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7th December 2017
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John Griffiths AM
Chair
Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
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Dear John,

Consultation on Local Approaches to poverty reduction: The Well-Being of Future Generations Act and public service boards

The WLGA represents the 22 local authorities in Wales and the fire and rescue authorities and 3 national park authorities are associate members.

The WLGA does not however have a direct relationship with nor does it represent the statutory Public Service Boards (PSBs); although the WLGA previously provided a range of support to the previous Local Service Boards, much of the support work for PSBs is provided by the Welsh Government and the Office of the Future Generations Commissioner. The WLGA is unfortunately therefore unable to provide a detailed perspective on the PSBs' wellbeing assessments or draft wellbeing plans.

The Future Generations Commissioner has however produced an analysis of the [Wellbeing Assessments](#) earlier this year, which provides a useful summary of key issues and references how poverty featured prominently in many assessments. The WLGA understands that several PSBs are planning to contribute evidence to the Inquiry and therefore looks forward to the Committee's conclusions and report.

At the time of writing, all 19 draft well-being plans were being consulted upon by the PSBs, with some plans remaining open for consultation until February; it is therefore likely that there will be some revisions to the draft plans. The draft plans vary, with a number providing an overarching summary vision, with others providing more detail around specific actions. Tackling poverty is a common and consistent theme throughout the draft wellbeing plans and is either included as a specific objective or is clearly implicit in other objectives in the draft plans.

During the Inquiry, the Committee may find it valuable to undertake a broader, supplementary analysis of individual public bodies' wellbeing objectives or their responses on tackling poverty or responding to the demise of Communities First; for example, tackling poverty is a core theme running throughout local authorities' own wellbeing objectives. The Welsh

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Government has produced a useful summary spreadsheet listing each of the well-being objectives published by the 43 public bodies subject to the Part 2 'Improving well-being' requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015).

With regards the Committee's fourth area of interest, there is a recognition and concern about the potential complexity surrounding greater regional working in the future. As the Committee will be aware, the Welsh Government's current local government reform programme proposes greater regional collaboration in several specific service areas. The WLGA is supportive of broad direction of travel and local authorities are already delivering a range of services collaboratively, but have highlighted the risk of greater complexity and the challenges of accountability and governance. The Welsh Government therefore needs to re-examine the inter-relationship between a range of local, regional and sub-regional partnerships and delivery arrangements in advance of any local government reform legislation being published.

PSBs' inter-relationship with statutory social services Regional Partnership Boards have previously been considered, given both involve a number of the same partners and both will inevitably have an interest in the wellbeing of the local population. These issues of regional partnership complexity were highlighted in a WLGA Labour Group discussion paper in September 2016 (which was shared with the WLGA Coordinating Committee for information – [see Section 5](#)).

As the wellbeing plans are finalised and joint actions and objectives begin to be delivered, PSBs are likely to increasingly work together across regions, particularly where wellbeing objectives may align or be better delivered collaboratively, for example, across city region/economic development footprints or local health board/Regional Partnership Board areas. PSBs already have powers to collaborate or merge if they deem it necessary and some PSBs have already either merged or integrated (Anglesey and Gwynedd, Conwy and Denbighshire, and Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda Cynon Taf). Such decisions should remain local however as a balance needs to be struck between placing PSBs or their activities on a strategic regional footprint which may address alignment and a reduced administrative burden on larger partners (such as LHBs, police and fire and rescue services) whilst ensuring a local enough focus and footprint to ensure community relevance of wellbeing plans and collective priorities.

I hope the above is of interest to the Committee's Inquiry.

Yours sincerely,



Daniel Hurford
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