



5th June 2025

Equality and Social Justice Committee
Senedd Cymru
Bae Caerdydd
Caerdydd
CF99 1SN

SeneddEquality@senedd.wales

Annwyl Glerc

Re: Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015: Post-legislative scrutiny

Please see below written evidence from the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority to support the Post-legislative Scrutiny of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 being undertaken by the Committee.

Background

The Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority is one of the original public bodies required to meet the provisions of the act. The Authority was part of the early adopters' programme organised by the Welsh Local Government Association prior to the introduction of the act and is represented on the Pembrokeshire Public Services Board (PSB).

Impact

The Act has been successful in terms of changing a number of conversations across Wales, however, it is more questionable how much it has significantly changed action by public bodies. Some examples include the limited spending and priority given to prevention rather than spending on dealing with outcomes. This can be particularly seen in the health sector where an increasing proportion of money is allocated to the health sector at a cost to those services which deliver the wider determinants of health such as education, work, housing, transport and the natural environment. Is this supporting prevention?

While much positive work has been undertaken on decarbonisation and meeting the challenges of climate change, we have still not seen the significant changes to some of our approaches and ways of working and living.

Far greater focus is given to nature recovery currently than in previous years. This is largely due to greater policy direction and availability of funding. However, the outcome of this work is not currently being delivered. This is in part because the methods of funding are short term in focus and are not appropriate for nature recovery work.



Rydym yn croesawu cael
gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg, a
byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth yn
Gymraeg. Na fydd gohebu yn
Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving
correspondence in Welsh, and will
respond to any correspondence in
Welsh. Corresponding in Welsh
will not lead to delay.

Little has changed in the approach to the economy. The main drivers are income and GDP, with little focus given to the Well-being economy.

Public sector funding is still largely driven by the UK Government and its rules. This means that long term investment and security of funding for public and third sector organisations is not provided. This short term, hockey stick approach is ineffective and makes poor use of the available funding. A change in this approach is needed to see real change.

Due to wider funding challenges public bodies are facing and the challenges of delivering day to day services the general public's experience of public services and what they deliver does not always align with the aspirations of the Act. Where transformational changes to services have been delivered by a public body in response to improving day to day services it can be difficult to know whether this is down to the Act or driven by other factors.

Partnership

The Partnership landscape is unnecessary complex and inconsistent. In Pembrokeshire we have a:

- Health Board that operates across Pembrokeshire, Carmarthenshire and Ceredigion;
- Corporate Joint Committee (economy, planning, energy and transport), that operates across Pembrokeshire, Carmarthenshire, Swansea and Neath Port Talbot;
- Swansea Bay City Deal covering Pembrokeshire, Carmarthenshire, Swansea and Neath Port Talbot;
- Partneriaeth – South West Wales Education Partnership, covering Pembrokeshire, Carmarthenshire and Swansea,
- Fire and Rescue Service covering Pembrokeshire, Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion, Powys, Swansea and Neath Port Talbot
- Police covering Pembrokeshire, Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion and Powys
- Public Service Board is for Pembrokeshire
- Regional Partnership Board - Pembrokeshire, Carmarthenshire and Ceredigion

In view of this it is hardly surprising that partnership is challenging and ineffective. An approach where partnership across the public sector follows the same boundaries would remove several of the current barriers.

Organisations operating at a local level have a clear approach towards engaging with PSB and local Well-being plans, however, it is not clear how National organisations feed into the process. The only exception to this is NRW who sit on all PSBs. There is a missed opportunity for organisations such as Sports Wales, Amgueddfa Cymru and the Arts Council to engage with and influence local Well-Being Plans.

Resources

The Act has not led to many examples of sharing resources, including budgets. This has in part being challenging due to budget challenges on public bodies. Without funding it has been problematic to resource PSBs and the complex partnership framework has made it difficult for even large organisations to provide funding for PSBs, especially when they are members of multiple PSBs. The Regional Partnership Boards (RPBs) have had the opportunity to bid for significant funding to support their work, and this has contributed towards breaking down barriers. A similar approach for PSBs may facilitate greater partnership working and move away from the current approach.

Legal Challenge

The absence of legal challenge to the act means that there is little case law to guide future decisions. While the cost of legal challenge is significant the Commissioner may wish to consider limited challenges where public bodies are clearly not acting in a way that meets the act. This would also support public bodies to gain better understanding during decision making of how to balance different aspects of the Act where there may be tensions between different Well-being Goals or five ways of working.

Relationship with other duties

Wider consideration is needed between the interrelationship of the Act with other public sector duties and their compliance, assessment and reporting frameworks and roles of different commissioners. In particular looking at how the Act could act as a conduit for these other duties. This could for example reduce reporting burdens across duties through amalgamating reporting requirements, helping free up public bodies resources and ensure that reports consider interrelationship and balancing of different duties.

Auditing the Act

Work is needed to review how the Well-being of Future Generations Act is being implemented in practice within performance audits by Audit Wales and in the approach they take when undertaking these performance audits.

During the early years some work was undertaken to focus on some of the ways of working, e.g. Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority – Review of Involvement (published in 2020), however, since then Audit Wales have reverted to a more traditional approach to audit, e.g. Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority – Income Diversification | Audit Wales. Over the past 5 years the only audit focused on the Act was the recent audit on setting Well-being Objectives - Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority – Setting of Well-being Objectives.

Some aspects of ways of working have been considered as part of other audits. However, exploration, interpretation and conclusions drawn are often impacted by current audit approach giving more weight to Section 41 (Studies for improving economy etc in services) of the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004 than Section 15 of the Well-being of Future Generations Act. Wider work is needed to look at Value for Money through the prism of the Well-being of Future Generations act, considering also what should be looked at beyond value for money in terms of 5 ways of working. This would support both Audit Wales and Public Bodies in terms of audit process and ensuring the Act is having positive impact on quality of audits and subsequent learning and performance improvements.

If you require any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yn gywir,



Tegryn Jones
Prif Weithredwr



**Awdurdod
Parc Cenedlaethol
Arfordir Penfro**

Parc Llaniôn, Doc Penfro
Sir Benfro SA72 6DY

**Pembrokeshire Coast
National Park
Authority**

Llaniôn Park, Pembroke Dock
Pembrokeshire SA72 6DY

Ffôn/Tel:
01646 624800

Ffacs/Fax:
01646 689076

pcap@arfordirpenfro.org.uk
pcnp@pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk

www.arfordirpenfro.cymru
www.pembrokeshirecoast.wales



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