

By email

2nd September 2021

Dear Delyth,

I would like to thank you for the opportunity to respond to the consultation on the Committee's priority areas during the next Senedd term. Several of my recommendations and commentaries below are relevant to other Senedd Committees, but I wanted to flag them to you too because efforts should be made across Committees to integrate respective areas of work. Better integration of policy areas will ensure collective scrutiny, the ability to identify implementation gaps and offer solutions across the Senedd's work. You can find my letters to other Committees [here](#).

I would also like to suggest to you and to other Committees a cross-cutting area, which can be looked at jointly and in collaboration by some, or ideally all, Senedd Committees: Skills for a Green Recovery. A prosperous, equal, green recovery from the impacts of COVID-19 means delivering good quality livelihoods to all, whilst supporting rapid decarbonisation and improving biodiversity. This is reliant on having the right skills and training for our population. My work on skills for the future has highlighted the importance of culture, creativity and communication (in Welsh and English) for a rapidly changing world. This is an area my own team has recently explored, and you can find our latest publication [here](#).

In May 2020, I published the first ever [Future Generations Report](#), which considered the progress made by public bodies in implementing the Well-being of Future Generations Act. It also set out the actions and recommendations public bodies should adopt as they further implement the legislation. I have highlighted for the Committee below the relevant findings and recommendations of the report for your consideration (Annex 1). I would encourage all Committee Members to consider the report and in particular the Section on [A Wales of Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language](#) and [A Globally Responsible Wales](#). I would further encourage the committee to consider its remit across within the context of all well-being goals.

Following the Future Generations Report, I have also published a paper, [Future Fit Programme for Government](#), which highlights the importance of culture for recovery and building back better.

I would also suggest you consider the [upcoming second iteration of the Future Trends Report](#), which will be published later this year by Welsh Government. Annex 2 below provides you with some of the relevant future trends which could impact the Committee's remit.

I would also advise all Committees to consider how their chosen priority areas align with the objectives and steps within the published [Programme for government](#).

I have highlighted the relevant findings and recommendations, which emerged from my work, to help the Committee select the specific areas they will focus on during the next Senedd term. My team and I would be happy to meet with Committee Members or clerks to discuss this further, if you think that would be useful.

Culture

Culture is one of the dimensions of sustainability set out in the Well-being of Future Generations Act and, as such is an intrinsic part of well-being that we must promote and improve for the benefit of our future generations.

Culture is part of the DNA of Wales. It's an identity, a language we speak, an industry; something that is experienced and something we engage in. From the clothes we wear, the music we listen to, and the games we play, being a member of a local sports club, visiting the theatre, singing in a choir, the movies we stream and the television we watch, browsing the internet in your local library, or going to the church, chapel, the synagogue, mosque or temple.

During the pandemic, cultural organisations and practitioners experienced a significant surge in usage of their digital resources and services, and in the arts many people turned to or rediscovered the value of creative activity to help cope with the difficulties of lockdown. It is clear that during the most difficult times, interaction with culture and being creative are vitally important as a coping mechanism, a way of retaining a sense of normality and maintaining a degree of connection with others in the community, and are meaningful and beneficial activities to pursue.

But in parallel the cultural and creative professionals have been amongst the hardest hit during the pandemic, falling through the gaps on access to the furlough scheme and experiencing the worst effects of the precarious nature of their work.

While policy initiatives launched by governments during the COVID-19 pandemic were needed and welcomed, there is a need to answer broader questions of public policy and creative practice and I hope that my findings below will be useful for the Committee to help address some of these questions.

The findings that emerged through this work include:

- Welsh Government are able to show some evidence on how they are supporting the cultural economy but need to ensure they are applying principles of sustainable development across all policies in this area.
- More needs to be done to promote creativity as part of lifelong learning and into current workforces.
- Funding to support cultural assets, production and delivery is not always seen as essential and can be the first thing to go when budgets are considered by public bodies.
- Public bodies are starting to recognise culture as a powerful tool that can help raise awareness of environmental challenges, but a more coordinated approach is needed in order to scale up the many examples across Wales.
- The impact of culture on health and well-being is being increasingly acknowledged and there are some innovative programmes, which should be shared and scaled up.
- The culture and sport community recognise their role in meeting a range of well-being objectives, but this is not always sufficiently acted upon by public bodies.
- The response to the COVID-19 crisis is triggering a greater appreciation of the role of culture and sport and innovative ways of involving and people.

