

Welsh Government and Future Generations Commissioner's Expectations: Public Services Boards and the second round of Assessments of Local Well-being (2021-22)

Overarching messages

- This is about **purpose not process**. Your assessments are significant because they have an important role in determining what your boards' priorities should be, and what will be in the local well-being plan.
- We would like to see boards operating within the spirit of the Act and we are looking for your approach to be **ambitious but achievable**. We want your PSBs to *aspire* to produce an excellent assessment, but also recognise the time and data available to you may limit what you can deliver. As a minimum, it is expected that:
 - The assessment covers the four dimensions of well-being (i.e. economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being) rather than focusing too heavily on one aspect, and draws out the links between pieces of data rather than viewing them in isolation.
 - The assessment takes account of the long term needs of the area as well as the short term.
 - The assessment looks at both the PSB area as a whole and at smaller communities and localities within the PSB area.
 - The approach taken to preparing the assessment reflects the 5 ways of working¹.
- The assessment is the **foundation on which everything else is built**. Boards should have a robust, objective understanding of their area to inform decisions on where they should focus their combined efforts. It is the point at which you *consider everything* to enable you to prioritise and not *cover everything* in your local well-being plan.
- We would like to see **leadership and buy-in** from organisations across the PSB, and a clear collaboration and connection between the executive/senior members of the PSB and support teams/officers.
- Ideally, the PSB members would **collaborate** to inform the development of the assessment.
- The assessments are important as a **wider resource** for partners, communities and others to draw on for the next five years. We encourage you to factor this thinking into their design, use and function.
- You should see the assessments as part of an **ongoing journey** on the use of evidence and analysis – continuing to build on their assessment of your area beyond the formal publication of a product to meet the legal requirement.
- There is **complete local (or regional) flexibility over how PSBs (plus RPBs and other partnerships) organise themselves to produce these**

¹ Long term, Prevention, Integration, Collaboration, Involvement

assessments, plans and how they deliver them. For example, using the last assessment as a starting point for update and refinement may be reasonable, if it incorporates and builds on all of the learning from the first round.

- We recognise the challenges locally in making sense of the requirements on the same organisations to produce similar assessments and plans under different national legislation e.g. the Population Needs Assessments. We would encourage partnerships to seek to **join up and avoid duplicating** work.
- In the context of the current expected timescales of local government elections, your Board must publish its assessment no later than **5 May 2022**.

Key differences from the first round of assessments

- There should be **learning from the first iteration**. We encourage you to reflect on your first round of the assessment process and your own experiences, and working as a Board, decide collectively what you're going to be doing and what you'll put most focus into. Consider any feedback on the first cycle of well-being assessments from members of the public, other organisations within your area, the formal feedback from Welsh Government and the [Future Generations Commissioner](#), to **consider what you may wish to improve upon or do differently this time round**.
- There is an opportunity to **reflect on the new sources of data and information which are available to the Board** since the last assessments were produced, e.g.:
 - Your experience of delivering the Act;
 - Local involvement exercises;
 - National data and information, e.g. core data sets from Data Cymru; NRW's Area Statements; Data Cymru's data catalogue; national briefings, and Audit Wales and other inspectorate reports.

Welsh Government will update you on sources available to support you.

- We continue to encourage **local variation** in how the assessments are approached. Your Boards have (deliberate) flexibility in how they are structured, provided they meet the core requirements set out in the Act and statutory guidance. You may wish to structure and present differently this time based on your own views of the last cycle.

Challenges and limitations

- We recognise there may be challenges and limitations to the assessments and would **encourage honest self-reflection** on these in the assessment. It is better to be honest about barriers that have been encountered in the assessment process than to hide them. Telling us about such issues may enable us to support you overcoming these issues.
- Where there are constraints, we would like you to reflect on how you might overcome them – either on your own, or with support from other PSBs and us.

