



By email

26/06/2019

RE: Gohebiaeth gan y Pwyllgor Cydraddoldeb, Llywodraeth Leol a Chymunedau | Correspondence from the Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee

Dear John,

Thank you for your letter dated 23 April.

Please see below the information you requested.

National Indicators and Milestones

You asked in relation to the national milestones to assist in measuring progress towards achieving the well-being goals set out in the Well-being of Future Generations Act:

- **We would be grateful for your view as to whether the Welsh Government's approach to developing milestones by selecting a small number of indicators to apply them to, as opposed to all 46, is in keeping with its duties under the Act;**
- **Please could you outline whether you believe any revisions need to be made to the existing set of 46 national indicators. If so, what should the revisions be?**

I welcome the approach officials have taken in engaging on the proposed criteria to set milestones and views on the existing indicators in an effort to model the five ways of working and improve involvement within the process.

I understand they have provided a number of opportunities for interested parties to engage alongside the online consultation. I appreciate the work that has gone into identifying the original 46 indicators, and the current proposed selection of 15 indicators among those against which milestones could be developed. This is a difficult task.

In general, I agree with the proposed five essential criteria for selecting the national milestones as outlined within the consultation document and welcome how they are linked to the five ways of

working, however, I have recommended additional criteria that the milestones should be easily communicable.

My office has liaised with the members of my Advisory panel, alongside other interested parties, who have shared their views regarding setting milestones against specific indicators. These views are outlined within my response to the consultation, and I believe some of the concerns highlighted would be mitigated by my proposal to set headline milestones, which would apply to a suite of indicators. I have suggested that there is a case for aligning the milestones with my priority areas which were set following extensive consultation and engagement and involvement of a range of stakeholders and experts. These areas have been selected as areas which, if the right sort of progress is made, have the biggest potential to drive progress across all the wellbeing goals. These could then be used within the grouped themes of: Early Years; People's Health and Well-being; Good Jobs; Fairness and Living Standards; Involved and Responsible Communities; Language and Culture; Low Carbon Economy; Healthy Ecosystems, as proposed within my response to the consultation on the national indicators in 2015.

Whilst I appreciate that national data may currently be lacking in some of the suggested areas, I have invited further engagement on how the Government can be supporting measurement which is future focused.

In my 2015 response, I raised specific concerns regarding the disaggregation of data by protected groups and the inclusion of children. Whilst I understand some progress has been made, I am aware that the Children's Commissioner has raised her concerns regarding reporting arrangements for indicator 6 'measurement of the development of younger children'. I very firmly believe that it is essential to understand and measure the views and experiences of children and young people, it is also vital that indicators are capable of disaggregation by all of the protected equality characteristics and by socio-economic group as we must be able to understand whether certain groups are being left behind.

I have requested that I am updated by Welsh Government on the progress in this area.

Officials have committed to meeting further following the closing of the consultation to explore further my proposed approach and to model what the milestones could look like in practice, which I look forward to doing in due course.

As you are already aware, my office has been working with Welsh Government specifically on the revisions for indicator 46, we look forward to a positive resolution.

Future Generations Report

In relation to the first Future Generations report, which you are due to publish by May 2020, please could you outline:

- **Whether you have commenced work on the development of your report, and if so, how it this work progressing?**

Work on the Future Generations Report started in January 2019. I have established a specific team in my office to deliver on this and all my work across the current year and previous years will feed into the report. I have launched a national conversation specific to the Future Generations Report called '[Our Future Wales](#)' which will include open meetings, closed meetings, online portals including information in BSL and social media interaction in addition to my permanent online listening platform called the people's platform which I launched in June 2019. I have started planning specific meetings with all the statutory consultees and some meetings have taken place throughout Wales, so far in Bangor, Wrexham and Carmarthen. I have developed a range of resources for community groups and schools to use to undertake engagement events themselves and I invite the members of this Committee and all AMs to take part and to encourage their constituents to join in the conversation.

As well as undertaking extensive engagement myself, I will be applying the five ways of working, I will use information which has already been published such as for example the well-being assessments, consultations undertaken by other stakeholder (including the Children Commissioner's latest survey).

- **How will you be involving stakeholders in the development of your report?**

See above. The Act is very clear on who I must involve as part of informing my FG Report – section 24 lists the following consultees: the Commissioner's Advisory Panel, each public body, representatives of voluntary organisations in Wales, any person the Commissioner considers is taking steps to meet the goals or representing the four pillars of well-being, representatives of residents in each local authorities, the third sector, business sector, trade unions, citizens living in local authorities in Wales. This is a huge task and I have already started engaging with these groups since I took post. To walk the talk, using the five ways of working I will also write in the next month to all Assembly Committee Chairs and heads of Welsh Government's departments seeking for their views and evidence they would like to provide. The Committee might also like to know that I am currently working with the WCVA on a Memorandum of Understanding to ensure I have a maximum interaction with the third sector. I am also working with universities, Wales Audit Office and many partners which are stakeholders in this stand of work.

