

Derek Walker
Future Generations Commissioner

23 March 2023

Dear Derek,

Croeso/Welcome to your new role as Future Generations Commissioner.

We were pleased to have the opportunity to meet you as part of the pre-appointment process and we thought it would be helpful to set out further detail in relation to the issues we raised as part of that scrutiny, as you take up your new post.

Transparency

Our report recommended that to aid transparency and scrutiny of the relationship between the Commissioner and the Welsh Government, you should consider how business with Ministers is conducted, including how meetings and communications are recorded and disclosed. This would help address the perception that too much of the Office of the Future Generations Commissioner's time and resource has been dedicated to helping the Welsh Government apply its own legislation, sometimes to the detriment of other public bodies. This dates back to recommendations made by the previous Senedd's Public Accounts Committee two years ago.

We want to ensure that other public bodies are deepening their understanding of the relevance of the Act to their work, particularly as the challenging budgetary situation requires all organisations to maximise application of the Act to deliver best value. We would like to suggest that you publish a six-monthly summary of all business with the Welsh Government. This could include: the date and duration of the meeting, a list of attendees; its purpose and the topics covered; and a summary of any follow-up correspondence and/or action points arising from the meeting. For context, we would hope to see some evidence that at least as much time was being dedicated to PSBs and Corporate Joint Committees.

We acknowledge this is not a routine ask of Welsh Commissioners, (most of whom are not accountable to this Committee) and I would be happy to discuss how we prevent this becoming an overly bureaucratic or burdensome exercise.

Vision and approach

In our report we also called for you to set out your overall vision and approach to the role within your first six months in office, in addition to the outcomes that you would like to achieve during your term of office and accompanying key performance indicators. We would be grateful if you could confirm your plans in that regard, and will welcome the opportunity to explore these further with you in due course.

Future engagement

We were grateful for the constructive engagement offered by your predecessor, and we look forward to continuing our work with you and your office in the same vein. I would like to invite you to meet with Members of the Committee informally at some stage during the summer term and, if you are agreeable, will ask the Clerk to liaise with your office to find a mutually convenient time.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light yellow background. The signature reads "Jenny Rathbone" in a cursive, flowing script.

Jenny Rathbone MS

Chair, Equality and Social Justice Committee

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.

