



Public Accounts Committee Inquiry - 'Barriers to the successful Implementation of the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015'

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Submission by Constructing Excellence Wales

1. Awareness and understanding of the Act and its implications

1.1 Welsh construction and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (WFG Act) are intrinsically linked. The Act is all about providing a built environment fit for future generations – and who better to deliver it than the Welsh construction industry. Yet many in our sector do not appreciate that the new legislative climate requires us to change and adapt. Everyone involved in construction needs to understand how everything they do is connected to the WFG Act and achievement of the seven well-being goals outlined in the legislation. Through the building of homes, schools, hospitals and infrastructure, the industry has a huge impact on every aspect of people's lives. That means construction has no choice but to align itself with the objectives of the Act. If we are to play our part in making Wales a world-class economy with a sustainable built environment, it is our legal, moral and ethical duty to do it. Constructing Excellence Wales produced a document as a statement of intent [HERE](#). Published in association with the office of the Future Generations Commissioner (OFG), it was a first step, a line in the sand. CE Wales is the only organisation able to pull all elements of Welsh construction together to embrace and deliver the government's goals as defined by the Act. Following a series of workshops and a conference in January 2019, we began our journey towards Construction for Future Generations.

1.2 The Construction sector is well versed in the WFG Act and desires to deliver more but we need more public sector leadership not just in strategic terms but in actions. The Act names public sector bodies, and experience is showing tenders are still being issued without reference to the WFG Act, yet all public sector supply chains should be engaged in supporting achievement of the Act's Goals. We need enhanced collaboration, empowerment of officers to manage and procure construction services differently from the past to drive for enhanced social outcomes.

1.3 Public Service Boards and the 44 named organisations have developed Wellbeing Objectives but many of these are service orientated and not construction oriented and yet the sector is a significant part of the Welsh economy and has been driving value under the Community Benefits initiative for many years; this should be 'trumped' by delivery on the aims and ambitions of the Act. It could be argued that without the built estate, the public sector boards would be unable to deliver their services to their aspirations. To support development of a focus on the enhanced wellbeing that can be delivered by the Construction sector, CEWales aspires to develop a 'standard' that gives all parts of the sector supply chain, including all the named 44 bodies clarity on what it should be aiming to do and how to measure it. CEWales has an ambition (but no current funding) to develop a Construction Sector Wellbeing plan (the 'standard') in full alignment with the Act, drafted as if it was the 45th named body under the Act. All parts of the industry would be encouraged to sign up to and adopt this standard with recording of activity and outcomes championed using the CEWales FG Directory which will cover all types of construction projects and not just buildings hence the ultimate

desire to move away from RIBA terminology and the Welsh Toms. Of particular note is the need to look at the whole project lifecycle from the viewpoint of a fully circular construction economy that goes well beyond a traditional 'waste' focus.

1.4 PPW10 has the WBF Act embedded, but currently has no teeth in respect of planning consents (no default planning conditions) and aspects such as Building Regulations need to be updated to focus on driving better outcomes including and fundamentally in respect to Climate Change and associated net zero targets. BREEAM for buildings is used as an environmental standard but once a target has been set, then we only measure achievement of the target and not beneficial exceedance. The interest in Passivhaus design is emerging and this will deliver some carbon savings and supply chain shifts within the Construction sector in Wales. But on their own neither Passivhaus or BREEAM certified buildings really reflect the broadest aspects of the WFG Act

1.5 It is fundamental that business cases for construction schemes should incorporate the WFG Act at the Strategic Case as well as others. In essence, we need to put Social Outcomes at the forefront of business case consideration and not just financial measures. As an example, on highway schemes using the WelTAG process (additional attachment) the focus has been on money but also on achievement of Transport Planning Objectives eg quicker journey times or enhancement in journey time confidence. These need to sit alongside Wellbeing objectives and environmental objectives. Mott MacDonald has developed a Wellbeing Impact Evaluation (WELLIE) tool that integrate the legal requirements of the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act and the UN Sustainable Development Goals into a clear methodology within the WelTAG and 5-Case Business Case process.

