

Flintshire Public Services Board: Well-being assessment

Feedback and advice from the Office of the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales,
17th March 2022

1: Summary

- A strong, integrated well-being assessment.
- Well presented with an extensive range of data and information used.
- Honest reflection on strengths and limitations.
- Evidence of good collaboration between PSB partners and wider stakeholders in the region.
- Clearly highlights the key issues affecting well-being in Flintshire which provides a focus for developing the well-being plan.
- Section 3 (below) highlights areas that if further developed would help strengthen the assessment overall. These relate to: involvement, equality, future trends, the Welsh language, data comparison, next steps and maximising contribution to Wales' well-being goals. Desirable areas are also included for your consideration.

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

Process and methodology

You have taken a 'mixed-methods and analytical approach', which included: primary research, secondary research, descriptive analysis and diagnostic analysis. This also involved support from an independent analyst, an innovative approach piloted in partnership with the other North Wales PSBs.

Collaboration is a strong feature of your work in developing the assessment. For example, this includes working closely with Wrexham PSB, The North Wales Research and Insight Partnership, schools and universities (for the COP26 event) and PSB partners. It's positive to hear you have worked alongside colleagues developing North Wales' Population Needs Assessment, ensuring you're not duplicating effort. And you highlight the value in working more closely with Wrexham, developing your understanding of systems leadership and how to apply this to your work as PSBs.

The North Wales Research and Insight Partnership is a strong component to the approach and work in drafting the well-being assessment. We note it seeks to support using evidence and insight to understand the challenges and opportunities, and co-produce approaches to improve well-being across the region. It includes working with Wrexham Glyndwr University as a key partner and it's positive to hear it is an "*opportunity to build on the existing regional approaches to systems thinking, leadership and collaboration that the University have been supporting – to think and act more broadly and work in a whole system way.*"

A strong feature throughout is integration, where you have explored the interconnections and root causes for local well-being in Flintshire. This is within both the dimension of well-being chapters and the specific 'Interconnections' chapter itself.

It's evident an extensive range of data and information has been used to inform the assessment, and we welcome the list of references included. A strength of the assessment is that evidence is drawn

from local, national (e.g., Joseph Rowntree Foundation), and international (e.g., World Health Organisation) sources to understand how local trends fit the bigger, global picture.

We welcome the honest reflection in section 2 on the first well-being assessment (2017). This includes recognising it was *“largely an academic exercise”, “very large in size”, “primarily led by the local authority”* where further analysis of the data would have helped. It also states while some of the key themes from your first well-being plan resonate with the key findings from this assessment, the priorities and action may well now differ.

It's positive to see the approaches to involvement that have been undertaken, including your use of innovative approaches. For example, your approach to 'citizen analysis' which seeks to use intersectional sampling to expand whose voices are heard, and supporting citizens to work with data about the climate emergency and North Wales. It will be interesting to see how this progresses as attention shifts to development of your well-being plan, and the next round of well-being assessments. Similarly, we welcome your work to engage with 'seldom heard voices' to bring insight into the assessment.

There is honest reflection on the data available. For example, you highlight much of the evidence available currently pre-dates the COVID-19 pandemic and Brexit, and further insight will be needed as and when it becomes available. Culture, in particular, is an area where you highlight much of the evidence pre-dates the pandemic, which has had known impacts on the arts, culture, and heritage sectors. Appendix E includes further reflection on limitations including a shortfall in resource (for a period) which hindered development of your well-being assessment.

Positively, appendix E goes a step further to highlight opportunities for the PSB, such as co-producing community narratives, building on your citizen's analysis pilot, using the Llaisau Bach methodology to develop young researchers, and supplementing the community narratives with individual narratives to better understand how the social determinants of health look and feel like for individuals.

Content

The structure of the assessment is clear and follows a logical structure. We note it has been developed with a similar structure to Wrexham's well-being assessment, to help facilitate ongoing and future joint working.

