

Update on voluntary sector involvement in implementing WBFG Act

**Third Sector Partnership Council
20 November 2019**

A Civil Society Stakeholder Forum on the Well-being of Current and Future Generations?

Purpose

1. To provide an update to TSPC members on the action to explore the idea of a civil society stakeholder forum on the Well-being of Future Generations.

Background

2. At the May 2019 TSPC meeting, two actions were agreed under Agenda Item 2 which included a discussion on involvement and co-production. These were:
 - a) The Deputy Minister and Chief Whip (DMCW) to ask officials to explore potential arrangements for a stakeholder forum to support the Welsh Government in its implementation of the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 (WFG Act).
 - b) TSPC (via Ruth Marks) to approach the Future Generations Commissioner to update her on discussion.

This paper has been jointly drafted by the Welsh Government (Action A) and WCVA (Action B).

Action A – Civil Society Stakeholder Forum

3. The proposal to consider establishing a 'Forum' on the implementation of the WFG Act originated in the work led by the third sector and Welsh Government which resulted in the 'All Together Report' (2018). Following a further workshop in May 2019 with third sector organisations, the TSPC meeting in May discussed the proposal and the commitment was made to explore this further. It was suggested that the scope of the work should be multi-sector, in recognition there has been little opportunity for engagement between the private and public sector on this agenda.
4. In addition to the 'All Together' report, views and suggestions on the involvement and engagement of stakeholders in the Welsh Government's work has also come from:
 - a. The work to feed in Wales' experience into the UK Voluntary National Review of the implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals in the UK and the Wales and the SDGs supplementary report.
 - b. International practice on engaging people on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals particularly under the UN banner of 'Multi-stakeholder' partnerships (SDG 17);
 - c. Emerging work by WCVA led work with WWF/Cynnal Cymru on international practice.

5. Since May, the Futures Team within Welsh Government has continued this conversation with stakeholders and engaged on 'Wales and the Sustainable Development Goals'. The insight and conversations have identified different needs/requirements and expectations from stakeholders on the question of a 'forum' and 'engagement' on the implementation of the WFG Act by Government'. These are summarized as:
 - a. To find out what the Welsh Government is doing (on the WFG Act)
 - b. To provide expertise as a critical friend to the Welsh Government
 - c. To help to mobilise action (covering individual and community action, as well as action by people in organisations)
 - d. To share good practice and get advice
6. The requirements from these four areas is potentially broad and diverse and therefore it would be unrealistic to assume that a single solution such as a 'forum' would address the differing stakeholder needs. To understand these four requirements better and to scope and explore potential solutions, two multi-sector workshops were delivered on 17th and 29th October. The workshops were structured to consider possible solutions for each of these requirements. Participants were also asked to identify existing forums, groups or ways that could provide an alternative method for meeting these needs.
7. The workshops were attended by 35 people from third sector, HE/FE sector, public sector and private sector organisations. The participants identified possible solutions and different options. Evaluation forms show that attendees valued the opportunity to work collaboratively with people from different sectors and the process of designing solutions.
8. The ideas proposed by the workshop participants for each of the requirements are currently being analysed. It is too early to present fully developed options, so this paper shares some initial insight into the success criteria for each of the requirements.
9. This initial analysis tells us that good engagement by the Welsh Government on the WFG Act should be:
 - a. Focused on the well-being goals
 - b. Open and accessible
 - c. Bi-lingual
 - d. Informative
 - e. Making better use of digital and social media platforms
 - f. Empowering people to take action
 - g. Easy to use
 - h. Building connections across sectors and with Welsh Government
 - i. Involve two-way communication

10. For Requirement (a) 'what Welsh Government is doing' and Requirement (b) 'provide expertise', the following criteria relating to transparency and accessibility was also important:

- a. Information about portfolio and departmental current and future policy and plans
- b. Who has responsibility in Welsh Government (politicians and officials) for different aspects relating to different well-being goals and aspects of the WFG Act and how to contact them
- c. A commitment to listening

Having access to decision-makers in Welsh Government at early stages of policy development was an important factor for stakeholders who wanted to provide expertise and be a critical friend to government. These stakeholders also wanted this role to be properly valued.

11. There were enough common criteria and solution ideas for Requirement (c) 'mobilising action' and Requirement (d) 'sharing good practice and getting advice', to suggest that a single, solution for these two needs may be feasible. These criteria include:

- d. Sharing good practice and exemplar case studies
- e. Web-based and face to face options
- f. Self-mobilising

Next steps

12. The ideas for solutions offered by the participants are being refined, and will be tested to inform an options paper for the DMCW in the new year. We will be in a position at the TSPC meeting in November to present some early thoughts about possible solutions for discussion.
13. Workshop participants and TSPC members are invited to work with the Futures Team during the testing phase. This will involve testing solutions against the success criteria identified at the workshops, mapping the journey of future users to check that the solution will meet their requirements and assessing the resource requirements for implementation.

Action B – Dialogue with the Wellbeing of Future Generations Commissioner

14. The Future Generations Commissioner and WCVA have a shared belief that third sector organisations in Wales will have a key part to play if Wales is to achieve the Well-being Goals under the WFG Act. Both the Future Generations Commissioner's Office and WCVA have a role to play in supporting third sector to do this.
15. WCVA and the Future Generations Commissioner are developing a Memorandum of Understanding that will be supported by an annual work plan setting out how they will work together to enable third sector organisations to make a bigger contribution to achieving the Well-being Goals.
16. A key action proposed is biannual meetings between the Future Generations Commissioner and third sector networks. The first is due to take place on 13 November. The meeting will discuss the work that the Commissioner is undertaking to prepare for her Future Generations Report 2020. It will also be an opportunity for third sector networks to highlight discussions taking place around the Welsh Government's stakeholder forum and third sector networks.

17. The report prepared by Cynnal Cymru looks at the need for a third sector-led coalition focussed on sustainable development – or current and future well-being in Wales. Such a coalition could increase expertise in the voluntary sector around sustainability. It could also develop as a more dynamic network, supporting mobilisation across voluntary and community organisations in Wales.

The Third Sector Partnership Council is asked to:

To note the paper