

What is the purpose of this document?

This is a snapshot summary of how you can use SoNaRR and Area Statements in the assessment of local well-being.

Who is this document for?

This document is for anyone involved in the assessment of local well-being under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

Key Message

Natural Resources Wales (NRW) recommends that any local assessment of environmental well-being is framed within the following aims:

1. **Stocks of natural resources are safeguarded and enhanced**
2. **Ecosystems are resilient to expected and unforeseen change**
3. **Wales has healthy places for people protected from environmental risks**
4. **A regenerative economy achieving sustainable levels of production and consumption**

These are the same aims we have used to develop the national SoNaRR assessment and it will make it easier if Public Service Boards (PSBs) also use these aims, to ensure consistency around the use of data.

What is SoNaRR?

Under the Environment (Wales) Act 2016, NRW has a duty to produce a state of natural resources report every five years. SoNaRR makes an assessment of environmental well-being [“the extent to which the sustainable management of natural resources (SMNR) is being achieved”] at the Wales level.

This assessment for Wales has been built around these four aims, and the summaries can be found online here:

[SoNaRR2020: Stocks of natural resources are safeguarded and enhanced](#)

[SoNaRR2020: Ecosystems are resilient to expected and unforeseen change](#)

[SoNaRR2020: Wales has healthy places for people, protected from environmental risks](#)

[SoNaRR2020: A regenerative economy with sustainable levels of production and consumption](#)

In short, we fall far short of achieving the four aims in Wales.

What does it mean for different areas in Wales?

The objective of the local assessment of well-being will be to evaluate the situation in each PSB area and how the area is 'performing' in the context of the Wales picture. There is nothing to suggest that the situation will be radically different in any individual part of Wales, but PSBs will want to show how they have used local data, and the experiences of local people, to feed into this.

This quick guide sets out the types of local data that might be used to formulate a local assessment, and includes a quick reference guide to the national indicators.

It is important to state that there is no fixed method or data set list for undertaking the assessment at the local level. It will be important to discuss with stakeholders what the four aims might look like in their respective local areas, and what data might be used to assess how well we're doing. Area Statements can help with this, as they have already worked with stakeholders to identify the key challenges and opportunities for the sustainable management of their natural resources in their local areas. Existing targets, or indicators (such as the National Indicators) will be relevant, and these are included below. Although the identified key challenges and opportunities are pre-Covid, it would be beneficial for PSBs to consider and reflect on this in their assessments. The challenges and opportunities may have altered, or some may have become more of a priority as a result of the pandemic.

The [Wales Environmental Information Portal](#) contains sources of data that can inform the assessment, but it's beneficial to combine that with the data that others hold, including local authorities. The Wales Environmental Information Portal is in an early phase of development and all feedback would be gratefully received, particularly what additional maps and reports would be useful to include.

The following section sets out the information that was used as part of making the national assessment, which may also be available at the local level.

Aim 1: Stocks of Natural Resources

“Success would see over-exploitation of natural resources tackled to make sure they are regenerated and enhanced to meet the needs of current and future generations. Non-renewable resources such as aggregates and fossil fuels would be used sustainably, and, where that is not possible, substitutes used to meet future needs”.

Information on **Extent** and **Condition** of our natural resources, in particular:

- Water (quality and quantity); Marine; Soils; Land; Biodiversity (particularly species); Invasive non-natives (as a threat to biodiversity for example); Air quality; urban areas (particularly land use change); energy and climate change.
- Local land use change will be a key consideration.

This links to the National Indicator in relation to areas of healthy ecosystems, concentration of carbon and organic matter in soil (gc per kg), % of surface water bodies and groundwater bodies achieving good or high overall status, Capacity of renewable energy equipment installed (MW).

Aim 2: Resilient Ecosystems

“Success would see healthy, functioning ecosystems that are able to safeguard and maintain supporting ecosystem services and their benefits. Ecosystem resilience is the capacity of ecosystems to deal with disturbances, either by resisting them, recovering from them, or adapting to them, whilst retaining their ability to deliver services and benefits now and in the future”.

Information on Diversity, Extent, Condition and Connectivity of our 8 Broad Habitats. Local Nature Networks will hold a lot of information on the state of the natural environment. Some Area Statements have developed ecosystems profiles which can also help.

This also links to the National Indicator on resilience of ecosystems, and as a proxy, areas of healthy ecosystems (ha).

Aim 3: Healthy places for people

“Success would see transformational change undertaken to reverse the climate and nature emergencies to ensure the health and resilience of our ecosystems, thereby pre-empting and preventing disease, ill-health and avoidable death caused by environmental hazards. The success of SMNR Aims 1, 2 and 4 are fundamental to the success of Aim 3.”

