

## Carmarthenshire Public Services Board: Well-being assessment

Feedback and advice from the Office of the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales,  
20<sup>th</sup> January 2022

### 1: Summary

- A clear, well presented well-being assessment demonstrating the commitment Carmarthenshire PSB has made to assessing well-being in its area.
- Structured in relation to stages of life, from 'new beginnings' to 'ageing well', which works well, is user-friendly and a helpful structure for encouraging inter-generational thinking.
- Regional collaboration a strong, positive feature of the work carried out.
- An honest appraisal of data and information, clarity on the information you have and don't have, and regular reflection.
- Good use and mixture of types of data and information (quantitative and qualitative), with information and feedback from your engagement work incorporated throughout.
- Some good examples of best practice, including the table outlining how the PSB have applied the 5 ways of working and the use of the impact / certainty matrix.
- Section 3 highlights some areas that if further developed, would help to strengthen the assessment. These relate to: future trends, involvement, making connections between issues, the Welsh Language and maximising 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 and methodology**

It's positive to see the PSB's collaborative work, locally and regionally to produce the assessment, sharing resources, expertise, data gathering and capacity. From this, you've identified 13 key regional well-being themes and identified cross-boundary well-being issues such as climate change, child poverty and housing affordability.

There is honest appraisal of the data shared throughout the assessment. For example, you state the number of children living in workless households has seen significant annual reductions in recent years, and the county is below the Welsh average of 13.5% (at 8.8%). And yet you (correctly) point out that while this is a positive trend, it should not be treated in isolation to the fact more children are living in poverty within your county, regionally and nationally in Wales.

You have engaged with a wide range of people and clearly drawn information from both quantitative and qualitative sources through the report. For example, on childhood obesity, the comparison of regional data on child engagement with sport is supplemented with qualitative views from children.

The table outlining how the PSB have applied the 5 ways of working is very helpful. For example, under 'Long-term' your examples include 'Futures thinking questions included in the survey' and 'Consideration and analysis of future trends information where available'.

The use of the impact / certainty matrix is a strength, enabling you to provide an indicative assessment of the main themes you have identified. It's also helpful to see assessment of your current performance against Wales' national well-being indicators to help provide further insight into levels of well-being in your county. It's also helpful to see these included in each of the chapters.

There is honest reflection about the impact of Covid on the assessment, and how the PSB has sought to reference specific impacts of the pandemic separately (where possible), and recognition of the impacts of Covid as a data gap. You also note caution if information isn't up to date or pre-dates COVID-19, such as with some of your figures on demographics.

The assessment explores some interconnections between issues. For example, the 'New Beginnings' chapter identifies the importance of addressing social and economic inequality but also environmental inequality. There is also cross referencing with some of the issues presented between chapters, e.g. noting wildfires as a problem in both your community safety and environment chapters, and cross-referencing between the two.

The structure of the 'Ageing well' chapter works well, set out against the World Health Organisation framework of 8 domains to assist in the creation of age friendly communities. This demonstrates an approach that aligns with the statutory requirements and incorporates research frameworks from wider studies on well-being.

### **Content**

Highlighting the key issues up-front in the report is useful for readers and wider stakeholders who would want to understand the headlines. The topics and issues are explained clearly throughout, meaning the information and narrative is clear, accessible and easy to understand.

The 'Engagement Response' sections at the end of each sub-chapter are a useful way of ensuring resident voices are promoted throughout the report - these strengthen the overall narrative.

You demonstrate a good understanding of what data you have, and what data you don't have. There are a number of occasions in the assessment where it states a topic is 'an area we would like to research further.' It's helpful to see these highlighted under your 'next steps' section as fuel poverty, adult obesity, domestic abuse, and housing / homelessness.

It's positive to see 6,436 students (67%) across 12 schools in your county taking part in a School Health Research Network (SHRN) survey in 2017-18. Analysis and comparison with the results from the more recent September 2021 survey will be important, when available.

We welcome the reflection on some of your data and statistics in relation to the first well-being assessment. For example, despite the high number of households continuing to live in poverty, you noted this has reduced by 2% since the last Well-being Assessment.

