

**National Assembly for Wales**  
Bill Summary

**The Well-being of Future  
Generations (Wales) Bill**

October 2014

Cynulliad  
Cenedlaethol  
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National  
Assembly for  
Wales



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# The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Bill

October 2014

Karen Whitfield, Helen Jones and Alys Thomas

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# Well-being of Future Generations Bill

## 1. Introduction

**Introduction date: 7 July 2014 Member in charge:** Carl Sargeant AM, Minister for National Resources

**Committee undertaking Stage 1 scrutiny of the Bill:** Environment and Sustainability Committee

**Committee Stage 1 reporting deadline:** 21 November 2014

The key purposes of the Bill are to:

- set a framework within which specified Welsh public authorities will seek to ensure the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (the **sustainable development principle**),
- put into place **well-being goals** which those authorities are to seek to achieve in order to improve well-being both now and in the future,
- set out how those authorities are to show they are working towards the well-being goals,
- put **Public Services Boards and local well-being plans** on a statutory basis and, in doing so, simplify current requirements as regards integrated community planning, and
- establish a **Future Generations Commissioner for Wales** to be an advocate for future generations who will advise, support and monitor Welsh public authorities in carrying out their duties under the Bill.



## 2. Policy Development

In its *[Programme for Government](#)*, the Welsh Government committed to ‘Legislate to embed sustainable development as the central organising principles in all our actions across government and all devolved public bodies.’ It also committed to ‘Legislate to put in place a new independent sustainable development body for Wales ... .’

The Welsh Government held an engagement event in December 2011 to investigate stakeholder’s views on putting a duty on Welsh Government and devolved public bodies to make sustainable development their central organising principle, and also on the creation of a statutory independent sustainable development body for Wales. The Explanatory Memorandum (“EM”) states that this event highlighted support for the proposal to legislate, although there was no consensus on the approach to be taken.

In January 2012 the Welsh Government consulted on the draft guidance to Local Authorities and their planning partners, *[Shared Purpose – Shared Delivery](#)*, and sought views on the principle of integrated planning and the role of Local Service Boards. The guidance in *Shared Purpose – Shared Delivery* encourages Local Service Boards to integrate a number of their statutory plans into a single integrated plan.

In May 2012 a 10 week consultation was launched by the Welsh Government, *[Consultation on proposals for a Sustainable Development Bill](#)*, which sought views on a range of proposals and issues in relation to developing the approach to sustainable development in Wales.

In December 2012 the Welsh Government consulted on its *[White Paper: A Sustainable Wales – Better Choices for a Better Future](#)*. The White Paper sought views on the following proposals:

- a new duty to embed sustainable development as the central organising principle of public bodies in Wales;
- the creation of a sustainable development body;
- the proposal to put Local Service Boards and integrated planning on a statutory footing;
- the proposed phasing and implementation of the duty, including the timing for the creation of the independent sustainable development body; and
- improving the accountability framework for sustainable development in Wales.

The development of the Bill has also been informed by the [Future Generations Bill Reference and Advisory Group](#), made up of a range of stakeholders from the public, private and third sectors. On 18 February 2014 the Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty launched a pilot National Conversation on ['the Wales we want by 2050'](#) to give the Welsh public the opportunity to give their views on the Wales they want for future generations. The interim [report from the pilot National Conversation](#), summarising the main messages to come out of the conversation, was published on the same day as the Bill.

### 3. Policy Objectives of the Bill

The stated policy intent of the Bill is to give effect to the Welsh Government's *Programme for Government* commitment to put sustainable development at the heart of government and public bodies, and its commitments relating to the difference it wants to make to the lives of people in Wales in terms of reducing poverty levels, improving health, equality, safety, cohesion, prosperity, culture, heritage and sustainable resource use. The EM states that the Bill will:

- **Strengthen existing governance systems** by providing a clear focus on what public authorities are seeking to achieve through a suite of statutory national well-being goals, and evaluated and measured against national indicators;
- **Embed sustainable development in specified public authorities** by requiring them to set their own well-being objectives that contribute to the achievement of the national well-being goals;
- **Support the change and promote the interests of Future Generations** by establishing a Future Generations Commissioner for Wales; and
- **Reform integrated community planning** by putting it on a statutory basis and establishing Public Service Boards, with the intent that this will reduce duplication and streamline the number of statutory plans and strategies that local authorities and their planning partners need to produce.

