



Powys Public Services Board: Well-being Assessment

Feedback and advice from the Office of the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales,
6th January 2022.

1: Summary

- A clear, extensive and well-presented well-being assessment.
- Structured against the 4 dimensions of well-being, with thorough chapters on the key features of each.
- Good use and mixture of types of data and information (quantitative and qualitative), including responses from residents to your surveys.
- Information presented across the PSB area, broken down into the 13 localities, and regular comparison with other areas in Wales.
- A stark range of challenges relating to well-being presented for the area, many of which have been exacerbated during the pandemic.
- Some examples of good practice, but the assessment could do more to emphasise some of Powys' success stories.
- Five key areas highlighted (in section 3) that could be developed further within the assessment. These are: the need for a summarised narrative which explores the connections between the key issues presented; making connections between the issues, data and information; using and incorporating key future trends; involvement and further areas to explore to ensure the PSB is maximising its contribution to Wales' well-being goals.
- Section 3 also outlines other (desirable) areas for consideration within the assessment.

2: Evidence of good practice in the well-being assessment

Process

- Overall, good use of both quantitative data and qualitative data, from a range of sources and organisations. For example, including quotes from residents in the 'What have people said' section of each sub-chapter, and regular references to other data sources such as SoNaRR, the Wales Centre for Public Policy briefings and others. This complements the more quantitative data and helps with the overall narrative of the area.
- Regular comparison of data and statistics within Powys to other areas in Wales (and the UK) is helpful for local, regional and national context. For example, on income you state 'Powys' average household income is £33,700, below both the Welsh average of £34,700 and UK average of £40,257.'
- Findings regularly broken down by smaller areas in Powys: such as by LSOA, the 13 localities, or by comparing/contrasting the experiences of residents in different towns across Powys.
- Regular consideration of how national context has impacted Powys, such as Covid or increased cost of living.
- Evidence the PSB has worked collaboratively with local stakeholders and community organisations in the development of the assessment. There is a long list of those engaged with for the research.
- Audience and subject specific research approaches have clearly been delivered, such as surveys of children to embed their perspective into the assessment.

Content

Work with business

- There are examples to be commended with the work with businesses in Powys. For example, the Powys business survey received 1,016 responses - a strong response. You also asked businesses what could be done to make the Powys and the Welsh economy more resilient in the face of future crises. This ties in with the positive feedback you've received from local businesses, particularly on the swift processing of business grants, e.g. *"Powys County Council has in my opinion been extremely supportive. The grant arrived swiftly, and staff were well-informed and helpful."*

Volunteering

- Powys performs well in relation to the percentage of people who volunteer, 32.1% in 2019-20 (3rd highest in Wales), and you note you will closely monitor the volunteering landscape post-pandemic, highlighting the following quote: *'In Wales, the experience of community groups during the Coronavirus pandemic suggests that place-based and interest-based groups can help to alleviate loneliness and provide a sense of purpose (Havers et al., 2021).'* Going forward, it will be important for the PSB to consider how you can continue to support and foster this.

Pandemic and education

- Positive to see the excellent work of Powys County Council in acting swiftly to put in place appropriate community-based support for children and young people within the County during the pandemic. For example, repurposing schools and providing free childcare for the children of key workers and the most vulnerable children and young people. This was supported by your survey responses where: *'Most (90%) agreed that they / their child had received the right amount of support, learning activities and lessons from their school.'*

In moving from the assessment to plan, the PSB could consider what lessons were learnt from acting so swiftly in this instance? And, if there are any considerations / implications for the PSB in developing and delivering its well-being objectives?

Xenzone (commissioned counselling service)

- Strong example where you're seeking to reduce the number of children and young people on the counselling waiting list and increase the numbers sessions available. Comments from residents in your survey reflect the need for this kind of service.

Play

- The 'Summer of Fun' for children and the additional funding awarded to support a Winter of Wellbeing and develop play parks in Powys to provide children and young people with sufficient play opportunities. The success of this was also reflected in your survey results.

Social housing in Powys

- Gathered registered social landlord data to provide a snapshot of social housing across Powys (for the first time).

Electric car users

- Established community networks for electric car users to share tips and knowledge.

3: Areas that could be further developed

Important areas for consideration

Need for a summarised narrative which explores the connections between the key issues

We recommend including a summarised narrative in the assessment. This would draw on the detailed information and data already presented in each of the chapters but go further in seeking to explore the inter-connections between some of the key issues highlighted throughout, bringing the information together into a set of broad, overarching headlines for well-being in Powys.

This would benefit members of your PSB to have a clearer understanding of the broad challenges to well-being in Powys, across the four dimensions of well-being. It would also greatly benefit anyone else who uses the assessment, including organisations and residents.