My specific campaign Our Future Wales uses the good practice used during the Wales We Want campaign. We have created information packs and resources for organisations to use in their own time and to feed back to us before the 1st of November 2019. I will hold specific events across Wales, participate in a multitude of events organised by relevant partners but also seek to use innovative and modern ways of engaging such as sentiment mining or twitter chats.

Budget and Prevention

We are aware that you published advice to the Welsh Government, including ten recommendations where you believe its budget needs to take more ambitious and transformational steps from this year onwards.

- **Has the Welsh Government formally responded to your advice on taking account of the Well-being of Future Generations Act in the budget process?**

Welsh Government have not published a response to my advice, but I have had two meetings with the Minister for Finance and I am expecting to meet her again in July.

I am focusing my monitoring of the budget in three areas:

- Developing a Journey Checker on the budget process, demonstrating what can change starting with simple changes, then more adventurous change and finally transformational change. Welsh Government have been receptive to working with us on this so far.
- Prevention: Using the definition of prevention agreed by Welsh Government last year, focusing on how Welsh Government's budget process is prioritising investment in prevention; and monitoring this.
- Decarbonisation: Following the publication of 'Prosperity for All: A Low Carbon Wales' and the recent declaration of a Climate Emergency, assessing the level of investment needed to support the level of ambition; and monitoring this. You will be aware that I have recently published a [10 Point Plan](#) for funding the Climate Emergency which inform this work.

Decarbonisation

The first of the Welsh Government's decarbonisation plans was published on 21 March, please could you outline:

- **Whether, in your opinion, the Low Carbon Delivery Plan gives sufficient consideration to and adequately reflects the well-being goals, five ways of working, and the Welsh Government's well-being objectives?**

I am pleased to see considerable focus on the Well-being of Future Generations Act within the plan, which reflects the emphasis placed by the Decarbonisation team within Welsh Government on following the 5 Ways of working and reflecting the 7 well-being goals and their own well-being objectives.

Part 4 of the Plan – methodological approach – sets this out in detail. The use of the Act is shown by the fact that:

- They have developed a well-being policy development tool (or matrix) to help explore the social, cultural, economic & environmental impact of potential decarbonisation actions. It prompts consideration of the five ways of working, well-being goals & well-being objectives relating to a broad range of areas including jobs, air quality, community cohesion. It identifies expected impacts and suggests where policies can be strengthened in relation to one or more of the well-being goals.
- There is a spotlight on the 7 well-being goals throughout the plan, and for each sector they set-out the evidence from the well-being appraisal that they've followed using their well-being matrix.
- They have also set out how the Ways of Working and considering the well-being goals have guided the development of the Plan – they have adopted the 5 Ways of Working to guide and shape their plan, for example:
 - o Prevention: establishing a Climate Justice Advisory group to ensure a transition that is equitable and avoids unintended consequences;
 - o Integration & collaboration: Decarbonisation is now a cross-government priority, so governance includes a Ministerial Task and Finish group, a cross-government Programme board, and also internal and external cross-sector to facilitate collaboration;
 - o Involvement: they have involved range of stakeholders throughout process.

I am encouraged by their approach, particularly given this is a long-term challenge, but I do feel that ambition, scale and pace of change, needs to accelerate over the next few years, focusing on what can be achieved urgently and over the coming decade to avoid the climate breakdown predicted by the IPCC.

Since the plan was published the Welsh Government has declared a climate emergency, the UK Committee on Climate change has published further advice recommending UK and Welsh Government's increase the target to 100 and 95% (emission reduction) respectively, so future plans will need to be far more ambitious than this one.

- **What changes would you expect to see in how the next plan is prepared, and in the policies and proposals contained within it?**

The Plan is comprehensive and covers a wide range of policies and proposals given the timescales (it is only to 2020). It sets a good foundation, but we will need to see future plans being more ambitious if we are going to address the 11-year window of climate emergency and the ambition of reducing emissions to zero not just 80%.

I believe that their approach, of following the Ways of Working and reflecting the well-being goals and objectives, has resulted in a robust and holistic programme of action and I would encourage them to continue with this work for future plans.

I am also pleased to see a focus on equity and climate justice through the establishment of a 'climate just' advisory group and the announcement of £5 million funding from the ESRC for a new Centre to focus on research into behaviour change on decarbonisation. It is positive to see a strong focus on people and behaviour change however people also need to see that things are actually changing – for example if the majority of new houses being built in Wales are not being built to zero carbon standards, and Welsh Government have the power to set better standards in Wales, why aren't they enforcing these? Again, it is positive to see actions in the plan around setting higher standards for new builds, driving innovation through our Innovative Housing programme, and funding through Sustainable buildings policy, but this is something that could and should have been done 10 years ago so we need to see radical change – e.g. all new homes to be zero carbon, and quickly.

