



# Gwent Public Services Board Response Analysis Template

## 1. Theme

Environment: Addressing the Nature and Climate Emergencies

## 2. Outline of the issues

### 2.1. Ecological footprint

Consumption patterns are having a negative impact on the environment and we need to use resources efficiently and proportionately. Reducing and reusing waste is one way to reduce our consumption of resources and provide positive benefits to people and nature. We need to get to One Planet living so that we don't use the resources that future generations will need to support themselves. To do this we will need to look at our food, energy and transport systems.

### 2.2. Biodiversity loss

We are falling short of achieving the four measures which denote the sustainable management of natural resources (SMNR). Across the region, stocks of natural resources are being used at an unsustainable rate and our ecosystems are under increasing pressure from the impacts of climate change, land use change, invasive non-native species (INNS), pollution and over-use. This jeopardises the ability of our natural environment to provide a number of vital well-being benefits now and in the future.

### 2.3. Species loss

Climate change, lack of management, over-use, INNS, pollution, landscape crime and antisocial behaviour threaten natural resources in Gwent. Condition assessments show the condition of native woodland and mountain, moorland and heathland (MMH) habitats to be 'unfavourable'. Grassland connectivity and condition are also poor. The majority of Gwent's rivers are of 'poor' or 'moderate' status and the health of our best rivers are registering significant failure rates for phosphorus levels. The Severn Estuary's special status is under threat, with predicted extreme impacts of climate change likely for coastal habitats.

### 2.4. Climate change

Climate risk is an increasing concern which is predicated to have a significant impact on the habitats, people and places of Gwent. Work will need to be done

to make sure we take an integrated look at climate risk across the work of the PSB and all three thematic areas of focus). All Local Authorities in Gwent have declared a Climate Emergency. As such, and in line with statutory requirements, climate risk should be considered regionally and we should understand issues, impact and response not just as they relate to environmental well-being, but social, economic and cultural well-being too.

Annual temperatures in Wales are expected to rise and more extreme heatwave events causing impacts on all aspects of well-being are likely to become more prevalent as a result. Iconic landscapes and cultural heritage assets could also be more vulnerable to wildfire exposure in future. Future climate projections indicate that drought risk will have a significant impact on the quality of agricultural land and our ability to produce food in the future.

Gwent, like many other places in Wales is likely to experience an increase in rainfall, river flow and intensity of extreme weather events. This is projected to lead to an increase in the likelihood of flooding of infrastructure, businesses and homes.

### **3. Well-being objectives to be worked towards under this priority**

Protect and enhance Gwent's natural environment to maximise the well-being benefits that nature provides to current and future generations by:

1. Reducing the environmental impact of production and consumption so that progress is made towards establishing and sustaining a regenerative local economy which contributes to national and global sustainability
2. Declaring a nature emergency in Gwent and using this to drive the enhancement of Gwent's natural areas and address the root causes of biodiversity loss
3. In response to the climate emergency, focusing on the protection of communities from environmental risks associated with climate change

### **4. What contribution can working towards these objectives achieve for well-being in Gwent?**

The proposed draft well-being objectives under the Environment theme have been designed to reduce inequalities and deliver better well-being for communities in Gwent.

However, it is important that the actions, timescales and resources identified in the Gwent Well-being Plan to deliver against the well-being objectives are agile and adaptive, and ultimately achievable within a potentially variable set of circumstances over the next five years, both foreseen and unforeseen. The objectives identified here offer scope and opportunity for collaborative, innovative and essential action under this theme.

### **5. Where are we now?**

The current evidence base for the Environment theme can be found in the [Gwent Well-being Assessment](#). The Assessment provides us with a picture of well-being in Gwent as it relates to this theme. Through conducting this response analysis, we have identified factors for consideration in relation to this theme which should inform the actions, timescales and resources identified in the Gwent Well-being Plan.

