

Response to Environment Committee Consultation:

The Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Bill General Principles

August 2014

Introduction

Chwarae Teg exists to deliver our vision of a Wales where women achieve and prosper. We do this by working with women to broaden horizons and build confidence and skills; working with employers to create modern workplaces that are successful by harnessing everyone's contribution; and working with influencers, educators and decision makers to build a society that values, supports and benefits women and men equally.

Embedding sustainable development into policy making and public services is an important move and Chwarae Teg welcomes the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Bill ("the Bill") as a method to do this. We are pleased to respond to this consultation and address the questions listed in the Terms of Reference in our detailed response below.

Key points

1. Sustainable Development has 3 aspects: economy, society and environment. All 3 must be viewed and treated equally in the implementation of the Bill and should be reflected in the National Indicators.
2. Women remain notably under-represented in decision making in Wales. It is important that Public Services Boards are gender balanced (50% women) so that they better represent the communities they serve.
3. Robust data is key to shaping and assessing work undertaken to achieve the well-being goals. This data must be gender disaggregated to ensure that the different impact of the Bill on men and women is taken into account and neither is unfairly disadvantaged by the implementation of the Duty.

1. How the Welsh Government should legislate to put sustainability and sustainable development at the heart of government and the wider public sector

- 1.1. Placing statutory duties on Government and public bodies has been successful in embedding action to tackle issues such as inequality. This suggests that a similar approach to embedding sustainable development could also be successful.
- 1.2. It's important that as the Bill progresses best practice is learnt from previous exercises, like the introduction of the Public Sector Equality Duties, to ensure the new duty is implemented smoothly and effectively.

2. The general principles of the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Bill and the need for legislation in the following areas:

2.1. The “common aim” and “sustainable development principle” established in the Bill and the “public bodies” specified

- 2.1.1. Chwarae Teg works to achieve our vision of a Wales where women achieve and prosper. Legislating to ensure public bodies are working to “improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of Wales” could play a vital role in achieving this vision.
- 2.1.2. To affect significant, lasting change, sustainability must be put at the heart of public services and policy making so we welcome the establishment of the sustainable development principle.
- 2.1.3. The governance principles listed in the Explanatory Memorandum should help public bodies in applying the principle but will need to be accompanied by appropriate support, guidance and training to ensure these are embedded across the organisation.
- 2.1.4. We believe that public bodies specified are the correct bodies to be covered by these duties and **would also support steps to encourage organisations not bound by the duty to adopt sustainable development principles. Procurement could be used to achieve this in part but good practice should also be promoted.**

2.2. The approach to improving well-being, including setting of well-being goals, establishment of objectives by public bodies and the duties imposed on public bodies

- 2.2.1. The well-being goals set out in the Bill provide a strategic vision which can help guide the work of public bodies to build a sustainable Wales. We believe that these are the right goals, which are inextricably linked to one another. To meet the goals this link must be understood so that an integrated approach can be taken. **It is also important that all goals are given equal footing to ensure that the 3 dimensions of sustainable development are addressed.**
- 2.2.2. The framework that the well-being goals provide will help to provide a focus for public bodies when setting their objectives. However, **more detail about what these goals look like “on the ground” and for different groups is needed. This information was collected as part of**

the National Conversation engagement event and it's important that this continues to inform the Bill as it moves forward and the work of the Commissioner once in post.

2.2.3. The action required by public bodies needs to be based on comprehensive, reliable data. Current issues with data, such as no disaggregation by protected characteristic, need to be addressed to ensure that assessments and objectives are made with an accurate picture of local need.

2.3. The approach to measuring progress towards achieving well-being goals and reporting on progress

2.3.1. The interim report following the National Conversation stated that respondents believe a clear set of measures are required if we are to accurately track progress against the well-being goals.

2.3.2. **National indicators set by Welsh Ministers are welcome but should follow further consultation and engagement to determine what progress against these goals looks like to the people of Wales.**

2.3.3. The Memorandum states that data will be disaggregated to a local level. It is also important that it is disaggregated by group. Progress against the goals must be achieved for all members of society. For example the changes required to make Wales a more equal nation for women will differ from those needed to address inequality for men. **This can only be assessed accurately if gender disaggregated data is collected.**

2.4. The establishment of a Future Generations Commissioner for Wales, the Commissioner's role, powers, responsibility, governance and accountability

2.4.1. The Future Generations Commissioner should help ease the implementation of the new duties and become an important source of support and guidance to public bodies.

2.4.2. The **Commissioner's Report** will be an important document which should guide the work of WG and public bodies across Wales. As such, it **should be prepared through wide ranging engagement and consultation.** The Third Sector is well placed to support the Commissioner to engage with different groups, especially those traditionally harder to reach. Chwarae Teg would be happy to assist in the future to provide a gender perspective to the Commissioner and their work.