In my response to their consultation last Summer, I highlighted areas I felt were not ambitious enough – for example in the transport sector. Welsh Government's proposed actions did not include anything on public transport whereas the plan now includes:

- proposals to achieve a modal shift from car dependency to sustainable forms of transport,
- significantly increasing modal share of active travel for short journeys,
- using planning policy to promote sustainable travel and reduce the need to travel, and
- increasing travel by rail & bus.

Although their proposals in some sectors (e.g. transport) have improved in the final plan compared to the ideas proposed in the consultation, action and investment to support the significant change that's needed such as modal shift now needs to follow.

There are other areas such as zero carbon new homes which have been discussed and considered for many years – Low Carbon Wales includes a policy to "Set higher energy efficiency standards for new

builds through reviewing Building Regulations Part L (Conservation of Fuel and Power)” but we now need to see firm commitments being made urgently.

As mentioned above, since publishing the plan in March, Welsh Government has declared a “climate emergency”, and the UK Committee on Climate Change has recommended more ambitious targets, so I am expecting future plans to be more ambitious and include stronger commitments such as, for example, restricting car use in urban centres to tackle climate change and air quality issues, further investment in decarbonising housing stock and a closer link between the steps that need to be taken to halt ecological decline especially in those areas such as peatland restoration and tree coverage which also have a positive impact on carbon reduction.

Whilst these proposals are welcome, we now need to see investment to support these actions and this has not been articulated in the Low Carbon Plan. On 21 June 2019, I published my [10 Point Plan](#) on funding Wales’ climate emergency – this contains proposals for areas of investment that should be prioritised by Welsh Government to support their declaration of a climate emergency and in total we recommend £991 million should be earmarked in the next Welsh Government budget (2020-21) to support decarbonisation.

Anomalies in the Well-being of Future Generations Act

During the meeting you referred to anomalies in the Act in relation to your duties in monitoring and assessing public bodies’ progress in meeting their well-being objectives whilst having no advisory role in setting those objectives. You also referred to your duties in advising Public Services Boards on setting and monitoring their well-being plans but that you have no duties on monitoring and assessing progress.

- **It would be very helpful if you could provide further details on where you believe there to be anomalies in the legislation.**

I am required to advise one group (PSBs) as they set their well-being plans with no duty to monitor progress while in parallel I am required to monitor progress towards objectives set by the other group (Public Bodies) for which I did not have any duty to provide advice in their preparation.

I am also in discussion with the Wales Audit Office on the issue of our scrutiny functions and I am thinking of possibly including in my Future Generations Report to be published next year, potential suggestions in relations to such anomalies.

- **In terms of organisations covered by the Act, what is your view on Transport for Wales being added to the list of public bodies in the Act, given its role in delivering Welsh Government policy?**

To date I have worked with Transport for Wales effectively embed the principles of the Act in the procurement process for the rail franchise. It is my view that duties from the Act extend to bodies funded by Welsh Government and this should be set out clearly in their remit letters. However, for the avoidance of doubt and given the significance of Transport for Wales in delivering the aspirations of the Act I would support any steps to clarify that they are bound by the Act that could be taken by the Government.

Climate change

We also discussed with you the opportunities available to NGOs to engage with your work since the Climate Change Commission for Wales was disbanded.

- **We would be grateful if you could provide details of how you take account of the views of those NGOs with an interest in climate change in your decision making, and clarity as to which of the functions previously undertaken by the Climate Change Commission in advising the Welsh Government have been absorbed into your office and which have fallen away.**

Involvement is a key principle within the Act and since my office was established it has been a key focus for all our work.

In line with my duties under the Well-being of Future Generations Act I have collaboratively worked with a range of stakeholders to define my areas and focus and to fulfil my duty to promote the sustainable development duty. This which includes environmental well-being and highlighting climate change as the key issue facing future generations.

In relation to third sector and NGOs, over the last 3 years my office and I have involved many such organisations for example they were part of stakeholder events and meetings organised across Wales in 2016 to establish my priority areas and subsequently third sectors organisations have been involved in every key piece of work undertaken by office – for example in developing my approach to monitoring and assessing, the work that I am currently undertaking on skills, work on developing a [10 Point Plan](#) on funding the climate emergency amongst others. A range of third sector partners and others were involved in the framing of the 4 main challenges facing future generations, one of which was climate change, and have been engaged in taking work forward on these priorities such as housing and

transport over the last few years. I have also entered in partnerships in my Art of the Possible programme to set out a wide menu of inspirational steps public bodies could adopt to achieve the national goals. Several partners were from the NGO/Third sector, and the goal convenor for a More Resilient Wales journey in particular was tasked to involve widely the sector in our work.

