

Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> January 2017

Dear Caerphilly Public Services Board members and support team,

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to provide feedback on your draft Assessment of Local Well-being published in December 2016. I fully recognise the challenges that you have faced in the development of the assessment this time around, and I congratulate you for your efforts.

My primary focus in providing this feedback is to help you consider how well your work so far will help you to set your collective objectives and undertake well-being planning. For me Public Services Boards are one of the biggest opportunities for the public sector in Wales to change the way we do things in Wales and to collaboratively make decisions and deliver services that will benefit future generations. Your assessment is a key part of this, and whilst I appreciate that it may not be a full picture by the time you publish it, it is important that it sets out a clear and informed picture of the well-being of Caerphilly and your communities, that is relevant now and into the future. **Your assessment should enable you to clearly identify key challenges for your area and communities, and to develop collective objectives that address these challenges.**

I attach a document that gives you detailed feedback on your draft assessment, and what you should think about building on both in the short term as you move towards well-being planning and in terms of assessing well-being in the future.

During 2017-18 one of your key tasks will be to develop your collective well-being objectives as part of your Well-being Plan. The legislation requires you to seek my advice on how to take steps to meet your objectives in accordance with the sustainable development principle (five ways of working).

Below I set out some of the things I will be looking for as my office continues to work with you. In my view those PSBs who have showed they are already taking account of the five ways of working will be well placed to develop objectives and Well-being Plans, which will have benefits for all organisations involved in terms of maximising their collective contribution to the goals and addressing inter-generational challenges.

You have clearly made a good start with your approach to **involving people and communities** in the development of your assessment. You need to think about building on this to make sure that you continue to provide opportunities for a broad range of stakeholders and citizens to get involved in influencing the development of your objectives, and be able to demonstrate that their input has an effect on what you do. Part of this is also to make sure that you make the information you have relevant not just to Caerphilly overall but to all of the communities in your area.

In terms of the **long term**, you refer to a 25-year timeframe in the introduction of the assessment. I would expect your assessment to consider the long term throughout, to provide a firm foundation to plan for the long term well-being of your communities. It is

important that your assessment begins to communicate the key challenges and opportunities for Caerphilly in the short, medium and long term.

I was pleased to see that you have structured the assessment around the seven well-being goals, but you should strengthen this approach by giving greater consideration to the **integration** of the goals (examples are included in the detailed feedback). This will be particularly important in thinking about the relative roles of your different organisations in **maximising your contribution** to the goals.

A key element of the legislation is the focus on **preventing problems** from occurring rather than just responding to them and I see this as a key priority for your well-being planning. This is an area where you need to think about what the data and evidence is telling you, in order to make sense of key challenges you have identified.

And **collaboration** is key to all of this – I think you have the opportunity of taking your partnership working to a new level, collaborating with resources and finding new ways to deal with old problems. Your assessment should be helping you to identify the most fruitful opportunities to do this.

Your support team have worked hard to develop this assessment and the people who support your well-being planning will need your full buy-in and support. Key features of this are likely to be the leadership you show and your willingness to give people space and permission to explore new ways of addressing old problems. This cultural change is what the Well-being of Future Generations Act is all about.

In anticipation of the requirement for me to provide advice on how you should take steps to meet your collective objectives I would like to see further detail of how you will use your assessment as you move towards well-being planning. I would appreciate you letting my office know how you have responded to our feedback. With this in mind it will also be important for you to provide my feedback to the scrutiny committee that has the lead for scrutinising the work of the PSB. The need for a more constructive approach to scrutiny has been identified as an important part of maximising collective action at the local level.

I hope that our feedback is clear and useful at this stage. However, I must reiterate that I don't see the development of your assessment as a one-off event. Going forward I will be providing opportunities for PSBs to share learning and best practice which I hope you will be involved in, in order to provide the best platform for you to fulfil your ongoing obligations under the Act.

Kind regards,



Sophie Howe,  
Future Generations Commissioner for Wales

## Feedback from the Office of the Future Generations Commissioner on

### CAERPHILLY Public Services Board Draft Assessment of Local Well-being

#### 1. Introduction

The following report provides feedback to Caerphilly Public Services Board from the Office of the Future Generations Commissioner (OFGC) on the final draft of the Caerphilly Assessment of Local Well-being. This feedback is based on our project team<sup>1</sup> reviewing the following key documents and discussions:

- Caerphilly County Borough Area Assessment of Local Well-being final draft 30.11.16
- Engagement process for the assessment stage of 'The Caerphilly We want' 2016. Report.
- A discussion between the project team and the PSB team on 25<sup>th</sup> January.

