

Monday 13<sup>th</sup> February 2017

Dear Ceredigion 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 January 2017.

I 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 Ceredigion 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.

The structure of the 'life cycle stages' is an interesting and compelling approach which I commend. By telling the story of the determinants of individuals' well-being and how they need public services at different points you have made great strides in bringing the assessment alive and making it accessible to a wider audience.

You've clearly given a lot of thought to **involving your people and communities**, through a range of approaches and the framing of your survey questions. 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.

Planning for the **long term** is a key part of what the legislation aims to achieve and this is something you would benefit from giving greater consideration to as you move towards well-being planning. I think you have a particular opportunity to build this into your life cycle approach, perhaps by thinking about what life might be like for particular life stages in the year 2040.

In terms of **integration**, your structure lends itself well to exploring the connections between economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being in relation to particular life stages. You could build on this by ensuring that you make relevant links to the seven well-being goals throughout your work and 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 focus your attention on 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 note that you have worked in collaboration with Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire PSBs on your engagement work and this is very encouraging. You now have the opportunity to take your partnership working in Ceredigion 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

### CEREDIGION PUBLIC SERVICES BOARD Draft Assessment of Local Well-being

#### 1. Introduction

The following report provides feedback to Ceredigion Public Services Board from the Office of the Future Generations Commissioner on the *Ceredigion Local Assessment of Well-being Consultation Draft (January 2017)*. This feedback is based on our project team<sup>1</sup> reviewing the following key documents and discussions:

- Ceredigion Assessment of Local Well-being. Consultation Draft January 2017
- Ceredigion Assessment of Local Well-being. Consultation Engagement Report November 2016
- a discussion between the project team and members of the PSB team on 24<sup>th</sup> January

It is intended that his 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.

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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

One of the issues we have considered is how effectively the seven national well-being goals have been reflected in the assessment, as the WFG Act requires PSBs to demonstrate how they plan to maximise their contribution to the national well-being goals utilising the sustainable development principle.

We understand that PSBs will develop different ways and 'frames' of reflecting well-being; in Ceredigion's case, the five life stages: New beginnings; Childhood; Youth; Adulthood and Older People. The consultation has also been structured around cultural, social, environmental and economic well-being.

We recognise, later in this report that the focus on life stages is an interesting approach and is helpful in some respects. However it is important that there is a clear link between the data, its interpretation and our understanding how the findings of the assessment impact on national as well as local well-being goals.

The assessment re-iterates the requirements of the PSB to utilise and contribute to the national well-being goals, and in Appendix 4 there is some mapping across of these goals to the life stages. However, the document could be improved by more discussion *throughout* of how the findings, challenges, headlines contribute to, or impact on the national well-being goals. It could also be clearer what Appendix 4 contributes to the document.

We would expect to see a clearer communication of the relationship between the assessment and interventions in the Plan to the national well-being goals, as you move towards well-being planning in Ceredigion.

## 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.

It is clear from the assessment and reference list that an extensive range of UK, national regional and some local data has been utilised to inform the assessment. This has been used to develop a compelling and very well written Ceredigion-wide commentary on the state of well-being and determinants of well-being for individuals. There is some Ceredigion-wide context provided which paints a rich picture of the foundation economy, rurality and the public service economy and some reflection of north to south Ceredigion differences.

The analysis could be improved by a far greater focus on individual communities across the area. The current approach provides limited understanding of well-being in different

communities and places, differences within communities or between communities, inequalities or particularly acute local issues. Appendix 3 provides a rationale for not using LSOA data and MSOA data, however we believe that a well-being assessment should provide a more localised (and less homogenous) understanding of well-being, and will be seeking evidence of this as well-being planning progresses. It will be positive if the planned asset mapping provides this level of detail.

The assessment would benefit from including data on 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 the 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.

Utilising the frame of life stages in the consultation has provided the PSB with a detailed understanding of well-being for individuals and their public service needs. It was positive to see that the consultation questions asked about the extent to which service needs at individuals and household level were being met. This has been utilised well in the narrative of the main document to develop a good understanding of service users and their needs throughout their lives. This has also highlighted the challenges to public service provision in Ceredigion.

