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A review of the Future Generations Directory
Project Findings Report

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JOB
A review of the Future Generations Directory

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Project description

Troup Bywaters + Anders (TB+A) have completed a review of the Future Generations Directory (now referred to as the FG Directory) on behalf of Constructing Excellence in Wales. Funded by CLAW and the Future Generations Commissioners office, this report provides a summary of the work undertaken and recommendations for the FG Directory's future, both for the 21st Century schools and more widely for all construction projects procured by Public Sector Bodies (PSBs) in Wales.

Our review has determined the current usage of the FG Directory on 21st Century Schools projects by Local Authorities across Wales. TB+A undertook the following activities:

- + Introductory workshops on the Directory and RIBA stages
- + Sought to recruit pilot projects to gain feedback on the process
- + Held monthly workshops with pilot projects April – July 2021
- + Engagement with the Future Generations Commissioners team
- + Identify potential custodians for the FG Directory

TB+A were appointed to undertake the work at the end of September 2020 to September 2021. It should be noted that the project was therefore undertaken during the COVID pandemic and included a period of lockdowns and TB+A staff and project participants working remotely.

It should also be noted that one of the project outputs was to move the FG Directory from an excel based form to an online platform. Details are provided later in the report as to why this was not progressed at this time.

2.0 Introduction to the FG Directory

Since its launch in 2019 the FG Directory, developed for the 21st Century Schools programme and made publicly available on the Constructing Excellence in Wales website¹, has been available for Local Authorities to use to demonstrate their compliance with the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act – both the goals and new ways of working. For reference, a copy of the FG Directory as published in 2019 (along with the guidance developed by the Vale of Glamorgan C21 schools' team) is presented in Appendix A.

The Guidance notes developed at the time of the FG Directory's launch provide more details, but in summary, the Directory is an excel based workbook with a worksheet representing each RIBA stage.

It should be noted that an additional stage "8 – End of life" has been added to the FG Directory. This is to cover the disassemble of the current building or future deconstruction of the project building.

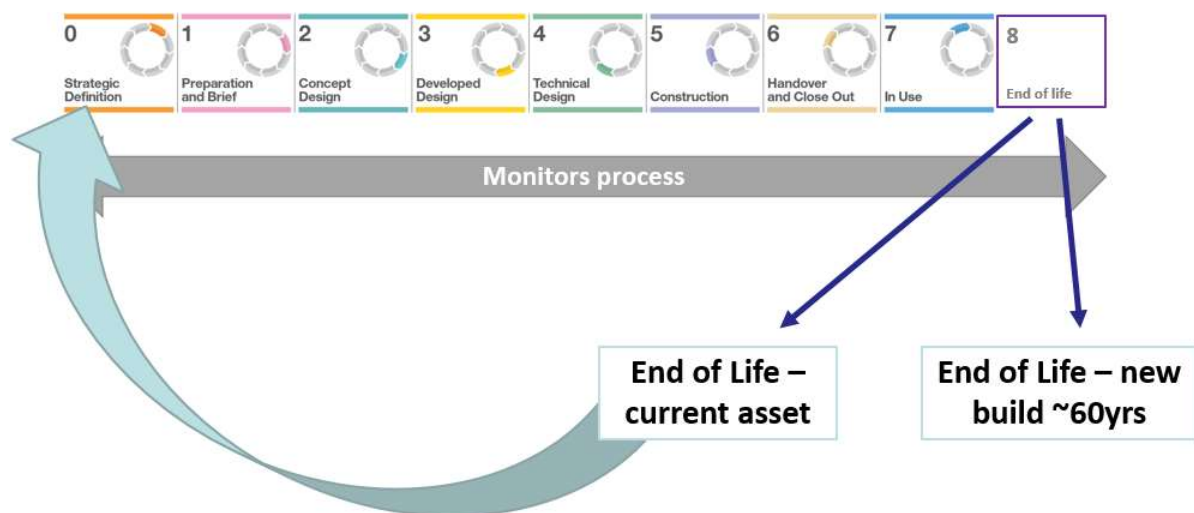


Figure 1 – RIBA Stages used for the FG Directory worksheets

The FG Directory is not a funding requirement for Welsh Government projects. It should also be noted that the Directory does not provide a score or review how well the project is considering the WFG Act, but merely records the work being undertaken against the goals and ways of working.

