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**Future
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A Senedd for Future Generations

A discussion paper for Senedd Cymru to strengthen awareness and implementation of the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

Prepared by the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales

contactus@futuregenerations.wales



A Senedd for Future Generations

Discussion paper

Introduction

The expansion of the Senedd in 2026 marks a significant moment in Wales' democratic evolution. With increased membership comes not only greater capacity, but a unique opportunity to rethink how our national parliament operates in the interests of both present and future generations. This discussion paper sets out practical solutions to support the development of a future-fit Senedd—one that is better equipped to anticipate long-term challenges, respond to emerging trends, and embed foresight into the heart of its work.

A larger Senedd creates the space to consider new methods for “future-preparedness” of its democratic instruments. This includes strengthening scrutiny through a long-term lens, enhancing legislative processes to better account for future impacts, and ensuring that decision-making aligns with the ambitions of the Well-being of Future Generations Act – improving our population’s holistic well-being today and for the future. It is an opportunity to move beyond short-term cycles, break down silos and embed approaches that prioritise intergenerational fairness.

At the same time, this moment offers a platform to increase awareness, understanding and implementation of the Well-being of Future Generations Act. By improving how future trends are communicated and debated, the Senedd can play a leading role in building a shared understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing Wales. In doing so, it can strengthen citizen engagement, support more informed policymaking, and reinforce its role as a world-leading legislature that takes a long-term perspective.

Building capacity for strategic thinking about the long-term is a discussion that is relevant to all parliaments. For example, following a review, the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body (SPCB) formally agreed to dissolve Scotland’s Futures Forum as a limited company and establish a new futures thinking service within the [Scottish Parliament](#). The review confirmed that futures thinking in a parliamentary context is vital.

This paper has been developed to support thinking for the new Senedd. The paper proposes new mechanisms to strengthen long-term governance.



Post-Legislative Scrutiny of the Well-being of Future Generations Act

Equality and Social Justice Committee, March 2026

The Future Generations Commissioner warmly [welcomed](#) the publication of the [report](#) on the 16th March 2026 by the Senedd's Equality and Social Justice Committee following its post-legislative scrutiny of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

Fit for the Future? The Well-being of Future Generations Act.

The Committee's cross-party approach signalled a shared commitment to strengthening one of Wales' most significant pieces of legislation. Their findings reflected both the progress made and the clear need to ensure the Act remains fit for the challenges ahead.

The Committee's report built on a strong foundation of evidence from across Welsh society, drawing on insights from public bodies, the private sector and civil society. It also reconnected to the spirit of the original national conversation, "The Wales We Want," where thousands of people helped shape a vision for a better future. In doing so, the Committee reinforced an important principle: that the future of the Act, and of Wales, must continue to be shaped with and by its people.

There is strong alignment between the Committee's recommendations and the findings of the Commissioner's [Future Generations Report 2025](#) and the Auditor General for Wales' 2025 Report '[No Time To Lose: Lessons from our work under the Well-being of Future Generations Act](#)'. The call for a formal review of the legislation, alongside stronger public engagement, reflects a growing consensus that the Act must evolve to meet increasingly complex challenges, from climate and nature emergencies to persistent inequalities and pressures on public services. This alignment provides a clear mandate for action.

As you look ahead to the next Senedd, this must be treated as a priority. A strengthened Well-being of Future Generations Act, backed by political will and practical implementation, will be essential to delivering long-term change.

This summary is provided as context for this paper. The full Committee report can be found [here](#).

1.0 Proposals

1. Committee for the Future
2. Embedding the Act within the learning and development offer for Members of the Senedd
3. Cross Party Group for Future Generations



A Senedd for Future Generations

This paper offers a series of practical proposals for consideration by incoming Members of the Senedd, aimed at strengthening the Senedd's capacity to act in the interests of future generations.