The number of school leavers (1.8%) recorded as NEET is now half since the last assessment (3.4%). While still just above the Welsh average, you note this significant reduction could be attributed to the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework which focuses on early identification and targeted support. You also state the number of children looked after by the local authority in Carmarthenshire is the lowest in Wales, a result of your continued focus on preventative work, with robust systems in place to keep children safe in the home. These are good examples of preventative work in the area.

The ReConnecting project, through the 50+ Leadership Group, is clearly valued by members of the Carmarthenshire Disability Partnership, and highlighted the importance of arts and culture during the pandemic, and how access to digital opportunities supported mental health and well-being.

### 3: Areas that could be further developed

#### Important areas for consideration

Building on the extensive work already undertaken for your well-being assessment, below are areas we consider to be important for your consideration. If developed further, they would help strengthen the assessment overall.

#### **Building on your use of future trends information**

It is good to see several references to the recently published Future Trends Report throughout the document. You have used the information to supplement local data and/or add some wider analysis, e.g.: *'Data presented in the Future Trends Report detail that by 2050 we are forecasted to see average summer temperatures rise by 1.34°C. This could cause an increase in rain by 5% throughout the year, concentrated more in winter as summers experience longer periods of drought.'*

To build on this, the assessment should also consider what the implications of the trends you highlight could be for your area. Using the example above, which areas and populations would be most vulnerable in Carmarthenshire to increased rainfall and/or drought? What could the potential impact be on homes, livelihoods or health and well-being? Are there implications for specific groups and communities?

Our recent report with Public Health Wales '[Inequality in a future Wales](#)' highlights that climate change could increase inequalities if the impacts on different groups in society are not factored in. To explore examples like this more fully, we would therefore encourage you to involve the people and communities who may be most affected, to ensure their voices are being heard. A better understanding of their concerns and priorities for action will help you plan your next steps.

Your assessment also references the links between future trends and inequalities in relation to work, noting: *'This shows a concerning trend that being in work does not necessarily pull households out of poverty.'* Along with climate change, the 'Inequality in a future Wales' report also looks at inequality in relation to trends on the future of work and demographic change, relevant to other areas of your assessment. Full consideration of the potential implications for inequality is necessary when making decisions to tackle future trends.

As discussed in our recent meeting, it can also be helpful to consider the impact of future trends in the short-term (3-5 years), medium term (10 years or so), and longer-term (up to the 25 years, a 'generation', as required by the Act). This can help you identify immediate risks or opportunities, and highlight the longer-term impacts that should shape those decisions. When thinking and acting for the long-term, *how* you do something is just as important as *what* you do.

We would welcome evidence that you have considered and prioritised the future trends most relevant to your area. You may find the impact / certainty matrix to be a useful tool here - we note you have already used it to assess the main themes in your assessment. Exploring two or three of the future trends you identify as significant for your area in more detail would strengthen the assessment overall. The PSB could also undertake this work as part of its preparation for the well-being plan and the setting of objectives/steps.

### **Your work on involvement**

The regional approach you've adopted includes your work on engagement, where you established an engagement group and survey sub-group. The assessment states a 'Regional Engagement and Consultation Framework' was produced, and is available on the PSBs website.

In our meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> January 2022, we highlighted that we were unable to locate the framework on your webpage and noted from you that a 'technical background document' is being produced detailing your consultation and involvement work. We look forward to seeing both documents.

From the information you have presented, it's clear you have engaged with a wide range of people. For example, your work with service users and providers from the Armed Forces community who shared their concerns on mental health and the impact the pandemic has had on their educational and training opportunities. And your focus groups held with Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities; EU (non-Welsh) citizens, rural and isolated communities, first language Welsh speakers, Gypsy / Traveller Communities, Syrian Refugees, LGBTQ+ people, disabled people and/or people with health conditions and young people.

It's good to see a wide range of methods, tools and approaches taken to your work on involvement. For example, you met virtually with seven local schools, with conversations structured around happiness, things that were important to them and their hopes for the future. These were clearly important discussions and revealed some telling feedback. This also links to the views and information captured in the 'Carmarthenshire Youth Council' in autumn 2020, where concerns included lack of suitable job opportunities, lack of affordable housing, training/skills, the environment and mental health.

It is reassuring to see your honest reflection on the '*voices which aren't currently being heard as part of the assessment*' as an area for improvement, and your intent to increase efforts to engage with these groups. Building on this, you could consider incorporating some lived experience into designing your well-being plan, enabling residents in Carmarthenshire to tell their story more fully.

