

19 May 2023

Dear

ATISN 17441 - Net Zero Wales 2035 Challenge Group

Information requested

Thank you for your request which I received on 28 April 2023. You asked for:

Information concerning the Net Zero Wales 2035 Challenge Group, specifically, the cost to set up the Group, its annual budget, who it reports to, the frequency of its meetings, if its meeting are open to public, and how many meetings of the Group have taken place.

Our response

Below is a response to each of your queries in turn.

- 1) How much did it cost to set this Group up in TOTAL** in terms e.g. overall TOTAL of Web Costs ; Staff Costs ; Adverts for Group Members; Interviews for Panel Members; Office Space; Travelling Expenses for Staff and Panellists; Printing costs ; Consultation Adverts and all Public Notices etc. etc.?
- 2) What is the annual budget cost of this Group** in all respects as listed above including Panel members expenses?

Response to Q 1 and Q2 - The costs of the Group are almost all attributable to the costs required to enable the Wales Centre for Public Policy (WCPP) to undertake their research work in support of the group.

The Wales Centre for Public Policy is grant funded by Welsh Government annually to undertake a range of research projects. However, given the intensity of this work, the Minister for Climate Change has agreed additional budget.

The additional budget supports the cost of hosting an Expert Advisor who will act as the Secretariat for the Group; and additional researcher time which therefore enables the WCPP to undertake specific pieces of work to support the Group by identifying, reviewing, and synthesising available evidence on the key areas of focus.

The additional costs agreed are: up to £197,070 over two years (2023/24 and 2024/25). Costs of approximately £26,000 in 2022/23 were met from the existing grant to the Wales Centre for Public Policy.

Costs in 22/23 and 23/24 have the estimated split of:

Expert Advisor – 29%

Researcher – 31%

Translation and Design of Published Documents – 6%

Travel and Subsistence – 2%

Overheads (to meet Cardiff University's costs in providing facilities, equipment and HR and finance support to the team supporting the Group) – 32%

The members of the expert Challenge Group are giving their time freely with only out-of-pocket expenses to be met from the budget. All meetings to date of the group have occurred virtually. The Welsh Government holds no data on any expenses charged to date, but it is understood they are negligible given the virtual nature of meetings to date.

3) Who does this Group report to?

The Group was created in response to a commitment in the [Cooperation Agreement](#) (between the Welsh Government and Plaid Cymru) to “commission independent advice to examine potential pathways to net zero by 2035 – the current target date is 2050. This will look at the impact on society and sectors of our economy and how any adverse effects may be mitigated, including how the costs and benefits are shared fairly”. As such the Group reports to the Welsh Government, specifically, the Minister for Climate Change and the Plaid Cymru Designated Member, Sian Gwenllian MS.

4) How frequently does the Group meet?

The group meets formally monthly. However, discussions and small sub-groups meet more frequently.

5) Are the Group's meetings open to the public at a set venue or by zoom?

The groups meetings to date have not open to the public. However, you can find details of meetings and opportunities to contribute at [Wales Net Zero 2035](#).

6) How many meetings has the Group had since its set up?

The Group has met monthly since January 2023 and therefore, to date, five half-day meetings have been held.

Next steps

If you are dissatisfied with the Welsh Government's handling of your request, you can ask for an internal review within 40 working days of the date of this response. Requests for an internal review should be addressed to the Welsh Government's Freedom of Information Officer at:

Information Rights Unit,
Welsh Government,
Cathays Park,

Cardiff,
CF10 3NQ

or Email: Freedom.ofinformation@gov.wales

Please remember to quote the ATISN reference number above.

You also have the right to complain to the Information Commissioner. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office,
Wycliffe House,
Water Lane,
Wilmslow,
Cheshire,
SK9 5AF.

However, please note that the Commissioner will not normally investigate a complaint until it has been through our own internal review process.

Yours sincerely