## 4. The Bill

### 4.1. *Part 1 – Introduction and Key Concepts*

Part 1 gives an overview of the main provisions and sets out the purpose and key concepts of the Bill, including:

- **Purpose of the Bill:** to ensure that the governance arrangements of public bodies for improving the well-being of Wales take the needs of future generations into account;
- **Aim of public bodies to improve well-being:** the aim of public bodies is to improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of Wales in accordance with the sustainable development principle (the “common aim”); and
- **Sustainable Development Principle** - ‘seeking to ensure the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.’

Part 1 also lists the organisations to be defined as public bodies for the purposes of this Act.

### 4.2. *Part 2 – Improving well-being*

This part sets the following national well-being goals and provides a description for each:

- **A prosperous Wales** - an innovative and productive, low carbon emission, economy that makes more efficient and proportionate use of resources; and which generates wealth and provides employment opportunities for a skilled and well-educated population;
- **A resilient Wales** - a biodiverse natural environment with healthy functioning ecosystems that support social, economic and ecological resilience and the capacity to adapt to change;
- **A healthier Wales** - a society in which people’s physical and mental well-being is maximised and in which choices and behaviours that benefit future health are understood;
- **A more equal Wales** - a society that enables people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances;
- **A Wales of cohesive communities** - attractive, viable, safe and well-connected communities;
- **A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language** - a society that promotes and protects culture, heritage and the Welsh language, and which encourages people to participate in the arts, and sports and recreation.

The Welsh Ministers may add or remove goals, or amend the goal titles or descriptors, by regulations.

The Bill requires public bodies to pursue **the ‘common aim’ to improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of Wales**, in accordance with the sustainable development principle. This will be achieved through public bodies (including the Welsh Ministers) seeking to achieve the well-being goals by meeting the well-being objectives they set pursuant to the sustainable development duty. Progress will be measured and evaluated by reference to a suite of national indicators set by Welsh Government, who will use these indicators to publish an ‘annual well-being report’ on progress towards the achievement of the national well-being goals. The Welsh Government is also required to publish a ‘future trends report’ within 12 months of the date of a general election. This should contain predictions of likely future trends in the economic, social and environmental well-being of Wales.

A duty is placed (section 7) on **public bodies to set and publish their own well-being objectives**, developed in accordance with the sustainable development principle, which are designed to maximise their contribution to the national goals. Requirements are laid out for setting and reporting on progress towards meeting the objectives.

#### *4.3. Part 3 – The Future Generations Commissioner for Wales*

Part 3 creates a **Future Generations Commissioner for Wales**, to be appointed by Welsh Ministers. The Commissioner’s general duty is ‘to promote the sustainable development principle’ and ‘to monitor and assess the extent to which well-being objectives set by public bodies are met.’

The Commissioner’s functions and reporting responsibilities are set out, including the requirement to report annually on his own work programme and public bodies’ progress with achieving their well-being objectives, and to produce a **five-yearly Future Generations Report**. The Commissioner may make recommendations, and this part also sets a duty for public bodies to take all reasonable steps to follow the course of action set out in recommendations made to them by the Commissioner, and to publish their response to any recommendations made. The Commissioner will be supported by an advisory panel, the purpose of which is to provide advice to the Commissioner on the exercise of the Commissioner’s functions.

Further provision in relation to the Commissioner is included in schedule 2.

#### *4.4. Part 4 – Public Services Boards*

This part **establishes statutory Public Service Boards for each local authority** and sets out the members, invited participants and other partners. The aim of each Public Service Board is to improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of its area in accordance with the sustainable development principle ('the local aim').

