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Senedd Cymru | Welsh Parliament

Y Pwyllgor Cydraddoldeb a Chyfiawnder Cymdeithasol | Equality and Social Justice
Committee

Ymateb gan: Trafnidiaeth Cymru | Evidence from: Transport For Wales

Jenny Rathbone MS
Chair of Equality and Social Justice Committee
Senedd
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1SN

06 January 2025

Dear Jenny Rathbone MS,

FUTURE GENERATIONS WELLBEING ACT

On behalf of Transport for Wales, as its Chief Transport Planning and Development Officer, please find below some evidence to support the Equality and Social Justice Committee's inquiry on post-legislative scrutiny of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. I hope that this letter also helps inform our oral evidence session on Monday, 7 July 2025.

Earlier this year, TfW published its well-being objectives and a well-being statement as part of our commitment to the Well-being of Future Generations Act (WFG): Well-being goals | Transport for Wales. Despite only becoming a recognised public body last year, we have been embedding the Act through our everyday processes, operations, people, and culture long before our formalisation as a named body.

We have a dedicated internal team who govern the application of our well-being objectives across the organisation and provide support to colleagues to implement the principles and ways of working. We view the WFG Act as feeding into all our roles and responsibilities at TfW, and we must collectively consider the long-term



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impact of our decisions and work better with people, our communities, and each other. Our approach to sustainable development is key to our work, so we are eager to support the Committee's post-legislative scrutiny.

At TfW, we believe the WFG Act has played a crucial role in embedding sustainable thinking into the operations of public bodies across Wales. The Act encourages long-term decision-making that considers social, economic, environmental, and cultural well-being, which we are incorporating into our strategies.

We have found the Future Generations Commissioner and team to be entirely supportive in our development of our strategies. In addition, we have found that the Commissioner's reports have provided us with useful information from its comprehensive reviews and overviews of progress. They provide important context and set out the Commissioner's ambitions and expectations.

In addition to such reports, we believe that establishing clearer evaluation criteria would enhance accountability of those within the scope of the Act and ensure that we are all effectively measuring our contribution to long-term well-being. Such criteria would be especially useful for organisations such as TfW, where the breadth of our activities mean that we are developing and fostering many partnerships supporting many different aspects of sustainable transport.

Furthermore, to better support the alignment of how different organisations are applying the Sustainable Development Principles, there would be benefit in strengthening common accountability mechanisms. For example, by establishing clear and measurable common standards, we would be able to effectively benchmark for performance and create certainty that we are implementing the principles of the Act effectively.

The guidance provided under the Act has significantly helped TfW understand our obligations. It has also supported the integration of well-being objectives into corporate policies, leading to positive changes in governance and strategy development. Despite this, there are still some challenges in interpreting and applying the guidance. We believe the provision of tailored sector-specific support and practical examples, could improve clarity and facilitate better implementation across all public sector bodies.

So, by addressing ambiguities in the legislative drafting of the Act, there would be increased clarification on expectations for public bodies. This would help to improve compliance by ensuring that all organisations have a clear understanding of their obligations and the standards they need to meet, especially when working collaboratively and in partnership with other organisations.

Although the WFG Act sets out legally binding duties for public bodies, we believe that the enforcement mechanisms largely depend on self-regulation and oversight by the Future Generations Commissioner. In practice, this means that while public bodies are required to follow the Act's principles, there are limited consequences for non-compliance. Strengthening enforcement frameworks by introducing clearer consequences for failing to meet well-being objectives could encourage greater





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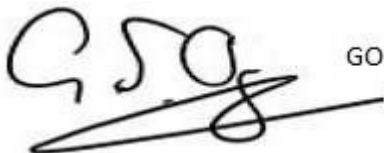
adherence and accountability.

Ultimately, many of the factors outlined in this letter feed into how the Act has represented value for money. We believe the Act encourages significant long-term benefits by encouraging public bodies to adopt preventative approaches rather than reactive policies. By focusing on sustainability and long-term well-being, the Act can help reduce costs associated with short-term, crisis-driven decision-making.

While the Act represents good value for money in principle, its effectiveness depends on how well it is implemented and monitored. Improved efficiency in implementation and clearer measurements of social, cultural, economic, and environmental impact could further demonstrate its value. By strengthening reporting and impact assessments, there will be a clearer picture of how effectively public bodies are meeting the Act's objectives and delivering tangible benefits to future generations.

I hope that this letter provides you with an initial understanding of TfW's perspective and experience on the effectiveness and impact of the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, so far. I look forward to delving into the detail on these points in our oral evidence session in July. If you have any questions in the meantime, then please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Yours sincerely

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Geoff Ogden
Chief Transport Planning and Development Officer