The assessment has been reviewed by the project team using a set of criteria, developed specifically to focus on aspects of assessment production, methodology and analysis and the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations Act. These criteria enable us to review the wide range of approaches to local assessment of well-being that have been used across Wales. This has also enabled us to provide bespoke feedback to PSBs, highlighting strengths and potential areas for improvement. This consistent approach will also enable the Commissioner to identify key issues and highlight opportunities for shared learning, at a Wales-wide level, for the wide range of public sector and other bodies involved in well-being planning.

It is intended that his feedback should be used to inform both the publication of the assessment in Spring 2017, and the ongoing processes of assessment and well-being planning, helping you to build on the work that you have already done and to utilise the feedback to continue to improve your understanding of well-being in your area.

While we understand that your assessment is an ongoing process, and that further work will be undertaken in coming months, it is important that the following comments are noted and acted upon as the well-being assessment is developed, adapted and built upon to inform well-being planning across the PSB.

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<sup>1</sup> Dr. Alan Netherwood, Netherwood Sustainable Futures, Dr. Andrew Flynn, Cardiff University and Dr. Mark Lang, Mark Lang Consulting

## 2. National well-being goals

We have considered how effectively the seven national well-being goals have been reflected in your assessment. It is excellent to see that the whole structure of the documents and engagement has been shaped around the seven national well-being goals. This shows a real commitment of the PSB to reshaping it's work around the Act and should be commended.

However, it is important that each goal is not seen as separate. The assessment could have given greater consideration to the relationships and interconnections between each goal, both in the consultation activity and quantitative and qualitative analysis. For example, in the relationship between prosperity and cohesive communities, there would have been benefit in developing an understanding of what *specific* pressures and opportunities may impact on the cohesion of communities across the area as a result of issues under the prosperity section. Understanding these interconnections is something that we would expect to see as the assessment process continues and your well-being planning progresses.

We expand on this issue of integration in point 8 of this feedback document.

## 3. Data content –area and place

The WFG Act requires well-being assessments to focus on the area and 'place' and reflect the variety of communities across your area. We have considered the extent to which the data content of your assessment does this, and as a whole, your assessment is well-balanced providing Caerphilly wide, local, regional and national data.

However, the level of analysis and interpretation of that data could be more consistent for each of the seven sections of the assessment. The data is often left to 'speak for itself' with limited commentary provided for readers to understand what this means for the state of well-being in the area as a whole or for individual communities.

Despite the detail provided by the GSWAG data, communities are often treated throughout the document as a homogenous 'whole'. While data is presented in the Appendices, there is little interpretation of this in the main document for individual communities across the area.

There is potential for the document to be strengthened by reflecting the variety of Caerphilly's communities and the differences and inequalities within (and between) community areas. The section on Health is a good example of where the assessment goes into detail on specific issues for specific communities, and the narrative and interpretation is clear. The document could be improved if this level of detail and community focus could be replicated across the other sections of the assessment and this approach will put you in a strong position to develop well-being objectives that are relevant to your communities.

## 4. Data content – how people need and use public services

We think it is important that you have a clear picture of the different needs of your people and communities now and in the future, and that the implications of these needs are understood.

We have considered the extent to which the data content of the assessment focuses on how people use and need public services, within communities and for particular groups of individuals. It is pleasing to see that through the consultation process there has been a focus on community needs in the context of the seven well-being goals. The framing of the questions within the consultation around service needs, and the integration of the information from the Population Assessment provide a clear indication of public service needs.

A priority for my office is encouraging public bodies and PSBs to make sure that they are firstly involving people and communities in ways that give them greater insights into people's lived experiences of public bodies, and secondly acting upon these insights when they make decisions and deliver services. Your assessment could be improved by being clearer about how the lists of 'asks', produced during the consultation are going to be used in the response analysis and well-being planning to help reframe public service delivery.

## 5. Quantitative and Qualitative Analysis

We recognise the challenge of balancing data, insights and evidence to produce a rounded understanding of the well-being of communities and individuals in the short, medium and long term. One of our main considerations has been the extent to which both quantitative and qualitative analysis and methods in assessments provide a broad picture of environmental, economic, cultural and social well-being, together with initial commentary on the implications of this 'picture' for communities. I.e. what really matters?

