

The Senedd's Public Accounts Committee inquiry:

Barriers to the successful Implementation of the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

Powys County Council response:

1. Awareness and understanding of the Act and its implications.

With all the current pressures and financial pressures, organisations aren't really considering what Wales will look like in the future, as they are often focussed on the here and now. It is often difficult to change this culture. We have found that awareness of the Act is visible at senior levels across the council, but it's more difficult to get lower level staff to connect the Act with their day job and for them to understand the bigger picture. While this Act is significant, it is often only a small part of the jigsaw with so many other acts which public bodies are expected to comply with and implement. In local government for example, different services will have differing priorities, and it often falls to the corporate centre to try and drive such cross-cutting principles, that are laid out in the WCFG Act.

2. The resources available to public bodies to implement the Act and how effectively they have been deployed.

Very little dedicated resource is available, and the expectation is for organisations to implement the requirements of the Act as part of their current responsibilities. While this is acceptable in principle i.e. that the Act should be embedded into existing processes and practices, often greater effort and resources are required at the start to help with the embedding process.

From a Public Service Board perspective, resources are often raised as an issue and barrier at meetings. Similarly, the resource for coordinating PSB's activities often falls with Local Authorities, which sometimes results in dis-engagement rather than engagement from some partners, as LA's are seen as the leaders.

3. Support provided to public bodies by the Future Generations Commissioner.

There seems to be an expectation that there will be a dedicated adoption by local authorities but with no funding or appropriate tools provided. We need focused recommendations, and it would be beneficial to have conversations with someone from the FG office about 'what it looks like' to us.

299 recommendations from the FG Commissioners Report is unmanageable. The Future Generations Report 2020 report says the same thing in different ways, multiple times. Would it have been easier to have consolidated a few? It seemed a bit repetitive and unapproachable. It's hard to encourage people to embrace this way of thinking, when providing such massive reports.

They are encouraging an integrated and holistic way of working in order to embed the FG act but in reality it is being presented as a larger standalone task.

As a local authority we are rarely contacted by a member of the FG Commissioners office and feel it would be beneficial to have a dedicated person that we could call upon for advice and assistance. Also, an offer from the FG Office to attend PSB meetings or council meetings would also be beneficial in our view.

As a council we do share the Frameworks that the FG Commissioners office have produced and have found these useful. But often, our officers don't want to be bombarded with additional frameworks

and guidance and therefore we have to consider ways of integrating the principles into our own existing frameworks and policies.

The Journey checkers are also a valuable tool, but sometimes officers feel we are drowning them with resources and research papers.

4. The leadership role of the Welsh Government.

WG need to link together Acts and frameworks to aid public organisations, rather than expecting us to continuously join the dots at a lower level. For example, one of the 7 Well-being goals is a more equal Wales and the EHRC have repeatedly recommended that WG join up the pieces of legislation, especially with the introduction of the Socio-Economic Duty.

The requirements of different acts often place the same planning and reporting demands on public bodies (e.g. the FG Act and Local Gov Wales Measure), which can be frustrating. Why are they all needed – can't things be consolidated, as more often than not they're aiming for the same outcome.

The Future Generations Report 2020 report published 13th May requires public bodies to make procurement improvements however the majority of local authorities adhere to the WG framework. It would make sense to work together to drive improvement and positive change.

In some instances, the various statutory Boards (PSB's and RPB's) feel very overlapped and it could be questioned, what is the value of having separate boards for separate Acts? Conflicting demands like these can often result in a lack of genuine collaboration between organisations including stakeholder engagement.

5. Any other barriers to successful implementation of the Act (e.g. Brexit, COVID, etc.).

- People's mindsets e.g. Greta Thunberg [said](#) people do not think past their own old age; if she lives to be 100 years old, she will be alive in 2103.
- Historically embedded ways of working and difficulty of changing culture
- Champions are getting frustrated by the system due to the restrictions it imposed on them however because of the last 6 months of lockdown and having to change ways of working, people are more prepared to be more responsive because they have had more freedom and necessity to act.
- We are restricted by budgetary cycles; you can have the best vision in the world but without the resources to make it happen it's still just a vision.
- We are concerned about the unmanageable number of recommendations in the FG Report 2020.

6. How to ensure that the Act is implemented successfully in the future.

- A more joined up approach at WG level to ensure a more coordinated framework for legislative requirements which are outcome focussed.
- More realistic.
- A clearer focus on priorities (the logistics of condensing such a huge report and the vast number of recommendations is overwhelming especially when most organisations don't have an FG team).
- A dedicated pot of funding which would allow organisations across Wales to trial new ideas, which if successful, would be feasible to be rolled out across Wales.
- Currently the Act requires public bodies to set Well-being objectives that contribute to all 7 Well-being goals – could consideration be given to allowing more flexibility of local priorities?