These proposals include:

- The case for establishing a Committee for the Future, to provide dedicated scrutiny of long-term issues, as well as to future-proof Welsh legislation as it is being created.
- Opportunities to embed the Well-being of Future Generations Act within the continuous training and development offer for Members, so they can play an active part in scrutinising its implementation.
- The creation of a Cross-Party Group for Future Generations, hosted initially by the Commissioner's office, to foster collaboration across political divides and to involve wider sectors, necessary to improve our collective well-being.

These proposals are intended to inform early discussion and provide practical options for Senedd Members committed to building a better future for Wales, by strengthening accountability structures, enhancing scrutiny of long-term issues, investing in Member capability, and fostering cross-party collaboration.

Taken together, these emerging proposals represent a broader opportunity to position the Senedd as a leading legislature in safeguarding the interests of future generations globally, aligned with the ambition of the world leading Future Generations Act, and alongside other mechanisms such as having an independent Commissioner.

1. A Committee for the Future

A dedicated **Committee for the Future** would provide a focal point within the Senedd for considering cross-cutting, long-term issues. Challenges such as climate change, demographic shifts, technological disruption, community cohesion and intergenerational inequality do not always sit neatly within existing committee structures.

This committee could absorb some relevant responsibilities held by the Equality and Social Justice Committee and the Public Accounts and Public Administration Committee, and even some of the remit of the Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee. This would enable the existing committees to spend more time on other matters.

The **Committee for the Future** would examine legislation and hold the Welsh Government to account by scrutinising its expenditure, administration and policymaking through a long-term, preventative lens, including holding the First Minister to account in their leadership. It could scrutinise both government and committee or private members Bills, ensuring that a long-term lens has been applied. Its remit should also encompass (but would not be restricted to) the implementation of the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015, sustainability, intergenerational fairness, and the integration of long-term thinking across public policy. Additionally, the Committee may investigate any area of policy from the perspective of its cross-cutting focus on future impacts, including how decisions made today affect social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being for future generations.

Such a Committee could:

- Monitor the implementation of the Well-being of Future Generations Act and its elements, including the Future Trends Report, and the progress against national indicators and milestones as outlined in the Well-being of Wales Report.
- Provide scrutiny of the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales and the actions taken by public bodies in delivery of the Well-being of Future Generations Act.
- Undertake horizon scanning and foresight work, ensuring Senedd committees receive appropriate data and evidence, working with established networks and organisations.
- Scrutinise all legislation and policy through a sustainability and long-term lens – publishing advisory statements on legislation under development and promoting amendments.
- Hold inquiries into emerging risks and opportunities.

One idea for consideration is for the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales to act as an observer at these meetings or play the same role as the Auditor General does to the Public Accounts Committee (as permissible by Standing Order 17.55) e.g.

- Supplying the independent sustainability evidence on which scrutiny is based
- Acting as the Committee's principal professional adviser



- Supporting effective questioning and analysis of witnesses' evidence while preserving independence and strengthening accountability by not being a member of the Committee.

(Of course, the Commissioner would not be able to be an observer or adviser at those sessions when his own work was being scrutinised).

Together, the Committee and Commissioner would be central to ensuring an improvement to the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales and ensuring we take a long-term sustainable approach in everything scrutinised by the Senedd in Wales.

An innovative proposal for consideration relates to the Committee Chair. The Chair of this committee could:

- rotate between the Chairs of all the other Committees in the Senedd (every 6/12 months);
- be the Llywydd/ Deputy Llywydd, demonstrating cross-committee integration and awareness.
- be shared with one or more Chair (under Standing Order 17A.1)

Its membership could also include all the Chairs of each Committee. Regardless, it would be expected that this committee maintains good collaboration and communication with all committees.

It is expected that Standing Orders may need to be changed to enable some of these more innovative practices.

