

Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Bill
Call for evidence from the Environment and Sustainability Committee
SDCC Response

1. How the Welsh Government should legislate to put sustainability and sustainable development at the heart of government and the wider public sector;

SDCC greatly welcome the introduction of the Well-being of Future Generations Bill. The new legislation will pick up the pace of progress and ensure more consistency across the organisations subject to the duty.

The legislation will also help ensure that some of the big issues facing local government into the next decade and beyond are planned and accounted for. The Bill will help provide a framework for developing innovative approaches to address these challenges.

We would support the 'central organising principle' approach featuring in the statutory guidance, this would help reinforce the message that sustainable development applies to the whole organisation rather than just key areas. Consideration also needs to be given to ensuring that the term 'well-being' doesn't narrow our focus on delivery to the health and social care sector.

***2. The general principles of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Bill and the need for legislation in the following areas -
-The "common aim" and "sustainable development principle" established in the Bill and the "public bodies" specified;***

Establishing a common understanding will help to ensure consistency across the public sector. We particularly welcome the governance approaches.

-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;

It is important that the environmental aspect of wellbeing isn't overlooked.

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

This seems like a practical approach and success will be evidenced through the national progress that is made.

We hope that this builds on (and goes beyond) previous approaches - WG's duty to produce and report on a sustainable development scheme.

-The establishment of a Future Generations Commissioner for Wales, the Commissioner's role, powers, responsibility, governance and accountability;

We support the establishment of a Future Generations Commissioner.

Support should be focused to address the variability in performance across the organisations subject to the duty and SDCC would recommend Welsh Government looks at how other countries have been able to effectively provide support and research, capacity building, training to the public sector.

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

The Public Service Board membership has better alignment to delivering the well-being goals.

The involvement of Natural Resources Wales will help ensure the dove-tailing of the WG and Environment Bills and also ensure a consistent approach to the environment in preparing wellbeing plans.

3. How effectively the Bill addresses Welsh international obligations in relation to sustainable development;

There is minimal mention the international dimensions of sustainable development. The goals set out in the Bill were established before the UN goals.

4. Any potential barriers to the implementation of these provisions and whether the Bill takes account of them;

- Lack of capacity caused by current budget pressures.
- A perception that the goals can work in isolation.
- The need to build understanding and knowledge when there are pressures on time.
- The emphasis on Welsh Ministers rather than the Assembly could result in less political buy in.

5. Whether there are any unintended consequences arising from the Bill;

Greater emphasis is placed on the social dimension of well-being.

6. The financial implications of the Bill (as set out in Part 2 of the Explanatory Memorandum and Regulatory Impact Assessment; which estimates the costs and benefits of implementation of the Bill);

There are clear benefits from taking early action and the legislation will help ensure that these risks are considered in our service planning process and that cost effective actions can be identified that can build capacity.

Acting now will avoid greater costs further down the line.

The costs of the establishment of a Commissioner and the Commissioner's office should be kept to the minimum necessary to deliver the support needed.

7. The appropriateness of the powers in the Bill for Welsh Ministers to make subordinate legislation (as set out in Chapter 5 of Part 1 of the Explanatory Memorandum, which contains a table summarising the powers for Welsh Ministers to make subordinate legislation).

This seems reasonable.