

Vale of Glamorgan Public Services Board: Well-being Assessment

Feedback and advice from the Office of the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales,
14th February 2022

1: Summary

- A clearly presented well-being assessment that demonstrates the Vale of Glamorgan PSB's commitment to its area.
- Broken down into five reports: an overview document, demographics, environment and transport, health and community, and education and economy. Each section includes a helpful introduction and overview.
- All four dimensions of well-being (social, economic, environment and culture) covered, with a narrative that makes regular links and connections throughout.
- Good variety of data and information presented, drawing upon a range of qualitative and quantitative sources.
- Section 3 (below) highlights some areas that if further developed would help strengthen the assessment. These are: future trends, involvement, equality, skills and the future of work, cultural well-being and maximising your PSB's 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

The assessment has drawn upon a range of quantitative and qualitative sources. This includes the consideration and use of an extensive range of reports and sources to inform its content, including future trends and their potential implications on well-being.

It is positive the assessment seeks to '*build on the foundations of the first well-being assessment*', and helpful it outlines other key partnerships working in the area, such as the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal and [Cardiff and Vale Integrated Health and Care Partnership](#), with regular links made to their work, e.g., the City Deal's work on skills.

One of the strengths of the assessment is the way in which some findings are broken down into smaller geographies as a way of presenting inequalities within the area. For example, in the Education and Economy section states: '*there are substantial differences in annual household incomes across the Vale of Glamorgan... in 2018, Ogmore -by-Sea and Llandow in the Western Vale records the highest net annual household income at £49,000. This compares to the lowest net annual income recorded in Gibbonsdown in Barry of £26,300.*' Within the same chapter, use of food banks, rates of benefit claimants and employment, are also covered by smaller geographies.

In the Health and Communities chapter, the 'stages of life' structure enables some exploration of the way well-being themes and goals interrelate. This is similar in the 'Life in the Vale of Glamorgan' section in the introductory chapter. For example, the assessment discusses the way the climate and nature emergency will impact housing, industry, access to green space, and mental well-being. Likewise, the discussion of Welsh Language covers links to culture and 'satisfaction with life'.

Content

The structure of the assessment, broken down into four themed reports and a ‘summary’, is a helpful way to present the findings as allows the reader to easily navigate the assessment.

The ‘View of the Vale of Glamorgan’ section provides a useful narrative under ‘Life in the Vale of Glamorgan’ and ‘The Future of Life in the Vale of Glamorgan’. It clearly outlines key themes drawn from the wider assessments such as: stark regional inequality with high levels of deprivation in Barry, the challenges of decarbonising the economy, and key demographic changes. Likewise, the ‘going forward’ section provides a level of transparency to the reader, and demonstrates the PSB is working collaboratively to consider the impact of the findings on future decision making and planning.

It is positive to see the commitment of PSB partners to the '[Climate Emergency Charter](#)' which sets out a number of actions partners can work together on to take positive action and lead by example. We also note the statement in the overview chapter "*it is impossible to consider the future of life in the Vale of Glamorgan if not through the climate and nature emergency.*"

The assessment’s consideration of environmental well-being is a strength, and it is positive to see it incorporate the views and concerns of residents. For example, it states 86% of respondents are ‘fairly’ or ‘very’ concerned about climate change, with concerns including variety of wildlife, water pollution, and overall quality of the natural environment.

The assessment consistently considers the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, demonstrating the way the pandemic has affected all areas of well-being in the Vale of Glamorgan. For example, the economy and education chapter provide an in-depth assessment of how businesses and jobs were affected, while the health and communities chapter outlines the impact on both mental and physical health. Intersectional experiences are also considered here too, e.g., how unpaid carers have higher levels of anxiety, likely due to the pandemic. As attention shifts from well-being assessment to plan, we encourage the PSB to explore what the longer-term impacts and opportunities might mean for the Vale of Glamorgan, and to make the connections between these and its potential areas of focus.

As well as the pandemic, it is also reassuring to see consideration of Brexit, in conjunction with a range of reports and research and their potential implications on areas such as agriculture and local supply chains, and what these might mean for your area.

There is regular reference to positive initiatives in the area, such as the [Food Vale Partnership](#) and the Llantwit Major Food Access Project exploring food poverty in the area. And it is good to see the focus on food in the assessment, both in terms of food poverty (Health and Communities) and in relation to production (Environment and Transport).

We note and welcome your application to achieve World Health Organisation (WHO) Age Friendly Community Status.

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

The assessment refers to and considers future trends information. This tends to be in amongst the narrative and topics being explored, as opposed to highlighting or setting out a specific ‘key future trends’ section. For example, in the narrative on employment, it points to our own research ‘Inequality in a Future Wales’ in relation to the future of work and move towards automation.