1.6 – CEWales has conducted many workshops and awareness events for Local Authority staff, Higher Education and for those in NHS Wales / Share Services. Example of past events can be previewed below:

- <https://www.cewales.org.uk/events/2016/building-future-delivering-wales-we-want/>
- <https://www.cewales.org.uk/events/details/8C8F3100-CF4B-B9B9-5930-580061A71178/> - north Wales
- <https://www.cewales.org.uk/events/details/801BED44-4B80-5A66-3164-E4C0CA021EDA/> - Cardiff
- <https://www.cewales.org.uk/events/details/F2993E3E-FC75-2A65-3340-6299062B95B2/> - G4C
- <https://www.cewales.org.uk/events/details/F1BAF2E2-1518-8F49-E23E-9CBD7FFF5D5/>
- <https://www.cewales.org.uk/events/details/354E782A-C17E-2715-BBA7-5F3D19935F59/>

CEWales is planning an event at the beginning of 2021 and would like to continue acting as a representative for the multi-disciplinary construction section which aligns with the ways of working set out in the Act.

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

2.1 In absence of the lack of resources to support delivery of the WFG Act, CEWales has taken the lead in developing the Future Generations Directory for the construction sector - Guide to the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 RIBA Directory, more information can be found [HERE](#). We are looking forward to implementing the Directory first in the 21st Century Schools programme, rolling out to other building schemes e.g. Design for Life and then to infrastructure and housing, if indeed funding is secured to support the delivery?

2.2 Purpose of the directory:

There are clear links between the key drivers of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and 21st Century Schools programme in terms of focussing on sustainability for future generations. However, until now it has been difficult to demonstrate how this programme is delivering on the aspirations of this important piece of legislation. A new Directory has been developed by CEW based on the RIBA stages and plan of work¹ which is a framework for construction projects. It has been piloted by the Vale of Glamorgan council, and other authorities, on 21st century schools' schemes. The Future Generations Directory aims to support construction projects to evidence their contribution towards the Well-being of Future Generations Act by mapping activities undertaken at each RIBA stage against each of the seven well-being goals. It can be particularly useful for clients in tendering and auditing processes. The Directory is designed to catalogue work already taking place which supports the aspirations of the Act. For example, achieving BREEAM Excellent standard and delivering community benefits encourage more holistic approaches to developing schools and enable the wider community to benefit from public investment.

2.3 For CEW to be able to proactively promote, coordinate and monitor public bodies to use the Directory on all major construction projects, a dedicated resource is necessary; short term funding has been secured to support this resource but to ensure implementation by the wider construction industry, further funding will need to be sourced. In order to get this project initiated, the Consortium of Local Authorities Wales (CLAW) is also supporting the project. CEW is currently distributing and marketing the directory, holding regional working group sessions, every 6 months for feedback and amendments, logging and tracking the use of the directory, providing 3 monthly updates on use/issues, providing a point of contact to offer advice, developing the directory to be an online tool and investigating the route/timescales required to move to a pan Wales standard.

2.4 CEWales would welcome an opportunity to present the Directory and how to use it and it's use further.

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

3.1 CEWales fed in extensive commentary to the WBF Act for incorporation into the FG 2020 report. There continues to be active discussions on how the FGO and CEWales can collaborate to mainstream some of the ideas generated to get them into common parlance and working practices. Financial support is needed for this valuable collaboration to move this forward quicker and keep momentum.

4. The leadership role of the Welsh Government.

4.1 As per the Welsh Government OECD report and the wider Welsh public sector, there is sufficient capacity to develop policy and strategy but limited capability in action delivery. CEWales is keen to act as an Action Partner in respect of driving achievement of the aims and ambitions of the WBF Act in the construction sector. CEW is uniquely placed to represent all professions in the construction sector from designers, manufactures, installers and operators.

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

5.1 It is imperative to focus on a true green recovery but one which is also focused on social outcomes; however, they must be real. In essence this focusses on the need to

¹ The RIBA Plan of Work organises the process of briefing, designing, delivering, maintaining, operating and using a building into eight stages - <https://www.architecture.com/-/media/GatherContent/Test-resources-page/Additional-Documents/2020RIBAPlanofWorktemplatepdf.pdf>

develop and deliver schemes that are Shovel Worthy and not just Shovel Ready. There is also a need to present a coherent and inspirational focus on asset modernisation (much of our housing stock, for example, is not fit for 21st Century when we consider energy use and hence carbon output). DfMA and MCC are key construction processes that have the ability to enhance social outcomes and respond to the climate emergency. These approaches need to be mainstreamed and the sector capacity to design and construct this way needs to be significantly enhanced. This requires collaboration with the manufacturing sector and links back to R&D and the skills agenda where new skills will be required.

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

6.1 See note on CEWales' Construction Sector Wellbeing Plan (Standard) in section 1.3

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