Each Public Service Board must develop **an assessment of local well-being and a local well-being plan**, which includes objectives designed to maximise contribution to achieving the national well-being goals in accordance with the sustainable development principle. They must take all reasonable steps to achieve the objectives included in this plan. This part of the Bill sets out requirements for the preparation, approval and review of local well-being plans, as well as a reporting mechanism. It also sets out the powers of Welsh Ministers in relation to the merging, collaboration, performance indicators and standards of Public Service Boards.

Further provision in relation to Public Service Boards is included in schedules 4 and 5.

#### *4.5. Part 5 – Final provisions*

This part makes further provision for Welsh Ministers' powers in relation to this Bill including power to amend the definition of 'public body' in Section 51(1) and to 'make consequential etc. provision', amending primary Welsh and UK legislation by regulation to give full effect to the Bill, and power to make regulations under the Bill.

## 5. Current policy of relevance

### 5.1. Sustainable Development Policy

Section 79 of the *Government of Wales Act 2006* ('the 2006 Act'), creates a duty on the Welsh Ministers to produce a sustainable development scheme setting out how they propose to promote sustainable development. There have been three sustainable development schemes since 1998. The current scheme is [\*One Wales: One Planet - the Sustainable Development Scheme of the Welsh Assembly Government\*](#), 2009.

The 2006 Act also requires the Welsh Ministers to publish an annual report on how the scheme's proposals were implemented during the previous financial year and, in the year following a general election, to publish a report assessing how effective the proposals have been in promoting sustainable development. The most recent [annual report](#) was published on 23 June 2014. The Welsh Government has a suite of [sustainable development indicators](#) which it uses to measure progress with the sustainable development scheme.

### 5.2. Integrated Community Planning

Local authorities and their partners have numerous duties placed upon them to produce plans and strategies which are aimed at improving the well-being of people in their area. The EM states that it has been acknowledged that many of these plans and strategies show overlap and duplication, and the many competing priorities and extensive partnership structures used to pursue these have resulted in too much complexity and reduction in operational efficiency amongst public bodies.

From 2007-2008, in response to the 2006 [Beecham Review](#), Local Service Boards were established in all parts of Wales with a view to addressing cross-cutting issues in a more integrated way. In 2012 the Welsh Government issued new guidance to Local Authorities and their planning partners, [Shared Purpose - Shared Delivery](#), encouraging integration of a number of statutory plans into 'single integrated plans'. The guidance states these plans were to:

set out the overarching long term vision for the sustainable development of communities over the next 10-15 years [taking into account] changing demography, the socio-economic context, the impact of climate change and a shift in focus and investment from remedy to prevention. (page 14)

Local Service Boards currently exist in each Local Authority area as voluntary partnerships. They produced their first single integrated plans in line with advice in [Shared Purpose – Shared Delivery](#), and all plans were adopted by April 2013.

The January 2014 report of the [Commission on Public Service Governance and Delivery](#) (the Williams Commission) identified a need for Local Service Boards to be ‘radically streamlined and made more effective’. On 8th July 2014, the First Minister made a statement in Plenary responding to the Williams Commission report, and the Minister for Local Government and Government Business made a statement announcing publication of [Devolution, Democracy and Delivery: White Paper – Reforming Local Government](#) setting out the Welsh Government’s ‘ambitions for the future of Local Government in Wales’.

### *5.3. Commissioner for Sustainable Futures*

Following the closure of the UK-wide Sustainable Development Commission in 2011, the non-statutory post of Commissioner for Sustainable Futures was created in Wales in April 2011. The Commissioner has been supported by Cynnal Cymru – Sustain Wales since March 2012. The [Cynnal Cymru website](#) ascribes the following roles to the Commissioner:

- Provide leadership for sustainable development in Wales;
- Promote sustainable development as the central organising principle in all organisations in Wales, and to promote the embedding of sustainable development into the work of sectors and communities in Wales...;
- Convene stakeholders representing relevant sectors or issues, and develop partnerships to address difficult issues based on a ‘coalition of the willing’ approach;
- Advise the Welsh Government on the policies and approaches required to promote and implement sustainable development; and
- Provide appropriate advice to the Welsh Government on the longer-term arrangements for promoting and advising the Welsh Government on sustainable development in Wales.