Key strengths of the draft assessment include:

- The introductory chapter which sets out the structure of the document
- The inclusion of summary statistics at the end of each well-being theme
- Reflection in section 2 on where you've come from, where you are now, and where you're heading.
- A clear list of appendices which details the methodology in further detail

Both the pandemic and Brexit are considered within the draft assessment. For example, under the economy sub-chapter, the assessment draws upon wider sources to note the unequal impact of the pandemic on household income and employment, citing that *“the impact on children is getting greater. More than one in five families with children have had to cut back.”* We also note the recent report prepared by Flintshire County Council which highlights that despite some sectors showing signs of recovery, issues remain around supply chain, recruitment and growing demand, and a

potential mismatch between the aspirations and skills of young people and the needs of the labour market, which may become a long-term issue.

We welcome the work the PSB has done using evidence (the collaborative situation analysis) to draw out key themes. As outlined in the assessment, current projects include the Children's University to encourage children to undertake wider learning activities (in collaboration with Wrexham Glyndwr University, school and other educational organisations), and the Social Prescribing Community of Practice (reflective learning on different approaches).

With regards to the social determinants of health, it is good to see the assessment refer to the five domains to improve well-being highlighted by the Marmot Review (2020). The assessment identifies these as the root causes to your communities' well-being outcomes as well as your intent to address these things together with your communities to set a path to improving well-being in a holistic way.

The 'Flintshire as a village of 100 people' concept is a helpful way to illustrate in very clear terms the people and population of Flintshire, and we note it was developed as part of the North Wales Population Needs Assessment. For example, using the concept shows that 23 people speak Welsh in Flintshire, 17 adults feel lonely and 30 adults are physically inactive.

The citizens' sense making example (on climate change) presented in the environment chapter is a great example of the work carried out and identifies ten key messages from your citizens' analysis pilot. For example, "*Decision-makers not deciding for tomorrow, next week, or next year (apart from emergencies and urgent things of course) but making strategic decisions for the next 10, 25, 50, 100, 500 years' time*" and "*Change how we give the green message to business. Not 'must' but 'it will save you money' - show how it will benefit the business.*" We are keen to be kept informed on next steps with this work, how it develops and helps inform your well-being plan.

It is reassuring to see reference to NRW's North-East Wales Area Statement and the State of Natural Resources Report for Wales (2020), including the three areas for transformative change: food, energy and transport. It is also positive the assessment includes sections on 'farming and sustainable land management' and 'food systems', where the assessment states "*It is in the social sphere, with the broad range of action civil society organisations can take, that Wales has the most options for transforming its food system.*"

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.

Involvement

From the information presented, it's evident the PSB is working positively to help embed two-way engagement to better understand the challenges and opportunities (locally and regionally), and co-produce approaches to address them.

This has been assisted by the North Wales Public Services Board collective being one of the 'projects' to receive support from the Co-production Network for Wales for the next five years through the

National Lottery Community Fund. Although still early days, two strong examples of recent work are shared within the assessment: 'seldom heard voices' and 'citizen analysis'.

On 'seldom heard voices', it is great to see your recognition that there are still some voices that are seldom heard and that you are working with the North-East Wales Community Resilience Team to capture community voices through their day-to-day activities with people and groups, which has fed into this assessment. Building on this, it would be beneficial if the draft assessment could include some further information and reflection on this, and whose voices have been captured (so far), and whose voices are not yet being heard? It would also be beneficial for readers to understand what the next steps for the work are.

On 'citizen analysis', you highlight the challenges associated with much of the population remaining unheard and disengaged. Choosing the climate emergency as a topic area, you're testing an approach using intersectional sampling to expand whose voices are heard and supporting citizens to work with data. Further information is included within appendix A, which includes three learning goals you had for the pilot. While still in its development phase, it is reassuring here to hear your intent to develop this approach further and we are keen to be kept up to date with how this pilot progresses.

Appendix E acknowledges it would be beneficial to supplement the community narratives with individual narratives (in relation to the social determinants of health). If timescales for finalising the draft assessment allow, we encourage you to consider if some of the views and lived experiences of residents can be incorporated into its design. This can be a powerful way of enabling residents in Flintshire to tell their story more fully and would help strengthen the assessment overall.

If timescales for the assessment do not allow for this, we recommend consideration is given to incorporating further qualitative insight from residents into the design and development of the well-being plan.