The assessment could be improved by providing some indication of spatial differences in service needs across Ceredigion (beyond the key challenge of rurality). For example in the case of tackling loneliness and isolation in rural areas, versus urban areas – and how this may differ around different towns and villages across Ceredigion, dependent on existing service provision and third sector involvement

Greater clarity on the relationship between the data from the Population Assessment required under the Social Services and Well-being Act and this assessment would also be beneficial. It is noted that this is referenced, but clarity on what this means for public services across Ceredigion would be helpful.

## 5. Quantitative and Qualitative Analysis

We recognise the challenge of balancing data, insights and evidence to produce a rounded understanding of 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?

It is clear that a broad range of quantitative and qualitative data, UK, Wales based research, case studies and other material has been used to inform the commentary in the well-being assessment. The 'context' and life stages' sections are clearly evidenced and argued, utilising the consultation data and the emerging issues from the referenced materials are well applied to Ceredigion as a whole.

As previously discussed, the Assessment could be improved by providing more information of localities and particular communities. There are some other aspects of the narrative which would provide a clearer understanding of which issues are *critical* to well-being across the area and within particular areas of Ceredigion including: infrastructural resilience; resilience of the agricultural economy; coastal flood defence; energy supply; water supply; soil quality (in addition to peat); cross border issues (see 10.); public sector employment through austerity; lack of connectivity. While these issues have been picked up in the narrative they are often descriptive – (e.g. transport links) without an *interpretation* of why these issues might be important and how they may impact on well-being differently in, for example, Newcastle Emlyn compared to Lampeter or Aberystwyth.

There is an opportunity for much clearer commentary, analysis and interpretation to develop our understanding of the *implications* of the data for Ceredigion, as a whole for individual communities and particular groups within the community.

## 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.

The Ceredigion 'context' section usefully highlights some challenges over the short and medium term e.g. housing, deprivation, flood risk and peat management. However, as discussed in point 5 well-being challenges are not 'homogenous' and will apply to different communities, landscapes, localities and individuals differently.

In some places local *interpretation* is lacking and needs to be addressed to make it Ceredigion specific e.g. the climate risk assessment (pages 51 and 52) are generic climate impacts – which of these are of particular concern given Ceredigion's unique characteristics?

There is limited analysis on which challenges are short, medium or long term, and how these impact on well-being, for example multi-generational deprivation, inter-generational issues for farming; long term road maintenance; working poverty. Given the medium term outlook of austerity for public services and Brexit – what might these mean for Ceredigion, and particular communities in 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 between for example housing and flood risk could also be highlighted, and asset mapping could be a useful approach to incorporate these issues.

## 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 in the *Consultation Engagement Report* the wide range of engagement via the consultation and the list of stakeholders, showing an impressive range of bodies, and individuals and groups engaged. The framing of the questions for the survey is notable, focusing on individuals, households and services. This, in addition to engagement at events and activities with schools, provides excellent data to inform the well-being assessment. This allied to a greater degree of localised information (see previous sections) would provide a strong evidence base for the well-being planning process.

The combined approach to the survey with neighbouring authorities has clearly provided benefits in efficiency, and should be commended. It will also be interesting to see how further collaboration can interpret the data to inform cross-boundary issues (see 10.)

It is less clear how collaborative the process of assessment production has been between public sector partners, the third sector and others in terms of data provision, analysis and interpretation. The assessment would benefit from a section on how the assessment has been produced, and the role of the Council in this – and its key collaborators (highlighting for example the activity with Hywel Da University Health Board in the consultation).

Collaboration between sectors will clearly be of importance in well-being planning and a greater emphasis on the role of other sectors might encourage their future engagement with the assessment and the plan. There is scope for more description of the third sector

and its role in well-being in Ceredigion, and where it gets involved in supporting well-being. It is also not clear how much the private sector has been involved in well-being planning in the area so far. This is especially important to understand in the context of both local and regional economies, from commuting patterns, tourism, and town centres, older workforce and the role of the rural economy.

## 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.

It is clear that the narrative on life stages provides good examples of ways of integrating across themes - focusing on the individual, for example in considering the relationship between deprivation, housing quality and health. This tells a compelling story about determinants of individuals' well-being.

The Assessment would be improved by applying the same approach to *communities* across Ceredigion. Numbers of working poor, housing costs and health trends in particular localities might be different from those in other communities. Similarly at a *strategic level* the inter-play between economic trends, town centres and service availability would provide an understanding of well-being across the area. This could be strengthened in the 'context' section of the assessment.