The FG Directory has therefore been developed as a Project Management, Quality Assurance and Auditing tool to support Project Officers. The FG Directory has been developed to demonstrate how the 21st Century Schools programme is delivering on the aspirations of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act.

Further information on the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, is available in the Welsh Governments essentials guide².

¹ [Constructing Excellence in Wales :: Future Generations \(cewales.org.uk\)](https://cewales.org.uk) – accessed 17/09/21

² <https://gov.wales/well-being-future-generations-act-essentials> - accessed 17/09/21

3.0 Engagement with LA staff

Engagement with Local Authority staff was sought through CEW newsletters and phone calls. Articles were emailed to CEW contacts as follows:

- + October 2020 newsletter
- + 2nd December 2020 flyer
- + 9th February 2021 (flyer circulated twice as it was raising awareness of the initial workshop to be held on 1st March)
- + April 2021 newsletter

3.1 Summary of workshops TB+A facilitated

TB+A facilitated eight TEAMS workshops, as set out below. A copy of the presentations given during the introductory and feedback phases are provided in Appendix B.

Project phase	Discussion	Dates
Introductory	Introduction to FG Directory Workshop 1 RIBA stages 0-4 Workshop 2 RIBA stages 5-8	All three workshops held in March 2021
Pilot phase	Pilot workshops 1 – 4	Monthly April to July 2021
Feedback workshop	Closing feedback workshop with participants	September 2021

Table 1 – Schedule of TEAMS workshops held during the review

3.2 Summary of participation and initial findings

Through the workshops, 50 officers attended representing 18 local authorities across Wales, as detailed in Appendix B. It was clear from the introductory workshops that the project would be focusing on engaging local authority staff and behaviour change. There was considerable nervousness to the introduction of the FG Directory, concerns that it would add to workload, rather than support the work being undertaken.

Much more time, more than what was originally planned, was required to provide assurance and encouragement to use the FG Directory. This was supplemented by 1-2-1 calls which should be taken into consideration as additional time dedicated to ensuring implementation.

These one-to-one calls were held with LA Officers to discuss their concerns with the FG Directory in more detail following workshops. Some concluded positively and the officers adopted the process and became pilot projects, one authority declined to progress with the FG Directory.

Our initial findings from the first three introductory workshops could be summarised as:

- + Very few local authorities procuring 21st Century schools projects were currently considering their duties to comply with Wellbeing of Future Generations Act, despite the Act being legislated in 2015.
- + There was considerable nervousness that the FG Directory would add to workload.

4.0 Pilot projects

A call for pilot projects was sent to workshop participants through March and April 2021. This resulted in the nine participating local authorities and projects, as presented in Table 2 below.

Pilot Projects		RIBA 0	RIBA 1	RIBA 2	RIBA 3	RIBA 4	RIBA 5	RIBA 6	RIBA 7	RIBA 8
Bridgend	Héronsbridge School		Feasibility							
	Bridgend North East Project		Feasibility							
	Mynydd Cynffig Primary		Feasibility							
Carmarthen shire	Bryngwyn School			Design						
Ceredigion	Cardigan High School				Design					
Cardiff Council	Willows High School	Feasibility								
Newport	Newport City Leisure Centre			Design						
Powys	Brohyddgen Community School			Design	Design					
RCT	YGR					Design	Construction			
	YGG Aberdare					Design	Construction			
Torfaen	Maendy Primary school			Design	Design					
VoG	Pencoedtre High School						Construction			
	St David's Primary						Construction			



Table 2 – C21 School projects and Local Authorities participating in review

The recruited projects represented a good range of RIBA Stages through to the start of construction on site. It has not been possible to recruit any projects at RIBA Stages 6,7 or 8.

Whilst the pilot projects provided verbal feedback and updates at the April to July workshops only one Local Authority submitted their completed FG Directories to the project. It's unfortunate that not more authorities took the opportunity to submit completed FG Directories to inform this review.

