



Dear Chair and members of the Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee,

**Re: Additional Information requested by the committee**

Please see further information in answer to the questions provided:

1. The five areas you believe the Welsh Government should prioritise and demonstrate more leadership on?

It is my view that Welsh Government needs to focus particularly on the five ways of working (the Sustainable Development principle set out in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015) and demonstrate throughout their policies and actions that:

- they are understanding and planning for the long-term rather than short-term budget or political cycles
- that there is a shift to prevention across a range of areas but most significantly within health and social care
- that policy-making is integrated across government and that it is developed collaboratively with partners recognising the different perspectives and expertise that can be brought from a broad range of public private and third sector partners
- and that they are doing more to understand the perspective of citizens - how policies work for them and how new policies can be formed in a way which responds to what people want and need and what will work for them.

In terms of specific policy areas, I am in the process of identifying through involvement and collaboration the main challenges and issues facing future generations in Wales. Once we have identified the issues which have most impact on future generations, we will analyse the opportunities to best address them in Wales and this will inform directly how I focus my resources and concentrate my work. Given the breadth of my remit it is important that I undertake a robust process in setting out the areas which I think pose the biggest challenges for Future Generations (which will also undoubtedly be areas within which the Welsh Government would be expected to demonstrate leadership). I have set out four areas which I think represent the biggest challenges for Future Generations and am seeking views about these. The conversation on these challenges can be found [here](#)

2. When you intend to publish the framework for Public Service Boards?

The framework referred to in the committee session is in relation to our work with New Economics Foundation to develop a framework that we have used to inform our work on the M4 and to define how the Act can be best applied in public bodies' decision taking. We are continuing to test and develop this framework to explore how it could be adapted for other uses. We are in the process of testing this framework against other areas before publishing formally.

The focus of our work with Public Services Boards has been on reviewing their well-being assessments. It has been a major undertaking to review all 19 assessments, to different deadlines. We have placed great importance on providing a robust and timely commentary to each of them in order to inform, challenge and support the work

of the PSBs, as they begin setting their local well-being objectives and setting out the steps they will take to meet them.

We have currently reviewed and provided feedback on two thirds of the PSB assessments. Once we have completed this exercise we will produce a summary report to draw out the key themes and disseminate the shared learning. We will also work with Cardiff University to hold a shared learning event which is likely to be in either May or June 2017.

2. Which Public Service Board is undertaking the estates mapping exercise?

Cwm Taf Public Services Board is undertaking the estates mapping exercise

4. To what extent will you engage with local planning decisions and in particular any Local Development Plans which you believe could be contrary to the sustainable development principle?

I am in the process of defining the priorities for my work. Planning and LDPs might or might not be among the priorities which will emerge through the wide conversation exercise I am undertaking. However, it is important to recognise that there are over 25,000 planning applications in Wales each year with on average 700 of those being large or strategically significant applications. Unlike other Commissioners, I do not have express statutory powers to instigate or undertake case work. I do not have express enforcement powers and the legislation does not provide for my office to be an extra layer to appeal to generally as well as within the planning context.

I cannot ask authorities to change decisions already made and my power to conduct reviews is designed to provide insight to me so that I can help public bodies to improve how they take into account the long-term impact of the things they do as explained in the statutory guidance.

Finally, I have also to be mindful of the very limited resources I have and of the breadth of my remit.

With this in mind, I have determined that my involvement is most effective at the strategic level, in particular working with the Welsh Government to consider how best we can support them as they design LDP guidance and the National Development Framework to ensure that they fully take into account the requirements of the Act and drive the radical change in the culture that is required in local authorities' approach to their planning decisions. We have met with the Welsh Government planning division to discuss this approach and we are encouraged by their commitment to include the Act fully in their work. We will also meet shortly with the Planning Inspectorate to discuss our respective roles.

5. What actions do you feel need to be taken to move towards a more preventative way of working, in particular in relation to those sectors for whom this is a specific challenge, such as the health and social care sector?