The survey provides data in four themes, as highlighted in the *Consultation Engagement Report*. Both documents could be improved with a section to highlight the inter-relationships between cultural, environmental, economic and social well-being in Ceredigion – what do these inter-relationships tell us about well-being in the area?

As stated previously, we will be interested to see how the Population Assessment data is integrated into the well-being planning process.

## 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.

The section on Future Trends reflects some of the key themes recently provided by Welsh Government on their update on their forthcoming future trends report: population change,

climate change; future of work; future of services. This section provides generic descriptions of trends with limited interpretation of their impact on Ceredigion itself. There are also some examples in the assessment where long term data has been used to describe the 'context' around flooding, population, housing and climate change.

Acknowledgement and description of future trends need to be developed into *interpretation* of these in Ceredigion i.e. which communities are particularly vulnerable/resilient in the long term to these issues, and how are they vulnerable or resilient? Again, this is something that could be addressed as part of the proposed Asset Planning activity. There may also be an opportunity to weave future trends into the 'life stages' frame, by considering the well-being of a citizen (or community) in 2040, through scenario planning.

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.

We believe that a more detailed analysis of key regional and cross border issues which affect Ceredigion 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.

The narrative provided in the 'context' section provides only limited consideration of the relationship of Ceredigion's place within the region. There is no mention of Gwynedd, Carmarthenshire or Pembrokeshire and only one mention of Powys as neighbouring PSBs which also 'manage' public services. Cross boundary well-being issues such as transport, health provision, commuting, infrastructure, housing and landscape need including in this section. There are established relationships between public bodies across this 'footprint' than need reflecting in the well-being planning process. Key partners like the University Health Board and NRW may be able to help to provide this regional perspective. We will also be interested to see whether the collaborative work with Pembrokeshire and Carmarthenshire on the survey can be developed to help in this respect.

It will also be important for Ceredigion PSB to consider the early findings of neighbouring local assessments of well-being as plan production develops.

## 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. It is positive that the assessment acknowledges the 'incomplete picture' as an issue, however it is unclear in the document how this issue is likely to be managed. Is this something that will be managed as part of the PSB Regional group, or by the PSB, or the Council?

It would be helpful for the assessment to provide more detail about 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 well-being planning, what would be good to build over the medium term and what the 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 on PSB needs.

## 12. Use of the sustainable development principle

The statutory guidance places an onus 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 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 well-being survey and associated engagement activity [see point 7]
- *Collaboration* – between Ceredigion, Pembrokeshire and Carmarthenshire PSBs [see points 8, 10]
- *Long term* – use of readily available climate, housing and population data and a Future Trends Section [see point 9]

However, there is little evidence that the sustainable development principle has been applied as a *modus operandi* to this assessment. There is no mention of the principle or five ways of working in the documents or appendices. It is difficult to see where the other 'ways of working', integration and prevention, can be applied to what has been produced in the

assessment. These may be implicit but the legislation is clear that the PSB must use the principle to maximise its contribution to the well-being goals.

The assessment would benefit from being clearer about how the principle will continue to 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 there is scope for further consideration. Both the documents would benefit from being more explicit about: the next steps; how individuals and organisation can remain involved; the timetable; and what the Plan is intending to do. Importantly this explanation needs to communicate how the material collected in the assessment is going to be used to formulate objectives for the PSB.

It is noted that there is some material which addresses some of these concerns on the PSB website. This should be included in the documentation to orientate the reader and manage expectations on timeframes and implementation.

### **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 of engagement through the well-being survey is particularly positive. Also of note is the quality of the narrative provided on the life stages of people across Ceredigion. The work provides a strong basis for the PSB to begin to prioritise issues for the well-being plan and determine what further assessment is needed.

At the same time, we believe the following issues need to be tackled to improve the Assessment as it evolves:

*Area and place* – to complement the life-stages analysis, a greater understanding of well-being within areas of Ceredigion, its towns, rural areas, and coastal areas to better reflect the key issues for well-being in different localities

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

*Regional context* – more analysis of Ceredigion's place in the region and its inter-relationships with neighbouring areas and communities, and their impacts on well-being

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

*Future trends* – greater attention given to the potential impact of long term trends on well-being in Ceredigion as a whole, for particular communities and for future citizens (through the life course narrative)

*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 Ceredigion

*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.