The Future Generations Commissioner believes that there is additional value in exploring how deliberative or participatory democracy methods such as a *mini-public*¹ arrangement could be incorporated within Committee structures to embed the lived experience and collaboration of citizens into democratic institutions. 44% of Members of the Senedd in Wales (who were questioned by Carnegie UK) believed involving bodies such as citizens panels could help increase trust. Carnegie UK concluded in the [report](#) the majority of Senedd Members had heard of deliberative democracy before the survey, adding that “openness was relatively strong, with roughly three-quarters saying they would consider taking part”. Over three quarters (77%) of Senedd members questioned said they were open to working with such bodies [deliberative techniques]– compared to 73% of MSPs questioned, 72% of MLAs and 64% of MPs. The Well-being of Future Generations Act has already embedded the importance of dialogue and ongoing conversations with the people of Wales in the decision-making processes of public bodies. There are real opportunities through a renewed Committee framework to further embody the

¹ A mini-public is a form of democratic innovation involving a representative group of citizens, usually chosen by lottery (sortition) to represent the broader population. The group is brought together to learn about, deliberate and make recommendations on a specific policy area. The method provides a source of balanced and informed views to guide decision-making and deepens democratic participation by providing meaningful ways for citizens to be involved in the democratic process between election cycles.



involvement approach – and to encourage increased relationship between citizens and their representatives.

Internationally, similar models have helped parliaments strengthen their ability to anticipate and respond to future trends. These international examples are captured in the Annexe.

It is important to stress that this new mechanism seeks to compliment and strengthen the established infrastructure already in place by the Well-being of Future Generations Act. It would also seek to build on the momentum and learning of legislating for future generations over the last ten years.

2. Embedding the Act within the learning and development programme for Senedd Members

Delivering on the ambitions of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 requires a shared understanding of its requirements and practical application. Embedding the Act within the Senedd's ongoing learning and development programme would support Members to fully use it as a framework for decision-making and scrutiny. This element could be delivered collaboratively between the Senedd Commission, Business Committee, political parties and the Commissioner's office.

The Commissioner already produces a range of general and tailored learning and development opportunities. These can be accessed [here](#). The Commissioner has also previously delivered training to members, their staff, members research team and committees.

New work in this area may include:

- Tailored learning opportunities on applying the sustainable development principle and foresight for Members and Senedd staff.
- Practical tools for scrutinising policies, legislation and budgets through a long-term and sustainability lens.
- Facilitated exchanges for Members of the Senedd to visit best practice examples of sustainable development – national or constituency ones, organised by the Future Generations Commissioner's team.
- A 'Future Skills Retreat' is also under consideration for Senedd Commission staff as well as for Senedd members and their staff.

This area of work would ensure Members and Senedd staff are equipped to implement the Well-being of Future Generations Act effectively in their role.

3. Establishing a Cross-Party Group for Future Generations

The purpose of Cross-Party Groups is to provide a forum for Members of the Senedd from different political parties to meet in order to consider and discuss shared interests in particular subjects.

Most (if not all) of the challenges facing future generations require sustained, cross-party collaboration. A **Cross-Party Group for Future Generations** would provide an informal but influential space for Members from all parties to come together around shared long-term and population well-being priorities.

The establishment of this Cross-Party Group would follow rules for the operation of CPGs (as updated by the Standards of Conduct Committee on 2 May 2023) and its precise remit would be for Members of the Senedd to consider and agree.

The Commissioner's office could provide the CPG's Secretariat.

The Cross-Party Group could:

- Facilitate dialogue on key future trends and risks.
- Build knowledge and understanding of these trends and issues.
- Provide briefings and engagement with experts, civil society, and young people.
- Support consensus-building on issues that extend beyond electoral cycles.
- Create opportunities for Wales to continue demonstrating international leadership.

For prospective Members, participation would offer a chance to engage constructively across political divides and contribute to a shared vision for Wales' future, in partnership with a community of champions for future generations.

Members who are interested in finding out more about this Cross-Party Group are invited to contact the Office of the Future Generations Commissioner for further information via contactus@futuregenerations.wales

2.0

Annexe

A. Committee for the Future: International Practice

B. Nature, Scope and Terms of Reference: what a Wales Committee for the Future would do

Annexe A:

A note on the case to establish a Welsh Parliament Committee of the Future

This content has been informed by a full paper prepared by Cat Tully, School of International Futures, and edited by Sir Bernard Jenkin MP (former Chair, Liaison Committee) and Lord Robertson of Port Ellen, informing the case for a UK Committee for Future.