The information contained in this section is by no means exhaustive and should be considered as the starting point to a series of much wider, more robust opportunities mapping and planning conversations. The evidence base can be understood and contextualised in a much richer way by drawing on the collective knowledge and expertise of key stakeholders throughout the development of the Gwent Well-being Plan. This exercise has been instigated as part of the response analysis process and some of the findings are as follows:

- 5.1. Work already taking place and/or planned, including legislative and policy drivers known and expected in the next five years<sup>1</sup>
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Replacement Local Development Plans
  - Agriculture (Wales) Bill
  - Air Quality Action Plans
  - Biodiversity Duty
  - Blaenau Gwent Climate Change Assembly
  - Blaenau Gwent Sustainable Food Partnership
  - Central Monmouthshire Opportunity Catchment
  - Climate change/decarbonisation action plans and strategies
  - Climate Ready Gwent
  - Dwr Cymru/Welsh Water projects
  - Food For Growth
  - Food Futures Gwent
  - Food (Wales) Bill
  - Future Wales, The National Plan 2040
  - Gwent Green Grid Partnership (GGGP)
  - Gwent Nature Recovery Action Plan (NRAP)
  - Gwent Wildlife Trust
  - Living Levels Landscape Partnership (LLLP)
  - Local Area Energy Plans
  - Local Nature Partnerships
  - Monmouthshire and Asterio Digital Platform
  - Monmouthshire Sustainable Food Partnership
  - Natur Am Byth
  - Nature emergency action plans and strategies
  - Nature Networks
  - Newport Well-being Plan Sustainable Travel intervention
  - Public Sector Net Zero 2030

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<sup>1</sup> Further details of all taking place and/or planned work listed here is available on request

- Newport City Centre Green Infrastructure Feasibility Study
- Newport Green & Safe Spaces
- Our Food 1200
- Programme for Government (2021-26 commitments)
- Resilient Ecological Networks
- South East Area Statement
- South East Rivers Project
- State of Natural Resources Report (SoNaRR2020)
- Sustainable Farming Scheme (SFS)
- Usk and Wye Special Area of Conservation (SAC) Rivers Programme
- Usk LIFE
- Wales Net Zero 2050
- Well-being Plans (ongoing and legacy work)
- Work of Housing Associations
- Work, projects and social enterprises of local community groups (e.g. Maindee Unlimited)

Many of the projects and workstreams already underway and planned across Gwent (as listed above) in the short to medium term are considered examples of good and best practice. These examples will be taken forward, learned from and built upon through the development of the Gwent Well-being Plan.

- 5.2. Opportunities and resource allocation that could support delivery (including those known/expected in the next five years):
- Landscape Enterprise Networks (LENs)
  - National Lottery various funds
  - Nature Networks Grant (NRW)
  - NRW funding e.g. Resilient Communities Fund
  - NRW National Grants
  - UK Levelling Up Fund
  - UK Shared Prosperity Fund
  - Welsh Government Capital Programme

## 6. What could be done (steps)?

We already have established and robust indicators by which to measure the proposed draft well-being objectives. It is these indicators that should be addressed in the first instance to meet these objectives. They are as follows:

Protect and enhance Gwent’s natural environment to maximise the well-being benefits that nature provides to current and future generations by:			
Draft well-being objectives	1. Reducing the environmental impact of production and consumption so that progress is made towards establishing and sustaining a regenerative local economy which contributes to national and global sustainability	2. Declaring a nature emergency in Gwent and using this to drive the enhancement of Gwent’s natural areas and address the root causes of biodiversity loss	3. In response to a climate emergency, focusing on the protection of communities from environmental risks associated with climate change
Recommended indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Zero waste</li> <li>• Net Zero</li> <li>• One Planet Wales</li> <li>• Systemic transformation in the food, energy and transport systems</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Habitat creation</li> <li>• Habitat connectivity</li> <li>• Green infrastructure (G.I.)</li> <li>• Habitat condition</li> <li>• Nutrient load</li> <li>• Air quality</li> <li>• Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identification of communities, infrastructure and services most at risk</li> <li>• Prioritisation for adaptation</li> <li>• Low carbon society</li> </ul>
Example actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore and promote community energy</li> <li>• Improve resource efficiency the re-use of materials</li> <li>• Promote a circular economy</li> <li>• Take a systems approach to transformation in the food, transport and energy sectors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognise biodiversity as an asset</li> <li>• Restore and create semi-natural habitats</li> <li>• Create connectivity patches and habitat corridors</li> <li>• Reduce and better manage the pressures on ecosystems</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertake a local climate change risk assessment</li> <li>• Build adaptive capacity and capability amongst PSB partners</li> <li>• Develop an integrated understanding of inequalities, environmental risks and hazards and explore nature-based solutions to alleviate</li> </ul>

			certain aspects and manifestations of inequalities
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*Table 1 – Proposed indicators for draft well-being objectives*