In general, the feedback collected from the workshops can be summarised as:

- + It would be useful to have a “date” column added so that it can be recorded when a particular activity has been completed.
- + Some authorities completed the directory “in house” others involved the project’s Main Contractor and design team.
- + Could the directory be made more interactive so that it could be reviewed against Wellbeing Goals, as well as by RIBA stages?
- + There was a discussion around whether the Directory cover sheet made the task more daunting than it is and whether that information could be held at the back of the Directory instead.
- + Discussions started around the RIBA stages and whether it might be useful to reduce from the current eight worksheets, again to increase take up with others.

5.0 Participation Surveys

Two e-surveys were undertaken with LA staff, to determine baseline understanding of the FG Directory and then repeated at project completion. Unfortunately, both returns were lower than hoped, nine participants in the baseline survey and fifteen participants in the final survey.

5.1 Baseline survey

5.1.1 E-survey

Please see Appendix C for a copy of the questions and returns received.

5.1.2 Results

Nine participants completed the survey and represented the following six authorities:

- + Blaenau County Borough Council
- + Bridgend County Borough Council
- + Cardiff Council (2 participants)
- + Denbighshire County Council
- + Flintshire County Council (3 participants, one is a duplicate return)
- + Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council

The data is therefore analysed on eight returns.



Figure 2 - Baseline FG Directory awareness

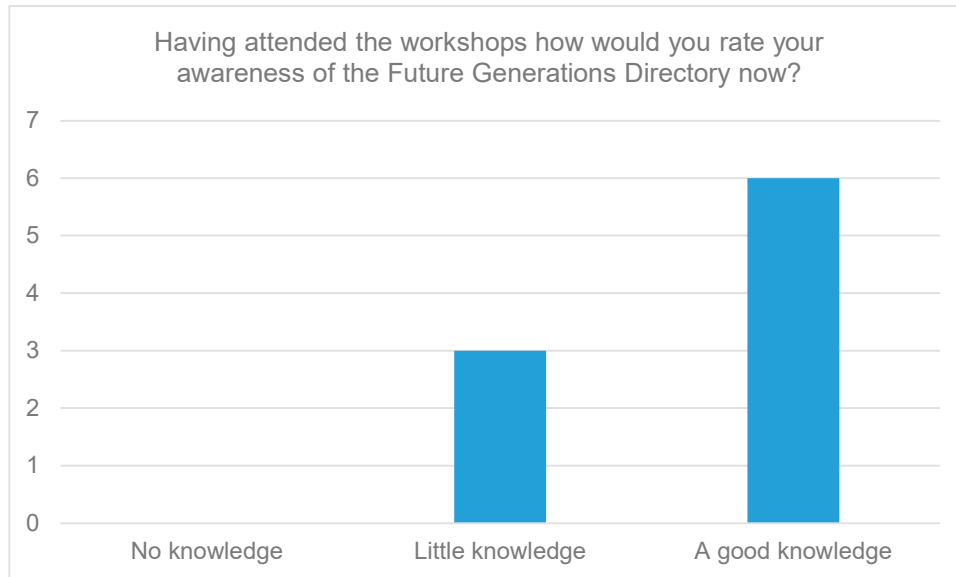


Figure 3 - Baseline FG Directory awareness following workshop

When asked “Do you have any comments on the FG Directory in its current format?”

Four participants returned “No comment”

Three returned positive feedback

- + I think the format looks very good and user friendly. Maybe it could be more visually friendly if adding the colour code of the RIBA stages to the cells because people are familiar with these colours. Also, the colour code of the WG Future Generations Act could be used for the goals titles because of the same reason.
- + I support the proposal from workshop 2 to filter the sheet based on FGWA areas as well as RIBA stages. I had a brief chat with my project team earlier today and it would be good to add a lessons learnt or amends sheet so that if areas aren't met then others can be added that demonstrate a different/better approach.
- + Well presented, but its new to us all and therefore probably resulted in reduced feedback during the sessions. I suspect once the pilot schemes are up and running the discussion will increase.

