

Swansea 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, comprehensive well-being assessment.
- Demonstrates detailed exploration of well-being in Swansea and commitment to the Well-being of Future Generations Act.
- Draws upon a range of quantitative and qualitative sources of information and data, adding depth to key findings.
- Developed in a collaborative manner involving a team of officers from the partner organisations of Swansea PSB, in conjunction with voluntary sector bodies.
- Approach to engagement highlighted within the assessment and annex 1.
- Section 3 (below) highlights areas that if further developed would help strengthen the assessment overall. These relate to: key messages, involvement, future trends, skills for the future, equality 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

The 'Overall approach to the 2022 Assessment' section of the introduction is helpful in providing an overview of the approach undertaken to the draft assessment. From this, you state your approach has changed since the previous assessment, and the assessment is structured around the four dimensions of well-being in the Act – a structure that works well.

It's evident the draft assessment has been compiled in a collaborative manner involving a team of officers from the partner organisations of Swansea PSB, in conjunction with voluntary sector bodies. We note working groups were established and you highlight the wider regional collaboration with Neath Port Talbot PSB and the West Glamorgan Regional Partnership Board – working together on a joint and common approach to the well-being assessments and population needs assessments.

The draft assessment has drawn upon a wide range of secondary qualitative and quantitative documents, which compliments the primary research, and adds depth to key findings. This is particularly useful where insight is provided on topics where there may not be in-depth quantitative data. For example, in discussion of poverty, the assessment draws upon research undertaken by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation's research on Minimum Income Standard, alongside Fair By Design, to outline the key pressures likely to be felt by households on lower incomes, e.g., childcare, transport, and access to services. Likewise, this is considered in relation to digital exclusion, where data is drawn from the National Survey for Wales and Nesta, to conclude that vulnerable households are at risk, and demonstrates some existing work (e.g., 'Our Neighbourhood'), to increase digital access and literacy in Swansea. To compliment this further, international sources add a global perspective, where, for example, lessons are drawn from '*Measuring Up: Comparing Public Transport in the UK and Europe's Biggest Cities*' by The Centre for Cities.

It is helpful the introductory letter and the 'About the evidence' sections within each chapter point out the evidence yet to be collected and/or fully considered, which includes the Future Trends

report. We will be particularly interested to see the findings of the academic research commissioned which aims to bring out the key implications and messages (the 'so what') from the draft assessment. We would be grateful to have sight of this work as and when it is available.

It's good to see the approach you have taken to engagement and involvement, where you have sought to supplement the data and information presented with people's experiences. It's also good to hear that *"the level and quality of response was encouraging"* to your survey in autumn 2021. Your approach to engagement is helpfully detailed within annex 1 of the assessment.

A strength of the assessment is the clear interrogation and critical reflection of data sources, particularly quantitative data. This is evident in the way gaps are outlined, such as recognising there is *'a lack of information on where digital 'not spots' are'* and noting an increase in referral numbers to support services with regard to violence against women, domestic abuse, and sexual violence may not mean an increase in incidents but in-fact increased reporting.

There is good recognition of the impact of recent events throughout the draft assessment, such as Brexit, COVID-19 and the cost of living, together with the climate and nature emergency. As you state: *"This period since the previous assessment in 2017 has in many ways been a momentous and extraordinary time"* and that these *"couldn't have been easily foreseen when the last assessment was undertaken"*.

The draft assessment is honest in its recognition of the challenges and pressures of responding to the pandemic, which has meant some partners have not been able to contribute to the assessment. You highlight this is reflected most in the 'Social' chapter, particularly in relation to physical and mental health, early years and loneliness/isolation. However, we agree that the chapter does still contain extensive information, data and analysis.

The draft assessment is comprehensive and there is good evidence of connections being made throughout. For example, the 'Economy' chapter includes a focus on climate change, decarbonisation, green infrastructure, sustainable transport and energy, and highlights connections to the other chapters in the 'integration' section.

