

Friday 10th February 2017

Dear Newport 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 sent to the office in December 2016.

The first thing I want to do is to make it clear that I fully appreciate the challenges that you have faced in the development of the assessment this time around, and I congratulate your team on their hard work and 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 Newport 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.

I was pleased to see that you have made a good start with your approach to **involving people and communities** in the development of your assessment, through your engagement work. I would encourage you to build 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.

It is clear that the provision of a Newport-wide assessment supported by 20 area profiles provides a strong evidence base. Whilst you have included some data on **long term trends** I think there is potential for you to have a greater focus on the long term in your work going forward, and to explore which of your communities are particularly vulnerable to the long term trends you identify. I did note that one of your engagement questions focused on what people would like to see more or less of in 20 years' time, which is interesting.

I think you have the opportunity of exploring further the **integration** between policy and challenges under the four themes (economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being), and making greater links with the seven well-being goals. 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 I would encourage you to give detailed consideration to 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 – you now have the opportunity to take 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

NEWPORT Public Services Board Draft Assessment of Local Well-being

1. Introduction

The following report provides feedback to Newport Public Services Board from the Office of the Future Generations Commissioner on the draft of the Newport Well-being Assessment published in December 2016. This feedback is based on our project team¹ reviewing the following key documents and discussions:

- Newport Community Well-being Profile 2016
- Newport Well-being Assessment Engagement Programme 2016
- Community Well-being Profiles 2016 – (as a sample of 20): Pilgwenlly; Lliswerry; Rogerstone; Caerleon
- a discussion between the project team and members of the assessment team on 3rd February.

It is intended that this feedback should be used to inform both the publication of the assessment in spring 2017 where possible, and the ongoing processes of developing your assessment and well-being planning.

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.

While we understand that the Well-being 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.

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

2. National well-being goals

One of the issues we have considered is how effectively the seven national well-being goals have been reflected in the assessment the WFG Act requires PSBs to demonstrate how they plan to maximise their contribution to the national well-being goals. We understand that PSBs will develop different ways of reflecting well-being; in Newport's case, economic, environmental, social and cultural well-being. However it is important that there is a clear link between the data, its interpretation and our understanding of all aspects of well-being in our communities.

It is positive that the assessment has listed the well-being goals in each of the 21 community profiles. This could be improved by providing an explanation of why these have been included and how they relate to each profile. It would be helpful to have some explanation of *how* the issues that arise in each profile contribute or impact on the national well-being goals, and the assessment could be improved by explaining the relationship between what the data is telling us and the implications for the goals. As well as being more explicit about this, there could be a stronger reflection of community cohesion, resilience, and how the globally responsible Wales is relevant to the Newport area.

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.

Clearly, the provision of a Newport-wide Assessment and 20 area profiles provides a strong focus on 'place'. This provides an excellent basis for building more interpretation and analysis at both levels. A recurring theme in this feedback is the potential for greater interpretation of the data, more analysis of what the data is telling us (with the exception of the economy section and parts of the environment section). In terms of 'place' more interpretation of the data would enable us to understand which issues are a priority, where, and the significance of the risk or opportunity, inequalities and the state of well-being. This would enable a greater understanding of which issues will need a collective response by the PSB.

You could also include a summary of critical energy, water, transport and coastal protection infrastructure. This means not just description, but an interpretation of key challenges and trade-offs. This type of information is of key relevance to the PSB, service delivery and future community well-being.

4. Data content – public service needs

We think it is important that you have a clear picture of the different needs of 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 public service needs, within communities and for particular groups of individuals.

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.

It is very positive to see the strong narrative and interpretation on asylum seekers, migrants, gypsy communities and subsequent service pressures in the Newport Profile. The assessment would benefit from a similar analysis for service pressures as a *whole* across Newport for *all* parts of the population. This type of analysis and interpretation could be used throughout the different sections and profiles, including specific public service needs and provision in the 20 Community Profiles.

While the Population Assessment required by the Social Services and Well-being Act is referenced, it would be beneficial for the assessment to give further detail on these links. It is noted that this was discussed during the phone call with the assessment team. It is also positive to see that the consultation focused on public services, and particularly what citizens would like to see more of and less of. The inclusion of a clearer summary and analysis of what they suggested would help the PSB to understand where there are gaps and strengths in public service provision.

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 of 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?

The assessment provides a detailed and excellently presented data set on Newport as a whole and for the 20 Community Profiles. This is commendable. It is clear that a lot of investment has gone into this resource utilising LSOA and MSOA data.

As discussed in point 3 above, the assessment provides a consistent and wide ranging compendium of local data, but in general, there could be greater interpretation, analysis and synthesis of key issues. Lists and tables need more interpretation to identify and

communicate the critical issues for well-being at all levels. Qualitative data from the consultation has been used well in the profiles: but again, a lack of interpretation of this makes it harder to determine what well-being issues are most critical to address.