One respondent commented

- + "It's overly complex, overly onerous and I suspect won't be used (or used properly) by many authorities because the volume of data to be collected is very significant. Although it is proposed that data already held will be used. I suspect that actually it isn't. Even entry of that amount of existing data into some kind of centralised repository will be time-consuming and onerous, for something for which the purpose and proposed methodology are not critical. Compared with a theoretical minimal requirement of 7 paragraphs of narrative text, the proposed format is very much OTT. There is a lack of clarity in terms of responsibility for gathering data at different stages, and assumption that those collecting the data understand the RIBA work stages. Blaenau Gwent definitely will not use it in its current form, and we have a much larger technical resource base than most authorities. We won't even offer to operate it as a pilot."

In response to “Would you be willing to discuss your responses in more detail with CEWales?”

Five participants responded yes, with three responding no. All participants gave their contact details for follow up dialogue as required.

5.2 Project completion survey

5.2.1 E-survey

Please see Appendix D or a copy of the questions and returns received.

5.2.2 Results

Participants were from the following Authorities:

- + Blaenau County Borough Council
- + Bridgend County Borough Council
- + Cardiff Council
- + Carmarthen County Council
- + Ceredigion County Council
- + Denbighshire County Council
- + Flintshire County Council (two participants)
- + Gwynedd Council
- + Newport Norse/Newport City Council (two participants)
- + Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council (three participants)
- + Ynys Mon

Fifteen responses were received and represented eleven authorities across Wales. From these fifteen participants, only four responded that they were Project Manager for one of the pilot projects trialling the FG Directory as part of this project.

In the closing survey, only seven of the fifteen participants gave their name. Unfortunately, it was only possible to identify two respondents who had participated in both surveys and so it was not possible to assess what impact the review workshops had had on the majority of the survey participants. It would have been useful to have had more returns and enabled a more longitudinal assessment to have been made.

Of these two participants who could be identified, one was remained uncertain of the Directory and the second remained of the opinion that the FG Directory was too complex and not appropriate for use by their Authority.

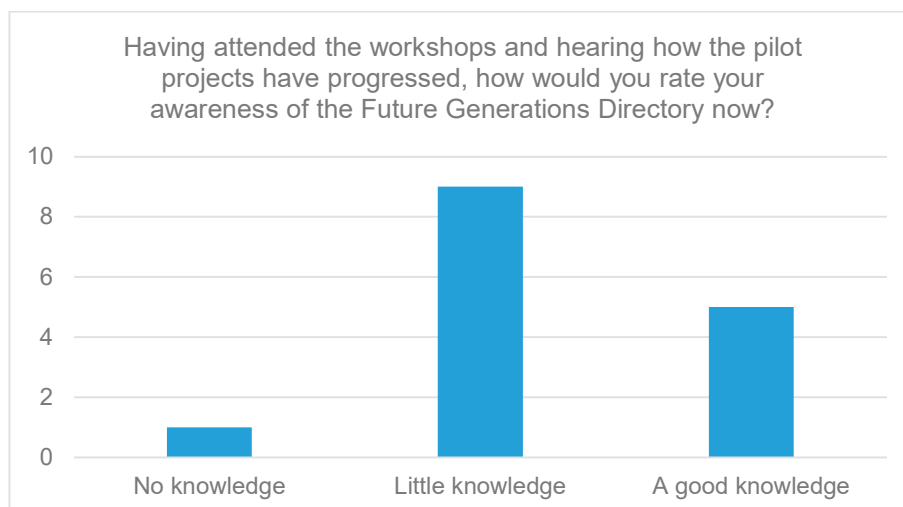


Figure 4 – Project Close - FG Directory awareness

The fifteen participants were clear, with a preference for the FG Directory to be restructured, as shown in the results below:

“Having observed the FG Directory being applied to a project, do you feel the FG Directory would work best”

<i>Retaining the RIBA stages 0-8</i>	3
<i>Switching to four project stages e.g. Feasibility, Design, Construction, Operation</i>	10
<i>I have no preference</i>	2

Furthermore, there was some enthusiasm for the continued use of the FG Directory, as indicated below:

“Will you continue to use the FG Directory on your C21 school projects?”