What makes a strong well-being assessment

Data and analysis

Reflecting on the last cycle of assessments and feedback, we generally found that stronger well-being assessments:

- **Demonstrated a critical analysis and interpretation of the data**, and didn't just set out the data collected.
- Were '**honest**' in their assessments, and open/reflective about what the assessment doesn't tell you as well as what it does. For example, where there isn't data available or where the implications are unclear.
- Evidenced how they were **using and understanding the data** sets prepared by Data Cymru.
- Took a **collaborative approach** to the interpretation of data and evidence, drawing on the resources and expertise across PSB members.
- Demonstrated a **good understanding and interpretation** of what national and regional level data/evidence means for the local area.

For the second cycle, you now have information and evidence from the [Area Statements](#) and [State of Natural Resources Report](#) to inform assessments. Your Natural Resources Wales representative can help you interpret these for your area.

Guidance on use of evidence and analysis

- The [guidance on use of evidence and analysis](#) is available to help PSBs prepare assessments.
- It is expected that the assessments will draw largely on quantitative data, supplemented by qualitative data.
- Assessments can be strengthened by moving beyond broad descriptive analysis, and by identifying priorities to be analysed in more depth at a later date to inform local wellbeing plans.

Ways of working - Long-term thinking

Analysis from the [Future Generations Commissioner](#), [Audit Wales](#) and others (e.g. [Cardiff University](#)) has highlighted that generally, futures and long-term thinking is an under-developed area. Stronger assessments of local well-being will:

- Undertake **sophisticated planning for the future**, informed by a rounded understanding of current needs, future trends and multi-generational policy challenges. Future techniques can help here.

- **Make use of the second Future Trends Report**, interpreting what these mean for your local area. There will be support sessions in conjunction with Welsh Government on this in 2021.

This is an area where we hope to provide tailored network support through 2021-22, in conjunction with the second Future Trends report, and building on the futures / long-term webinar we held with coordinators in December 2020.

Ways of working - Involvement

Due to the pandemic, community involvement looks and feels different to before. However, this has opened the door to new opportunities and a way for both organisations and people to learn new skills. Strong well-being assessments will:

- **Build on the base-lining involvement exercises undertaken during the first round** which sought to establish what the issues were (as opposed to starting again). For example, involving people around your existing objectives with a focus on what has improved, and what still needs doing.
- **Apply a range of involvement methods, tools and approaches** – as was discussed during the ‘involvement’ webinars in October 2020 and February/March 2021.
- Evidence the **work undertaken with other organisations and networks** that has helped influence and inform your involvement.
- **Build on some of the great examples of collaboration with the voluntary sector and local communities** we’ve seen through the pandemic, and how you are using that information to inform your thinking, planning and delivery. For example, the [Blaenau Gwent Locality Response service](#) redeployed staff from departments across the local authority to coordinate an emergency response in partnership with third sector organisations, ensuring people could access the support they needed in their community.

Feel free to **be creative** in how you’re approaching involvement in your area. For example, Brecon Beacons National Park authority have been using Minecraft as an involvement tool for their [town centre plan](#).

As outlined below, we will use the network meetings, bulletins, online webinars and other means to **share good/best practice** on this theme. Looking at ways of being creative when approaching involvement is also an area we can explore if this would be helpful.

Support from Welsh Government and the Office of the Future Generations Commissioner

Timescales

What we will do:

We have considered in detail your feedback from the Coordinator meetings, PSB Assessment Survey and online sessions held in November ('Involvement') and December ('Futures/long-term') 2020.