On the whole, the provision of quantitative data is thorough and well set out for all areas under the seven well-being goals. However, as previously pointed out, there is an opportunity for much greater commentary, analysis, synthesis and interpretation to develop our understanding of the *implications* of the data for Caerphilly area as a whole, for individual communities, and for particular groups within the community.

While a focus on your five community areas is positive these sections would benefit from an explanation of the key challenges *in each locality*, utilising the area data available in the Appendices.

The qualitative data derived from your impressive consultation is generally communicated really well and supports the quantitative data to illustrate key themes emerging under each goal. However, you have the opportunity to make greater use of this material to develop a clear picture of well-being in the area. (see later comments in point 7.)

In terms of analysis, the following paragraphs provide specific feedback on each of the seven themes:

*Economy:* It is positive that this section lists current strategic and governance contexts and has engaged with the business community. However, there is a limited 'picture' of economic well-being of particular localities. This section could be improved by a clearer communication of key issues and summary.

*Resilient:* This section has excellent analysis and shows impacts on localities, utilising the Climate Change Risk Assessment and other data sources. The section (and others) could be clearer about where the 'issues for further consideration' have come from. The information from feedback events would also benefit from some interpretation.

*Health:* This section is well written and evidenced, identifying key issues, the state of play and how this impacts on the *Council*. However, importantly there is a lack of critical analysis to build the picture of the implications of this to well-being in the *area* – again, clearer communications and summary would improve this section.

*Equal:* This section is very strong on trends that impact on poverty and equality, including welfare reform and the events engaging young people have really helped to develop data. This section could be improved by providing clearer indications of which of the proposed activities are most critical to progress equality across your area.

*Cohesion:* This section provides impressive descriptions of 'why things matter' on a theoretical level - there is less information provided on why these are important in Caerphilly and in particular localities within the area. This is one of the sections which needs a much clearer narrative and summary of key issues.

*Culture:* The Welsh language part of this section provides excellent context and evidence - although amalgamating the two separate sections on Welsh language would help. The section on Arts is also simple and straightforward with good descriptions of community based assets.

*Global:* Like the section on cohesion, this section provides a good theoretical overview of why this goal matters, however, it provides little information on how these challenges impact on Caerphilly, or what they mean for the public sector. This section is particularly unclear as a collection of statements with no clear narrative about what issues are important to consider in the area.

## 6. Key challenges

It is important that well-being assessments, in assessing the state of well-being, focus on key challenges to well-being over the short, medium and long term, as well as the positive attributes and assets in the area. This includes the trade-offs between different well-being goals, tensions, and deficits within the area.

It is helpful that each of the different sections for the seven goals provides a short overview of the situation; lists of current interventions; lists of strategic and governance arrangements and lists of assets. However, the narrative would benefit from clearer identification of key challenges for both communities and public service provision in each of the seven sections. There is also potential for a clearer explanation of trade-offs, tensions and deficits in particular localities.

Where key challenges to well-being are described in detail, they are often framed in generic terms, as illustrated by the climate change risk assessment data. This is an example of where this national data could have been interpreted for the area and informed understanding of key challenges and pressures for particular communities and groups of people. Similarly, the sections on prosperity and culture provide a general understanding of major trends, but little insight into how they may impact within the area and what trade-offs may occur.

All seven sections of the document could be improved with a summary of the key challenges over the short, medium and long term. (see comments on later section on Foresighting and Future Trends).

## **7. Engagement, involvement and collaboration**

The WFG Act clearly indicates that collaboration and involvement are two of the five ways of working which PSBs need to consistently apply to their work. As a consequence, we have been particularly interested in the level and method of engagement, involvement and collaboration across the partnership in producing the assessment, including engagement with communities, public, third sector and private sector organisations.

The work of the PSB on this is strong in terms of the methods adopted, with a great deal of effort being put into engaging with and listening to residents. Chapter 2 shows an impressive range of engagement around some basic questions which were framed well for different audiences. Clearly the range, methods and extent of engagement across all sectors has been well planned and delivered. Bespoke and already scheduled events have been used as opportunities to ask and listen. The breadth of engagement across sectors, age groups and communities of interest is strong in terms of the numbers engaged but also the quality of information provided. Further engagement with the private sector would improve understanding of economic well-being in your area.

More work still needs to be done to interpret and analyse the lists of information provided by your engagement to determine which issues are the most critical for people. This needs to continue to be a priority for your ongoing work.