In developing the Gwent Well-being Plan, it will be essential to identify how collaborative public sector working can drive transformation and identify what levers we have locally that can help shape this transformation. The environmental systems, food systems and resource systems that influence environmental well-being often behave in ways that are complex and unpredictable. In areas like land management, waste management, biodiversity conservation, pollution prevention, food security and decarbonisation, the cause and effect of arising issues are seemingly complex or unattainable. The term “wicked issues” is sometimes used to describe problems like climate change, biodiversity loss or soil degradation. In these situations, interventions need to be designed in the absence of perfect knowledge of how human and natural processes interact, and in a way that draws together fragmented evidence and multiple perspectives. Systems approaches can provide structure in such cases.

The overwhelming message from the [State of Natural Resources Report \(SoNaRR2020\)](#) is that societal transformation is needed in the food, energy and transport systems. Taking a system view will allow a wider range of leverage points than have traditionally been used to regulate the environment and provide scope for collaboration and integration on multiple geographical, organisational and policy footprints. As such, the Gwent PSB should explore the opportunity to influence these systems collectively.

There is a major challenge to reduce agriculture’s negative impact on the environment, while simultaneously maintaining food production for a growing population. Brexit could have a significant future impact on land management in Gwent, and while trade deals and policy creation is being looked at nationally, more can be done to reduce the impact of future changes at the local level, such as increasing local food supply chains and networks. How the food system is managed, used and sustained is a significant factor in tackling health inequalities.

Achieving energy system transformation alone would create new jobs and livelihoods for the people of Gwent. Meeting decarbonisation targets can also lead to improvements in the quality of life for communities which suffer from the adverse impacts of poor air quality.

How we travel is having a negative impact on our environment and people’s health, changing our climate and increasing pollution. We need to look at different ways of meeting our travel needs.

Brexit is a key risk, increasing a potential significant future impact on land management in Gwent and while future trade deals and policy creation is a national issue, more can be done to reduce the impact of future changes at the local level.

Competing demands on land are causing habitat loss and fragmentation. We are always going to need land for housing and employment purposes, but we need to get better at making decisions which ensure that future generations are

both free from environmental risk and able to benefit from sustainably managed natural resources.

It will not be possible to prevent all flooding; there is therefore a need to use a range of approaches to not only reduce the risk where possible, but to adapt our communities and infrastructure to be prepared for severe weather events and rising sea levels.

Perhaps most importantly of all, more work needs to be done to address the drivers of unsustainable management which exist outside of the environmental well-being sphere. A closer and more integrated look at key challenges should be undertaken, where transformation and systemic change would have significant well-being benefits 'in the round' (i.e. as pertaining to the other thematic areas of focus and all four pillars of well-being).

The Gwent Well-being Plan will be delivered over the next five years. It is essential that strategic and operational 'futures thinking' underpins Plan development and delivery.

## **7. What resources would be needed? Are they already in place?**

It is impossible to determine the resources needed to deliver at this stage in the well-being planning process. Decisions regarding the specific resourcing of actions should follow the establishment of what those actions are. Broadly speaking, resource allocation to delivery of the Gwent Well-being Plan should take account of the following:

- **Regional resourcing:** Following the establishment the Gwent PSB and the development of a single Gwent Well-being Plan, resourcing for delivery should be considered at a regional scale. It is not essential that all workstreams are wholly collaborated on by all partners at all times, but rather that communications and governance mechanisms are of a robustness that enables integration across all the work of the PSB.
- **Adaptable resourcing:** In light of lessons learned as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Gwent Well-being Plan should be deliverable at all times, including if adaptations must be made to prioritising, resourcing and/or working arrangements.
- **Cross-cutting resourcing:** There is a risk to resource efficiency posed by arranging delivery of the Gwent Well-being Plan by theme. There are numerous opportunities to work more strategically across all three well-being themes which will streamline and increase delivery opportunities.
- **Partnership resourcing:** Delivery of the Gwent Well-being Plan is not exclusive to PSB member organisations. The Gwent PSB should be looking to collaborate with local and regional strategic partnerships (e.g. the Gwent Green Grid Partnership (GGGP)) to streamline and increase delivery opportunities.

