

National Assembly for Wales
Environment and Sustainability Committee
WFG 75
Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Bill
Response from National Museum Wales

Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales response to General principles of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Bill consultation

September 2014

Background to Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales – information and context

Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales was established by Royal Charter in 1907. The Museum receives its core funding through grant-in-aid from the Welsh Government as a Welsh Government Sponsored Body. Amgueddfa Cymru's Charter objective is *'the advancement of the education of the public'* which involves developing, caring for, studying and sustaining access to Wales's national museum collections for the benefit of society in perpetuity. Amgueddfa Cymru already has a strong commitment to sustainable development in its broadest sense and it is embedded within our current Vision of being a 'world-class museum of learning' which was introduced back in 2005. Amgueddfa Cymru is currently in the process of developing a new 10 year Vision for the future and the principles of sustainable development will be central to the delivery of services designed to meet the needs and well-being of future generations in Wales.

Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales operates seven national museums across Wales: National Museum Cardiff, St Fagans: National History Museum, National Roman Legion Museum, Caerleon, Big Pit: National Coal Museum, Blaenafon, National Wool Museum, Dre-fach Felindre, National Slate Museum, Llanberis and National Waterfront Museum, Swansea.

Amgueddfa Cymru has a long history of providing specialist advice on issues that impact on Sustainable Development through its Department of Natural Sciences. Amgueddfa Cymru has a close working relationship with scientific research centres and environmental organisations across Wales and beyond. We also deliver programmes on education for sustainable development in a range of accessible and engaging ways to both the formal education sector (as the largest provider of education outside the classroom in Wales) and informally to our general visitors. We seek to explain sustainability issues to the 1.6m visitors that we welcome each year, and those who use our website annually, and recently developed the travelling exhibition "Climate change - what's occurring?" which has now been shown at many venues around Wales and seeks to encourage communities to understand the impact that residents have on the environment.

Amgueddfa Cymru, like all museums can play an important role in relation to community cohesion and the well-being of citizens which is a key element of sustainable development. All of the Amgueddfa Cymru museums interpret and work with the communities in which they are located and with various communities across Wales linked to specific collections. Furthermore, in addition to projects which bring together geographical communities, the Museum also engages in projects with groups who are at particular risk of social exclusion, including asylum seekers, refugees and people with mental health problems.

As an organisation, Amgueddfa Cymru has invested significantly in its own sustainability credentials, working closely with the Carbon Trust and the Welsh Government. A DVD was made by the Carbon Trust that focuses on the work the Museum has undertaken to reduce its carbon footprint.

Comments on the specific points in the terms of reference to the inquiry

1. How the Welsh Government should legislate to put sustainability and sustainable development at the heart of government and the wider public sector;

We understand the need to ensure consistent application of the principles of sustainability and sustainable development across government and the Welsh public service, and the introduction of legislation will make everyone involved consider these seriously. However, it is vitally important that the legislative approach applied **respects the diversity of the Welsh public sector** and the organisations within it. Only by ensuring that this **distinctiveness** is part of the solution, will the implementation of legislation achieve the best possible outcome.

2. The general principles of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Bill and the need for legislation in the following areas:

- **The “common aim” and “sustainable development principle” established in the Bill and the “public bodies” specified;**

Amgueddfa Cymru agrees with the common aim of public bodies to improve well-being, which is to improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of Wales in accordance with the Sustainable Development Principle. However, we feel that this should also be extended to also encompass educational and cultural well-being ensuring that the legislation supports organisations in achieving a better quality of life for our own and future generations in ways which promote social justice, equality of opportunity and enhance both the natural environment and cultural environment, respecting their limits.

We understand that both the ‘common aim’ and the ‘sustainable development principle’ work together to provide a definition but feel that it will be extremely important for the Welsh Government to promote a single definition as widely as possible to improve public understanding about this bill and what it is designed to achieve so that Sustainable Development in Wales will become a way of being which reflects Wales’s culture in the broadest sense. We would also like to note that the Welsh Government uses a number of different definitions of Sustainable Development in various documents and clarity on a single definition would be helpful.

- **The approach to improving well-being, including setting of well-being goals, establishment of objectives by public bodies and the duties imposed on public bodies;**

The approach of applying clear and well described well-being goals, embracing Wales’ culture, is welcomed and will help focus in delivery. However, we feel that the well-being goals should be strengthened to reflect Wales’ diversity in general, which is a real strength of the nation, and in particular, the diversity of both economies and environments across Wales and the multiplicity of cultures within Wales.

While we understand the need to ensure consistent application of Sustainable Development principles across the Welsh Public Service, it is vitally important that the systems and mechanisms applied **respect the diversity of the sector** and the organisations within it. The Bill needs to avoid the creation of additional bureaucracy by working with the strategic and operational planning frameworks already established in all public bodies, thereby avoiding additional layers of reporting. This is especially critical within the current financial context, where public bodies are under extreme financial pressures. We endorse the fact that the sustainable development principle can actually help public bodies manage their resources better within this context but the demands of measuring

progress and reporting it could lead to too much time documenting evidence, auditing etc. and as a result the benefits would be negated.

- **The approach to measuring progress towards achieving well-being goals and reporting on progress;**

The achievement of well-being goals may take many years to come to fruition and the outcomes are often intangible and difficult to express. It is important, that within the Bill, it is recognised that annual reporting will only reveal an indicator of change and the direction of that change.

- **The establishment of a Future Generations Commissioner for Wales, the Commissioner's role, powers, responsibility, governance and accountability; and**

Amgueddfa Cymru supports the establishment of this role and supports the role having a basis in law.

- **The establishment of statutory Public Services Boards, assessments of local Well-being and development / implementation of local well-being plans.**

No comment.

3. How effectively the Bill addresses Welsh international obligations in relation to sustainable development;

Amgueddfa Cymru welcome the UN and EU perspectives and requirements being taken into account in relation to the Bill.

4. Any potential barriers to the implementation of these provisions and whether the Bill takes account of them;

As already mentioned, the current financial situation across the public sector, means that organisations are becoming increasingly stretched, with fewer staff and resources, and this could be a barrier to the implementation of these provisions.

5. Whether there are any unintended consequences arising from the Bill;

No comment

6. The financial implications of the Bill (as set out in Part 2 of the Explanatory Memorandum and Regulatory Impact Assessment; which estimates the costs and benefits of implementation of the Bill); and

No comment

7. the appropriateness of the powers in the Bill for Welsh Ministers to make subordinate legislation (as set out in Chapter 5 of Part 1 of the Explanatory Memorandum, which contains a table summarising the powers for Welsh Ministers to make subordinate legislation).

No Comment

