



Our ref: ATISN 20762

Date: 30 July 2024

Dear ,

### ATISN 20762

Thank you for your request for information under the Freedom of Information Act (2000) received on 3 July 2024 which I received on 12 July 2024. You asked for the following information:

1. The Welsh government actions/enforcement procedure for councils that do not consider/are in breach of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act 2015.
2. Guidance notes for councils regarding their responsibilities under the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act 2015.

### Our Response

Taking each of your requests in turn:

1. ***The Welsh government actions/enforcement procedure for councils that do not consider/are in breach of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act 2015.***

The Welsh Government receives its assurance of compliance with the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 ("the Act") through various reporting mechanisms, such as:

- Public bodies' annual reports of their progress towards meeting their well-being objectives.
- Reports from the [Future Generations Commissioner for Wales](#).
- Reports from the [Auditor General for Wales](#).

The Act requires Welsh Ministers to issue guidance to public bodies to support them in meeting their duties within the Act, which public bodies must take into account. This guidance can be found on the Welsh Government's [webpages](#).



## Public bodies – reporting on well-being objectives

Public bodies listed in the Act are subject to the well-being duty, which requires that public bodies set well-being objectives and take all reasonable steps (in the exercise of their functions) to meet those objectives. There will always be a limit to the amount of finance, people, time and assets that are available to take the necessary action, but the consideration of these factors needs to be reviewed through the five ways of working provided by the [sustainable development principle](#) balanced with the contribution made by the well-being objectives.

Public bodies are also required to report annually on their progress towards meeting their well-being objectives as soon as is reasonably practicable following the end of the financial year to which the report relates. Their reports are considered by both the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales and the Auditor General for Wales.

## The role of the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales

The Act established the office of the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales (“the Commissioner”). The Commissioner can monitor and assess the extent to which well-being objectives set by public bodies are being met. The Commissioner also has the power to conduct a review into the extent to which a public body is safeguarding the ability of future generations to meet their needs by taking into account the long-term impact of carrying out sustainable development. The Commissioner may review:

- The steps the public body has taken or proposes to take to meet their well-being objectives.
- The extent to which a public body is meeting its well-being objectives.
- Whether a body has set and taken steps to achieve their well-being objectives in accordance with the sustainable development principle.

In conducting reviews, the Commissioner can also make recommendations. Public bodies have a duty to take all reasonable steps to follow the course of action set out in the recommendation by the Commissioner.

## The role of the Auditor General for Wales: sustainable development principle examinations

The Act confers a power on the Auditor General for Wales (“the Auditor”) to carry out examinations to assess the extent to which public bodies have acted in accordance with the sustainable development principle in both the setting of, and steps taken towards meeting, their well-being objectives. The Auditor must carry out at least one examination of each of the public bodies within each ‘reporting period’ (currently once every five years). This report is laid in the Senedd.

The Auditor reports the findings from examinations of public bodies to the body itself, with the relevant outputs also being published by the Auditor when finalised. Public bodies take these reports into account to understand the progress they are making to discharge the well-being duty.



**2. Guidance notes for councils regarding their responsibilities under the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act 2015.**

Welsh Ministers must issue guidance to help public bodies discharge the well-being duty under the Act. Public bodies must take this guidance into account. The guidance, [Shared Future: Shared Purpose](#), contains guidance documents covering core guidance, individual role (public bodies).

The guidance documents pertaining to Local Authorities can be found here:

- Core guidance - [SPSF 1: Core guidance \(gov.wales\)](#)
- Public bodies guidance - [Well-being of future generations: public bodies guidance | GOV.WALES](#)

If you are dissatisfied with the Welsh Government's handling of your request, you can ask for an internal review within 40 working days of the date of this response. Requests for an internal review should be addressed to the Welsh Government's Freedom of Information Officer at:

Information Rights Unit  
Welsh Government  
Cathays Park  
Cardiff  
CF10 3NQ

or e-mail: [Freedom.ofinformation@gov.wales](mailto:Freedom.ofinformation@gov.wales)

Please remember to quote the ATISN reference number above.

You also have the right to complain to the Information Commissioner. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office  
Wycliffe House  
Water Lane  
Wilmslow

Cheshire  
SK9 5AF

Telephone: 0303 123 1113

Website: [www.ico.org.uk](http://www.ico.org.uk)

However, please note that the Commissioner will not normally investigate a complaint until it has been through our own internal review process.

Yours sincerely