There are some significant challenges in the health and social care sector in meeting the requirements of the Act. The current planning process, which is based around the three-year Integrated Medium Term Plans, does not support the long-term planning requirements of the Act. It also poses some issues in rising to the challenge of prevention which, not always, but very often needs longer-term planning and investment. The myriad of performance indicators, strategies and plans which health boards are required to address also presents significant challenges in terms of being able to focus on key areas for improvement in line with the ways of working in the Act.

I have held a range of discussions, particularly on prevention, with those involved in driving change in the NHS including the Bevan Commission, Public Health Wales, the NHS Confederation and Chairs and Chief Executives of each of the Health Boards. I am supporting the work of the Bevan Commission through a one year partnership post specifically around involving people and patients in service re-design and reform through their 'Bevan Advocates' Programme. I am also partnering with Public Health Wales on the development of policy and practice to tackle Adverse Childhood Experiences

From April onwards a member of my staff will be working with a range of partners to develop an explanation of what good could look like in respect of meeting the goal of a healthier Wales. This will include a focus on all the ways of working but particularly focusing on prevention.

In the meantime, having engaged with a number of organisations and reviewed the evidence base on social prescribing, I believe I that there could be substantial gains to the NHS and to wider Well-being (which could address a number of the Well-being goals) through the adoption of a social prescribing model. My office has been working with the Welsh Government Primary Care lead who is developing a model and I have recently written to the Cabinet Secretary to request a meeting to discuss the Government's position in adopting the model in the next NHS strategy.

You have also requested information on:

1. Are you involved in the development of the Welsh Government's four crosscutting strategies and have you made any assessment as to whether they are being developed in line with the sustainable development principles?

We have been in regular contact with the Welsh Government and are awaiting more information on the process they are going through to write the strategies and how we can best contribute to this work. We have noted that the earlier we are involved in the process, the more likely it is that our challenge can be used constructively. We have been invited by the Welsh Government to attend a 'roundtable discussion with the Welsh Commissioners and associated policy colleagues' due to take place in April 2017.

We are also keen to explore how the Welsh Government intends to meaningfully involve stakeholders and the wider public in the shaping of the strategies and the ongoing development and delivery of the actions set out within them. One area we have recently been updated on is their initial planning for engagement.

2. Have you received any feedback from public bodies, Public Services Boards or community councils on the usefulness of the statutory guidance in helping them fulfil their obligations under the Act?

Ultimately the Act is designed to support better quality decision-making in the public sector, to focus the collective efforts of public bodies on improving the well-being of the current generations, whilst safeguarding the ability of future generations to meet their needs. The core guidance is generally well-regarded and viewed as clearly explaining the purpose and intention of the Act, whilst avoiding detailed prescription.

However, the continuing requirement in the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 for local authorities to set Improvement Objectives has caused confusion in relation to the requirement in the Well-being of Future Generations Act for public bodies, including local authorities, to set well-being objectives. There are similar complications in relation to reporting progress. The guidance for public bodies does not offer much help to public bodies on these issues. Similar issues have occurred in relation to the NHS performance management framework and reporting.

My Office has worked with officials from the Welsh Government, WLGA, NHS Confederation and WAO to draft additional advice that has been sent out to local authorities and NHS bodies. My Office will be discussing with the Welsh Government how this additional advice should feature in any future revisions of the statutory guidance.

2. How are public bodies progressing in developing their well-being objectives?

I was asked to support the formation of a network of national public bodies subject to the Act because no 'national body' network existed (whereas there are for example many local government or health networks). My office has facilitated this network of the national bodies (including for example Velindre NHS Trust; Public Health Wales; Arts Council; Sport Wales; Natural Resources Wales) coming together on two occasions to date with the main objective of shared learning and a focus on setting well-being objectives by the end of March 2017.

The second meeting in December 2016 was focused on how well the public bodies are using the five ways of working (set out in the Act) to set their well-being objectives and challenge business as usual, how they are/can work with the Public Service Boards and how well they are driving integration with their corporate planning processes. Each workshop has included insight from the public bodies on their experiences and issues to date and discussion. The organisations that have shared their experiences so far (National Resources Wales and Public Health Wales) have identified a tension as to what level to focus their objectives – whether they are “organisational focused” i.e. quite close to what the organisation does or “outcome focused” i.e. more aspirational and visionary.