There is an honest appraisal of the data and evidence available to inform the assessment. For example, you highlight the limitations of the 2011 Census Data and state much of the analysis included may be subject to change, as the results of the 2021 Census are expected later this year.

Content

The structure of the draft assessment is clear and works well and it's particularly helpful to see a consistent format applied across each of the dimensions of well-being. This helps ensure each of the topics within the four dimensions of well-being are considered in detail, and in relation to the broader picture of well-being in Swansea.

A linked contents page upfront means the reader can navigate by topic with ease. Providing a demographic profile upfront provides useful insight to what the future of Swansea may look like. Further strengths include the introduction of each well-being chapter exploring alignment to the well-being goals, alongside an outline of key contextual factors and key sub-themes of the chapter. The inclusion of 'conclusions and key messages' at the end of each sub-topic means findings are neatly summarised. This will be particularly useful for the development of the Well-being Plan, as well as bringing issues together to help develop an overall narrative for well-being in Swansea.

The inclusion of case studies and examples of projects delivered within Swansea (internal and external to the PSB) works well. These are included regularly and provide a clear picture about challenges the PSB may be facing and how organisations and sectors are working together to address them. For example, the community cohesion projects such as Together and Tell Me More which seek to bring people from different backgrounds together.

It's reassuring the economy chapter includes a strong focus on decarbonisation. Commitments outlined in the assessment include *"increasing the resilience of the region's manufacturing base, including its (currently) relatively carbon intensive foundation industries"*. Alongside this, we note the Council has recently adopted the new South-West Wales Regional Economic Delivery Plan as its strategic framework for economic regeneration, which includes commitment to making the economy resilient to climate change and acting on decarbonisation, and aiming to establish South West Wales as a UK leader in renewable energy and the development of a net zero economy.

The assessment includes reference to recent and ongoing developments within Swansea, by consistently linking findings to the policy and strategic context. Good examples include:

- Reference to Swansea's application to the Foundational Economy Challenge Fund to test out two new approaches to the design and procurement of services in rural areas of Swansea.
- Embedding findings from NRW's Area Statement for South-West Wales.
- Swansea's Corporate Parenting Strategy 'best life' project.
- The Skills and Talent Project, from the City Deal.

It's great to see the 'Recognising and Respecting Children's Rights' feature highlighting Swansea as the first local authority in the UK to voluntarily make a public commitment to Children's Rights, and the 'Listening to Children and Young People' section within the 'social' chapter is a strength of the assessment. There is rich information in the key issues they have highlighted for your PSB to consider and reflect upon, such as protecting the environment, supporting disabled children, equality for LGBTQ+ children and young people, and developing resources to help young people better understand politics.

We note Swansea's evening and night-time economy (ENTE) has a reputation nationally as a leading light in how the sector should be managed, and it's positive to hear of your response to calls to improve safety for people, in particular women and other vulnerable groups, when visiting the city centre by day and after dark.

The chapter on environmental well-being is comprehensive, with consideration given to the key legislation, strategies and policies in place. It's particularly positive to see a focus on food within the 'Soils, land use and food' section of the assessment, which includes sharing the example from a survey that found 94% of 183 respondents in Swansea would consider joining a CSA veg box scheme, and sharing key messages from the 'Food for the Region' conference. We also note the section indicates a recommendation to pursue a food strategy for Swansea.

The draft assessment also includes a strong chapter on cultural well-being. It's great to hear about the new 'Diversity Pledge for Culture' in the city, which represents a commitment to diversification of audiences, and support to ensure communities with protected characteristics have fair and equal representation and access to your programming. We also note Swansea is signed up to Culture 21 (Agenda 21 for Culture) within the European cohort, and were the first UK city to do so.

3: Areas that could be further developed

Important areas for consideration

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

Key messages

We note reference to the academic research the PSB has commissioned to highlight the key implications and messages (the 'so what') from the draft well-being assessment.