It is also reassuring to see the breadth of information and sources referred to. For example, on the area’s ageing population, it makes good links between the UK Govt Office for Science’s report ‘Future of an ageing population’ and the Cardiff and Vale UHB’s ‘Reimagining Ageing into the Future’.

Building on this, the assessment would benefit from making more explicit links and references to the recently published [Future Trends Report](#). And while the ‘Future of Life in the Vale of Glamorgan’ section does begin to explore some of the key future trends, and their potential implications for the Vale of Glamorgan, it would be helpful for the reader if the key future trends discussed could be broken down by sub-headings for added emphasis and clarity.

Looking ahead, it would be helpful to understand how the PSB intends to continue to consider and embed future trends information into its next steps, including the development of a well-being plan and setting of objectives and steps. Futures techniques are effective tools for engaging with others and prompting constructive discussion in a way that can help develop plans that deliver meaningful change.

In their feedback to PSBs, NRW are offering to run Three Horizons workshop to help support the incorporation of future trends into the well-being planning process. We encourage your PSB to take up this offer if you haven’t already. Our Three Horizons toolkit is available [here](#).

The environment and transport chapter refers to our recent report ‘Inequality in a future Wales’ and highlights that more vulnerable groups are often least likely to be part of the decision making and planning process. Together with our advice below on your work on involvement, we encourage you to consider how different people and population groups living in your communities may be differently affected by future trends, and to actively involve those people to ensure their voices are being heard in your discussions and decision-making. A better understanding of their concerns and priorities for action will help you plan your next steps.

Involvement

The assessment makes frequent reference to the ‘Let’s Talk About Well-being’ 2021 survey and states *‘This assessment has been reliant on the findings of online engagement, primarily through surveys, to develop a first-hand understanding of life in the Vale of Glamorgan.’*

Using and adopting strong, innovative involvement techniques that go beyond engagement and move more towards co-production is important for all PSBs. While the content within the assessment suggests a strong evidence base, it would be helpful if further information could be incorporated on the involvement methods and approaches used to undertake the assessment. This would be useful for the reader and the longer-term benefit of the PSB so lessons can be learned and taken forward, as attention shifts to your well-being plan.

We recommend further information is included that:

- Provides detail on engagement techniques used
- Outlines any approaches taken to help increase accessibility of engagement tools / methodologies
- Presents a list of stakeholders, organisations and community groups engaged with
- Outlines any strengths and challenges of your engagement work
- Identifies 'seldom heard voices' you are seeking to involve
- Reflects on how your work to involve people could be improved going forward.

To help inform the next stages of the well-being planning process, the Co-production Network for Wales is producing advice and guidance based on the way in which involvement and co-production has been embedded in the well-being process so far. We encourage your PSB teams and coordinators to help shape this guidance with Co-Production Nand the network for Wales, as it develops.

Equality

The assessment contains some strong elements in discussion of equality within the area, and regional inequalities are covered in detail throughout. For example, the assessment explores how black, Asian and minority ethnic populations were disproportionately affected by the pandemic, and recognises that while the risk for all victims of domestic violence increased, LGBTQ+ and black, Asian and minority ethnic populations were at an even higher risk. Similarly, there are some references to gendered inequalities such as the gender pay gap, which is discussed and referred to in the education and economy section.

Building on this, we recommend ensuring all 'protected characteristics' outlined in the Equality Act are considered within the assessment. Other reports such as the [LGBTQ+ Action Plan](#), may also be of use, to help advise on particular areas within the Vale of Glamorgan.

The assessment rightly points out '*There are substantial concerns emerging the impact the pandemic has had on widening inequalities*', and we welcome that the assessment draws upon our '[Inequality in a future Wales](#)' report.

For reference, the next stage of this work is being undertaken in collaboration with FLiNT (Futures Literature Through Narrative). Authors will work with communities most likely to be affected by climate change to ensure their voices are heard, and then shape policy solutions that work for both people (inequalities) and planet (climate change). This work also aims to help develop capability and capacity building for everyone, and the key findings and methodology of the work will be shared with PSBs in due course.

Skills and the future of work

The education and economy section provides a good overview of prosperity in the Vale of Glamorgan, and touches on future employment opportunities and skills for the future across sectors.

The world is changing, and these changes are having profound implications to the future of work, community and well-being. Nationally in Wales, skills planning is lacking long-term thinking, focused on reacting to skills gaps rather than proactively preparing and planning for the skills of the future and meeting the well-being goals for Wales.