Local authorities have signalled that they are facing difficulties in the timing of the local government elections and the timing of setting their well-being objectives. There is also a perceived risk of a potential lack of continuity after the appointment of a new administration which has impacted on some, if not all local authorities.

Aside from Welsh Government, the Well-being of Future Generations Act requires public bodies to publish their initial set of Well-being Objectives no later than 31st March 2017. Some authorities have already indicated that they will be publishing a Corporate Plan by the end of March 2017 which includes their well-being objectives. As Local Government elections fall after this date there is a possibility that local authorities may review their well-being objectives following these elections, as they draft their new Corporate Plans. Authorities may then wish to re-consider their well-being objectives following the local government elections, as per the Well-being of Future Generations (see Section 9 (5) and (6) '(5) A public body may at any other time review and revise its well-being objectives...Where a public body revises its well-being objectives...it must publish them as soon as is reasonably practicable..'). With any review of well-being objectives, a local authority must have acted in accordance with the sustainable development principle and applied the five ways of working.

4. How are Public Services Boards progressing in: 1) undertaking their wellbeing assessments; 2) setting well-being objectives; and 3) developing local well-being plans?

We are in the process of responding to all PSB well-being assessments in partnership with Cardiff University. The assessments seen so far (14 to date) are mixed in terms of approach, format and intention of usage. We are providing robust and detailed feedback to each PSB, focusing on how they can build on their work to date to improve their evidence base and to apply the five ways of working to the approach they take to well-being planning. As part of our commitment to involvement we are seeking views of other stakeholders representing interests across the well-being goals which will be reflected in an overview report on gaps and areas for learning for the PSBs.

In preparing a well-being plan, PSBs "must seek the advice of the Commissioner on how to take steps to meet the local objectives to be included in the plan in accordance with the sustainable development principle". We are currently engaging with PSBs and other partners on the most effective approach to doing this.

5. In addition to the police service, have any other organisations which are not "public bodies" expressed an interest in applying the principles of the Act?

A wide range of organisations are in contact with us to learn more about the Act. This includes: UK bodies such as the Equalities and Human Rights Commission, the National Offender Management Service; large enterprise such as Dwr Cymru and Boots the Chemist; think tanks and research groups; academic institutions; third sector organisations and umbrella groups. We are keen to work with all those who can affect change, so that change can happen and resources used to their fullest effect. Within Wales, the Welsh Ambulance Trust is not listed amongst the 44 public bodies in the Act, however they state that:

"We are becoming increasingly outward facing and are committed to working with partners to deliver a Welsh public service that we can all be proud of, can rely on and that continues to meet the evolving needs of our population. In this respect, we will be focusing on how we can play an integral role in delivering the ambitions set out by the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act and looking at new and innovative ways of playing our part in the wider health and well-being system"[1].

---

[1] Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust Annual Report 2015/16, page 35

Bangor University has also committed to becoming known world-wide as the Sustainable University. Although universities are not included in the Act, the leadership of the university has decided to adopt the framework of the Act as a way of embedding sustainability in all aspects of the university's work as an institution.

I am encouraged by the breadth and level of commitment shown by those bodies not covered by the Act and I am keen to draw in their knowledge and expertise as part of my commitment to supporting and challenging public bodies.

6. Could you provide further information on the "Embedding Children's Rights for Future Generations" programme of work with the Children's Commissioner?

Following the five ways of working, the Children's Commissioner for Wales and the Future Generations Commissioner have set up a joint programme to support public bodies embed the UNCRC in their delivery of the Well-being of Future Generations Act. The Well-being of Future Generations Act upholds the spirit of the UNCR Convention and brings a fresh impetus to building prosperous, resilient and inclusive societies.

