

July 2019

Re: Assessing the impact of budget decisions - Welsh Government response

I am responding to your request for my views on the Welsh Government's response to the joint report 'Assessing the impact of budget decisions'

As highlighted in the joint report, I included comments on the Strategic Integrated Impact Assessment (SIIA) of the budget and the Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) tool as part of the evidence I provided to Finance Committee on the 2019-20 draft budget. My comments included that at the moment the majority of impact assessment processes are retrospective in nature; whilst I welcome the integrated approach of the Integrated Impact Assessment tool I don't think there has been sufficient training, expertise and capacity building for the people doing Impact Assessments; and I think there's a way of finding a lighter touch, high-level impact assessment using the Well-being of Future Generations Act (WFG Act) as a framework, and then a deeper dive where specific impacts have been identified to still cover those areas that are important.

In May Amelia John, Deputy Director for Futures and Integrated Policy Making, presented to my Advisory Panel (which includes the other statutory Commissioners) about the Integrated Impact Assessment tool. She outlined that Welsh Government intend to repurpose the IIA to make a more iterative and creative process to assess impact, and that the WFG Act will continue to frame this work. I understand that her intention is that a working model of this approach will be available towards the end of the year, following testing in a few policy areas. WG have committed to continue dialogue with my office and the offices of the other Commissioners.

I note that the Welsh Government has accepted all of the recommendations from the Committees, including 'Recommendation 4: That the Welsh Government commit to using the Well-being of Future Generations Act as a framework for the SIIA' I do not consider that this has happened sufficiently to date in the budget process, and will continue to scrutinise the effectiveness of the approach in relation to the next draft budget.

Kind regards,

Sophie Howe, Future Generations Commissioner for Wales