<i>Yes</i>	8
<i>Unsure</i>	6
<i>No</i>	1

When asked about further changes to the directory, participants responded:

“Would it be useful for the FG Directory to have a references/useful contacts tab with links to organisations who may be able to help with sustainable design and delivery of construction projects?”

<i>Yes</i>	10
<i>Unsure</i>	3
<i>No</i>	2

To determine interest in the FG Directory being used more widely, we asked

“Within your Authority, what other construction projects do you feel could make use of the FG Directory to demonstrate compliance with the Act?”

With a variety of responses were received, positively indicating that the FG Directory could be applied more widely to LA procured construction work:

- + Programme of future projects to be discussed.
- + 21C [21st century schools]
- + Both housing and schools projects could use this approach
- + Aeron Valley New Area School
- + Regeneration projects such as the new Leisure and Wellbeing Facility which I am piloting in the current FG Directory workshops.
- + Larger capital scheme that are managed by other departments e.g. Social Services
- + Regeneration, Leisure
- + Most projects could benefit from the directory, as it clearly breaks down expectations at each stage.
- + All engineering, infrastructure and landscaping projects - which the current RIBA stage approach will not work with.
- + If you rename the 4 stage approach to Feasibility, Design/Planning, Construction/Implementation and Operation - pretty much *everything* can be covered with the same approach. It provides consistency and simplicity across all

areas of operation which are project-based, whether they involve physical works or not."

- + Not sure
- + As long as the Directory is used from the very inception of a project, then there will be benefit on any project over a certain value.
- + Projects under the 21c schools programme
- + Not sure at the moment, but there could be some.
- + All capital and Housing Projects.
- + I work as part of the Construction framework team and would be interested to apply on our call offs for Carmarthenshire

In closing the final survey, we asked *"Do you have any comments on the FG Directory in its current format?"* Ten participants responded no or n/a, and five provided these further comments:

- + It feels like a lot of the questions asked in the various RIBA stages are repeated, however, if this is changed to 4 project stages, this could be resolved.
- + Suggested improvement - to reference each of the evidence criteria in a similar way to BREEAM.
- + The 0-8 Stages don't sit easy with me. The Directory should either fully align with the RIBA Stages (demolition being RIBA Stage 0 - inception of a new project) or change to Feasibility, Design, Construction, In-use.
- + The directory needs to be unlocked or the final column should be unlocked to add in hyperlinks and comments. I also find it useful to be able to colour code the items that are completed and if I have enough evidence yet (e.g. just drafts available)
- + The last time I saw it, it was still using the RIBA fee stage principle, which I think is overly technical, overly specific, too complex and requires too much jargon and collection of too much data that will not necessarily exist. I have a version of the 4 stage approach which I will be using instead.

We asked participants who could be the FG Directory's custodian,

"Who do you feel would be best to be custodian of the FG Directory and support its expansion beyond C21 schools to all construction works procured by Local Authorities in Wales, and other public sector bodies?"

<i>CEWales</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>CLAW</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Future Generation Commissioners Office</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Other</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>WLGA</i>	<i>1</i>

Further details provided to the "other" response was detailed as *"Welsh Government. They can implement and manage data from the public and private sector"*.

In closing the statement, we asked whether they would be willing to discuss their responses in more detail with CEWales. Of which seven responded favourably and provided their contact details.

5.3 Evaluation of surveys

The baseline survey indicates that understanding of the FG Directory was low. The survey respondents quoted workshop discussions in their comments indicating that workshops were a useful way to have conducted the project.

One survey respondent remained against the FG Directory from the initial workshop and stated that they will develop their own procedures, this stance remained in the closing survey.

Unfortunately, both surveys had lower participant rates than hoped, and only two participants were identifiable as returning both. It was therefore not possible to undertake longitudinal analysis and determine the value of the project in supporting LA's to use the FG Directory or what improvements could have been made.

That said, it was possible to see that there had been some improvement in the knowledge of the FG Directory in the closing survey.

Restructuring the FG Directory appears to be the preference, with the addition of a "further information" tab being added.

There was support for the FG Directory being applied to other LA procured construction projects which is encouraging.