Examples of international practice

Parliaments with similar constitutional arrangements already have a Committee for the Future, or for Future Generations, or equivalent bodies focused on foresight, long-term scrutiny, and long-term policy.

This is gathering pace. The first World Summit of Parliamentary Committees of the Future, hosted by Finland in 2022, brought together 26 countries. By 2025, when the Summit convened in Chile, participation had grown to more than 70 parliaments, including Ukraine. This expansion has been further accelerated by the adoption of the UN Declaration on Future Generations in September 2024, driving interest in new parliamentary institutions, legislation and participatory mechanisms ahead of its 2028 review.

Finland's Committee for the Future: Finland provides the most established and instructive example for why it matters.

Since 1993, the Finnish Parliamentary Committee for the Future has operated as a standing committee supporting all other parliamentary committees in considering long-term issues. There are four distinctive features:

- 1. System-wide parliamentary support.** The Committee does not compete with other committees; it strengthens them by generating dialogue on major future challenges and opportunities.
- 2. A clear executive–legislative dynamic.** Each electoral cycle, the government produces a cross-civil-service Report on the Future. Parliament, through the Committee, scrutinises this report, explores long-term trends (including intergenerational impacts), and holds the government to account.
- 3. Deep engagement with citizens and expertise.** The Committee routinely engages the public, researchers and practitioners in its inquiries. Finland's national innovation fund, SITRA, reports directly to Parliament, reinforcing democratic oversight of long-term investment.
- 4. Crisis as catalyst.** The Committee was established during a period of profound national disruption following the collapse of the Soviet Union, when Finland lost access to markets equivalent to around 40% of GDP. It was created in response to sustained civil society and parliamentary pressure for a better way to navigate uncertainty.

Importantly, Finland's Committee has influenced not only economic and social policy, but also national security thinking, including defence preparedness and conscription, demonstrating the relevance of parliamentary foresight to core state functions.

Other parliaments adapting similar ideas to their own contexts are:

- **Lithuania** has led parliamentary scenario work looking out to 2050, supporting vision-setting and contingency planning.
- **Estonia, Malta and South Korea** have established parliamentary futures groups addressing demographic change and technological disruption.
- **Chile, Uruguay and Kenya** are using parliamentary foresight mechanisms to explore the implications of AI and system-wide transformation, including through regional cooperation - see the Montevideo Declaration on Anticipatory governance signed by 27 South American Parliament.
- **Italy** amended its constitution in 2022 to embed intergenerational fairness and has introduced mandatory intergenerational impact assessments for legislation, already reshaping subsidy and budget decisions.
- **New Zealand** has embedded parliamentary scrutiny of Long-Term Insights Briefings.

Across these cases, the lesson is consistent: traditional parliamentary structures struggle to address issues that are cross-cutting, long-term and beset with uncertainty. Committees of the Future have emerged as a pragmatic institutional response, to engage with long-term National Strategy.

International examples of deliberative democracy / mini-publics

Basque Country: Citizens' Assemblies

The assemblies involved a civic lottery to identify diverse groups of citizen participants who took part in 40 hours of deliberation in each assembly, supported by experts and comprehensive information. Design and implementation was benchmarked against international standards: the OECD Good Practice Principles for Deliberative Processes framework.

The Tolosa and Gipuzkoa Citizens' Assemblies (2022-2025) brought together a range of stakeholders both local and international including Arantzazulab, the OECD, DemocracyNext, a local university research group, and a local participatory organisation (Prometea). For each Assembly people from Tolosa/Gipuzkoa were selected to engage via a civic lottery, with citizens representing local diversity based on age, gender, education level, and place of residence. Participants were compensated for the time they spent engaging in the initiatives. The Assemblies met over several months and engaged in approximately 40hrs of deliberation on two set topics i) mental health (Tolosa Assembly) and ii) the climate emergency (Gipuzkoa Assembly). Participants were provided with comprehensive information on each topic and sessions were facilitated by experts, with time set aside for group deliberation. Repeat sessions allowed for issues to be discussed at length and for participants to collaborate and find consensus, which then informed the development of recommendations. Recommendations from each Assembly were drafted and put forward to local officials. Council officials reviewed the recommendations from both Assemblies, adopted the majority, and provided further updates on implementation in 2023, 2024, and 2025.