## **8. How have you engaged with stakeholders?**



The evidence base for the Environment theme was put together collaboratively with key stakeholders, drawing from multiple existing sources of data and understanding. In undertaking an assessment of environmental well-being, partners drew together key evidence, understanding and assessment from specific and connected policy areas, including (but not limited to SONaRR2020, the South East Area Statement and the [Gwent State of Nature Report \(GSoN\)](#). Stakeholders were invited to contribute to and sense check the Gwent Well-being Assessment.

Stakeholder involvement in the well-being planning process is invited at every opportunity. During the response analysis phase of the process, stakeholders have provided additional context, knowledge and understanding relating to this theme by answering the following questions of the draft well-being objectives:

- How far do you feel that the proposed draft well-being objectives under the Environment theme add value to work already taking place and provide opportunities to work in partnership?
- Do you see yourself as a collaborator in the delivery of the Gwent Well-being Plan?
- The next step in the well-being planning process is to develop the Gwent Well-being Plan. This includes setting out the steps to deliver the well-being objectives. Thinking about the proposed draft well-being objectives, what do we need to consider with regards to:
  - work already taking place and/or planned;
  - legislative and policy drivers (including those known/expected in the next five years);
  - existing best/innovative approaches to collaboration on this theme;
  - opportunities and resource allocation that could support delivery (including those known/expected in the next five years)?

Stakeholders will develop the content of the Gwent Well-being Plan through involvement in a series of collaborative opportunities designed to map pathways for delivery, including actions, resource and timescales.

## **9. How does this area link with the other response areas?**

Each well-being theme under which a response analysis has been undertaken is dependent on factors which relate to the other two. To look at any one of Environment, Health Inequalities or Community Cohesion in isolation results in a limited picture of well-being, one that is not considered 'in the round'. There are significant cross-cutting topics which are currently only looked at in isolation. It is essential that such topics are looked at and planned for in an integrated, holistic way. The topics that emerging through the response analysis to the Environment theme which should be explored in terms of how they cut across the entirety of the Gwent Well-being Plan are: climate change, transport, food and energy. There is significant work to be done in taking a systems approach to understanding, planning and delivery with regards to these topics (e.g. Climate Ready Gwent (CRG); Food Futures Gwent).

Through response analysis and development of the Gwent Well-being Plan, it will be important to identify environmental and socio-economic inequalities between and within communities (including reference to specific communities which are more vulnerable to environmental risks and hazards). This includes but is not limited to widening the scope of response analysis beyond the environmental impact to include the public health impact of: flood risk, air quality, noise pollution, water quality and INNS.

Actions relating to decarbonisation are consistent with those designed to improve health equity. Professor Michael Marmot's report [Sustainable Health Equity: Achieving a Net-Zero UK](#) (commissioned by the UK Committee on Climate Change), identifies four key areas for action:

- Minimising air pollution
- Building energy efficient homes
- Promoting sustainable and healthy food
- Prioritising active and safe transport.

## 10. Conclusions and recommendations

As a result of the Environment theme response analysis, it is recommended that, in setting its draft well-being objectives, the PSB:

- Declares a nature emergency in Gwent;
- Identifies actions which are regional, adaptable, cross-cutting and futures focused; and
- Undertakes a collective, systems approach to understanding, planning and delivery with regards to climate change, transport, food and energy, which spans all three thematic areas and considers well-being 'in the round'.

## 11. Links to other potential PSB priority areas

## 12. References

Version: Draft

Date: May 2022

Please now complete the table on the next page outlining what initial steps could be taken to achieve each potential objective.

If the PSB chose this as a well-being objective, what key steps should be undertaken in the first 12 months, and by whom? (We acknowledge that the objective is a long-term issue, but identifying some initial steps will help the PSB to understand what could be done)

Objective 1: Steps	Partners involved	Lead organisation	Target Date	Comment

If the PSB chose this as a well-being objective, what key steps should be undertaken in the first 12 months, and by whom? (We acknowledge that the objective is a long-term issue, but identifying some initial steps will help the PSB to understand what could be done)

Objective 2: Steps	Partners involved	Lead organisation	Target Date	Comment

If the PSB chose this as a well-being objective, what key steps should be undertaken in the first 12 months, and by whom? (We acknowledge that the objective is a long-term issue, but identifying some initial steps will help the PSB to understand what could be done)

Objective 3 (if needed): Steps	Partners involved	Lead organisation	Target Date	Comment

**END**