The current post of Commissioner for Sustainable Futures, and support for this post by Cynnal Cymru, is in its final full year, with a shadow office of the Future Generations Commissioner expected to be set up by 1st April 2015, and the new Commissioner expected to be appointed by December 2015, according to the [Cynnal Cymru website](#).

## 6. Key Legislation

Annex A of Shared Purpose – Shared Delivery identified a number of statutory planning duties which should be discharged through the single integrated plans. Well-being plans to be delivered under the Bill will incorporate these duties, and the Bill amends or repeals relevant legislation to accommodate this. Key consequential amendments and repeals (as outlined in the EM) are listed below:

- **Local Government (Wales) Measure 2010** – in relation to community planning / community strategy;
- **Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010** – in relation to Children and Young People’s Plans and information on the sufficiency of play opportunities;
- **Mental Health (Wales) Measure 2010**- in relation to joint schemes for the provision of local primary mental health support services;
- **Children Act 2004** – in relation to the duty on Welsh local authorities to co-operate to improve well-being of children in a local authority’s area and Children and Young People’s Plans; and
- **National Health Service (Wales) Act 2006** – in relation to the duty on each local authority and Local Health Board to jointly prepare and implement a health, social care and well-being strategy.

Schedule 4 to the Bill contains the full list of amendments and repeals in consequence of section 45 of the Bill.

In addition, the EM states that the Bill requires newly established Public Service Boards to integrate a number of statutory assessment processes, taking account of these in preparing assessments of local well-being, including: reviews of sufficiency of nursery education under the **School Standards and Frameworks Act 1998**; assessment of sufficiency of childcare provision undertaken as a result of regulations made under the **Childcare Act 2006**; assessments of the sufficiency of play opportunities under the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010; assessments of needs for care and support, support for carers and preventative services carried out by the local authority and Local Health Board under the **Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014**; and assessments prepared under the **Crime and Disorder Act 1998**.

## 7. Integration with other key proposed legislation

The Environment Bill White Paper proposes to introduce national and area-based statutory natural resource management plans. The national plan will set out the Welsh Government's national objectives and priorities for natural resource management whilst area plans will set out on a spatial basis how these national priorities will be delivered. As part of producing and reviewing these plans Natural Resources Wales (NRW) would be expected to gather evidence and report on the state of the natural environment in Wales. The White Paper also states that the natural resource management policy will be issued every five years, 'in tandem with the setting of national outcomes through the Future Generations Bill' (page 26). The EM for the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Bill suggests that NRW representatives on the Public Service Boards will provide the link with the 'Natural Resource Management approach' and will 'strengthen the environmental aspects of well-being plans'.

The consultation document [Positive Planning: Proposals to reform the planning system in Wales](#), which accompanied the [draft Planning \(Wales\) Bill](#), states that the planning system will help deliver the national goals set out by this Bill. The EM for this Bill states that NRW representatives on the Public Service Boards will help link local well-being plans more closely with local development plans. The Environment Bill White Paper sees local development plans as 'the spatial interpretation of sustainable development' and states that they should link closely with single integrated plans (local well-being plans).

The Public Health White Paper, [Listening to you: Your health matters](#), positions the Well-being of Future Generations Bill as an overarching piece of legislation with the capacity to further a 'Health in All Policies' approach. It refers to the creation of local well-being plans as important drivers to improve community planning in relation to health and well-being, and views the inclusion of health in the national goals as a key component of a sustainable Wales.

The proposals set out in [Devolution, Democracy and Delivery: White Paper – Reforming Local Government](#), refer extensively to the provisions of this Bill with regard to Local Service Boards and local well-being plans, which the White Paper states are intended to improve long-term, integrated planning, transparency and accountability. The White Paper proposes two Bills: one in January 2015 providing powers to enable mergers to take place, with a second after the May 2016 election to give effect to what the Welsh Government describes as the 'main merger and reform programme'.

