

Number: WG29831



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Welsh Government  
Consultation – Summary of responses

## Welsh Transport Appraisal Guidance 2017 (WeITAG 2017)

26 October 2017

Mae'r ddogfen yma hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.  
This document is also available in Welsh.

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## INTRODUCTION

The Welsh Transport Appraisal Guidance (WelTAG) was published in 2008. It was produced by the Welsh Government and provides guidance for use in the development, appraisal, and evaluation of transport related projects. The guidance has been revised to reflect current best practice in this area and to provide a consistent approach with the Five Cases Business Model which is commonly used for business cases that accompany applications for funding by the public sector. The opportunity has been taken to reduce the length of the guidance and to embed the principles of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

This report provides a summary of the feedback received, and the Welsh Government's response to this feedback.

## BACKGROUND TO THE CONSULTATION

Our consultation document "Welsh Transport Appraisal Guidance 2017 (WelTAG 2017)"<sup>1</sup> was launched by Ken Skates AM, Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Infrastructure on 8 December 2016. The consultation ended on 2 March 2017 and a total of 23 responses were received.

### Who responded?

Responses were provided from organisations with a range of interests and from a range of locations:

| <b>Responses by Organisation</b>     |           |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|
| Local Government – local authority   | <b>7</b>  |
| Local Government – community council | <b>1</b>  |
| Central Government                   | <b>3</b>  |
| Public Body                          | <b>1</b>  |
| Consultant                           | <b>4</b>  |
| Professional Institution             | <b>2</b>  |
| Charity                              | <b>3</b>  |
| Campaign Group                       | <b>1</b>  |
| Individual                           | <b>1</b>  |
|                                      | <b>23</b> |

| <b>Responses by Location</b> |           |
|------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>Pan-Wales</b>             | <b>14</b> |
| <b>North Wales</b>           | <b>3</b>  |
| <b>Mid Wales</b>             | <b>1</b>  |
| <b>South West Wales</b>      | <b>1</b>  |
| <b>South East Wales</b>      | <b>3</b>  |
| <b>Unknown</b>               | <b>1</b>  |
|                              | <b>23</b> |

<sup>1</sup><https://consultations.gov.wales/consultations/welsh-transport-appraisal-guidance-2017>

## RESPONSES TO THE CONSULTATION

### The Main Document

**Question 1 – Do you think WelTAG 2017 is an improved process for developing, appraising, and evaluating transport related projects?**

| Yes         | No         | No Answer/<br>Unsure |
|-------------|------------|----------------------|
| 17<br>(74%) | 3<br>(13%) | 3<br>(13%)           |

The majority of respondents agreed that WelTAG 2017 is an improved process for developing, appraising, and evaluating transport related projects. The links to the Five Case Model were particularly welcomed.

*‘The principle of evaluating transport issues via this document seems quite a thorough way of analysing road and transport issues for Wales’*

*‘The document clearly explains the principles of the new WelTAG Appraisal methodology and the structure and stages of the appraisal process. The integration of the Weltag Appraisal Stages with the Welsh Government and UK Treasury’s Five Case Model for Public Sector Business Cases is welcomed’*

The small number who disagreed cited a number of reasons that can be summarised as follows:

1. Too focussed on problems and not objectives:

*“my concern is it is still written from the aspect that the ‘issue’ raised is still seen to be from a motorised vehicle or transport aspect. Given the new emphasis on active travel... it would be just as valid to express an issue as ‘it is difficult to cycle from Mold to Chester’*

*‘Transport planning in Wales has been reactive or ‘problem-oriented’. The risk with this approach is that, in developing a plan around addressing problems, piecemeal or short-term ‘solutions’ emerge often to the detriment of pre-existing infrastructure, like canals’*

2. Appears complex, time consuming, costly, particularly for local authorities:

*‘The WelTAG process is often complicated and time consuming’*

*‘Since the decision to reduce funding allocation to local government, many services and specialist skills are no longer available ‘in-house’ and therefore technical appraisal work – such as WelTAG – will inevitably be out-sourced’*

3. Lack of detailed guidance particularly on technical appraisal.

*'The document is ambiguous and will lead to a wide variation in the quality of business case submissions'*

*'There is insufficient guidance on what technical data should be'*

### **Government Response**

We welcome the majority of respondents that think WelTAG 2017 is an improved process for developing, appraising, and evaluating transport related projects.

We recognise the concerns raised and will seek to address these through improvements to the final guidance, technical notes, and regular user workshops.

## Well-being of Future Generation (Wales) Act 2015

**Question 2 – WeITAG 2017 has been written to encompass the goals, objectives, and ways of working set out in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. Are there specific areas where the document needs to be improved or strengthened?**

| Yes         | No        | No Answer/<br>Unsure |
|-------------|-----------|----------------------|
| 16<br>(70%) | 2<br>(9%) | 5<br>(21%)           |

Although the majority of respondents agreed that, in relation to the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, there were areas of WeITAG 2017 that needed improving, some of the comments related to general improvements to the document.

