

National Assembly for Wales
Environment and Sustainability Committee
WFG 62
Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Bill
Response from Climate Change Commission for Wales



4 September 2014

Dear Chair

Consultation: Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Bill

The Climate Change Commission for Wales welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Committee's inquiry on this Bill; our key message is the need to emphasise the **importance of strengthening specific references to climate change measures** within the Bill in order to drive our emission reduction and adaptation performance.

The Climate Change Commission for Wales has already written to the Minister (in May) to outline its support to the Committee on Climate Change's [recommendation](#) that '**setting a statutory underpinning to Wales' climate change targets** could help to provide certainty to policy-makers, businesses, investors, and the wider society in Wales and strengthen incentives to reduce emissions'.

We also believe that it is imperative that the structure of the Bill, in particular the goals, measures and principles, **set the framework for tackling climate change across the public sector**. Climate change should be included within the measures of progress in the Bill, extending this requirement to a duty on Public Service Boards to set targets in line with accepted global requirements.

As the Interim Report from the pilot National Conversation on the 'Wales we Want' (July 2014) identifies, when people were asked to list potentially critical issues for the future of Wales, five themes stood out with climate change and the natural environment receiving the most votes (69.5%).

A more detailed response on the issues identified within your "terms of reference" will be shared with the Committee during my evidence session on the 25th of September, and this will be informed by a discussion with the Commission members on the previous day. However some key points that we'd like to highlight are as follows:

Goals & Measuring progress:

Within the current Well-being goals there is no specific reference to climate change and no recognition of the 'global systems' perspective, our international impacts or responsibilities, or 'environmental limits'.

In terms of measures for climate change, indicators would need to cover territorial emissions, adaptation and carbon footprinting¹. For the measure of Wales' carbon footprint regular ecological footprint research needs to be undertaken. Welsh Government is yet to publish the most recent research undertaken on this.

Currently Wales is the only UK devolved nation not to have or be seriously considering statutory climate change targets. Using legislation to push environmental action has already proven successful in Wales and we feel that a stronger approach should be called for to deliver climate change action.

These targets should be supported with a package of measures, such as:

- Developing an action plan every 5 years to achieve these targets
- A requirement for an emission impact assessment on large scale infrastructure and strategies
- A duty on the public sector to contribute to these targets
- Measuring the emissions impact of annual budgets

A mixture of amended goals, targets within the Bill and activation of Welsh specific duties under the Climate Change Act could provide a package of legislative measures to help accelerate action in Wales. We would be happy to advise further of how these could be integrated into the current proposals for the Wellbeing of Future Generations Bill.

Role of Future Generations Commissioner for Wales

The remit and responsibilities of the Future Generations Commissioner should include climate change and ongoing support for the Climate Change Commission. We also feel that there is a need to include a duty for Welsh Government and/or the Future Generations Commissioner to set targets for the Welsh Government and public sectors to report on climate change mitigation and adaptation.

The Welsh Government is currently undertaking a 'Refresh' of its Climate Change policy – a statement is expected in the autumn by the new Minister and this provides a significant opportunity to demonstrate continued leadership on climate change. The Commission would urge the Refresh to go beyond a high level statement of intention and consider a commitment to statutory targets in the forthcoming legislation. Without this commitment to deliver on its political ambition, Wales is in real danger of falling behind other nations in the UK and Europe.

¹ The carbon footprint refers to emissions that are associated with the consumption spending of UK residents on goods and services, wherever in the world these emissions arise along the supply chain, and those which are directly generated by UK households through private motoring etc. These emissions are often referred to as "consumption emissions" to distinguish them from estimates relating to the emissions „produced“ within a country's territory or economic sphere. To find out what effect UK consumption has on GHG emissions we need to take into account where the goods we buy come from and their associated supply chains.

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Yours sincerely



Peter Davies
Chair, Climate Change Commission for Wales

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