Outcomes/Impact/Evidence of public participation leading to change:

Recommendations from both Assemblies were adopted by officials with the majority (across the two Assemblies) being implemented by local/regional government. Officials engaged in follow-up events and meetings which were held annually up until two years after the recommendations had been adopted. The Tolosa Assembly was independently evaluated by experts from the University of the Basque Country.

The process was noted to have a ripple effect and impacted over 200 individuals involved in various capacities, fostering the development of a culture of deliberation and support for future initiatives.

Belgium – Ostbelgien Model

Ostbelgien is the German-speaking community of Belgium and has legislative power over areas including health and education. First region to have a permanent role for citizens as part of democratic processes mandated by law. Combination of two citizen bodies: a Citizens' Council that selects a topic and convenes Citizens' Assemblies to discuss the topic and produce policy recommendations. The Council is responsible for setting the agenda and preparing Citizen Assemblies and the follow-up of recommendations. The Council is made up of 24 citizens who are randomly selected and aims to be representative of the population. Council members are in post for 18 months; it aims to avoid parliament-like long terms and to give more citizens the opportunity to participate. A Permanent Secretary is also in post which is an administrative role that supports both the Council and the Assemblies, ensuring smooth operation and coordination with the Parliament. Previous topics have included improving working conditions of healthcare workers, inclusive education and sustainable housing.

Citizen Council members meet regularly with politicians to discuss the implementation of their recommendations and are invited to sit in on committee meetings to follow the implementation process and ensure politicians understand the Citizen Council's intention. The process is seen to enhance transparency and accountability.

Annexe B: Nature, Scope and Terms of Reference: what a Wales Committee for the Future would do

This content has been informed by a full paper prepared by Cat Tully, School of International Futures, and edited by Sir Bernard Jenkin MP (former Chair, Liaison Committee) and Lord Robertson of Port Ellen, informing the case for a UK Committee for Future.

A Welsh Committee of the Future (which could be a joint Committee for elected Members of the Senedd and external stakeholders) would not be a rival to existing committees, but a new Committee and a new capability. It's inquiries and reports would be an additional resource for existing committees.

Drawing directly on international experience, its functions would include:

1. Creating political demand for system-wide change.

Evidence from UK and international experience shows that civil service change in government is only effective when ministers backed by Parliament set clear direction.

This is of particular importance when long-term, systemic thinking is required.

The UK Parliament Liaison Committee recommended stronger parliamentary engagement with national strategy. This was reinforced by the Heywood Fellowship's conclusions. It is supported by the findings of a global comparative study on effective governance systems conducted by SOIF for Patrick Vallance in 2019, when he was Chief Scientific Adviser.

2. Sustaining scrutiny of the long-term

The Committee would be a dedicated space for this, mandated to look at issues affecting future generations, and engaging with them. This can be rigorous, technical and structured: for example, building on the UK APPG on Future Generations' [Future Check](#) pilot.

3. Commissioning studies on forecast scenarios and future technologies

This would include:

- future-focused inquiries on emerging issues,
- scenario exercises and horizon scanning on emerging issues - or big complex issues, and
- new tools and techniques - including from international good practice, emerging horizon scanning and early warning systems, intergenerational assessments.

4. Supporting other committees

It could offer comparative examples, inquiry templates and futures perspectives to other select committees, helping embed long-term thinking across Parliament without structural upheaval.



5. Strengthening democratic participation

It could carry out structured citizen and youth engagement on long-term issues, ensuring that futures thinking is participatory and democratic, not technocratic — and helping rebuild trust between Senedd and the public.