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Environment and Sustainability Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
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[www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk](http://www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk)

3 September 2014

Dear Sir/Madam

### General Principles of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Bill

The Carnegie United Kingdom (UK) Trust welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Environment and Sustainability Committee's inquiry into the general principles of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Bill. The Trust works to improve the lives of people throughout the UK and Ireland, by changing minds through influencing policy, and by changing lives through innovative practice and partnership work.

We welcome the introduction of the Bill and the duty placed on public bodies to promote the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of people in Wales. We **strongly support** the general principles of the Bill.

We have chosen only to respond to the terms of reference where we have experience and relevant evidence. Further information on our work is available on our website [www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk](http://www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk).

### EVIDENCE BASE

The Carnegie UK Trust has been actively involved in promoting wellbeing in policy since the establishment of the first [Carnegie Roundtable on Measuring What Matters in Scotland](#) in 2010. Since 2011 we have published [case studies](#) of how governments and civil society organisations measure wellbeing in France, the USA and Canada; made recommendations on [next steps for the Scottish National Performance Framework](#); funded a [policy assessment tool](#) which uses wellbeing indicators to critique policy proposals; and explored how to [promote wellbeing in Northern Ireland](#).

Our work in Wales has included supporting [Wales Public Services 2025](#), including our joint publication *Weathering the Storm: A look at small countries public services in times of austerity*. Our UK-wide programme on the [Enabling State](#) has also included Welsh stakeholders.

## 2.1 - The “common aim” and “sustainable development principle” established in the Bill and the “public bodies” specified

The Bill establishes in legislation the duty on public authorities to contribute to a ‘common aim’. Our international research strongly supports this duty. We found that wellbeing approaches to policy allowed the framing of a shared vision to direct the activities of public services.

We identified three ways in which such an approach improves policy-making:

- **Identifying gaps:** Using a wellbeing approach to policy development often highlights issues that were not previously seen as policy priorities. Alternatively, it can show differences in experiences between different groups in society.
- **Shifting to prevention:** Wellbeing frameworks shift policy attention from remedial policies to preventative ones. For example, by focusing on prevention to improve health outcomes or using physical activity to reduce crime, the wellbeing perspective appears to encourage decision-makers to look for creative ways of improving wellbeing by focusing ‘up-stream’.
- **Joined-up solutions:** Wellbeing frameworks provide government with a holistic view of the impact of current policies. In our case studies, this was often followed by a renewed emphasis on finding joined-up solutions and overcoming the dominant, silo-based way of working.

## 2.2 The approach to improving well-being, including setting of well-being goals, establishment of objectives by public bodies and the duties imposed on public bodies

We welcome underpinning the common aims statement with more specific ‘goals’. Our work on wellbeing measurement internationally, and in Scotland, has found that a single wellbeing framework, or dashboard, to which all public services are aligned, is an effective approach to improving wellbeing. This approach would ensure that the Welsh Government is measuring its progress against a range of social, economic and environmental outcomes.

We note that the wellbeing goals are already well developed. There is general consensus internationally on the ‘domains’ of wellbeing (see for example, OECD Better Life Index). Most of these are included within the goals as drafted, however we would suggest the

inclusion of 'quality of work' alongside employment would be a benefit. We would also recommend that a reference was made to civic engagement. We believe that public services and government in Wales are experiencing the same loss of trust observed in other parts of the UK and Europe. Specific reference to the importance of citizen involvement in decision-making (through both elections and other participatory mechanisms) would help to address this issue.

We are aware of the Wales We Want conversations. Again, our international research supports this aspect of the development of the Bill. We found that wellbeing frameworks were most successful when they had actively engaged citizens in the development of goals and indicators. This provides the framework with added legitimacy. There is a clear intention that public bodies will consult with citizens when setting wellbeing objectives, the Welsh Government should lead by example and ensure that citizen engagement is at the heart of its process for setting the wellbeing goals and national indicators. We see an opportunity to develop the proposed duty on Welsh Ministers to consult with 'other such persons as they consider appropriate' in setting wellbeing indicators to specifically engage citizens, the third sector and businesses, as each has important insights and strengths to bring to wellbeing.

### 2.3 The approach to measuring progress towards achieving well-being goals and reporting on progress

We welcome the proposal for Welsh Ministers to publish an annual report on the progress made towards meeting their wellbeing objectives and for this to be laid before the National Assembly following the end of the financial year. In our discussions in Canada, the US and Scotland the accessibility of this information has been critical. Particular attention is required to ensure that data is presented in a way that engages the public directly. We would urge the Welsh Assembly to see the audience for the update as the people of Wales and invest in it accordingly.

There are also pros and cons of having an annual report (proposed here and used in Virginia, USA) and a 'real time' system (favoured by Scotland). The delays inherent in producing an annual statistical update can limit its usefulness in terms of policy-making. We would recommend both an online system, updated when data becomes available (see for example [Scotland Performs](#)) and an annual report.

We recommend that the Welsh Assembly set aside time to debate the annual statistical update to ensure that it is used as an accountability tool.

### 2.5 The establishment of statutory Public Services Boards, assessments of local Well-being and development/implementation of local well-being plans

Our research shows that wellbeing frameworks are helpful in linking central and local

government activity. The proposals in the Bill would focus all public services on achieving these goals and creates a 'golden thread' linking service specific policy developments to overarching strategy. We are unclear of whether there are any planned links to resource allocation but would recommend this is investigated as 'anchoring' the goals in financial mechanisms can help overcome strong cultural barriers to joint working and prevention.

It is particularly important that all sections of the community have the opportunity to debate local wellbeing plans and participate in setting local outcomes. It is often local people who understand best what local priorities should be and what needs to happen to improve wellbeing. We therefore welcome the proposal for public service boards to consult representatives of residents in the area, local businesses, trade unions and others with an interest in the area's economic, social and environmental wellbeing. We would recommend that every effort is made to engage directly with citizens during this process.

The publication of reports by community councils of the progress made towards meeting the objectives included in the local wellbeing plan is also an important way of engaging the public after the development of the plan.

### **Concluding remarks**

We hope that you find these comments helpful. We would be delighted to provide oral evidence on our experiences in Scotland, Northern Ireland and internationally if this would be of use to the Committee.

If you would like to discuss our response, or would like to find out more about our work please contact my colleague Lauren Pennycook, Policy Officer at [lauren@carnegieuk.org](mailto:lauren@carnegieuk.org) or by telephone 01383 721 445.

Yours faithfully,



Martyn Evans  
Chief Executive