Finally, you state '*This represents the beginning of an ongoing conversation about well-being in Carmarthenshire*' which is great to hear as the PSB shifts its focus from assessment to plan/objectives. Using and adopting strong, innovative involvement techniques that go beyond engagement and move more towards co-production will be important for PSBs in Wales.

### **Making the connections between the issues, data and information**

The assessment identifies some connections between issues, a benefit of structuring the assessment against age. For example, the report links mental well-being and ACEs with the ability to develop relationships, cultural connections and sporting participation. And the 'New Beginnings' chapter identifies the importance of addressing social, economic and environmental inequality.

To highlight one example from the quantitative and qualitative information presented, there are clear links and connections between transport infrastructure, children's play, access to green space, physical activity and mental health, and reducing emissions.

As you state: '*One of the key ways to tackle levels of obesity in children is encouraging them to engage in physical activity*', and yet road traffic is highlighted as the main barrier to children playing and hanging out by parents of year 5 and year 8 pupils. This also relates to your points on obesity

and the mental health of children and young people. And, your comment that encouraging the use of the cleanest modes of transport, active travel and the creation of urban green space is *'likely to be key in reducing emissions in the future.'*

In moving from well-being assessment to plan, one of the key considerations that will help the PSB prioritise its objectives and steps will be identifying connections like these, that cut across the four dimensions of well-being.

### **Welsh language**

Your county has the most Welsh speakers compared to the rest of Wales, and you note the ability to speak Welsh is associated with higher subjective well-being. Despite this, you highlight a stark decline in the number of Welsh speakers in the county. For example, from 50.3% in 2001 to 43.9% in 2011. The assessment also highlights the challenges around Welsh-medium childcare settings, where numbers/places have decreased.

Building on the information set out, it would be helpful to include further analysis of what this data means for your area (now and in the longer-term), in conjunction with the national vision of 'Cymraeg 2050' to increase both the use of Welsh and number of Welsh speakers. Referencing any work that has been undertaken to better understand the reasons for the decline in your area would also be useful.

In moving to setting objectives and steps within your well-being plan, clear links should be made to Carmarthenshire's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) and the local authority promotion strategy. Members of your Welsh Language Strategic Forum highlighted the importance of the relationship between the economy and the Welsh language, and connections could also be made here with your local skills providers.

### **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 your area.

The table below sets out areas that could be explored further within the assessment, and/or taken into consideration for the well-being plan. 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:

<p><b>Equality and intersectionality</b></p>	<p>Equality has been considered through the assessment. Building on your positive engagement work, the assessment could acknowledge how intersectionality affects people in Carmarthenshire, e.g. what is it like to be young and LGBTQ+ in Carmarthenshire? Ethnicity and gender-based oppression can also result in significant health inequalities. We also recommend ensuring all 'protected characteristics' outlined in the Equality Act are considered within the assessment.</p> <p>An ageing population will have implications on equality in your area, and disrupt how health and social care, employment and education, and pensions operate. These systems will need to adapt if they are to function in the long-term. Our <a href="#">'Inequality in a future Wales'</a> report explores future trends in relation to demographic change, the future of work and climate</p>
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	change, and is a helpful resource for considering the potential implications for inequality in these areas.
<b>Skills for the future</b>	<p>It's good to see feedback through your engagement work on the importance of digital skills, and you have shared concerns on the continuing trend of young people moving out.</p> <p>We encourage you to consider the skills needed for the future, how they relate to your area, and the significance they may hold in respect of other areas of well-being. For example, the skills needed to transition to a low carbon economy. Summary analysis of our recent report is <a href="#">here</a>. It finds that across Wales there are significant skills gaps in green industries which must be addressed.</p>
<b>Brexit and agriculture</b>	Could be considered further given agriculture is main land use in Carmarthenshire, in conjunction with potential implications of the <a href="#">Sustainable Farming Scheme</a> (SFS). WCPP's briefing: ' <i>The impacts of Covid-19 and Brexit on well-being</i> ' is a helpful resource. Issues relating to sustainable land management skills (see our report linked above) are also relevant here.
<b>Net Zero Wales and the Climate Change Risk Assessment (CCRA)</b>	Welcome the information presented on the environment. Consideration should be given to what <a href="#">Wales' decarbonisation pathway</a> means for your area, and the <a href="#">Climate Change Risk Assessment (CCRA3) summary for Wales</a> is also a key document outlining the key risks and opportunities for Wales, not currently referenced.
<b>Llwybr Newydd: Wales's Transport Strategy</b>	Consideration of the three headline priorities and sustainable transport hierarchy within <a href="#">Llwybr Newydd</a> (the Wales Transport Strategy 2021), and progress/challenges in your area.
<b>Regional Skills Partnership</b>	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. Please also see above points on skills.
<b>South West Wales Regional Economic Framework</b>	Recently <a href="#">published</a> in December 2021, an important resource for your PSB.
<b>The foundational economy</b>	And links to <a href="#">the Foundational Economy Challenge Fund</a> .
<b>Circular economy and consumption</b>	Referenced lightly in your waste sub-chapter, but could further explore what Wales' <a href="#">strategy for a circular economy</a> means for your area, e.g. helping communities share items, food waste, electric fleet etc. PSBs should be seeking ways to understand how a circular economy approach can help them meet a number of well-being priorities.
<b>Fair and local procurement</b>	Not explored in the assessment, but a key lever for change. Some analysis of your local economy/supply chains would strengthen the assessment.
<b>Tourism</b>	An important area that could be explored further, which links to your work with business, the environment and cultural/natural heritage.