As attention shifts towards your well-being plan, we encourage you to build on your consideration of future trends information and 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, such as the use of Welsh, the environment and culture. This is to help ensure the well-being objectives and steps you set are responding to the future of work and changing demographics, and not just responding to the short-term economic industries and opportunities of today.

Collaborating and involving a wider set of people to review and design your well-being objectives is one way to help achieve this. For example, schools (pupils, governors, headteachers), Further and Higher Education institutions; local business; community groups; Regional Skills Partnerships and others.

The assessment cites a wide range of reports and sources, including our 'Inequality in a Future Wales' report. Another helpful resource available is our summary analysis of our recent report with New Economics Foundation on '[Skills and training for a prosperous, green and equal recovery](#)'. The report finds there are significant skills gaps in green industries across Wales which must be addressed.

Cultural well-being

Cultural well-being is considered within the assessment, and it is positive to see reference to the research carried out by Welsh Government on the relationship between culture and well-being.

Going further, the assessment would be strengthened if culture was a more common thread throughout the four themed chapters. The Wales Centre for Public Policy's '[Cultural well-being briefing](#)' is a helpful resource and sets out five specific recommendations for PSBs to support this area of well-being. We recommend these are considered in more detail, to better inform your draft assessment and well-being plan. We also encourage you to consider the '[Vibrant culture and thriving Welsh Language](#)' chapter of our Future Generations Report, which sets out the key findings and recommendations in relation to culture and the Welsh language in Wales.

There are cross-cutting opportunities for your PSB to use cultural activities, or a cultural well-being 'lens', to drive well-being improvements in other key areas of well-being such as health, skills for the future and town centre regeneration. For example, the PSB could seek to actively involve arts and culture representatives in its work to ensure their voices are being heard in your discussions and decision-making. Fostering cultural well-being through participatory activities can also develop social capital and a sense of place and togetherness.

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 and incorporated into your assessment. Instead, you may wish to choose some areas to compliment the extensive work you have already undertaken:

Transport and Connectivity	The consideration of transport within the assessment is strong, making links to social and environmental well-being. Building on this, we recommend the assessment makes clearer links to Llwybr Newydd (the Wales Transport
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	Strategy 2021) in the assessment, and considers any progress or challenges in your area against its three headline priorities and the sustainable transport hierarchy it sets out.
The Foundational Economy and fair and local procurement	<p>Positive the assessment discusses Welsh Government's move towards the foundational economy and explores what this might mean for jobs in the Vale of Glamorgan. Can any links be made with <u>the Foundational Economy Challenge Fund?</u></p> <p>Fair and local procurement is a key lever for social change and is touched on briefly. Further consideration and analysis in this area would help strengthen the assessment.</p>
Regional Economic Frameworks	The recently published ' <u>South-East Wales Regional Economic Framework</u> ' will be an important resource for your PSB.

Other areas for consideration (desirable)

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

- **Analysis:** There are good examples within the assessment where an issue is presented and discussed in detail with analysis making clear links to future trends and wider context. This is particularly the case for the 'transport and environment' section. In some instances, particularly in the 'Demographics' and 'Education and Economy' chapters, there is a tendency to set out statistical information with little explanation as to *why* something has changed, *who* is affected and *what* might happen next. For example, when the assessment states that with tourism the '*economic contribution of the sector has fallen by 67.1% to £93 million*' in 2020, no explanation is provided. It would be useful in instances like this if further explanation could be provided.
- **Reflection:** It would be helpful if further consideration could be given to any lessons learnt and carried forward from the last round of well-being assessments, to inform future PSB work and develop areas of best practice.
- **Regional Comparisons:** The findings within the assessment are frequently broken down by ward or LSOA, with findings often compared to Wales or UK wide statistics. Further consideration of cross-border issues, beyond the Cardiff Capital Region, would also be welcome.
- **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.
- **5 ways of working:** Including information on how the PSB has applied the 5 ways of working in producing the draft assessment would be a benefit.
- **Readability:** Some of the themed reports would benefit from additional headers and sub-headers, to help break up the text. Some of the graphs and tables within the four themed reports are small and difficult to read. It is suggested they are made larger and/or put in a separate document as a technical annex.
- **Evidence and Sources:** The report cites a wide range of quantitative and qualitative sources, including recent and relevant strategy documents. These include the Cardiff Capital Region Deal, the Climate Emergency Charter, SoNaRR, and the Population Needs Assessment for

example. It would be helpful if an annex was incorporated to include a list of all the sources used within the assessment.

- Minor: there are some cases in the assessment where a link to further reports or information is suggested but not included (e.g. Environment and Transport, page 25). This should be amended.

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](#)