Equality

Inequality is one of three key areas of focus highlighted in your key findings section (alongside the social determinants of health and adverse childhood experiences) and is addressed throughout the assessment. For example, we welcome your acknowledgement that *"households in Wales with a disabled person in the family, for example, are far more likely to be living in relative income poverty (28%) than those without (20%). And those from Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups are also at a higher risk of being in relative income poverty."*

Under 'society', the draft assessment highlights unpaid care, disproportionately taken up by women, may become more important if adaptations to current services cannot be provided and subsequent social and economic problems might arise from this. And linked to your work on involvement, we also note the positive work to draw upon the views of 'seldom heard voices', and that some demographic analysis has been undertaken to identify populations of marginalised groups (e.g., gender and ethnic minorities).

Building on this, we recommend ensuring all '[protected characteristics](#)' outlined in the Equality Act are considered within the assessment and consideration is given to how intersectionality affects people in the area. For example, what is it like to be young and LGBTQ+ in Flintshire?

With regard to the pandemic, it's reassuring to see the key findings section recognise how it has exacerbated inequalities and identify the future of work, climate change and demographic change as three areas that will have the most profound impact in a future Wales. This is consistent with the findings within our joint report with Public Health Wales: '[Inequality in a future Wales](#)'.

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.

Future trends

It is reassuring to see the draft assessment refer to the four key megatrends and public service drivers within the Future Trends Report (2021) alongside the four stages to embedding long-term strategic thinking in the planning and strategy process (identified by the Government Office for Science).

In the 'Assessment of well-being in Flintshire' section, further information is also included on longer-term data. For example, under 'society' it highlights the projected ageing population and likely increase in demand for health and social care will come at a time where there could be fewer people of working age to fund these services. Links are also made to other trends, such as the adoption of new technologies in work to facilitate longer working lives and the increased need for housing that can adapt to people's changing needs as they age.

The citizens' analysis pilot presented in the environment chapter is a great example of the work you have carried out to consider how different people and population groups living in your communities may be differently affected by a key future trend - in this instance, climate change. One of the ten key messages from citizens was "*Decision-makers not deciding for tomorrow, next week, or next year (apart from emergencies and urgent things of course) but making strategic decisions for the next 10, 25, 50, 100, 500 years' time*".

Collaborative working focussed on the 'long-term' is challenging but 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. As the assessment states, the first stage (gathering intelligence about the future) is the information gathered and presented within your well-being assessment, where the other three stages can be explored further within the well-being planning phase.

With this in mind, it would be helpful to better understand how the PSB intends to continue to consider and embed future trends information into its next steps, including the development of the well-being plan and setting of objectives and steps. Any further information you're able to share in the draft assessment here could be in conjunction with our suggestion (below) for the inclusion of a 'Next Steps' section.

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 are encouraging PSBs to take up this offer and we understand you have expressed interest in holding this with your PSB.

Welsh Language

The draft assessment acknowledges the Welsh language as an important part of Wales' cultural well-being and recognises wider links to well-being: "*Welsh speakers are more likely to participate in arts and sports events*". As of 2021, the assessment highlights 22.8% of the population in Flintshire speak Welsh.

Building on the information set out, it would be helpful if some comparative figures could be included in relation to Welsh speakers in other areas of North Wales and Wales nationally. We also encourage you to include some analysis of what this data might mean 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.

In moving to setting objectives and steps within your well-being plan, clear links should be made to your local authority's promotional strategy and its Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP).

Regional and national comparisons of data

The 'Flintshire as a Village of 100 People' illustration provides an accessible and helpful overview of key issues affecting residents in the area.

While the illustration works well, are there any opportunities to include and refer to some wider comparisons of the data for the benefit of the reader? For example, how does the rate of unemployment, children living in poverty and adults feeling lonely compare to the rest of Wales? This could be within the illustration itself, or highlighted separately, and would help provide further context for the reader.

We also encourage you to ensure the local level data and analysis provided throughout the draft assessment is consistently benchmarked against regional and national figures (where possible to do so). For example, the assessment notes that 22.8% of Flintshire's population speak Welsh, but there is limited additional context provided in relation to rates in other areas of North Wales and Wales nationally.

Next steps

Prior to the references and appendices sections, the draft assessment concludes with the 'Interconnections' chapter. This highlights three main areas of focus (inequalities; social determinants of health; and Adverse Childhood Experiences) and states this will also help the PSB bridge the well-being assessment and well-being planning stages.

