

Public Accounts and Public Administration Committee

By email

28th March 2025

Dear Mark,

Re: Update on Recommendations 8 and 10 'Scrutiny of Accounts: The Future Generations Commissioner for Wales 2022-23'

Please find below the two responses due this month to the recommendations in your Committee's report 'Scrutiny of Accounts: The Future Generations Commissioner for Wales 2022-23' (March 2024). I am pleased to outline the progress we have made in the last twelve months on these matters.

Recommendations 8. We recommend that the Commissioner updates the Committee in a years' time on the delivery of his office's Leadership Academy and Welsh Government International Programme.

The **Future Generations Leadership Academy** is a transformative leadership programme, run by my office. The purpose is to nurture and inspire Wales' future leaders in their journey to achieve the aspirations of the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

The programme is leading to positive change. Feedback from participants consistently affirms that without the experience of the Future Generations Leadership Academy and the Alumni network, they would not have had the chance or skills to develop as they have. This link is the [latest article](#) on the Academy programme. This [webpage](#) and provides more information about the Academy.

I am immensely proud that the Academy has given access to exciting personal and career opportunities to underrepresented groups. The Academy includes an accessibility fund to help participants, who may otherwise experience barriers to participation, take part in the programme.

The 4th cohort successfully graduated on 14th of March 2025; 36 young leaders aged 18-30 years old took part, all of whom are passionate about putting the Well-being of Future Generations Act into action.

The 4th Future Generations Leadership Academy enjoyed buy-in and support from sponsor organisations. The programme received sponsorship from both public and private sector organisations demonstrating cross-sector appetite for the service. It was run on a budget of £181k. Since its inception the Academy has generated £593,675 in sponsorship funding.

We now count 120 future leaders as part of the alumni of the Future Generation Leadership Academy. Alumni of the Academy report that the academy has helped their careers. Many have taken on leadership roles, becoming Trustees and Board member.

This year my team worked with the organisation called Leaderful Action who were contracted to analyse the feedback we collected throughout the year and compose the impact report, as well as design and deliver bespoke training.

My office has begun exploring partnerships and sponsors for the 2025/26 Future Generations Leadership Academy and is aiming to launch the next cohort in September 2025.

My office has exciting plans to grow and increase the reach of the programme. My team are designing a 3–5-year business plan and are exploring opportunities to work with external partners like the Open University, Cardiff University, Bridgend College and the Campaign for National Parks organisation, who all have similar aspirations for leadership academies.

Our **international programme** is dedicated to facilitating and supporting good practice exchanges between Wales and global stakeholders, enabling knowledge-sharing and collaboration on sustainable development, climate action, and well-being policies. By engaging Welsh public bodies with international counterparts, we strengthen relationships with governments, institutions, and organisations, ensuring Wales is recognised as a leader in long-term governance. In 2024-2025, our focus has been on enhancing these exchanges to support the effective implementation of the Well-being of Future Generations Act, both by helping Welsh public bodies share their challenges and learn from global best practices, and by raising the international profile of the Act by showcasing Wales' progress on the world stage.

This work has been made possible through £200,000 in specific funding from the Welsh Government's International Division in both 2023-2024 and 2024-2025, with an indication that a similar level of funding will be available for 2025-2026. However, as the Welsh Government undertakes a refresh of its International Strategy, the model of funding for future years is moving to a bidding process.

This year, our engagement with European cities and institutions has included engagement with the Irish and Finnish Governments on implementing national well-being frameworks. As a result, the Finnish Parliament's Committee of the Future recommended that Finland follows the model set in Wales by its own Well-being of Future Generations Act. As a follow-up to our engagement with the Irish Government on well-being budgeting, we are organising a session with the Welsh Government's Finance and Sustainable Futures teams to share insights from Ireland's approach of implementing budget tagging to align spending with well-being indicators. We are also facilitating a briefing for Irish officials on the local and regional applications of the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

As part of our commitment to knowledge-sharing, we recently facilitated exchanges between Public Health Wales and the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare in Helsinki, as well as between Cardiff Council and Nantes Councils' Parks and Recreation teams on climate and nature initiatives. In public health, we gained valuable insights on effective prevention strategies, which we are now sharing with Public Health Wales and public bodies across Wales. Additionally, following the engagement between Cardiff and Nantes, both councils have committed to ongoing collaboration, continuing to exchange learning and good practices on urban climate resilience and nature-based solutions.

Beyond Europe, we have supported Welsh Government's Wales in India Year 2024 and Wales and Japan Year 2025. Our engagement has directly contributed to Maharashtra's efforts to introduce their own Future Generations Bill, which was formally tabled in June 2024. We have also helped connect universities in Maharashtra with Welsh organisations that provide courses on sustainable development, such as Black Mountains College and WJEC. Looking ahead, we will continue to support this collaboration through virtual workshops and a knowledge exchange between young people in Wales and India on climate change and sustainable development.

In our ongoing global policy engagement, we continue to promote Wales' leadership in long-term thinking and future generations governance. Recently, we attended the UN Summit of the Future in New York, where we met with UN officials, including the UN Under-Secretary General for Policy, Guy Ryder. During the Summit, we hosted a side event with UNESCO-BRIDGES, delivered a keynote speech alongside the Prime Minister of Jamaica, and moderated a panel discussion with the UN Futures Lab and the OECD. Ahead of the Summit, we also organised a Future Generations Forum, engaging over 50 Welsh stakeholders to ensure that Welsh voices shaped the Commissioner's contributions.