Healthy places for people include (but are not limited to):

- Freedom from environmental hazards such as flooding
- Pollution at levels which do not impact people’s health and wellbeing

- Connected, mixed use neighbourhoods with equitable access to services and amenities that encourage physical activity, energy efficiency, social interactions, play, learning and working opportunities.
- Accessible, high quality green and blue infrastructure and spaces that provide opportunities for physical activity, relaxation and community cohesion

This might consider information on air quality / pollution; waste management; noise pollution; water pollution; land use and soils (including contaminated land); invasive non-natives (as a threat to people and property); flood risk (particularly communities at risk); physical and mental health; access to employment (farming, forestry and tourism in particular); Accessible local greenspace. You should combine environmental information with health data, to consider the needs of different age groups, diversity, or communities with respect to a healthy environment, as well as health inequalities.

The following National Indicators are relevant to this aim:

- % of properties with a high risk of flooding
- % of properties with a medium risk of flooding
- Air emissions.
- Air quality (Average micrograms (μg) of NO₂, PM_{2.5} & PM₁₀ at residential dwelling locations per m³ and population weighted scores
- Flood risk score

Aim 4: A Regenerative Economy

Success would see a reduction in the environmental impact of production and consumption and the environmental footprint within Wales and internationally, while optimising benefits of ecosystem services.

Here, the economy includes (but is not limited to):

- Use of natural resources for production
- Material value of stocks of natural resources
- Agriculture and other land use industries
- Management of waste
- Import and export of natural resources

Information on sustainable production and consumption and overseas footprint. This information will be virtually impossible to source at a local authority scale. It might be possible to substitute with case studies on the production of goods using raw materials using those natural resources (food, fibre, fuel) – and consider the flows of those goods and services within and out of the local authority area (where does the food come from that local people buy?). Note: NRW doesn't hold any data on this and when assessing this aim under SoNaRR reviewed existing reports as sources of evidence.

Information on employment in the food, farming, timber production, manufacturing and recycling industries may be of interest, if it can be used to ascertain the

contribution being made to the circular economy, and whether those industries are “giving back” or renewing their use of resources.

The information above should be used along with qualitative information sourced from local communities, and stakeholders through any consultation or engagement processes. The Area Statement may also be a source of that qualitative data, as well as work ongoing to look at interventions and actions to achieve sustainable management of natural resources.

The following National Indicators are also relevant:

- Ecological footprint per person (global hectares)
- Carbon footprint per person (tCO₂e)
- Ecological footprint (million global hectares)
- Emissions of greenhouse gases attributed to the consumption of global goods and services (MtCO₂e)
- % of municipal waste sent for reuse/recycling/composting
- Tonnes of waste generated by industrial, commercial and construction sources (000s)

NOTE: NRW will be publishing Guidance Note 42 which highlights relevant evidence to support **green infrastructure assessments** in early summer 2021, which will be extremely relevant to all parts of the assessment.

Involving Communities

Any engagement processes, consultations or surveys undertaken as part of the well-being assessment process should be designed so as to help with the local assessment of the four aims. It will be important to capture local views and experiences on whether communities think we are meeting those aims.

Once the assessment has been made, how can we use SoNaRR and Area Statements to inform the response?

It's important to recognise that Area Statements have already made a start in identifying priorities and opportunities for action and these should be woven into the response analysis.

The overwhelming message from SoNaRR is that societal transformation is needed in the Food, Energy and Mobility systems. Taking a system view will allow a wider range of leverage points than have traditionally been used to regulate the environment. The concluding chapter sets this out:

[SoNaRR2020: Bridges to the future](#)

Each of the four assessments of the aims of SoNaRR also contain a section on the opportunities for action. These are summarised below and PSBs may want to explore these further as part of the Well-being Plan:

Stocks of natural resources

- Decarbonise
- Improve land management
- Recognise biodiversity as an asset
- Address resource use and its impacts

Resilient ecosystems

- Protect existing ecosystems and improve their condition and functioning
- Increase the extent of semi-natural habitats
- Enhance connection within and between ecosystems by creating connectivity patches and habitat corridors
- Restore and create semi-natural habitats
- Reduce and better manage the pressures and demands on ecosystems and natural resources, focusing on sustainable resource use and efficiency
- Diversify production systems

This can be achieved by:

- Building on Wales's policy framework, particularly to deliver nature-based solutions, working through Area Statements.
- Optimised regulation, consistent with SMNR
- Effective ecosystem management
- Build wider engagement – through Area Statements and other mechanisms

Healthy places for people:

- Equitable and sustainable communities
- Healthy, active and connected communities
- Green growth and innovation for healthy communities
- Increasing resource efficiency and moving toward a regenerative economy

A Regenerative Economy:

- Promoting a circular economy and wider social transformations. Examples might include local procurement, repair cafes, local food systems, sourcing energy from waste, reduction in packaging, payments for ecosystem services.

There is already plenty of activity happening locally to drive these opportunities forward, driven by the [Area Statement themes](#). These can be hooks for addressing all four aims within the Well-being Plan, linking up to other cross cutting agendas.