## **8. Integration**

One of the key aims of the WFG Act is to develop integration at all levels across the public sector. We believe it is important to understand the inter-relationships between environmental, social, economic and cultural well-being. As a result, we have been keen to consider the level of integration between traditional policy and organisational silos in producing the assessment.

This is an area for you to give further consideration as you finalise your assessment for publication, and as you move toward well-being planning. There is scope for far greater integration between the seven well-being goals, and for more exploration of the relationship of policy/challenges between each theme. Each area seems to have been treated separately in terms of authorship, engagement and interpretation, perhaps



reflecting a lead body taking on the responsibility for producing each Section? It is important that the data listed in the assessment is explored across traditional silos to interpret what this means for well-being in the area.

It is important that the inter-connections between the seven goals are thoroughly explored, and that you as the PSB explores how you can maximise your contribution to all of the goals through collective action. We will be interested to see how this integration develops as well-being planning progresses.

## 9. Foresight and future trends

One of the key challenges from the legislation is to consider the short, medium *and long term* well-being throughout the assessment and plan process. We are interested in the level of foresight and use of future trends analysis in producing the assessment and how you have recognised the well-being of future generations.

The introduction refers to the use of foresight scenario planning - with the PSB undertaking a workshop on this theme for each well-being goal. This effort should be commended. However, the workshops asked three questions: one on priorities under the well-being goal; one on gaps; and one question on whether those issues currently identified will be the same in 2040. This results in a list under each of the seven areas of ideas of further trends which might impact by 2040. This data is useful, but these lists are not scenario planning. There is potential for you to take these lists of issues and understand how they could impact on your area and in different communities by 2040 – through scenario planning.

The introduction to the assessment refers to a 25-year timeframe. Population, housing, health and climate projections are readily available and have been used to inform the narrative. However you could have applied this 25 year timeframe more consistently across the different sections of the analysis: there is limited interpretation and synthesis of long term pressures and trade-offs on the area and how these inter-relate.

The final draft of the assessment could be improved by using a simple approach of summarising the short, medium and long term challenges for each section as suggested in point 6, identifying where there are potential significant implications for the area, and gaps in your understanding of long term trends.

The Welsh Government will be producing their Future Trends Report in May 2017. The current plan is to include 6 key themes: Population, Economy, Natural Resources & Climate Change, Health, Land Use & Infrastructure & Societal Change. Your assessment will need to take account of data included in this, but should aim to provide a clearer emphasis on long term challenges to well-being in Caerphilly in the assessment published in March.

## 10. Cross boundary issues

Integration and collaboration are central to public bodies applying the sustainable development principle to their activities. One of our aims has been to review the extent to which the assessment has considered cross boundary issues for regional and national



action. The GSWAG partnership has clearly undertaken an impressive and thorough body of work to consider broad well-being determinants across the region. The appendices for Caerphilly and the Gwent region provide a robust foundation to improve our understanding of well-being. A clearer explanation of what all of this data means for Caerphilly in a regional context needs more explanation.

A more detailed understanding of key regional and cross border issues which affect Caerphilly would be beneficial, to inform your well-being planning. The assessment could provide a clearer explanation of Caerphilly's 'role' within the region.

While a short section on the potential economic and infrastructural benefits of the City region is informative, it is unclear what the implications of this major, long term project might be for *all* aspects of community well-being across the area. Even if the specific impacts are uncertain at present, it will clearly have an influence on cohesion, equality, resilience and so on. The project's potential influence should be included for all sections of the assessment, beyond the prosperity section, as it is likely to have multiple impacts across different parts of Caerphilly.

The document would benefit from greater clarity on what the section 'Gwent Regional Agenda' is for. It currently lists the existing activities and agendas of a range of bodies made up of public sector partners. It could be clearer how these lists link to previous sections. If it is to list the regional governance arrangements, then the Council, NRW, Police and Crime Commissioner need including, and this might need expanding to describe the role of other partnerships active in the region.

It will also be important for PSBs to consider the conclusions of neighbouring local assessments of well-being as you move toward well-being planning. While we recognise the complexity of this for Caerphilly with seven neighbouring PSBs, clearly the relationship on a wide range of well-being issues will cut across all of these administrative boundaries. Some clarity about how Caerphilly PSB's well-being planning will approach this would be beneficial, through GSWAG or other means.