- A greater focus on access to culture and the promotion of cultural equality and justice is needed by public bodies.
- The values and opportunities of a culture recovery needs to be embedded across all government programmes.

During the last 6 months, I have been developing a Freelancers and Public Bodies Pledge alongside Welsh Government. This Pledge will aim to partner freelancers with public bodies across Wales in tackling challenges such as loneliness and isolation, town and city regeneration, mental health and lifelong learning. I believe there is an opportunity to build on the relationships already established by public bodies to view challenges and solutions through the culture and creativity lens. This builds on my ambition for there to be a 'Creative in Residence' in all public bodies in Wales.

In July, I convened a meeting of cultural bodies in Wales to discuss my further advice to Government and to explore the sector's role in shaping COVID recovery. This is an energized sector with much to offer in supporting Welsh Government deliver its Programme for Government, building on their innovative and exciting work during the last 18 months in particular. I would further encourage the Committee to consider how the cultural sector in Wales could be supported to work beyond its traditional remits in wider policy areas and in tackling future trends. I am currently leading a joint letter with cultural bodies in Wales to the Government, highlighting the opportunities to work with the sector in meeting its Programme for Government and Well-being Objectives. The Well-being Objectives in which the cultural sector can support include (but are not limited to):

- Continue our long-term programme of education reform, and ensure educational inequalities narrow and standards rise.
- Provide effective, high quality and sustainable healthcare
- Build a stronger, greener economy as we make maximum progress towards decarbonisation.

All efforts should be made by Government to promote cultural well-being across its policy, financial and process decisions, seeking to maximise its contribution to all well-being goals in partnership with others. I will share my final letter to the Deputy Minister for Arts and Sport with the Committee when it is published.

Based on my existing advice and work, I would encourage the Committee to consider focusing their work on culture around the following themes:

- **Culture and creativity as a valued core dimension of well-being.**
- **Culture as a mechanism for wider change.**
- **Ensuring culture is available to all.**
- **Support young people to experience and work within the creative and cultural industry**
- **Support culture led intergenerational activity to tackle loneliness and isolation, Welsh language promotion, mental health and community cohesion.**
- **A revised national Culture and Creativity Strategy**

Welsh language

My findings in relation to the Welsh language include:

- The target of a million speakers and an increase in those who speak Welsh daily to 20% by 2050 is an ambitious policy, but more action across all public bodies is needed to achieve this target.
- The Welsh language must play a full part in the latest technological developments to ensure that it remains a modern language used in all aspects of everyday life.
- Welsh Government is continuing to show political will and determination to improve and promote the Welsh language but more needs to be done to address the loss of Welsh language skills when young people move beyond statutory education.
- Public body objectives and steps do not always meet the level of ambition needed to achieve this goal and are not demonstrating sufficiently how they will contribute to the national target of a million speakers and an increase in those who speak Welsh daily to 20% by 2050.

I too would like to encourage all Senedd Committees to consider their role in addressing the housing crisis in Wales – in particular its impact on the Welsh Language. The [Brooks report](#) on second homes tells us that the rising figures for second homes are already as high as 46% in some of our communities, while members of these same communities are put on waiting lists for social housing that, with current timescales, might mean they will be able to access social housing in 40 years. I intend on writing to Welsh Government to share my concerns.

Based on my existing advice and in drawing on the advice of the Welsh Language Commissioner, I would encourage the Committee to consider focusing their work on the Welsh Language around the following themes:

- Identify opportunities to promote and use the Welsh language within COVID Recovery approaches.
- The importance of mainstreaming the Welsh language into wider legislation and policy
- Policy interventions that should be introduced to ensure that the Government are on the right track to meet the 2050 targets.
- Policy interventions that should be introduced to address with urgency the housing crisis in Wales, and its impact on Welsh language communities. The need to involve communities to identify solutions is essential.