For further information on these proposed Bills see the Research Service's paper of the [Welsh Government's Legislative Statement](#).

## 8. Financial implications of the Bill

A detailed Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) is contained in the EM which presents the costs of several options considered under each of the four main policy intentions.

The EM explains that the current Commissioner for Sustainable Futures is in office until June 2015 and Cynnal Cymru – Sustain Wales are currently procured to provide support and assistance to the existing Commissioner from 2012-13 to 2014-15.

All Welsh Government costs relating to this Bill will be met from the Sustainable Development and Equality departmental budget within the National Resources portfolio.

Table 1 provides a summary of the additional costs that will be incurred as a result of implementing the legislation. Further details of the costs associated with each element of the Bill are set out in the sections below the table.

Table 1 shows the **additional costs of the preferred options total £5m over the first five years of the Bill.**

**Table 1: Summary table of the additional costs of the legislation under each policy intention; 2015-16 to 2019-20**

Policy intention	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	Total
1 and 2) To improve governance arrangements and to embed sustainable development within specified public authorities	158,200	205,100	85,900	107,900	107,900	665,000
3) To establish an independent Commissioner for Future Generations	797,470	745,101	745,101	745,101	745,101	3,777,874
4) To reform integrated community planning	35,500	142,100	131,600	131,600	131,600	572,400
<b>Total additional cost of the Bill</b>	<b>991,170</b>	<b>1,092,301</b>	<b>962,601</b>	<b>984,601</b>	<b>984,601</b>	<b>5,015,274</b>

Source: National Assembly for Wales, *Explanatory Memorandum – Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Bill, 7 July 2014*

**Transitional costs total £332,000 in years 2015-16 and 2016-17** and are comprised of costs to the Wales Audit Office of £244,000 for professional and development training (policy intentions 1 and 2), £52,000 to the Welsh Government for recruiting the Future Generations Commissioner and dealing with transitional arrangements (policy intention 3) and £36,000 to the Welsh Government to engage with Public Service Boards (PSBs) in the initial stages of implementation (policy intention 4).

**Recurrent costs total £4.7m** and £3.6m of these fall to the Welsh Government, £537,000 to PSBs, £520,000 to the Auditor General for Wales (AGW)/ Wales Audit Office (WAO) and opportunity costs of £68,000 to those organisations who will have members on the Commissioner's advisory panel.

**Policy intention 3 is most expensive as it involves the recruitment, staffing and office costs of the Future Generations Commissioner.** The RIA states the costs to public authorities of meeting the requirements of the Bill are expected to remain the same and met within existing resources for setting corporate objectives and reporting against them (policy intentions 1 and 2). Under policy intention 4 additional costs of £537,000 are identified for PSBs which include additional costs for the Police, Probation service, Fire & Rescue Authority and NRW of attending meetings, costs of preparing well-being assessments and additional scrutiny costs.

**The RIA discusses the benefits of each of the policy intentions within the Bill, but is not able to quantify them.** It states under each preferred option that, 'Although un-quantified, these benefits are considered to be sufficient to justify the additional cost'.

## 9. Response to the Bill

On 8 July 2014 the then Minister in Charge, Jeff Cuthbert AM, made statement to [Plenary](#):

Yesterday, I laid the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Bill, together with the explanatory memorandum, before the National Assembly for Wales. This piece of legislation, more than any other, is central to this Government's legislative programme and, if passed, will be one of a few laws of its kind anywhere in the world.

The Bill puts sustainable development at the heart of public service governance in Wales. It represents the next, significant stage in our devolution journey on sustainable development. In so doing, it enshrines in legislation our shared commitment during 15 years of devolution to make sustainability central to everything that we and the wider public sector do. The Bill is the result of a considerable body of work by many people from different political standpoints, but at its core it represents our commitment to pass on a better quality of life to our children and grandchildren. Nothing could be more important.