Through these, you shared what you believe are the key challenges and opportunities for working better together as we head into the second round of well-being assessments. To help you develop your second well-being assessment, we are:

- **Continuing to run the national network meetings, topic focused webinars and online meetings** through 2021 with other organisations and networks, building on the 'involvement' and 'long-term' events held in November and December 2020 ([WG/FGC](#))
- Running a **Future Generations Xchange** event in March 2021 to share best practice and demonstrate the impact of PSBs ([WG](#)).
- Using the network meetings, bulletins, online webinars and other means to **share good/best practice** on themes such as 'data analysis', 'community involvement' and 'futures and long-term'. This is particularly powerful when hearing from PSBs who feel they're delivering aspects such as these well ([WG/FGC](#)).
- Offering regular **'drop-in clinics'** to offer advice (including commissioning analysis of wellbeing data), test ideas, and clarify requirements on the well-being assessments and well-being plans ([WG](#)).
- Preparing a **core data set**, through Data Cymru, containing approximately 75 indicators that would be used by most, if not all, PSBs as part of the well-being assessments ([WG](#)).
- Preparing a **data catalogue**, through Data Cymru, which will identify data and information not readily accessible e.g. from public bodies named in the Act and other national organisations such as Sport Wales, Arts Council of Wales, National Museum of Wales, Police Services and Commissioners. Data Cymru could then support and simplify the data requests to avoid overwhelming those sources ([WG](#)).
- Working **with the Welsh Government team leading on the Future Trends Report to ensure alignment and integration** between your work and theirs, as it develops. We are looking to improve the timeliness of the report for use in the assessments ([WG/FGC](#)).
- Welsh Government and Future Generations Commissioner recognise the challenges in developing these assessments under the current circumstances. **Welsh Government support, including regional funding**, has been designed for the coming year with the involvement and consultation of coordinators.

We are also exploring:

- Working with research expertise to prepare national briefings on high priority topics of common interest e.g. impacts of Brexit and people with protected characteristics (WG).
- The potential for **small, online communities of PSB practice (peer networks) on particular themes** (e.g. futures, involvement, data, etc.), if you think this would be beneficial (WG/FGC).
- Tailoring our approach to **provide practical advice and information and shorter feedback**, building on the comments you've provided on our advice and support during the last round of well-being assessments (WG/FGC).
- Sharing the best way for enabling you to have **clear, direct contacts within our respective offices**. This has been a consistent ask in your feedback (WG/FGC).
- **Sharing the work the Future Generations Commissioner does to seek to reduce the complex landscape public bodies and PSBs operate in and** to try to make implementation of the Act easier, through publishing Ministerial letters and providing transcripts of Senedd Committee evidence hearings etc (FGC).
- Setting out how we (and Data Cymru) could potentially **support you on data analysis and interpretation**, stepping up from just providing data (WG/FGC).

Roles

- **Welsh Government** has an **operational** role in supporting PSBs in undertaking the assessments – providing clarification on the requirements; facilitating the sharing of learning between PSBs, providing specific support to ensure that PSBs are able to deliver effectively. Please direct any queries to lgpartnerships@gov.wales
- **The Office of the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales** (in addition to commenting on individual assessments) has a **strategic** role in identifying and seeking to address common issues/draw out the broader learning from the exercise for achieving the ambitions of the Act e.g. common challenges or gaps. Currently, please direct any queries to contactus@futuregenerations.wales using ref: 'PSB Well-being Assessments' and it will be assigned.

Resources

Key reports

- [Well-being in Wales: Planning today for a better tomorrow](#)
- Audit Wales: [So, what's different?](#)
- The Future Generations Report: Ch 2 - [Welsh Government](#) and [public bodies](#) and Ch3 [Well-being Goals](#).
- [Implementing the Sustainable Development Principle](#): Public Health Wales and Kingston University produced a report on the five ways of working.
- The Future generations Commissioner's '[Journey to involvement](#)'.
- [The 2020 assessment of sustainable management of natural resources in Wales](#)

Implementing longer-term planning and decision making

- [Government Office for Science](#) and the '[Futures toolkit for policy makers and analysts](#)'. A set of tools to help embed long-term strategic thinking within the policy process, and explains how to ensure they have real impact.
- [FGC Three Horizons Toolkit](#): to help you think and plan long-term.
- [Futures for Wales Report](#) (2018). In partnership with Public Health Wales, this report identifies tools and approaches for long-term planning.
- [A shift in governance, policy and delivery for future generations? Well-being planning in Wales \(Cardiff University\)](#)