#### Programme Aims:

Children and young people should remain prominent and visible throughout the Well-being of Future Generations work. Visibility should manifest itself in a number of ways, including being involved in planning and decision-making and the needs of the child population being given prominence in plans, budget and services. The programme, therefore, intends to:

1. Develop a clear statement about embedding a children's rights approach and an explanation of how it fits with the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act, and other legislative requirements such as the Equalities Act 2010;
2. Establish a baseline for take-up of adoption of the UNCRC in public services;
3. Work with public service boards to ensure that consideration of children's rights is central to their agenda as they develop their first plans;
4. Develop a web-based resource for public bodies, including PSBs, with exemplars of how public bodies have started to engage and apply the principles of the UNCRC;
5. Develop an evidence base on the benefits of a rights-based approach – focusing on effective use of resources, outcomes and cost-benefits;
6. Engage and listen to public bodies about their achievements and challenges in adopting a child rights based approach.

The programme aims to help public bodies prevent duplication and inconsistency in what is required of them in respect of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Well-being of Future Generations Act. Some practical tools will be developed to help public bodies think about how they embed children's rights and the Well-being of Future Generations Act in their work.

Meetings were held with public bodies to introduce the programme and to discuss how their work in relation to children can relate to the requirements contained in the Well-being of Future Generations Act. A Children Rights Roundtable Network also met twice to discuss this. A resource to support public bodies and PSBs to embed a

children's rights approach in their corporate governance functions and across the requirements of the Future Generations Act is being prepared. This will be accompanied by a children's rights self-assessment tool to capture good practice and support public bodies and PSBs to take appropriate action for further implementation of children's rights in their Future Generations work. This will act a diagnostic mechanism. Both are expected to be published in the summer 2017.

7. Given that the Commissioner's office has a duty to advise on climate change, for details of the work they have conducted to date in this area with public bodies, PSBs and Welsh Government.

Climate Change has been identified as one of the four main challenges facing future generations in Wales in the first phase of our conversation on my Office's priorities. I am therefore defining, in collaboration with and by involving a wide range of people, my priority areas for action which will be published in the summer.

My work on climate change so far includes raising awareness of climate change as a key issue and a challenge for future generations in keynote speeches at events (over 100 events to date), meetings with key decision makers and stakeholders. I have met with Matthew Bell, Chief Executive of UK Committee on Climate Change and I also gave a presentation to full Committee during their visit to Cardiff (8 July 2016). I have written to each of the public bodies to bring the Climate Change Risk Assessment Report to their attention and to advise them of the need to include this evidence as part of their Well-being assessments and I am reviewing how well this has been done through my analysis of their assessments and providing detailed feedback on this and a range of issues.

I have partnered with Constructing Excellence Wales to provide support through focused events with the construction industry and I have held several discussions with key stakeholders/partners such as Natural Resources Wales, World Wildlife Federation and others, to explore opportunities for collaboration e.g. advice provided to PSBs on climate change;

Over the last six months my office has had a number of discussions with the National Assembly staff who are leading the Assembly's work on climate change. We have attended two stakeholder events (one on climate change and one on the Inquiry into the future of Agriculture and Rural policy in Wales), and have fed into the development of the CCERA Climate Change Reference Group. Although my office will not be a member of this group, we will be invited to attend and provide updates to the group to avoid any duplication of effort.

Finally, I have been working with the Welsh Government Decarbonisation team to test how the five ways of working can be a key part of their Decarbonisation programme and support their work on carbon budgets.

8. Could you provide any examples of how public bodies have improved engagement with citizens since the implementation of the Act?

The 12 draft Well-being Assessments we have seen so far show a range of approaches to engagement, some of which are new and innovative. For example, the 'Blaenau Gwent we want, a conversation about our future' work strongly focuses on encouraging people to think about the future. This includes encouraging people to write a

future profile: a social media account profile such as Facebook or Twitter - thinking about what they will be doing in 20 years' time, what job they will have, what they will do for leisure? Or suggesting that people write a letter or email to their future self, outlining what they hope to achieve and how they want their area to change.

Many of the PSBs have also shown how they have used engagement as the starting point to the development of their well-being assessments. They have successfully tested the validity of their data with local communities to ensure that what the data was telling them was how local people and communities perceived wellbeing for them. Interestingly, this provided a greater depth of interpretation and challenged some of the narrow perceptions of deficit that can be held by public sector workers about well-being.