He continued:

At its heart, the Bill has three key aims that I will highlight today. First, the Bill provides a renewed sense of purpose for public services to plan what they do. It requires all of us to think differently and to plan over a longer period of time. It seeks to end the practice of public bodies working independently of one another and requires that we look for collaborative solutions. Most fundamentally, it requires us to plan so that we recognise challenges before they arise and grasp the opportunities that arise for us as a nation.

Secondly, the Bill embodies international values of sustainable development and wellbeing. It incorporates the Brundtland definition of sustainable development as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Wales is at the forefront of an international dialogue that is seeking to engage people across the world in a debate about the world that they want to see in 2050. Wales, once again, is leading the way. No other nation is taking these bold steps to legislate for long-term wellbeing goals.

Thirdly, the Bill is intended to make a real difference for people and communities. In my portfolio, intervening early is central to our ambition to tackle poverty. There is no better way of preventing poverty than helping people into work by equipping them with the skills they need to succeed.

Russell George AM, for the Welsh Conservatives stated:

Looking at some of the key aspects of the Bill's architecture, the issue of setting goals on the face of the Bill was an important element, and I am pleased that you have listened to the concerns of a wide range of environmental non-governmental organisations in relation to the second goal on biodiversity, and to the Welsh language campaigners in terms of strengthening the last goal.

However, he also said:

In terms of the creation of the role of the future generations' commissioner, I have to say that I am still quite sceptical regarding the creation of another commissioner. I think that we are in danger of commissioner proliferation in Wales, which in itself is not sustainable.

Llyr Gruffydd AM for Plaid Cymru stated:

It is clear that there is a need for a strong and clear vision on sustainable development and the role of the public sector to work towards achieving that in Wales. In order to get to where we all want to be, we need a complete change of culture. There is a need for change in the mindset in terms of how the public sector operates and how we as the people of Wales live our lives. An Act on its own will not achieve that, but legislation certainly has a role to play. Therefore, I welcome the Government's intention to legislate in this area, and I, as others have already said, am keen to make it work.

However, one worries, in looking at what we have been given, that the Government is trying to do that in a way that is much more complicated than it needs to be. I am looking at the goals. There is nothing with which we can disagree in those goals. Does the Minister recognise that there is a danger in the goals that we are trying to be all things to all people and that, as a result, there is a risk that we will not achieve what we want to see realised?

Speaking for the Welsh Liberal Democrats, William Powell AM stated:

It is clear to me, as you have already said, that it would be a strange person indeed who would have any major issue with the main substance of this Bill. However, as is often the case with this form of portmanteau legislation, we do need to ensure that the legislative rhetoric of the goals does not come at the expense of a tangible regulatory framework, and indeed meaningful enforcement where necessary. Further to this, we do need to isolate and strengthen what the unique selling point of this legislation is actually going to be. In order for it to be worth while, it needs, as colleagues have said, to deliver a measurable contribution that could not have been delivered by other means. I think that this case is still to be made, in fact, and it is what I plan to be working on with colleagues as we enter the scrutiny phase of this important Bill.

Mick Antoniw AM said:

Thank you, Presiding Officer. Minister, I am fully in accord with the aspirations and intentions of the Bill, and I am very grateful for the opportunity that you have given over the past weeks to engage in the formulation of aspects of the Bill. At this stage, I would say that there are a number of aspects to it that, I think, are not strong enough and do not reflect what the Bill is about enough if we really want it to deliver what could be a piece of radical legislation.

I will focus on three points. The first is in terms of the principles that are outlined. We need to make these far more focused; for example, a prosperous Wales should, in my view, be a prosperous and socially just Wales. It should also include the issue of social justice. As you know, I have drafted proposals in respect of all of the principles, but I think that, as they stand, they are far too loose and woolly. However, I think that they can be made effective with some fine tuning.

The other point is in respect of the drafting, particularly section 20(1) with regard to public bodies and their response to recommendations from the commissioner. Again, these are too weak. For example, section 20(1) notes that a public body must take all reasonable steps to follow the recommendations, but, according to section 20(1)(b), if it decides on an alternative course of action, of course, it can do so. We need to make sure that that is tightened up.