## **11. Data quality and data gaps**

The WFG Act intends that well-being planning will be a continuous process where the evidence base will be gradually improved over time, to enable public bodies and others to understand and plan for well-being in their communities. We are keen to understand the approach of PSBs to data quality and data gaps during the assessment and data issues moving forward.

Clearly a great deal of effort has gone into ensuring data quality through the GSWAG partnership. It is also encouraging to see that through the consultation some of the "issues for possible future consideration" in each of the seven well-being areas identify data gaps and actions to fill them. Data gaps were also explored as part of the Future scenarios workshops.

The assessment could be improved by providing greater insight of data gaps from different aspects of the work to understand what might be needed in the short term, medium and long term – i.e. what is missing that matters now to inform the development of your collective priorities, what would be good to build over the medium term and what longer term data issues are. This would enable the PSB to build on existing work and plan for improving data quality during the next year and beyond, helping PSB partners to build in data research and management into their business and corporate planning. It would also provide an indication to Welsh Government, the Office and Data Unit Wales about PSB needs.

## 12. Use of the sustainable development principle (five ways of working)

The statutory guidance places a responsibility on PSBs to *maximise* their contribution to the well-being goals by utilising the sustainable development principle in the way that it operates. We have been keen to understand how the five ways of working that make up the sustainable development principle have been utilised during the process of developing well-being assessments.

There are some references to the ways of working which show that to some extent they have been considered as part of the process of assessment development.

- *Involvement* is mentioned as important in the preamble to the section on *Engagement* and we have already highlighted the exemplary work through the consultation,
- *Long term* is implicit in some of the data used in Appendices and the conversation regarding 2040. (See comments in point 10).

However, there is little evidence that the sustainable development principle has been applied as a *modus operandi* to this Assessment. (see comments on *Integration* (point 9)). The Assessment would benefit from being clearer about how the ways of working have changed the approach of the PSB to this work, and how they will shape well-being planning.

## 13. Looking forward to plan production

A critical issue for our review of this assessment was whether the documentation was clear about how the work would be carried forward to develop local collective objectives and plan production. There is a lack of clarity in the final sections of the assessment on what happens next, with reference to 'ongoing discussion'.

The document would benefit from a short section to map out the engagement process and timetable for next 12 months for stakeholders and groups who want to remain involved, to build on the strong engagement shown in the production of the assessment.

A recurring theme throughout our review has been the lack of interpretation and summary of what are the key and critical issues for well-being for the area as a whole and for particular communities. At present we can see:

- 8 strong themes included in the 'Emerging Issues' Section,
- 50 aspirations as 'Issues for possible consideration'.

It is unclear at present whether these are to be the focus of your well-being planning. A clearer understanding of how the assessment, the themes and aspirations, will be used to inform well-being planning would be beneficial. This is particularly important in terms of how your priorities will be selected and consulted upon.

#### 14. Overview

The documentary analysis above has identified a number of areas where we believe the assessment could be strengthened, both in the short term, before its publication and over the medium term as the response analysis develops and you move toward well-being planning. In addition to this we organised a phone call to discuss the assessment with members of the PSB team who had been involved in the process. The aim of the phone call was to provide us with an opportunity to clarify/explore particular issues that our initial review had highlighted and to enable the PSB team to flag up issues which are part of the broader context of assessment production.

A number of clear, recurring broad themes have emerged from our review and the conversation. We believe the following issues need to be tackled to improve the assessment.

*Integration across themes* – a greater focus on the inter-relationships between the seven themes and the implications of these across the area and for individual communities.

*Interpretation of the data* – a clearer narrative and synthesis of what the data tells us about well-being at community and Caerphilly levels.

*Local detail* – a clearer understanding of well-being issues for particular communities within the area.

*Regional context* – a greater understanding of the impact on well-being of Caerphilly's place in the region and its inter-relationships with neighbouring areas and communities.

*Challenges* – a clearer understanding of short, medium and long term challenges (and opportunities) to well-being for particular communities across Caerphilly and at a regional level.

*Future Trends* – build on the work done on foresighting to reflect what impact future trends may have on well-being of particular communities and groups of people across the area.

*Moving forward* – provide a clearer description of how the assessment data is intended to be used as well-being planning progresses.

It is recognised that some of these may be addressed in the PSB's proposed activities between now and the publication of the final assessment, particularly in developing work on community areas and prioritisation of well-being issues using the scoring matrix.

However, we hope that the issues raised above will inform the ongoing work of the PSB so that these elements are reflected more strongly in the final Caerphilly PSB Local Assessment of Well-Being.