The comments that relate to the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 are addressed here, the more general improvements suggested are addressed in question 5 – any other comments.

Of those respondents who agreed that WeITAG 2017 needs to be strengthened in terms of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, most requested further clarity and guidance particularly on:

- How to incorporate the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 in the setting of objectives;
- How to incorporate the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 in the impact assessments; and
- How to embed the principles of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

One respondent suggested that the transport case be renamed to ‘sustainability’ case: *“we feel that ‘sustainability case’ would be a better term and would further enable to appraisal process to be better aligned with the Well-being of Future Generations Act”*.

One respondent noted that the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 adds cultural impacts to the previous 3 pillars of sustainability (social, environmental, economic). These have been grouped with social, but there are some cultural impacts that also relate to environmental impacts as well, such as cultural heritage.

### Government Response

We note that the majority of respondents requested further guidance on how to apply the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. We will seek to provide further guidance through improvements to the main document, supplementary guidance, and regular user workshops.

## **Advisory notes**

### **Question 3 – it is our intention to provide Advisory Notes to accompany WeITAG 2017. What advisory notes would you find helpful?**

A total of 87% of respondents answered this question. The types of advisory notes requested can be grouped in to the following headings:

- General guidance on the application of WeITAG;
- Technical guidance on using WeITAG; and
- Sources of information.

Guidance on the application of WeITAG:

- Templates and examples of how to apply WeITAG to different types and complexities of schemes;
- Advice on scope and content of Stage Reports and Impact Assessment Report;
- Role of organisations;
- Role of review group;
- Guidance on engagement, consultation and feedback;
- Guidance to new users and clients commissioning WeITAG; and
- Glossary of terms.

Technical guidance:

- Criteria for seven point scale;
- Advice on weighting of criteria;
- Historic Environment impact assessment;
- Monitoring required at each stage, eg traffic data; and
- Modelling requirements.

Sources of information:

- Government policies;
- Strategies;
- Legislation;
- Sources of statistics; and
- WebTAG.

## **Government Response**

We welcome the ideas for advisory notes put forward by the respondents.

We recognise the need for supplementary information. We will hold user workshops and lessons learnt sessions to identify the nature and the content of further advisory notes identified through the consultation process.

Links to useful information will be provided on the WeITAG page of the Welsh Government website.

## Training and Support

**Question 4 – Are there any areas where you would find additional training and support helpful?**

| Yes         | No         | No Answer/<br>Unsure |
|-------------|------------|----------------------|
| 11<br>(48%) | 5<br>(22%) | 7<br>(30%)           |

The response to this question was mixed, although nearly half thought that the following training and support would be helpful:

- Worked examples;
- Help on technical aspects;
- Templates;
- Process, requirements and outputs; and
- How to apply to a range of scheme types.

One respondent felt that further training would only be beneficial once practitioners are using the guidance, and that an online forum would be useful.

### Government Response

We note that some respondents would find additional training and support helpful. Once WeITAG 2017 has been launched, we will look to set up regular practitioner workshops, to share best practice, try worked examples, and provide assistance on completing WeITAG appraisals.

It would be difficult to ensure consistent and accurate advice is given in an online forum. If users require support, they will be able to email the WeITAG helpdesk, where they will be offered advice and examples of best practice where they are available.



## Other Comments

### Question 5 – Do you have any other comments on the guidance?

A total of 74% of the respondents had additional comments to make. However, there were also a number of comments made under question 2 that will be addressed here as they did not relate to question 2.

The main document

- Concern that the move away from purely cost benefit analysis will make scheme assessment less objective and more political;
- No opportunity to show police have been consulted regarding any road safety matters;
- Use of the word 'case' in the stages and the cases is confusing;
- Difference between commercial and financial case is not clear;
- Unclear difference between Stage 2 and Stage 3;
- What are meant by 'actual inputs' under monitoring and evaluation;
- Review Group should not be renamed Challenge Group, but maybe 'Assurance Group' or 'Steering Group'
- Lack of technical guidance makes it unclear what is required.
- Clarity is required on the alignment of WeITAG 2017 to the stage of scheme development.
- Role of the review group
- Reference to statutory impact assessments
- No reference to outputs required for example Appraisal Summary Tables.
- Unclear how schemes will be compared against each other.
- Guidance on how to deal with very large 'long lists'
- Combine stages 1,2 and 3 for smaller schemes
- Align terminology more closely with 5 case model to avoid confusion
- Reference to Active Travel Act
- Clarity on which tools people should use, eg WebTAG, DMRB etc
- Make clear the WeITAG IAR should include evidence for all 5 cases

Funding decisions

- bidding process should include submission of relevant stage reports
- funding should cover all 5 stages

## Government Response

We welcome the additional comments made by the respondents. We will seek to address these through improvements to the final guidance, technical notes, and regular user workshops.

## **Next Steps**

We are grateful for the constructive and insightful feedback provided by respondents to this consultation. We will use this valuable feedback to make improvements to WeITAG 2017 and inform our future work to produce supplementary guidance and to deliver training and workshops.