

## **Briefing from 16<sup>th</sup> January 2018 Conference**

### **'The role of scrutiny in relation to Future Generations' - Welsh Audit Office**

Delegates were asked to reflect on current practice in relation to the five ways of working and considered possible alternative approaches in their application to scrutiny.

The seminar looked to explore, how we choose topics, how we look at it and how we report it?

We were advised that there can no longer be 'business as usual' in relation to scrutiny.

The main points from the event are as follows;

- We tend to scrutinise current working situations. We focus on the here and now in scrutiny and now we need to look at scrutiny as a longer term approach
- Scrutiny in relation to the Future Generations Act needs to look outside of the main topic we are scrutinising. It needs to take into account the act and its requirements/ethos
- There is a move toward prevention and for crisis/firefighting work to stop. Need to invest early on and take long term approaches to problems
- Want to involve the public in a real way. High level consultation doesn't tend to work
- Need to realise that small cuts at a local level make big impacts long term
- It is difficult to make long term decisions based on budgets which are measured annually – this needs to be considered
- Old processes are easy to get stuck in, we must move away from these where they are not in line with the act and not working
- Perhaps build in the Future Generations Act to all recommendation so it is considered in any policy changes
- Difficulty in making long term decisions with annual budget process. Welsh Government, Local Authorities and other partners must start to take longer term financial view.
- A good scrutiny environment requires;
  1. A good relationship with executives
  2. Freedom to scrutinise properly
  3. Effective training and information

Some key things scrutiny can look at to measure impact of Future Generations Act:

- Look at the risk register for impacts relating to FGA
- Wider impacts on services, thinking much wider and challenge silos. How are others being impacted not just the service you are looking at
- Prevention, how are we preventing things happening and learning from the past, sharing learning good and bad
- Ensuring more co-ordinated public services

- What are the knock on effects of the decisions we are making now?
- Involve the public. What do they want to see the future to look like and their solutions? Opportunity for scrutiny to bring real voices of communities in to solve issues.
- How we make the shift to taking that longer term approach and what are the issues around doing that?

How can we engage and involve communities and the public more:

- Focus on service users
- Refocus time and resources to understanding what the public want and need
- Ensure the public and communities are at the centre of what we do
- Think about the future and 'walking in the shoes' of people using our services and don't get bogged down in how things have always been done.