



WRITTEN STATEMENT BY THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

TITLE Introduction of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Bill
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BY Jeff Cuthbert AM, Minister for Communities & Tackling Poverty

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Bill 2014 ('the Bill') has been laid today, 7 July 2014.

The Well-being of Future Generations Bill strengthens the existing governance arrangements in named public sector organisations for improving the well-being of Wales. The Bill ensures that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. This will be provided for by securing the sustainable development principle in law.

A stronger framework for delivering a sustainable Wales

The Bill provides for a set of long-term well-being goals for Wales. These are for a prosperous; resilient; healthier; more equal Wales; with cohesive communities; and a vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language. Placing them in legislation will provide a clear definition of the Wales we want – a sustainable Wales, and help deliver the long term consistency and certainty that is needed to tackle the generational challenges we face, for example climate change, tackling poverty, and health inequalities.

The Bill will require Welsh Ministers to establish national indicators to measure progress towards the achievement of the well-being goals and report on them annually. The Bill confirms the aim of public bodies to improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of Wales in accordance with the sustainable development principle.

Achieving the goals – specified public authorities

To ensure progress is delivered, the Bill places a duty on each specified public authority to set out objectives that are designed to maximise its contribution to the achievement of the well-being goals. This will mean a much improved focus on what specified public authorities are seeking to achieve in order to improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of Wales, for current and future generations.

When setting and subsequently taking steps to achieve the objectives, specified public bodies will be required to do so in a manner that is consistent with the sustainable development principle which is defined using the internationally recognised and accepted definition of sustainable development.

This principle is intended to influence an organisation's governance to ensure the organisation best achieves its well-being objectives, and subsequently maximises the contribution that it can make to delivering a sustainable Wales.

Long-term Thinking – balancing the need to take action to address current issues with the need to meet the long term needs of Wales. This is especially relevant where their short term actions may have a detrimental effect in the future.

An integrated approach – considering how a body's well-being objective may impact upon the three aspects of well-being contained in the Bill (the environment in which we live, our economy, and society – people and communities), and by considering how well-being objectives impact upon the well-being goals, also how the well-being objectives impact upon each other and in turn the objectives of other public bodies.

Engagement – involving the people and communities with an interest in the well-being objectives, engaging them in finding sustainable solutions.

Collaboration – acting collaboratively with other bodies, or different parts of a body acting together in a co-productive way, to assist in the achievement of the body's objectives, or another body's objectives.

Preventative Action – deploying resources to undertake action now in order to prevent problems occurring or getting worse.

The Bill will increase the transparency of specified public authorities by requiring them to explain every year the progress they have made toward achieving their well-being objectives, which must contribute to the well-being goals for Wales. It will also require these bodies to state how they propose to govern themselves and ensure that resources are allocated annually to fulfil the duty.

Supporting the change and safeguarding the interests of future generations in Wales

The Bill will establish a Future Generations Commissioner for Wales, to promote the sustainable development principle and monitor and assess the achievement of the well-being objectives set by the specified public authorities. The Commissioner will support those bodies in implementing the requirements of the Bill and embedding sustainable development at their core. The Commissioner will be able to require information and make recommendations to those public bodies, who will then be required to respond.

Reforming integrated community planning

The Bill will reform the approach to integrated community planning in Wales by putting it on a statutory basis. The provisions for the establishment and operation of Public Services Boards will address how the members of those Boards assess the economic, social and environmental well-being of the areas they serve and plan together to improve the well-being of those areas and the people and communities within them.

The reforms are intended to reduce the number of plans and strategies by enabling members of Public Services Boards to incorporate a number of these into their local well-being plans. This will also improve the coordination of the ways in which members of the Boards adopt and operate such plans and strategies, while placing them within the framework of national goals and indicators. The Bill will also strengthen the accountability of partnership working to local democratic scrutiny.

Sustainable Development Charter

Although the Bill does not set goals on non-public bodies, the SD Charter can help public, third sector and private organisations work together as it embodies the same sustainable development principle as the Bill. There are over 200 members of the SD Charter and it continues to grow. In the future, I hope the Charter will continue to act as a catalyst for sustainability, learning and innovation – and make a strong contribution to the Wales we Want.