CEWales was identified as the preferred custodian, but as the surveys and workshops were conducted by CEWales there may be some bias to this response. It is suggested that wider discussions are held with the project funders, CLAW and FG Commissioners office to determine a way forward for FG Directory custodianship, updates and publicity.

With the extension given to the closing survey to try and recruit more participants, it has not been possible to carry out any follow up calls with participants of either survey. It was hoped that more respondents would take part in the closing survey, and that it would also be able to determine more respondents to both surveys in order that project impact could be determined. Unfortunately given project timescales this follow up has not been possible, but it is strongly recommended that CEWales do carry this out with those who expressed interest in discussing the work further.

6.0 Overall project findings

From facilitating the workshops and survey responses it is possible to determine that there was very little awareness of the FG Directory following its launch in 2019. For several taking part in the workshop it was new to them. There appeared to be no other approach being taken for 21st Century School projects to demonstrate that they have considered the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act during the project.

It was a disappointing start to the project and meant that the first quarter of the project was much slower and more focused on gaining trust and participants to the project.

Once a more collaborative approach was taken in workshops April to July it was possible to see that benefits of using the FG Directory were found by LA staff. This is supported by the number of survey respondents indicating that they would continue to use the FG Directory and their indication that it would be useful to other schemes in their authority beyond just C21 schools.

Through the workshop discussions it became apparent that the FG Directory being based in excel was not a barrier to use and that little would be gained in moving it to an online platform. In fact, it was felt that doing so could become a barrier to use, with logins, IT security amongst the feedback given.

Whilst there was a good cross section of engagement by LA's however this does not reflect the amount of take up of the directory. From anecdotal feedback received this is attributed to the time frame of the project with some LA's not in a position to identify appropriate construction projects at this specific time; this does not infer that they will not use the directory in the future.

The slow start to the project has meant that while suggestions for improvements have been identified it has not been possible to complete all improvements, or for those to be piloted and tested within the timescale of this piece of work. TB+A have developed an updated copy of the FG Directory as part of this project outputs, but that is yet to be reviewed by CEWales, the project funders and participating pilot projects.

7.0 Looking beyond C21 schools

As can be seen from the results to the closing survey, there is interest in expanding the use of the FG Directory beyond the C21 schools programme by Local Authority staff. Furthermore, we understand that CEWales will be progressing the trialling of the FG Directory with NHS Wales Shared Services and Transport for Wales for healthcare and infrastructure projects respectively.

For the FG Directory to become applicable to this wider audience, it has been agreed that it will be reconfigured from RIBA stages to the four project milestones:

- + Feasibility
- + Design
- + Construction
- + Operation

TB+A have drafted a revised copy of the FG Directory as part of this project work, and is presented in Appendix E. It may require further trialling by the C21 school pilot projects as well as with schemes in healthcare and infrastructure before it can be fully implemented. It is assumed that CEWales, the Future Generations Commissioners Office and CLAW will determine a way forward for this aspect of works.

8.0 Recommendations

This section sets out the recommendations of the review project undertaken by TB+A. Further findings may be available from the parallel work CEWales have been undertaking with regards the Sustainability Charter and associated stakeholder groups.

The table below details our recommendations and a suggested lead for the activities.

	Recommendation	Suggested Lead
1.	Make further use of the baseline and closing survey returns to follow up for more detailed feedback, prior to moving forward with any further work on the Directory. Within TB+A timescales it has not been possible to undertake phone interviews with respondents to gain further details to support the comments they have made in their returns. Further explanation could assist in determine the best way forward for disseminating the FG Directory more widely.	CEWales
2.	Review of the revised FG Directory with Local Authorities who provided pilot projects.	CEWales
3.	Pilot projects recruited via NHS Wales Shared Services and Transport for Wales	CEWales
4.	Further promotion of the FG Directory amongst local authorities to ensure wider take up	CLAW
5.	Promotion of the FG Directory and PSB legal duties to demonstrate compliance with the WFG Act	FG Commissioners team
6.	Welsh language edition of the FG Directory to be published	CEWales

Appendix A – FG Directory

Appendix B – Workshop presentations

Appendix C – Baseline Survey and responses

Appendix D – Closing survey and responses

Appendix E – Draft update of the Future Generations Directory

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