### Other areas for consideration (desirable)

These are areas you might wish to amend / update to strengthen the assessment overall:

#### **Environmental and cultural well-being reflected across age groups**

There is occasional disparity between the extent to which the four dimensions of well-being are explored. For example, social and economic wellbeing are covered comprehensively across all four chapters, while environmental well-being is predominantly covered in 'Aging Well' and 'Adulthood', and cultural well-being in Adulthood.

Building on the information already set out, such as your section on 'play', are there any opportunities for you to further consider environmental and cultural well-being among young people in Carmarthenshire? The engagement with schools and young people suggests these are very important areas for them, and additional insight would help strengthen the assessment.

#### **Collaboration**

Building on the collaborative approach taken to developing the assessment in the region, it would be beneficial if the assessment identified *who* all the partners were and *how* the collaboration was managed. This information would help for future learning, as cross-sector collaboration is a challenging but often effective means of delivering social change.

#### **Stakeholder list**

It would be useful for future learning (internal and external to the PSB) if a list of stakeholders engaged with is included in your technical background document.

#### **Reflection on progress**

It's positive to see some examples where you have compared progress with your first well-being assessment. The inclusion of further examples would be beneficial, if possible.

#### **Breakdown of the PSB area and 6 local communities**

While trends are generally considered at the local authority level, some findings are then broken down by town, community area and ward. Going further, it would be helpful to see some deeper analysis of the community areas compared against each other. For example, the section on house prices could explore why increases in house prices have occurred, and why they are different in some areas than others (e.g. proximity to the coast, second homes / tourism, or transport links etc). It would also be useful, for example, to see how some elements of well-being might differ for those nearer to the coast and those more inland; or towns in comparison to more rural areas.

#### **Volunteering, inter-generational activities and knowledge sharing**

Currently, 33.7% of Carmarthenshire adults volunteer and the links to well-being are clear. There are clear messages from your survey with older people that there is a desire to share knowledge and experience, providing opportunities for intergenerational connectivity, building community cohesion and improving well-being. This appears to be an important area for your county and the PSB could consider its role more fully in this area if it's not already.

#### **Fly-tipping**

A significant concern for the area, with the total number of recorded instances being the second highest in Wales. It's also opposite to the trends seen in your neighbouring counties of Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire, where they have seen a significant decrease in fly tipping instances. It would be helpful to know if any specific work, studies or action is being undertaken to help address this issue?

### **Case studies**

Welcome your suggestion that case studies will be added to the Assessment.

### **Terminology**

We encourage you to use the term 'seldom heard voices' or 'need to reach' as opposed to 'hard to reach' groups. And, the use of the term 'declined' in relation to progress against the national indicators suggests the percentage has got smaller, whereas it tends to show the situation has actually worsened, e.g. for loneliness (p87). Suggest considering revising this terminology.

### **Mobility**

On page 85, there is no information under the header 'mobility'.

## [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](#)