The challenge for PSBs' engagement as they move towards well-being planning is two-fold – firstly that they find new ways of engaging people and of asking different questions (if people feel they are being asked generic, high level questions time and time again they will get consultation fatigue) and secondly to demonstrate how they are responding to what people have said, so that people don't feel they are being consulted for consultation's sake.

I have also worked with Welsh Government to explore in more detail how some public bodies are approaching involvement in order to identify emerging good practice.

9. Following on from the Economy, [Infrastructure and Skills Committee recommendation](#), do you feel that the planned National Infrastructure Commission should be included as a public body under the Act?

I have responded to the consultation on the Commission and believe that it is critically important that the principles of the Wellbeing of a Future Generations Act are included within the terms of reference of the Commission. Dependant on what form the Commission takes, the Committee might want to consider how best to ensure that the Commission is required to comply with the principles of the Act - that it uses the five ways of working, contributes to the well-being goals, and in particular takes accounts of the full definition of the 'Prosperous Wales' goal as well as the others.

10. When do you expect the Welsh Government to publish its milestones (to accompany the national indicators);

We have been in regular contact with the Welsh Government and are awaiting information about the likely content and timescales for the production of the milestones.

11. Is there evidence of change at the Welsh Government level as a result of the implementation of the Act, including any examples you could provide?

Whilst we are at early stages of the implementation of the Act, and therefore it would be unrealistic to see major change by this point, there is some evidence that the Act is being used by officials to deliver the change required. The Welsh Government's decision to establish a small set of four cross-cutting strategies (Healthy and Active, Prosperous and Secure, United and Connected, Ambitious and Learning) that span traditional Departmental or



Ministerial portfolios is an example of the Welsh Government using the Well-being of Future Generations lens to challenge business as usual. A key test of the effectiveness of this approach will be the degree to which all five of the ways of working are applied to the setting of milestones and the ongoing implementation of these strategies. Work is also underway, by the Welsh Government, to explore the practical implications of applying the sustainable development principle to areas such as procurement, decarbonisation and SMART Cymru (which helps Welsh business to grow their investment in research, development and innovation). In most cases this work is at a very early stage, however, working with Bangor University's Sustainability Lab, the SMART suite of programmes that provide a suite of integrated programmes to Welsh Business and research organisations, have embraced the Act to challenge business as usual and have a number of examples of how this has changed what they do and how they do it.

The Environment and Sustainable Development Single revenue grant is also an example about how the Welsh Government is changing its support for local government in a way that reframes aspect of funding around the Well-being of Future Generations Act while this has not been without its critics.

Although at an early stage the work of the Valleys Taskforce is showing a lot of promise in terms of the way in which the ways of working in the Act are being applied. In particular, I have been pleased to see the approach that is being taken to involve communities, to seek to better integrate policies and public service delivery and to collaborate with a range of partners. We have held initial discussions with officials leading the Taskforce and will be providing some support on developing their understanding of the Act.

We will continue to support and challenge the Welsh Government as they go further on the journey of implementing the Act and recognise that whilst there are still many challenges ahead they need to play a leading role for the rest of the public bodies in Wales. Our attention will be particularly focussed on the areas which will become our priority areas i.e. those which will have the biggest impact in the Welsh context.

#### 12. How do you view the role of the Assembly in tracking and scrutinising progress under the Act?

The Assembly is in a unique position to track and scrutinise the progress under the Act. The Act is all encompassing and each of the committees could ensure in their scrutiny of issues and Ministers that the Act is fully implemented. I sincerely hope that the Assembly will take every opportunity to track and scrutinise the progress of the Act including even through a full post-legislative scrutiny of the Act. I firmly believe this legislation has the potential to truly change the way we do things in Wales. However we must recognise that this is a long-term cultural change programme. The legislation provides the framework but it will require significant leadership, investment of time and resources, and all of us to work together to achieve the seven goals and safeguard the ability of both current and future generations to meet their needs.

Yours

Sophie Howe  
Future Generations Commissioner for Wales