We remain committed to supporting the Welsh Government's International Offices in embedding the Well-being of Future Generations Act into their global work. Over the past year, we have briefed international teams in Ireland, Japan, Germany, France, North America, and India, providing guidance on sustainability and future generations governance, and connecting them with in-country stakeholders.

Finally, to ensure that young people in Wales benefit from our international engagement, the Future Generations Leadership Academy has incorporated an international dimension into its 2024–2025 programme, giving participants exposure to global perspectives on sustainable development.

Academy alumni have participated in international events, including European Union meetings in Brussels, a European sustainable development workshop alongside young leaders from Flanders, participation in the EU Together Stronger programme in London and meetings with members of the Maharashtra Legislative Assembly.

In the coming year, we will continue to expand our international reach, supporting public bodies in Wales to engage with global good practices and ensuring that Wales remains at the forefront of sustainable development and future generations governance. The focus and extent of this work will depend on the funding made available by Welsh Government.

Recommendation 10. We recommend that the Commissioner provides the Committee with an update, in a year's time, on the work and progress being made to attract and recruit disabled people in the workforce at the Commissioner's Office.

To further enhance the skills and knowledge of our existing team members, we are collaborating with Disability Wales to provide education awareness sessions on the Social Model of Disability in the next financial year. This is the model used by Welsh Government, having been formerly adopted in 2002. The social model defines that people are disabled by barriers in society, not by their impairment or difference.

The social model helps us recognise barriers that make life harder for disabled people and underpins how an equal Wales can be achieved. Our ongoing work with Disability Wales is helping us further embed the model in our own work to make us a more inclusive employer for disabled people as well as improving the advice and assistance we give to public bodies on implementing the equal Wales goal.

We have explored a number of specialist job boards for recruitment advertising purposes. These have included Evenbreak, Reach and Disability Jobsite. We also share our roles extensively with our networks, including the Future Leaders Academy Alumni and our equality stakeholder network. We do not experience a high volume of vacancies and since our re-structure in 2023 where we lost 18% of our workforce, we have not had any permanent job opportunities. That being said, we have increased the number of people with disabilities who work with us from 0 to 7.4% via temporary recruitment. We operate positive action measures which are reviewed each time a vacancy arises. This includes offering a guaranteed interview scheme to people with disabilities who meet our essential job criteria.

As talent leaders we have a responsibility to acknowledge the power dynamics that exist in the selection process and do our part to disrupt this pattern. As a result, we have taken steps to improve our hiring practices by sharing interview questions in advance. Doing so means that all candidates have access to the same information upfront. We help candidates know what to expect, how best to prepare, and what we are looking for. We pull back the curtain to create space for a candidate to think about their skills and match rather than fretting about what is coming next or trying to prepare for every interview question they could be asked.

Our relationship with Welsh Government's Disability Unit has also strengthened over the last twelve months. We recently reached out for some in-depth neurodiversity advice to help shape our offer to Future Generation Leadership Academy participants. As a result of this enhanced relationship, we have been able to build an improved neuro-inclusive learning environment, harnessing the potential of underrepresented neurodiverse talent. We also

spoke at length with the Disability Unit about the merits of the Disability Confident Scheme. This is something we are considering and would have to work towards becoming a Disability Confident Leader, an aspiration we hope to achieve in the future.

As part of our wider work around accessibility and inclusivity, we have introduced a policy for accessibility payments which applies to our work in a range of settings including our Future Generation Leadership Academy and initiatives such as commissions with freelance artists. The bursaries are applicable for a range of accessibility support including assistance to attend meetings, or payment for childcare.

Additionally, we have pledged to be part of the 10,000 Able Interns Programme, a UK based paid programme for disabled talent experiencing social and physical barriers to work. Alongside this, we are in discussion with a number of other public body organisations in Wales to consider a joint apprenticeship through the Cardiff and Vale College On-SITE (Supported Internships) scheme. Supported Internships are a transition to work programme committed to transforming the lives of young people with additional learning needs. This is a Welsh Government funded programme.

Finally, our office premises which are hosted by Tramshed have undergone a series of accessibility improvements over the last year. We were pleased to introduce Tramshed to Trevor Palmer, a Board member of Disability Wales with lived experience. He worked alongside Tramshed offering a series of recommendations to help advance inclusive building design. Inclusive design is about more than buildings and the space around them, it is about enabling everyone to participate equally, confidently and independently in everyday activities. It is vital to creating a sense of belonging and making society more equitable.

A series of building modifications were made to include, drop curves being removed from the highway so wheelchair access from train station to both main entrances to Tramshed Tech and the Production Hub are accessible without having to cross any roads. Ramped access to main areas was introduced, the whole building has been adapted for visually impaired people, Changing Places Toilet facilities have been introduced, automated door access was installed, a hearing loop has been made available in addition to a quiet room for neurodiversity. Tramshed are also looking to reduce the lumens of the lighting in the space over the coming months.

I hope you find this information useful and please feel free to ask for additional information if needed.

Yours sincerely,



Derek Walker

Future Generations Commissioner for Wales