Starting each section with a question is positive. Generally, these sections would benefit from being clearer on how *significant* the well-being issues highlighted are for Newport and the 20 Community profiles, and the implications of this for public services. This is done well in places e.g. the narrative on the local economy and on flooding. This approach would help the reader to identify inequalities and which specific issues and geographical areas need to be addressed by well-being planning.

The assessment is indicator focused, which appears to result in narrative being driven by indicators rather than the well-being challenges it seeks to illustrate. It also results in a wealth of information that gets in the way of the assessment identifying the critical issues for well-being. An example being Education, there are a range of indicators measuring educational performance, but without analysis of what the significant issues are on education in Newport and where are they felt most. Clearly the 'headline' is implicit in the data but would benefit from being made more explicit. Addressing this balance between data and key messages would benefit the assessment.

The following paragraphs provide more specific feedback on each theme.

Economic well-being – this provides an *excellent* interpretation of the data to describe the key challenges to Newport's economy, its role within the region, weaving in future trends and the role of deprivation in the area. In this case the data supports the narrative describing what the data is telling us. Adopting a similar approach and style in other parts of the documents would improve the Newport and Community Profiles.

Social well-being – there is a very clear description and evidence of the determinants and drivers of social well-being in terms of health. This is illustrated spatially, however, greater description of how these generic issues apply specifically to Newport and areas of Newport would help us to understand which are critical issues and where there are inequalities e.g. access to a healthy diet. A consistent approach to 'localising' these well-being issues would help in this section. Of the other issues covered in this section: homelessness, housing and community safety – the narrative is particularly indicator focused (see comments above.) and would benefit from a clearer explanation of the significance of these issues to Newport and its areas.

Environmental well-being – this section provides a robust Newport wide narrative – which is especially good on flooding - but in other areas for key issues the significance needs to be more clearly communicated for example is there enough

open space in Newport, is this a critical issue? This could be explained for all issues covered in this section: climate change impacts; landscape; water; air; carbon and ecological footprint. It is positive that this section focuses on the *assets* of Newport and their positive impact on well-being. This is an approach that could be used to strengthen other parts of the assessment (see comments in point 6.)

Cultural well-being – this section could be improved by providing a general description of cultural well-being (as in the economic section) using the indicators to illustrate this. What is the data telling us about Welsh language; arts; sports; and culture? This section would benefit from a better description and understanding of cultural assets in Newport – including for example the nature and characteristics of its music, food, drink and arts scene.

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 Newport.

The assessment and the community Profiles could be improved by developing an understanding of assets as well as deficits. As well as physical assets such as the environment and landscape, other assets could be reflected such as cultural assets (see point 5), but also social assets, such as community networks, volunteering, the non-monetary economy, businesses networks, community finance. These have a positive impact on well-being and contribute to community cohesion and resilience. These are important attributes of local well-being and need a higher profile in the assessment

In general, there is limited analysis on which challenges are short, medium or long term, and how these impact on well-being, for example; long term road maintenance; working poverty; food poverty; energy security; water security. Given the medium term outlook of austerity for public services and Brexit – what might these mean for Newport, and particular communities in terms of these areas of policy? While data might not be available, these are key issues for well-being over the medium term, and the assessment would benefit from acknowledgement of these (and other) key challenges. Tensions and trade-offs have been described well for example on flooding and welfare reform and should be replicated in other parts of the assessment.

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.

It is pleasing to see the wide range of stakeholder engagement in the *Engagement Programme* report and the range of other methods which have been used to gather both quantitative and qualitative data to inform the assessment.

It is unclear at the moment who undertook the assessment and who might use the work moving forward (and this was discussed during the phone call with the assessment team) The Community Profiles could be improved by briefly describing the engagement process and highlighting the collaborative activity of PSB partners and others in contributing to the assessment so far. This could describe the roles of statutory partners and the wider regional work that has been undertaken through GSWAG.

It is unclear from the assessment to what extent the private sector and third sector have been involved or consulted on well-being in the area. This is clearly important for their insight into all aspects of well-being, but particularly in terms of the local economy, community cohesion and public service provision in partnership within Newport. This either needs to be reflected more strongly if consultation and engagement with these sectors has occurred, or needs to be addressed in future work on the assessment and Plan. It is noted that plans for engagement with these sectors were discussed during the phone call with the assessment team.

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-relationship 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.

Providing more clarity on the method of assessment production and understanding the nature of the collaboration [see point 7] would enable us to understand the extent to which activity has been integrated and cut across themes and organisations. Clearly the Council has taken a major role and extended a great deal of effort in developing this resource. What is the role of the other organisations on the PSB and what has been the nature of their contribution?

