and reducing related emissions where possible.

The GGCs also included a commitment to update organisational travel policies so that they require lower carbon options to be considered first as an alternative to each planned flight. Annual reports are published by the Government on performance against the GGCs.

Scotland

The Scottish Government has applied a carbon emissions levy to its business travel since 2006. The carbon emissions levy has contributed to carbon reduction projects in the Scottish Government estate: solar panels, LED lighting, and sustainable travel infrastructure.

Wales

The Welsh Government employs Corporate Travel Management (CTM) to act as its air travel contractor. Data on air travel will be captured by CTM at the point of booking to inform Welsh Government's reporting of climate impacts.

Commuting

Wales

Continued flexible working, use of local hubs and shared facilities, active travel and greater use of public transport significantly reduces car commutes and business travel in working lives of people post the Covid pandemic.

Work is underway to transition public transport commuting and business travel to ultra-low emission modes, including rail services.

The Welsh Government Net Zero Strategic Plan gives an overview of the work carried out within the Welsh government to reduce its carbon footprint.

Northern Ireland

The Hybrid Working Policy[16] was implemented in 2021. Reduced daily commuting and less staff travel contributes to departments' carbon reduction objectives with the associated environmental benefits.

3.3 Procurement

> *"The huge power of some £290 billion of public money spent through public procurement every year in the UK must support Government priorities: to boost growth and productivity, help our communities recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, and tackle climate change." (the Cabinet Office's 2020 Green Paper)*

Since the 2020 Cabinet Office Transforming Public Procurement Green Paper was published, England, Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland have all published procurement policy notes. The details of each vary but all provide government contractors with guidance and/or standards to ensure public procurement is considering the impact on the climate. This is an important step towards public money being spent in ways that will reduce emissions over time. Details of each are set out below.

England

In June 2021, Taking Account of Carbon Reduction Plans in the Procurement of Major Government Projects: PPN 06/21[17] was published, requiring suppliers bidding for major

[16] https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/publications/office-estate-review-further-information
[17] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/procurement-policy-note-0621-taking-account-of-carbon-reduction-plans-in-the-procurement-of-major-government-contracts

government contracts (suppliers subject to the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and contracts in excess of £5 million per annum) to publish their own Net Zero commitments or risk deselection from the procurement process.

This measure ensures all suppliers bidding for major Government procurements will be committed to achieving Net Zero by 2050 and are reducing their emissions over time.

This measure was a world first, and similar policies have followed from the US and Canada. It has been identified as leading best practice by the OECD and UN Race to Zero. Thousands of suppliers have made commitments to achieve Net Zero by 2050 as a result.

Scotland

Public Procurement - Taking Account of Climate and Circular Economy Considerations: SPPN 3/2022[18] was published in June 2022. It clarifies expectations with respect to climate and circular economy considerations. It aligns climate change reporting duties with procurement policy and legislation which requires public bodies to consider and act on opportunities to improve social and environmental wellbeing. It encourages public bodies to use their public procurement spend to support climate and circular economy ambitions, signposting sources of support to embed their policy in practice.

Research on the tools and methodologies available to public bodies to help them estimate and target their Scope 3 emissions from purchased goods and services has been commissioned by the Scottish Government to report late in 2023.

Wales

Decarbonisation through Procurement: WPPN 12/21[19] guides procurement professionals on how to support the reduction of carbon throughout the procurement lifecycle.

Targeted support and skills development within the supply chain to increase the proportion of Welsh suppliers who can deliver the required goods and services and are, therefore, eligible for contracts.

Guidance has been developed, targeted at procurement professionals to support the reduction of carbon throughout the procurement lifecycle.

Suppliers are incentivised through proportionate evaluation criteria to proactively seek further opportunities to reduce climate impacts. They are sent a strong signal regarding future low carbon requirements and staff are trained.

[18] https://www.gov.scot/publications/public-procurement-taking-account-of-climate-and-circular-economy-considerations-3-2022/#:~:text=Advice%20and%20guidance-,Public%20procurement%20%2D%20taking%20account%20of%20climate%20and,economy%20considerations%3A%20SPPN%203%2F2022&text=This%20policy%20note%20replaces%20SPPN,to%20address%20the%20climate%20emergency.

[19] https://www.gov.wales/wppn-12-21-decarbonisation-through-procurement-html

The Welsh government aim for, by 2026, all purchasing activities to have a robust carbon reduction phase built in at the earliest stage and throughout. The Welsh Government also require all procurement tenders over £5m to have a carbon reduction plan as a pre-requisite.

Northern Ireland

Scoring Social Value: PPN 01/21[20], agreed by the NI Executive, mandates that tenders must allocate a minimum of 10% of the total award criteria to social value. Social Value is about maximising the social, economic, and environmental benefits through the public procurement process. Ultimately, this allows Government Departments and their stakeholders to find new and far-reaching methods to deliver on the outcomes of the Programme for Government.