2.4.3. The **Commissioners Advisory Panel** should consist of expertise across all of the well-being goals. Currently the goals "a more equal Wales" and a "more prosperous Wales" do not appear adequately represented on the advisory group. **Therefore the core membership should be expanded to include a member with expertise in the economy and another with expertise in equalities.**

2.4.4. Both the post of Commissioner and additional members to the panel will be appointed through the public appointments system. Work has been undertaken in recent years to address the under-representation of women in public life. We welcome continued action to support women directly and to ensure that the application process is gender neutral. **We hope to see work in this area continue to ensure that positions such as those created by this Bill are equally accessible to women.**

2.5. The establishment of statutory Public Services Boards, assessments of local well-being and development/ implementation of local well-being plans

- 2.5.1. We welcome moves to place integrated community planning on a statutory basis and the role that the Public Services Boards (PSB) will play in ensuring that an effective, joined up approach is taken to placing sustainability at the centre of public services and policy making at a local as well as national level.
- 2.5.2. The inclusion of the third sector as an invited participant is also a welcome move as these organisations are often best placed to feed in the views and experiences of the community and protected groups. While the County Voluntary Council will bring valuable insight to the PSB we would suggest that **the group would also gain from considering the role that other third sector organisations could play in representing the views and experiences of protected groups.**
- 2.5.3. Women remain notably under-represented in public life in Wales and as a result policies and decision making is not being informed by the knowledge and experience of women. **We recommend that efforts be made to ensure that all PSBs are gender balanced.**
- 2.5.4. A key role of the PSB will be the preparation of the assessment of local well-being, which aims to provide a “detailed understanding of the inequalities between different groups in the population”. **Preparation of this assessment should therefore follow robust consultation which engages with all protected groups, especially those that are harder to reach.** This will ensure the assessment provides the comprehensive evidence base needed to inform the work of the PSB and the local public bodies.
- 2.5.5. It’s also important that lessons are learnt from the roll out of Equality Impact Assessments so that issues around consistency and insufficient data can be avoided.
- 2.5.6. Under current plans the PSB will establish their own performance management systems. Echoing our earlier point about the need for a clear set of measures to assess progress, it’s important that performance measures set by PSBs are consistent across Wales and informed by the National Indicators.

3. How effectively the Bill addresses Welsh international obligations in relation to Sustainable Development

- 3.1. Rio+2020 commits States to “ensure the promotion of an economically, socially and environmentally sustainable future for our planet and for present and future generations.” The Bill aims to embed this commitment across all public bodies in Wales and is a welcome move.
- 3.2. “The Future we Want” produced following Rio+2020 highlights the importance of pursuing gender equality and women’s empowerment as part of sustainable development. It also states the need to achieve sustainable development by promoting “sustained, inclusive growth”, reducing inequalities and creating greater opportunities for all. If the Bill is to achieve this **it is important that the different ways that men and women interact with the environment, the labour market and other public services is taken into account.**

- 3.3. For example, women are more likely to rely on public transport, make use of public services and be responsible for the environmental duties of the household, such as recycling.
- 3.4. Women also continue to work below their potential in low paid, part time work and face a range of barriers to entering and progressing in the workplace. Wales cannot be more equal or more prosperous unless women are able to make a full contribution to the economy and to society. **Therefore action to help women achieve and prosper should be a key element of work to achieve the well-being goals set out in the Bill.**

4. Any potential barriers to the implementation of these provisions and whether the Bill takes account of them

- 4.1. The well-being goals as set out in the Bill, if achieved, could have a significant impact on Wales socially, economically and environmentally, but will only be achieved if all public bodies give the new duties the same level of priority. Therefore **ensuring consistency in the applications of the duty across Local Authority areas must be a priority.**
- 4.2. Decreasing budgets could also act as a barrier. The duties within the Bill will require quite a large amount of work, especially from Local Authorities. Some may find it difficult to achieve what is required without additional resources.
- 4.3. **The potential impact of the Williams Commission Report should also be considered.** While the outcome of this report is not yet clear, it will affect the implementation of this Bill and should therefore be considered as the legislation moves forward.
- 4.4. The quality of data available may also act as a barrier. To effectively assess well-being and track progress a robust evidence base is vital. **The data used to inform public bodies and PSBs must be comprehensive and disaggregated by protected characteristics.**

5. Whether there are any unintended consequences arising from the Bill

- 5.1. As outlined above women interact with the labour market, environment and society differently to men and as a result will be affected differently by this Bill. The action required to achieve the Well-Being Goals for men and women will also differ as a result.
- 5.2. These differences must inform the progress of the Bill and the development of National Indicators. It is also vital that public bodies and Public Services Boards carry out robust equality impact assessments as they develop well-being plans and objectives to ensure that all members of the community benefit from the implementation of the Bill.

Conclusion

Chwarae Teg welcomes this Bill as part of Welsh Government's continued commitment to embedding sustainable development into public bodies and policy making. It is vital that as the Bill progresses WG continue to consult and engage with people across Welsh society to ensure it delivers for everyone.

It is vital that the 3 aspects of sustainable development; society, economy and environment, are given equal standing and that the different impact the Bill could have on men and women is considered throughout the legislative process. If this

happens the Bill could play a central part in building a Wales where women can achieve and prosper.

Recommendations

We recommend that:

1. Bodies not bound by the duty should be supported to adopt sustainable development principles and the role of procurement in delivering this should be investigated.
2. National Indicators should be set following further consultation and engagement to determine what progress against these goals look like to the people of Wales.
3. Data collected to inform objectives and well-being plans and to assess progress against the well-being goals must be disaggregated by gender.
4. The core membership of the Commissioner's Advisory Panel should be expanded to include a member with expertise in the economy and another with expertise in equalities.
5. Public appointments to the post of Commissioner and to the Advisory Panel should be carried out in a gender neutral way.
6. All efforts should be made to ensure that Public Services Boards are gender balanced.
7. The inclusion of third sector organisations other than CVCs in Public Services Boards should be considered to ensure a diverse and wide range of views and expertise can guide the work of the Board.
8. Consultation and engagement, especially with hard to reach groups, should be a key part of work to compile an assessment of local well-being.

Chwarae Teg would be happy to discuss any of the above in more detail. Please contact:

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