Making the connections between the issues, data and information

Linked to the recommendation above, it would be beneficial if the assessment highlighted examples of areas / themes that are potentially cross-cutting and closely connected across the four dimensions of well-being, within the chapters.

An example where you have touched on this is in the environment chapter, where the links between the consequences of flooding and the physical and mental well-being of individuals affected has been recognised. Including more examples like this would strengthen the assessment, as currently, the links and connections across the main chapters aren't always apparent.

Food is an example that features throughout in relation to 'cost of living' (social), foodbanks (cultural) and the environment chapter. As currently presented, it can read as an isolated, fragmented topic within different chapters, whereas it is a systemic challenge and opportunity in and of itself (and one of three areas for transformative change outlined on SoNaRR).

Other connections that stand out in the assessment that could be explored further are, for example, the links between your positive work with business, climate change, digital connectivity and mobility.

Tourism / sustainable tourism in Powys is also an area that appears across chapters. The 'Wider marketing of Powys as a top destination' is one of the key headlines identified in your business survey. It ties in with some of the feedback to your survey on the future resilience of businesses in Powys, which highlights the need to promote the area, and aligns with the 'Reconnecting people and places' section in the environment section. It's also strongly connected to the cultural and environmental heritage of the area. Going further, connections could also be made on promoting Powys as a tourist destination with your local housing market, second home ownership and the Welsh language in the area.

Building on the information already presented within the assessment, can links between some of the areas highlighted above (and others), be identified or further explored? The recently published '[Mid-Wales Regional Economic Framework](#)' will be an important resource for your PSB. The areas highlighted above are all priorities within the framework.

Understanding and incorporating future trends

We recommend further work is carried out to consider and incorporate some of the key trends presented within the second future trends report, within your well-being assessment.

While there are some references to the long-term and future in the assessment, such as the data on population projections taken to 2043, the 'future proofing' survey and environment chapter, it's not evident (overall) how future trends have been used, considered and incorporated.

This is particularly significant given some of the striking data presented in your assessment in relation to poverty, the significant rise of unpaid carers, referrals for social isolation and unemployment (highest in Wales) during the pandemic, as well as the area's ageing population.

As outlined in our recent report '[Inequality in a future Wales](#)', existing inequalities will increase in the future if nothing is done, and if conflicts between achieving economic growth, promoting equality and environmental change are not addressed.

Welsh Government shared a slide deck with PSBs in August 2021 with key information from the second Future Trends report, which was published on 14th December 2021 (towards the end of your consultation deadline). This data, in conjunction with how it inter-connects with key future trends such as the future of work, climate change and demographic change, is what the PSB will need to use and consider in full as it moves from assessment to the well-being plan and objectives.

Involvement

The engagement methodology articulates how you've gone about your engagement work, and the rationale behind it. The mixture of information and data presented throughout is a strength, as is the wide range of stakeholders you have engaged with. We like that you have focused on filling data gaps, focussing on what matters to people, and considering under-represented groups.

To build on these strengths, this section would benefit from some additional insight and reflection on what you feel worked well, and the areas where you feel you could (potentially) improve, as you move to the well-being plan.

For example, one of the striking features from your survey responses was that it did not always reflect the other data or statistics presented in the assessment. In relation to poverty, there are some very stark figures collated from partners. And yet, in response to being asked how people were managing financially, 25% said they were living comfortably; 46% said they were doing alright; 22% just about getting by; 6% finding it quite difficult and 1% very difficult.

What does this mean or imply for your work on engagement? Whose voices are not being heard in the survey? Using and adopting strong, innovative involvement techniques that go beyond engagement and move more towards co-production is important for all PSBs. Where you have included qualitative data and quotes from the PSB and partner surveys to give more insight into people's lived experience, this adds value to the narrative in the assessment. Building on this in your next steps would be good. For example, how can you incorporate more lived experience into designing your well-being plan and enable residents in Powys to tell their story more fully?

You mention focus groups, online forums and other involvement methods in your methodology. The outputs from these are less obvious in your assessment than the survey findings and we'd be interested to know your reflections and learnings from carrying out these other activities. If it was

more difficult to analyse and include the findings from these activities, why? How could you integrate qualitative and quantitative findings more in future and what would help you do that?

Finally, are there any lessons in your thinking and approach to engagement in Powys to be drawn from your experience in 2021 working with the Co-Production Network for Wales on community involvement?

Maximising the PSB's contribution to Wales' well-being goals

Understanding the full definition of Wales' well-being goals can help ensure the assessment is considering the wide range of topics and themes of well-being within Powys.

The table below sets out areas that could be explored further within the assessment, and/or taken into consideration for the well-being plan. These have been presented against the four dimensions of well-being, as you have used this structure in your assessment.