Policy integration is an area for you to give further consideration to as you finalise your assessment for publication and as you move toward well-being planning. There is scope for greater integration and more exploration of the relationship of policy/challenges between each theme. There appears to be only limited evidence that data from each section has been considered alongside that of the others, or that the inter-relationships have been

considered, although there is some mention of the importance of the environment across the sections. 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.

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 recognition of the well-being of future generations.

There are some good examples in the assessment where long term data has been used around flooding, ageing population, economic change and climate change. It was also positive to see a question on what people would like to see more of or less of in 20 years-time as part of the consultation.

However, generally, there needs to be far greater attention given to the potential impact of long term trends on Newport under the four themes and within the Community Profiles; there was some discussion of the challenges this poses during the phone call with the assessment team. It is something we would expect to see improve as the assessment develops and you move toward well-being planning, i.e. which communities are particularly vulnerable/resilient in the long term, and how are they vulnerable or resilient?

A simple approach could be adopted to address this issue. Summarising the short, medium and long term challenges for each section (also see point 6), identifying where there are potential significant implications for the area, and gaps in your understanding of long term trends might help the PSB to prioritise critical challenges where collective action is needed.

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. As it develops 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 the initial assessment published in the coming months.

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.

A more detailed analysis of key regional and cross border issues which affect Newport would be beneficial, to inform the well-being plan process. The assessment could provide a clearer explanation of the area's 'role' within the region and it will also be important for PSBs to consider the conclusions of neighbouring local assessments of well-being as plan production develops. The relationship with GSWAG is a positive example of regional collaboration, and it will be of interest to see the assessments in the region influence each other through the well-being plan process.

It would be helpful to see some interpretation of how the City Region Project might impact on *all* aspects of community well-being across Newport. 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 'Economic well-being' section, as it is likely to have multiple impacts across different parts of Newport. Greater insight could also be provided on the significance of commuting patterns to well-being in Newport, critical issues for transport infrastructure and the nature of inter-relationships with Cardiff, Caerphilly, Torfaen, Blaenau Gwent and Monmouthshire and other regional partners.

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.

This is an area where the assessment process in Newport needs to improve, as at present there are few indications of data gaps, or much reflection about data quality. A section summarising key data gaps and needs would be beneficial for the PSB to understand how it might improve their understanding and where resources may be needed. 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.

An overall analysis of this type will also be important to understand if there are any patterns in data needs from across the four themes, and how these gaps can be best addressed. It would also provide an indication to Welsh Government, the Office and Data Unit Wales on PSB needs.

12. Use of the sustainable development principle

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 they operate. We have been keen to understand how the sustainable development principle and five ways of working have been utilised during well-being assessments.

Clearly there are elements of your approach which show how the five ways of working have been considered as part of the process of assessment development.

- *Involvement and Engagement* – via the activities outlined in the Engagement Programme (point 7)
- *Long term* – use of readily available climate, housing and population data (point 9)
- *Prevention* – early years intervention discussed in the Developmental Milestones section on Social Well-being.

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 8) and *Collaboration* (point 7). There are references to the 5 ways of working, but a clearer indication of the significance and application of these principles to the assessment would be useful – i.e. how the principle has changed the approach of the PSB to this work, and how the principle will shape the well-being planning process.

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 objectives and plan production.

This is an area where we believe the assessment could be clearer about next step and how individuals and organisations can remain involved. It is acknowledged that this was discussed during the phone call with the assessment team, and that a provisional plan is likely to be discussed by the PSB in March.

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 the Plan is produced. 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 has highlighted and to

enable the PSB 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. Clearly the level and presentation of data through the Profile documents is particularly positive, as is the provision of data for 20 community areas across Newport. As mentioned previously, this structure provides a strong basis for the PSB to begin to prioritise issues for the well-being plan at a local level and determine what further assessment is needed.

We believe the following issues need to be tackled to improve the assessment, which are applicable to Newport as a whole and the individual community areas:

Interpretation of the data – more explanation of how the issues identified through the data impact on well-being of individuals and communities across Newport

Integration across themes – a greater focus on the inter-relationships between environmental, social, cultural and economic well-being across Newport

Regional context – more analysis of Newport's place in the region and its inter-relationships with neighbouring areas and communities, and their impacts on well-being, including the potential influence of the City Region Project

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

Future trends – greater attention given to the potential impact of long term trends on well-being in Newport as a whole, for particular communities

Moving forward – provide a clearer description of how the Assessment data is intended to be used, how data gaps are to be managed and how well-being planning will progress in Newport

Well-being goals – a clearer understanding of the relationship between the issues identified and the seven national well-being goals.

It is recognised that some of these may be addressed in the PSBs proposed activities between now and the final publication of the assessment whereas some could be addressed as the assessment evolves and is kept as a 'live' document.

We hope that the issues raised above will inform the ongoing work of the PSB so that these elements are reflected more strongly as the PSB moves forward.