

Senedd Cymru

Y Pwyllgor Cyfrifon Cyhoeddus a
Gweinyddiaeth Gyhoeddus

Craffu ar weinyddiaeth gyhoeddus

PAPA(6) SPA08

Ymateb gan Gomisiynydd Cenedlaethau'r
Dyfodol Cymru

Welsh Parliament

Public Accounts and Public Administration
Committee

Scrutinising public administration

Evidence from Future Generations
Commissioner for Wales

Dear Mark,

I would like to thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Committee's consultation on 'how the Public Accounts and Public Administration Committee should approach the public administration part of its remit'.

As you are aware, I have published extensive advice and recommendations on the implementation of the Well-being of Future Generations Act. In particular, in the last 18 months I have presented my findings to Senedd Committees and published my advice in my statutory Future Generations Report. I would like to draw the Committee's attention once again to the findings and reflections in these documents, as they still provide relevant steer, evidence and focus for scrutiny.

1. Future Generations Report 2020 – Full Report
2. Future Generations Report 2020 – Chapter 2
 - a. Welsh Government - The role of Welsh Government in implementing the Act
 - b. Public Bodies – Changing our public sector culture
3. Progress towards the Well-being of Future Generations Act – Overall Findings (2019)
4. Future Generations Commissioner for Wales' Written Evidence to Public Accounts Committee (2020) - Correspondence

Implementation

Most public bodies are making progress on implementing the Act but in different ways - some are delivering the 'what' and some are delivering the 'how'. There is further work needed to fully demonstrate the 'double test' of the Act – applying both. 'What' you decide to do should use the five ways of working to find the solution that best contributes to all your local well-being objectives and the national goals. But 'how' you deliver that solution must also use the ways of working and seek to contribute to the goals. I would welcome the Committee's focus on scrutinising and supporting public bodies to apply this 'double test'.

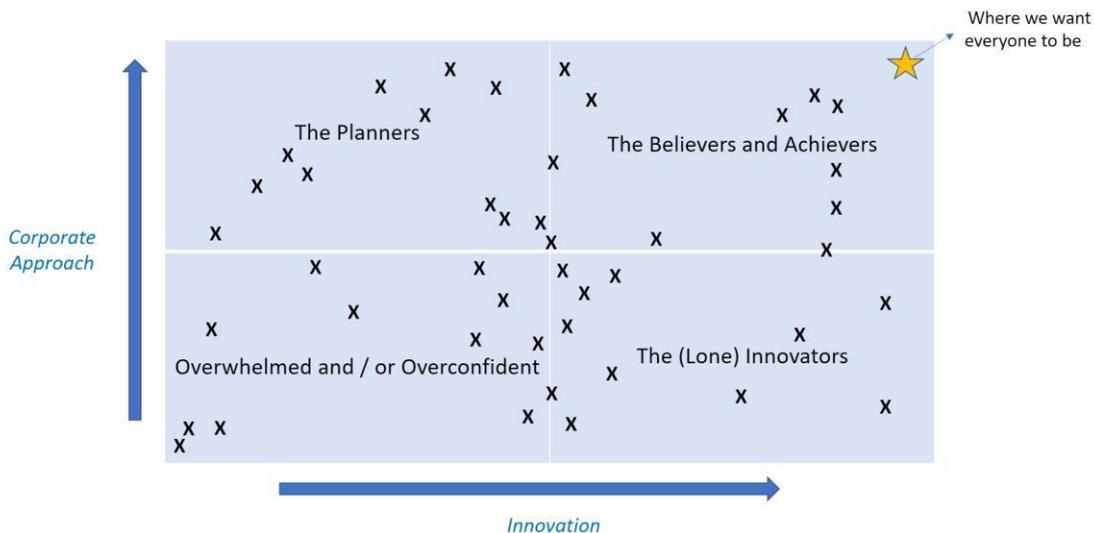
My analysis of implementation loosely categorised the 44 public bodies (in 2019) into the following four groups, illustrated by the graphic below:

1) **The Planners:** Organisations that have started with their corporate planning and strategies, set a strategic direction but are at different stages of changing their culture, delivering differently and demonstrating progress. Some of these organisations have funded dedicated resources, training and staff to encourage change.

2) **The (sometimes lone) Innovators:** Organisations who have sometimes struggled to fit the corporate direction into their well-being duties but are thinking and delivering differently because of the Act. These can be pockets of individuals or teams who are seeking to change culture, sometimes against the corporate centre reluctant to transform. These organisations typically ‘undersell’ themselves because they struggle to align corporately and affect wider change across the organisation.

3) **Believers and Achievers:** Organisations where there are examples of innovative practice, change makers and champions of the Act – sometimes daring to deliver differently against ingrained culture, other times fully supported by leaders. Public bodies should be in this space. There are many examples of individuals and teams who understand using the Act as a framework for change, but the pockets of innovation vary from place to place.

4) **The Overwhelmed and / or Overconfident:** Organisations who are either overwhelmed through responding to perceived and real crises and those who see the Act as a side-line to their core business or believe they have already ‘cracked’ the Act.



My **recommendations** to public bodies include (a sample);

- In setting their well-being objectives, public bodies should undertake horizon scanning exercises to think, plan and resource for the long-term future with others in collaboration – public, private, voluntary sector and members of their community.
- In setting their well-being objectives, public bodies should move towards better involving people throughout the decision-making process from defining a problem to delivery and evaluation, being open to real change as a result.

- In considering their steps, all public bodies should Clearly align financial planning and decisions across the seven corporate areas of change to the achievement of their well-being objectives.
- In testing and demonstrating how public bodies are applying the Act, they should ensure they move beyond paper-based exercises, increase staff understanding and provide constructive challenge to show how the Five Ways of Working have been applied, specifically how contribution goals and objectives can be maximised.
- In testing and demonstrating how public bodies are applying the Act, they should build challenge from other departments, experts and stakeholders into their internal decision-making processes.

The full list of recommendations can be found in the Chapter 2 links above.

In 2019, I published a **Future Generations Framework for Scrutiny** – an aid to support elected representatives, officials and stakeholders to scrutinize public bodies. I would encourage the Committee to consider how it can use this framework in discharging its responsibilities.

I have written extensively to other Senedd Committees on the prioritisation of their work programmes. Better integration of policy areas will ensure collective scrutiny, the ability to identify implementation gaps and offer solutions across the Senedd's work. You can find my letters to other Committees [here](#).

The implementation of the Well-being of Future Generations Act, and in particular the machinery and processes in place to support this implementation will continue to be of interest to me in the coming year. I look forward to working collaboratively with the Public Accounts and Public Administration Committee and the Equality and Social Justice Committee on the development and delivery of this work.

Best wishes,



Sophie Howe

Future Generations Commissioner for Wales