Building on this, it would be helpful if the draft assessment included a 'Next steps' section. This could provide a high-level overview of the PSB's next steps as attention shifts from publication of the assessment to the development of your well-being plan, and any further information on how the PSB intends to progress the three key areas of focus and some of the initiatives within the assessment, e.g., 'seldom heard voices' and 'citizen analysis'. It could also include information on how residents and readers can get involved and be kept up to date with developments.

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:

Skills for the future	To compliment the work already undertaken, we encourage you to consider the findings in our recent report here on the skills needed to transition to a low carbon economy. It finds that across Wales there are significant skills gaps in green industries which must be addressed.
North Wales Regional Economic Framework	The North Wales Regional Economic Framework is a useful resource the PSB could consider, particularly in discussion of skills and key employment sectors.
The foundational economy and fair and local supply chains	Our bitesize resource on procurement provides a helpful summary on the Commissioner's vision for procurement, identifying the key issues highlighted by public bodies during the research and Section 20 Review, as well as the recommendations outlined in our ' Procuring well-being in Wales ' report.
Circular economy and consumption	To strengthen this area, the assessment could further explore what Wales's strategy for a circular economy 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.
Brexit	The draft assessment does acknowledge the UK's withdrawal from the EU is likely to impact many aspects of well-being, such as challenges to the local economy as businesses navigate new trade regulations. In drafting the final report, and in development of the well-being plan, we recommend consideration is given to the key findings in this research from WCPP . The draft assessment could also consider the likely impact on agriculture, and potential implications of the Sustainable Farming Scheme .
Tourism	An important area that could be explored further, which links to your work with business, the environment and cultural/natural heritage. Tourism provides a useful theme from which to discuss the integration of well-being dimensions, such as culture, environment and economy.
Llwybr Newydd: Wales's Transport Strategy	Building on the data and information included in the 'transport' section, links could also be made to the three headline priorities and sustainable transport hierarchy within Llwybr Newydd (the Wales Transport Strategy 2021).

Other areas for consideration (desirable)

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

- **Collaboration:** a strength of the assessment is how it outlines the collaboration in the region. Any additional information that could be included on how this works in practice would be helpful for other PSBs in Wales, as cross-sector collaboration is a challenging but often effective means of delivering social change.
- **Sources:** There are some instances within the draft assessment where broad narratives are outlined without presenting the detail or citing sources. For example, in the society chapter, the assessment states that the population shift is *"being driven by... reducing fertility rates"*



and increasing life expectancies... developments in the way people live, work, travel, are reflected in trends towards an aging population". It would be helpful for the reader if text like this could be cited, where possible to do so.

- **Local data:** Occasionally there are examples where the strong narrative is supported by national data, without reference to local data and information. For example, in relation to volunteering, the draft assessment highlights 74% of people volunteered formally and informally across Wales in 2019-20. It would be helpful here if the past and present local figures could also be provided. Similarly, with 'urban and rural green infrastructure' there is good overarching narrative which could be supported by local figures relating to proximity to green space within Flintshire.
- **Community areas:** in the assessment, findings are typically discussed at a local authority level. Where there are opportunities to do so, it may be beneficial to identify and benchmark some smaller areas against each other to identify how well-being trends may differ. For example, in rural vs more urban areas, Welsh speakers or relative affluence.
- **Cultural assets and play:** The draft assessment could include information on Flintshire's cultural assets and play, as set out in Wrexham's draft assessment.
- **Examples:** the assessment (particularly culture) discusses resident activities in Flintshire, such as rates of volunteering and attendance at cultural events. It would help draw a stronger picture of what it is like to live in Flintshire if some examples were provided – such as annual festivals etc.
- **Citizen's Analysis Pilot:** The 10 key messages from your citizen's analysis pilot do not appear to have been incorporated (overall) into the summary points of the environment chapter. It would be helpful if an overarching headline could be incorporated into the summary. It would also be helpful if further information on the pilot could be presented on the proposed next steps.
- **TEDxGwE:** This fantastic event was aimed at bringing partners and community leaders from across the North Wales region together to listen to children and young people present their own TED talks about climate change (compered by Iolo Williams). It's currently set out as an appendix, but could be included as a case study within the main body of the text, amplifying the voice of children and young people.
- **Signposting:** The assessment is well structured and uses clear language to guide the reader. A linked contents page with linked subheadings would help improve navigation (if possible).

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](#)