It is appreciated that it may not be possible for all the information below to be fully considered / incorporated in your assessment. Instead, you may wish to choose some areas to compliment the extensive work you have already undertaken:

Economy	Social
<p>Brexit Could be considered further, in conjunction with potential implications of the Sustainable Farming Scheme (SFS), and broader challenges such as the pandemic and climate change. WCPP's briefing: '<i>The impacts of Covid-19 and Brexit on well-being</i>' is a helpful resource.</p> <p>Regional Skills Partnership It's not clear if the links have been made with your local Regional Skills Partnerships. Your assessment will be a significant resource for them. Similarly, their strategies and priorities will be key for your PSB.</p> <p>Skills for the future The assessment could consider skills for the future. The summary analysis of our recent report carried out with New Economics Foundation is available here.</p> <p>The foundational economy And links to the Foundational Economy Challenge Fund.</p> <p>Net Zero Wales What Wales' decarbonisation pathway means for Powys.</p>	<p>Intersectionality While Powys is not very ethnically diverse, it would be worthwhile acknowledging how intersectionality affects people in Powys. For example, ethnicity and gender-based oppression can result in significant health inequalities.</p> <p>LGBT+ experiences Currently no reference within the assessment.</p> <p>Disability Greater analysis (going beyond rates of disability) could be useful to understand levels of accessibility and experience accessing services in Powys.</p> <p>Awareness Welsh Government's Race Equality Action Plan, LGBTQ+ Action Plan, Disability Rights Taskforce and how these potentially affect Powys and organisations on the PSB.</p>



Culture	Environment
<p>Welsh Language Further explore the longer-term future of the Welsh language in Powys, in conjunction with national level predictions and relevance to your area. Concerns were raised in response to your survey on using and learning the Welsh Language.</p> <p>Connections can also be made here to Powys as a tourist destination, the local housing market and second home ownership.</p> <p>Cultural assets and natural heritage Limited information on Powys' cultural assets and natural heritage, and how this links to areas of deprivation or lower participation. The WCPP's briefing on 'Cultural Well-being' is a helpful resource.</p>	<p>Knowledge of nature/climate Consideration of the PSB's literacy on nature, climate and the environment.</p> <p>Circular economy and consumption Touched on in the environment chapter, but could explore further what Wales' strategy for a circular economy means for Powys, e.g. helping communities share items, food waste, electric fleet etc.</p> <p>Fair and local procurement Not explored in the assessment, but a key lever for change. Analysis of Powys' local economy, its supply chains and the 'Powys Pound' for example, would be beneficial.</p>

Other areas for consideration (desirable)

Areas you might wish to amend / update to strengthen the assessment overall:

- **Reflection on progress:** The assessment would benefit from some reflection on any learning and differences between your first and second well-being assessments, e.g. were there any lessons from the first assessment that were taken on board to inform the second iteration? How similar (or not) was your approach to engagement?
- **Collaboration:** The inclusion of a short narrative (with examples) on how partners have worked together to develop the assessment would be useful for learning, to detail how this was delivered, e.g. information (and/or examples) where partners are working together to identify and prevent issues, and/or where they are exploring some of the key pressures in delivering public services in their areas.
- **Data gaps:** It would be helpful if a summary of the data gaps you have identified and referred to are presented within the document.
- **Mental health:** Much of the data and narrative is at a national level, and statistics for the area (in the working age population) are not evident in the draft assessment.
- **Community safety:** the text and narrative is about deprivation, and does not refer to community safety. It's assumed this is a simple error that can be easily remedied. It would be helpful to see links being made between community safety, poverty and equality, to enable a better understanding of which communities and groups in Powys are most at risk.
- **Environment:** Positive to see the environment chapter open with reference to NRW's SoNaRR, and the links being made to the mid-Wales Area Statement. However, much of the narrative is set at an all-Wales level. Some Powys-specific context would be helpful.
- **Environment and survey:** In some areas of the environment chapter, the survey section sometimes refers to SoNaRR, with no views or quotes from residents of Powys.
- **Reconnecting people and places:** This section highlights that '*A new opportunity is that a series of short circular walks is now being developed that use sections of the trails plus nearby Public Rights of Way.*' This sounds like a good initiative, and more information could be included in the assessment if appropriate, e.g. as a case study.



- **Green/social prescribing:** This section does not provide any information or detail about green/social prescribing developments in Powys. This is surprising given reconnecting people with their natural environment emerged as a key priority from the Area Statement consultations, and feedback to people of Powys survey also included the need to promote and list areas that are accessible to all.
- **Waste:** Currently lists statistics and doesn't give a comparison to the rest of Wales.

4: Resources to help inform your next steps

Below are resources that can help inform your next steps, as you move from well-being assessment to well-being plan:

- Chapter 4 of the Future Generations Report: '[Setting Good Well-being Objectives](#)'
- The '[Future Generations Framework for Projects](#)'
- [Case studies](#) of how the Act is being implemented on the ground in Wales
- Office of the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales: [Resources](#)