The NI Procurement Board published a construction toolkit[21] in September 2022. This provides advice and direction on the latest best practice techniques for public sector projects to deliver Zero Carbon and Sustainability in construction. It provides practical resources on decarbonisation and reducing energy usage and improving the environment. The guidance illustrates that construction projects can drive decarbonisation through their approach. This could be by signing up to an environmental or carbon standard for built assets (such as PAS 2080, EN15643, PAS 2035, and BREEAM), or by setting ambitious reduction targets at project level for carbon and material use.

3.4 Skills

Embedding skills and knowledge about decarbonisation and climate change across the civil service is essential for policy and projects to support in the journey to net zero.

England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland have all provided some form for climate awareness training to staff, teaching them how their work can reduce the impact of climate change and to support climate skills development in the government sector.

England

A new climate change fast stream has been launched, with a small annual cohort on the Government's graduate programme doing two years of specialised postings on climate change.

Many individual Government departments have also commissioned the Carbon Literacy Trust to provide training on climate change to their staff. This is an award-winning project that aims to make individuals aware of the impact of activities on the climate, and to know what steps to take to reduce emissions as an organisation, and why that is important.

Climate and environment policy capability is being embedded into the policy profession standards, supported by the Director Generals for Net Zero and Environment and the Civil Service Climate and Environment network. A full-time employee will be posted to develop

[20] https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/publications/ppn-0121-scoring-social-value
[21] https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/publications/sourcing-and-construction-toolkits-0

standards for climate and environment policy capability, and there will be further career support for civil servants interested in specialising in climate and environment areas.

Scotland

Climate Solutions online courses are a unique collaboration between Royal Scottish Geographical Society, University of Strathclyde Business School and Edinburgh Climate Change Institute, with development support from the Scottish Government.

Climate Literacy eLearning was developed by Scotland's national Climate and Procurement Forum. As of 30 September 2023, 1155 people had completed the eLearning. Wales

The Future Generation Commissioner has recognised that Carbon Literacy has an important role to play in achieving the goals and targets that the current government has published as well as the broader aims of the Well-being of Future Generations Act[22]. In the Commissioner's ten-point plan for decarbonisation, Carbon Literacy for the public sector is called for. Cynnal Cymru – Sustain Wales, The Carbon Literacy Project's official partner in Wales, has been delivering certified Carbon Literacy training since 2017.

Northern Ireland

In December 2020, the Department of Agriculture Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) initiated a project with Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful (KNIB) to develop and deliver carbon literacy training specific to NI. Building upon the pre-existing Carbon Literacy Project delivered in other parts of the UK, accredited carbon literacy courses are being delivered to teachers utilising the existing eco-schools network. It is also being made available to youth and community leaders via a train the trainer approach.

DAERA have supported Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful (KNIB) and the NI Environment Link (NIEL) to pilot climate change awareness training for civil servants with over 400 staff taking part to date. This training has been well received and has shown the value in training policy makers, front line staff and those delivering services to the public, amongst others. Following on from these initial pilots, DAERA in conjunction with DoF, will be considering options for wider rollout to staff.

DfE and DAERA are jointly providing funding support towards the Business in the Community (BITC) Business Action on Climate Campaign (and associated 'pledge to reduce emissions' in line with the science-based target initiative of 50% emission reduction by 2030), The pledge has been signed up to by a number of NI Public Bodies.

[22] https://www.futuregenerations.wales/about-us/future-generations-act/

4. Conclusion

Achieving the UK net zero goal by 2050 will require decarbonisation of all sectors and nations. Each one of these will require a unique approach and face bespoke challenges.

Government and the public sector have the responsibility to lead by example in a UK-wide effort, whether that is by ensuring civil servants have environmental concerns at the forefront when designing new policy or by fitting government buildings with the latest heat-decarbonisation technology such as heat pumps.

Additionally, by holding private sector contractors to high standards when it comes to their carbon emissions when delivering high-value government contracts, powerful companies are incentivised to create climate action plans and find new ways of working towards a net zero landscape.

The UK sees net zero not just as a necessary goal to protect the future of our planet, but as a great opportunity. Between 1990 and 2021, the UK cut emissions by 48%, decarbonising faster than any other G7 country[23]. As the UK looks to its 2050 target, bringing government emissions to net zero will be an essential part of that journey.

This Roadmap has set out the key milestones, breadth of innovative policy and billions of pounds of funding being channelled into bringing UK government emissions in line with the net zero target, and the four nations of the UK look forward to ongoing collaboration with NZGI partner countries.

[23] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/net-zero-strategy

This publication is available from: www.gov.uk/government/publications/net-zero-government-emissions-uk-roadmap

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