

Y Pwyllgor Amgylchedd a Chynaliadwyedd
Environment and Sustainability Committee

Cynulliad
Cenedlaethol
Cymru

National
Assembly for
Wales



National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1NA

Huw Vaughan Thomas
The Auditor General for Wales
Wales Audit Office
24 Cathedral Road
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CF11 9LJ

3 October 2014

Dear Auditor General

Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Bill – Further information

Thank you for attending the Committee meeting on 1 October for the evidence session on the general principles of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Bill.

At the meeting, and in your written evidence, you have expressed the view that the assessment of your role contained in the Explanatory Memorandum of the Bill is inaccurate. You have suggested that the potential benefits of amending the Bill to ‘place a duty on the Auditor General for Wales, to include an examination of how organisations have embedded sustainable development as their central organising principle in relation to their duty’ could be considered. The Committee would like you to provide further details on how you feel this could be achieved, including any specific amendments which would need to be made and the potential impact of such amendments.

Additionally, at the meeting you agreed to provide further information on:

1. The views of your leading counsel with regards to your current statutory obligation in relation to the Bill in its current form; and
2. An example of a similar duty as referred to above in existing legislation.

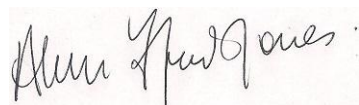
We would be grateful if you could provide a response on the above issues by Friday 10 October. I appreciate that this timescale is tight, however this reflects the wider timetable for stage 1 and the need for us to receive your response in sufficient time to be able to fully consider the information.

Also within your written evidence you have stated that your “observations are based only on a reading of the Explanatory Memorandum, rather than an audit of the underlying working papers.” During the meeting you explained that, subject to the approval of the Public Accounts Committee and the availability of the necessary documentation, you would be able to carry out such an audit. The Committee would like to formally request that you undertake this audit and provide details of the conclusions reached. I’d be grateful if you could let me know when you believe this work could be conducted by.

If you are able to look favourably on this request, then I will ask the Clerk to the Committee to liaise with appropriate officers in your office to discuss the details of this engagement.

I have copied this letter to both the Chairs and Clerks to the Public Accounts and Finance Committees so that they are aware of my request. It is my understanding that this request does not cut across any work that the Public Accounts Committee has planned and that there is no procedural barrier to Assembly committees seeking your support with their work.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alun Ffred Jones', written on a light-colored rectangular background.

Alun Ffred Jones AM
Chair of the Environment and Sustainability Committee

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Mr Darren Millar
Chair, Public Accounts Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay,
Cardiff CF99 1NA

Date: 6 October 2014
Our ref: HVT/2215/mjb
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Dear Darren

WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS (WALES) BILL

You will have seen the letter of 3 October 2014 that I have received from the Chair of the Environment and Sustainability Committee (for ease of reference, a copy is attached).

Further to the oral evidence that I provided to that Committee at their meeting on 1 October to assist with their scrutiny of the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Bill (the Bill), they have asked that I should make arrangements to conduct an audit of the costs set out within the Welsh Government's Explanatory Memorandum to the Bill, and to report my findings to that Committee.

I am minded to meet the Committee's request by undertaking a study under section 145A of the Government of Wales Act 1998, to test the overall robustness of the assumptions / analysis underpinning the regulatory impact assessment. Before doing so I am of course required under that provision to take account of the views of the Public Accounts Committee. I should therefore be grateful if you could arrange for your Committee to consider this matter at its earliest convenience, given the need for this work to be undertaken as swiftly as possible.

Yn



HUW VAUGHAN THOMAS
AUDITOR GENERAL FOR WALES