More detail and advice in relation to culture and Welsh Language can be found in the Sections on [A Wales of Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh language](#), as well as my paper, '[A Fit For the Future Programme for Government](#)'.

I would encourage the Committee to consider these findings and use them to inform their priorities and work in relation to the Welsh language in the next Senedd term.

International relations

The COVID-19 pandemic and climate crisis underline the huge economic, environmental and health inequalities facing the world's poorest countries. For Wales to be a responsible global nation it must prioritize action to:

- Drastically reduce its carbon footprint, particularly through consumption emissions – and reduce its contribution to tropical deforestation, including through public procurement.
- Identify how it can effectively support low-income countries to cope and eventually recover from the pandemic. Until vaccines are available for all, the world's poorest countries will suffer most, and continually, from the pandemic. The Welsh Government should lead a review as to how to effectively support low-income countries health systems by building on existing international health links. This review should include how to support Wales' Welsh international NGOs and charities which are facing budget cuts due to the UK Government's reduction in international aid.

My findings in relation to international relations can be found in the section on [A Globally Responsible Wales](#) and include:

- The Well-being of Future Generations Act is a World-leading piece of legislation, and we have an important role in helping other nations learn from our approach.
- Welsh Government's International Strategy is an opportunity to promote Wales to the World, but we should all be thinking and acting in a way that is globally responsible.
- Wales' contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals is recognised, but we should accelerate the pace of change to ensure we are recognised for action, not just words.
- Wales is globally recognised and respected as a mostly welcoming nation, but we should continue to ensure we're creating a safe and peaceful future for all, ensuring Wales is a Nation of Sanctuary.
- Wales will need to plan effectively for the EU transition period and beyond and ensure our relationship with the World beyond Brexit is based on positive shared values.
- We are using our natural resources faster than can be replenished, but Wales is demonstrating its ambition to become a zero waste, net zero carbon country.

Based on my existing advice and work, I would encourage the Committee to consider focusing their work on international relations around the following themes:

- **Wales as a global citizens and leader.**
- **Ensuring Wales is welcoming, safe and fair to all.**
- **Making the right financial decisions now, to enable future generations to thrive.**
- **Fair, ethical and sustainable supply chains.**

You may also be interested in some of the case studies of good practice that I have been collecting, which are available [here](#). In particular, you might like to look at:

- [Amgueddfa Cymru – widening engagement with young people;](#)
- [Arts and Culture in well-being;](#)
- [Local museums improving well-being;](#)
- [Supporting creative communities.](#)

Once again, I would like to thank the Committee for the opportunity to feed into their priorities for the next Senedd terms. Should you wish to discuss any of the above points in more detail, please do not hesitate to contact my team at ContactUs@futuregenerations.wales.

Yours sincerely,



Sophie Howe
Future Generations Commissioner for Wales

Annexe 1

Relevant Recommendations from the Future Generations Report 2020

A Wales of Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh language

Key Recommendation:

Welsh Government should ensure that its cultural agencies including Cadw, Visit Wales, Creative Wales and national bodies like Arts Council of Wales, National Museum Wales and the National Library are working together to better make the connections between how culture and language are addressing the climate and nature emergencies. The sector should be supported in this work by all government departments and wider public service.

Policy Recommendations:

Welsh Government should:

- Ensure adequate funding for the Welsh language in order to reach the 2050 Strategy targets.
- Ensure that the Welsh language is fully mainstreamed into all Welsh Government policies, guidance and strategies.
- Put long term funding commitments in place to support cultural development and the creative industries across Wales.
- Develop clear, sustainable pathways for people to access and achieve success in the cultural professions.
- Demonstrate that investment in culture is considered important; social return on investment is understood and money is invested in the prevention agenda to support this.
- Develop a national strategic communications campaign to promote the benefits of culture on the wider determinants of health.
- Lead on a cultural landscape partnership programme between cultural and environmental sectors with innovative approaches developed to mitigate key issues identified.
- Develop cultural partnerships akin to the Fusion/Cyfuno model to support skill development and employability. Consider how this could support the national mission in education.
- Ensure the revised national culture strategy is aligned with The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, and fully reflects the sustainable development principle.
- Develop cultural corridors across Wales that encourage public, private and voluntary sectors to connect cultural and creative sites, programmes and institutions to widen well-being opportunities, reach and prosperity.
- Develop a large scale approach to ensuring cultural facilities, programmes and venues are accessible to staff, audiences, participants and cultural professionals; including specific capital pots in place to deal with overarching building developments that are needed.
- Find a way to secure the development of statues of five Welsh women through appropriate Welsh Government funded infrastructure programmes.

Process Recommendations:

In their day to day actions Welsh Government should start:

- Recognising the potential of creativity to support change in policy-making across all government portfolios.
- Showing the long-term impact of investment in culture and language through legacy projects.
- Working with public bodies to identify, support and scale up local cultural success stories.

A Globally Responsible Wales

Key Recommendation:

Welsh Government should create a vision and plan to ensure Wales becomes the most eco-literate country in the world.

Policy Recommendations:

Welsh Government should:

- Ensure the International Strategy is implemented by all Ministerial portfolios and work with the business and voluntary sectors and civil and civic society to maximise its opportunities.
- Ensure it provides clarity to public bodies on how the Social Partnership (Wales) Bill and the socio-economic duty align with The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.
- Be proactive in sharing its approach on delivering the Sustainable Development Goals within the rest of the UK and internationally.
- Build links and alliances with other countries who are leading on sustainability and put in place mechanisms to develop new ideas and share best practice.
- Review its 'Nation of Sanctuary Refugee and Asylum Seeker Plan' in light of evidence from the ACE Support Hub, regarding the adversities experienced by child refugee and asylum seekers.
- Consider implications of the EU Withdrawal Agreement, specifically in relation to the impact it may have on meeting their well-being objectives.
- Continue to support and build upon the successes of Wales for Africa and Plant!, that demonstrate Wales' commitment to being globally responsible.

Process Recommendations:

In their day to day actions Welsh Government should stop:

- Investing in fossil fuels.

In their day to day actions Welsh Government should start:

- Conduct human rights and gender equality assessments of all trade policies and agreements and ensure all investments are ethical.
- Ensuring Wales has measures and indicators that help map what impactful approaches to being globally responsible looks like.
- Better communicating the relationship between the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 to all sectors (public, private and voluntary) and civil and civic society.

- Rolling out the Code of Conduct for ethical procurement and investment, alongside providing clear leadership and support for public bodies in addressing all seven of the well-being goals through their procurement practices.

Annexe 2

Future Trends to Watch

Current Trends:

- There are 38,000 fewer freelancers working in creative occupations since the start of 2020 across the UK.
- The 2019/20 National Survey showed older people (65-74 and 75+) least likely to have attended or participated in arts, culture or heritage activity at least 3 times a year.
- Since the establishment of Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol, there has been over a 25% growth in the number of students studying in Welsh at university.
- [61% of overseas visitors](#) cite our historical sites as a key reason for their visit to Wales.
- Public funding of the arts in Wales decreased by 18% between 2011-12 and 2017-18. Local authority funding of the Arts Portfolio Wales has [decreased from £11 million in 2011-12 to £5.1 million in 2016-17](#).
- The Well-being in Wales 2018-19 report says 62% of all scheduled monuments are classed as being stable or improving, but 14% are still assessed “at risk”.
- Figures for 2018-19 tell us that only a third of adults took part in sport three times a week, with [41% of adults reporting not participating in any sport or physical activity](#).

Future Predictions:

- Wales is projected to [lose 26% \(15,000\) of its creative jobs and see a 10% \(£100 million\) drop](#) in creative industries GVA.
- Based on the 2011 Census, we will have around 666,000, rather than one million Welsh speakers by 2050.