To give you more examples of my interactions with the sector, I have engaged with NGOs with an interest in climate change through a number of conferences, events and activities including:

- Presenting at the UK Environment Links conferences, organised by Wales Environment Link, in 2016 and 2017
- Presenting at the Renew Wales conference in 2016
- Engaged with, and presented to, the Assembly Committee on Climate Change, Environment & Rural Affairs (CCERA) climate change expert reference group to discuss our work in 2017 – a number of NGOs are represented on this group
- Co-organised and co-hosted two Zero Carbon Wales workshops with Centre for Alternative Technology, WCVA and WWF (2017)
- Organised a roundtable to inform our response to the Assembly inquiry on “Low Carbon Housing” (2017) inviting a range of stakeholders including WWF, Energy Savings Trust, One Planet Development, Rounded Developments, Community Housing Cymru, Melin Homes, National Energy Action
- Supported Welsh Government stakeholder workshop to inform the development of their well-being matrix – NGOs including FoE Cymru, WWF, WEL were invited to attend
- Supported the organisation of a Climate Just workshop in Cardiff (2018) – invited several NGOs to attend this
- Writing a letter to all Cabinet Secretaries to remind them of their duties under WFG in relation to climate change – this letter was informed by FoE and WWF
- Key Note Speaker at the British Ecological Society/UK Conservation Agencies Symposium: Securing Our Natural Environment for Future Generations (May 2018)
- Spoke at Wales Biodiversity Partnership Conference (September 2018) and Llais Y Goedwig Annual Conference (2018)
- Commissioned Sustrans to support research & produce a report – [Transport Fit for Future Generations](#)
- Organised a roundtable to inform our response to the consultation on Low Carbon Pathway – range of stakeholders invited to attend including Renew Wales, Community Energy Wales, FoE, WWF, Wildlife Trusts Wales, WCVA, Interlink, Groundwork, WEL, Cynnal Cymru (Sept 2018)
- Supported IWA's 3-year Re-energising Wales project, through membership of the sub-group focussed on community benefits

- Worked with many NGOs to develop a [10 Point Plan](#) to fund Wales' climate emergency – including WWF, FoE, WTW, Sustrans, Ynni Sir Gar, Cynnal Cymru, IWA
- Developed strong partnerships with Wildlife Trusts Wales, Wales Co-op centre, United Welsh Housing Association, Fairtrade Wales, Interlink who seconded staff into my office (2018-19) to work on the Art of the Possible programme to develop resources for the seven well-being goals and involvement

In relation to the second part of the question, the Climate Change Commission was established in 2007 to advise Welsh Government, build agreement on action needed, mobilise sectors and share advice and good practice. It brought together key sectors and organisations to tackle the challenges of climate change in Wales.

[Peter Davies reflecting in 2017 on the former work of the Commission said:](#)

“The legislative structure is stronger, but experience indicate that implementation can be bureaucratic leading to slow change on the ground. For example, virtually all recommendations of the Land Use and Climate Change group were accepted by Government but were never fully implemented. Equally the potential of the Active Travel Act has yet to be fulfilled through effective implementation and provides an illustration of this point.”

The Well-being of Future Generations Act sets out that I may provide advice or assistance to a public body, including providing advice on climate change. My budget was modelled on that of another commissioner's office and did not include additional funding to cover the running costs of the Climate Change Commission in Wales.

Having said that, I have advised Welsh Government since early 2017 on the development of their Decarbonisation programme including supporting them on how to embed the five ways of working and consideration of the seven well-being goals into their approach as I explained in my evidence sessions in front of the Committee and in this additional evidence. As I do, I have provided both support and challenge to the government in relation to climate change. Latest in date, on the 21st of June, I published my advice as to the amount of funding which Welsh Government would need to spend to realise the Climate Change ambitions we have in Wales.

And in addition to this, I have been working collaboratively with, and involved, a range of stakeholders in my work on decarbonisation and other priority areas as detailed above.

Following the Act, I would like to stress that we need to address every issue in a holistic manner, and to take great care to avoid silo working or narrow consideration. The reason that I have set the areas of

focus I have is because these are the areas most likely to drive the biggest change across all the wellbeing goals – for example land use, planning, decarbonisation, housing and transport are essential to tackling climate change and meeting our carbon emission targets. There are also significant economic opportunities by focusing in these sectors if we focus on developing the right skills in Wales. It is important in my view that we look at the driver for change holistically (as indeed the Act requires). Taking a siloed approach would be counterproductive and would undo what the Wellbeing of Future Generation Act does, which is to connect issues between 7 goals on an equal footing.

I am currently in discussion with the WCVA about developing a MOU which will set out future arrangements for working through them on specific areas of joint interest.

Thank you again for contacting me. I hope you will find this information useful.

Yours sincerely,



Sophie Howe
Future Generations Commissioner for Wales