The other point that we need to tighten up very much is the actual powers of the commissioner, because I do not think that they are clear enough. We need to have some power of intervention among the commissioner's powers. Finally, I think that there is a point with regard to the advisory panel that needs to be far more focused.

**Antoinette Sandbach AM commented:**

Minister, I have real concerns about the framework nature of the Bill. This is the first Assembly to which full law-making power has been given, and it is deeply regrettable that Bills that are coming before the National Assembly for Wales are seeking to take scrutiny functions away from Assembly Members and to concentrate power in the hands of Welsh Ministers. I would like you to look at the Bill and check that that is not happening, and that the commissioner is accountable to the Assembly and not the Welsh Government—after all, sustainable development is the central organising principle of the National Assembly for Wales.

I think that the democratic deficit that was spoken about earlier by William Powell is an important point, because you will be, in effect, creating another quango, and you will be removing the decision-making process from the National Assembly for Wales. I think that, where you are talking about future generations, in those circumstances, any appointment made for a commissioner should be made by the National Assembly rather than the Welsh Government. I look forward to taking up your offer to meet Ministers so that I can raise my concerns about the way in which the Bill is drafted. A badly drafted Bill, which concentrates powers in the hands of Ministers, which then removes scrutiny from this place, will not serve the future generations of Wales.

**Anne Meikle, the [Chair of the Sustainable Development Alliance](#), a group of over 20 organisations, commented:**

The Bill published today is another step in the right direction, but the proposals are complex and we need to be sure they will make public bodies give far greater weight to meeting the needs of our children and grandchildren. Too many political decisions these days give priority to short term gain at the expense of the future.

If this law is to be effective in future-proofing our country, it needs to set clearer goals, which take account of future challenges and give more priority to the long term consequences of today's decisions.

We need to be prepared for a world where there is fierce competition for resources such as energy and timber, and recognise that decisions we make in Wales have a direct impact on people and nature globally.”

It's notable that today's interim report on 'The Wales We Want' highlights climate change as a key issue facing future generations. Yet as it stands, the bill falls short in terms of changing the way the public sector works to tackle such big, long term issues.

On a more positive note, we are pleased that the Government has responded to concerns about a lack of a goal relating to the Welsh environment. As an Alliance, we now want to work with all parties to develop legislation that will give future generations the life they deserve.

### **Oxfam** stated:

The Bill as it stands is a step forward for sustainable development in Wales; however we feel there is room for improvement.

The two main pillars for Oxfam Cymru's work are climate change and inequality and the two are inevitably interlinked. We believe that you cannot effectively address one without the other.

In light of this, we feel the bill does not go far enough to recognise Wales' impact on the rest of the world by firmly addressing the issue of climate change and Wales' contribution to a warming planet.

Climate change does not recognise geographical or political borders and what happens in Wales impacts on the wider world as much as what happens internationally impacts on Wales. We are pleased that the Welsh Government has responded to concerns about a lack of a goal relating to the Welsh environment, but we feel they could do more.

Research indicates that the world's poorest people face the greatest risks from climate change. In Wales we have significant inequalities in income and wealth, with figures released from the UK government last week, revealing 24% of households in Wales living below the average income after housing costs. In light of this, the existing and potential impacts of climate change on people in poverty in Wales, as well as globally are not insignificant.

Failure to embed international scope within the Bill dilutes the meaning and potential of sustainable development as a driving force for positive change and does not provide clear leadership for the rest of the public sector.

The Well-being of Future Generations Bill can help address inequalities at home and abroad but more needs to be done to embed sustainable development into decisions made by public bodies.

We welcome the appointment of a Commissioner for Future Generations, but feel the significance of this post is diminished if it has no more power than to write reports and is appointed by the Welsh Government as opposed to the National Assembly. Appointment by the Assembly would ensure the Commissioners' independence and their ability to hold the Welsh Government and public sector to account.



