

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

### **Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Authority's response.**

#### **Q1. Awareness and understanding of the Act and its implications.**

As an Authority, we believe we have a good awareness and understanding of the Act and its implications. We understand the purpose and aim of the Act and are committed to ensuring we consider the long-term impact of our decisions on the communities we serve.

We have continued to embrace the Act, and, as statutory members, we are represented across the six Public Services Boards (PSBs) within our Service area. Representation at PSB meetings includes the Chair or Vice-Chair of the Fire Authority accompanied by a Strategic Manager from Mid & West Wales Fire & Rescue Service (MWWFRS). Specialist Officers representing various sectors of MWWFRS also take an active role in the various sub-groups which have been put in place to develop and deliver the work of the PSB's. We also ensure that our Improvement and Well-being Objectives are developed in accordance with the sustainable development principle and incorporate the five ways of working.

Our integrated approach when setting our Well-Being Objectives is clearly evident in our current [Corporate Plan 2020-2025](#), which outlines how each of our Strategic Aims are aligned to the Act, the five ways of working and seven well-being goals. Furthermore, they have been incorporated into our planning cycle; our actions; and how we plan to meet our Improvement and Well-being Objectives, setting out a robust programme of activity to deliver on each Strategic Aim, as well as the Well-being Goals whilst recognising the short, medium and longer term needs of the communities we serve.

The Authority's internal policy and procedural development also pays cognisance to the Act, by giving due consideration to any positive or negative impacts, and how the policy or initiative supports the five ways of working and the Sustainable Development Principle.

Two recent reviews by Audit Wales, (formerly Wales Audit Office) which focussed on the themes of [Involvement](#) and [Partnership Working](#) in Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Authority, also demonstrates our commitment to the Sustainable Development Principle which is enshrined within the Act.

We are however of the opinion that, in terms of the general public, there does appear to be a general lack of awareness of the Act and its implications.

#### **Q2. The resources available to public bodies to implement the Act and how effectively they have been deployed.**

With the exception of limited revenue funding to support administration of PSB's there is no additional funding made available by WG to support the delivery of the Well-Being plans. This is in stark contrast to Regional Partnership Boards (RPB) where central funding is made available to support the development and delivery of RPB work.

### **Q3. Support provided to public bodies by the Future Generations Commissioner.**

The Commissioner has provided some tools and documentation to help support the improvements public bodies need to make in order to meet well-being objectives in accordance with the sustainable development principle, such as the Future Generations Report 2020, Journey on Involvement and feedback on our Self-Reflection tool which was submitted in 2019.

Overall, the communication and correspondence we have received as a public body from the Future Generations Commissioner (FGC) has been limited although we do recognise that the FGC does have a relatively small team. Representatives from the FGC's office have attended some PSB meetings however this is fairly sporadic in nature.

### **Q4. The leadership role of the Welsh Government.**

Welsh Government representatives do attend some PSB meetings, but this is not always consistent across all PSB's. We do believe that there could be a clearer leadership role undertaken by the Welsh Government in relation to the awareness and promotion of the Act. Similarly, there does appear to be a disconnect between Welsh Government and the Future Generations Commissioner. There also appears to be very little public references to the Act in terms of WG's work at Ministerial level during 'public announcements.

### **Q5. Any other barriers to successful implementation of the Act (e.g. Brexit, COVID, etc.).**

The number of strategic partnerships, some with competing remits, is a major issue for public sector organisations within Wales.

Similarly, the lack of hypothecated funding available to PSB's, in comparison to other strategic partnerships, has certainly reduced the effectiveness and speed of delivery of PSB Well Being plans. There is little evidence of pooled budgets to deliver Well-Being plans and as such organisations often operate independently without exploring opportunities for collaboration.

Whilst the full impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is yet to be realised there is a general expectation that public sector funding will be subject to further efficiencies. This, in addition to a decade of austerity, would clearly impact on the successful implementation of the Act.

We believe it to be too early to establish the impact from Brexit at the present time.

### **Q6. How to ensure that the Act is implemented successfully in the future.**

In order to ensure that the Act is implemented successfully in the future, and to progress the good work of the PSBs it is crucial that funding is made available. Access to available funding streams will enable for the pooling of knowledge and resources by working collaboratively across partner organisations to the benefit of our local communities and future generations, together with the ability to adopt 'one-off' financial support to ensure some initiatives get off the ground as part of embedding long terms goals for shaping and sustaining communities of the future..