While this is positive to hear, it's not clear from the information set out if these findings would be included in the final well-being assessment, or if this is intended as information aimed at PSB members to help inform next steps as attention shifts to the well-being plan? Clarity on this within the assessment would be helpful. We would also be interested to see the findings of the work.

Involvement

Your approach to involvement is helpfully detailed within annex 1 of the draft assessment. This outlines the three key phases of the work: an online survey; working with partners to make the most of existing events and opportunities; and the consultation process of the draft assessment itself. Annex 1 also provides a helpful overview of the responses, set out in relation to the four dimensions of well-being.

It's reassuring to hear "*the level and quality of response was encouraging*" to your survey in autumn 2021 and your "*approach aims to ensure that gaps are identified and seldom heard from voices considered.*" The 'Listening to Children and Young People' section within the 'social' chapter is a strength of the assessment and we note the comment that a priority for the PSB is meaningful and inclusive opportunities for children and young people to be heard in decisions that affect them.

Similarly, the Ageing Well Steering Group used a range of methods for engaging people 50+ in an effort to increase accessibility and uptake of the consultation, to which 236 responses were received which highlighted some of the key issues they wish to work on to make Swansea a better place to live. It's also good to see the social care section (under 'social') state that the priority is to ensure co-production remains central to the planning, design and delivery of services.

Building on your positive work to date, we encourage you to consider including further information (and reflection) on the following:

- What you consider to be the strengths and challenges of your engagement work to date.
- Identifying the 'seldom heard voices' you are seeking to involve.
- Any approaches or tools you've identified that could potentially improve your work to involve people going forward.
- Using and including quotes from residents within the assessment (we note annex 1 states these will be included in the final published assessment).

Using and adopting strong, innovative involvement techniques that go beyond engagement and move more towards co-production is important for all PSBs. 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 Network for Wales, as it develops.

Future Trends

While the draft assessment provides a comprehensive overview of well-being in the area, we acknowledge your statement that this is an early draft, and the Future Trends Report is yet to be fully considered.

As currently set out, it is helpful the structure of the draft assessment includes a 'Future Trends and Prospects for Swansea' section for (most of) the topics that fall under each dimension of well-being, and there is valuable information contained within some of these sections. Data on longer-term demographics aside, the environment chapter is perhaps the strongest in looking longer-term, due in part to the challenges faced by the climate and nature emergency, and how that links directly to challenges such as ecosystem resilience, water resources, flood risk etc.

Building on the structure you have adopted for the draft assessment, we recommend full consideration is given to the [Future Trends Report](#) (published in December 2021) to help better inform and strengthen the assessment. This should be carried out in relation to and across all four dimensions of well-being.

Looking ahead, it would also 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](#).

Skills for the future

There is good information contained within the 'Swansea's workforce' section and it's positive to hear the Council and its local/regional partners are working to create a more skilled workforce in the future. This includes sharing examples of several initiatives, including the recently approved Skills and Talent project under the Swansea Bay City Deal, which will work to develop skills in the region, plugging the skills gaps in many sectors.

With the ongoing and forthcoming regeneration projects including Copr Bay, The Kingsway and Blue Eden projects in mind, and the continued growth of the city's two universities, we encourage you to consider the findings in our [recent report](#) 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.

This could be explored further within the 'Future trends and prospects for Swansea' area of the 'Swansea workforce' section and in relation to the discussion of school attainment and training and education provision in the region. Clear links should also be made to your local Regional Skills Partnership.

Equality

The draft assessment is strong in its consideration of equality. Examples of good practice includes the discussion of domestic violence and its consideration of different identities (and changing statistics). For example, *“The percentage of BAME cases referred to MARAC has remained in the region of 6.6% and 7.4% since 2018 with less than 1% fluctuation year on year. However, the specialist advice service for BAME victims saw a significant drop in numbers from 2018 to 2021, possibly correlating to the lack of outreach events due to the pandemic.”*

Other examples highlighted include Swansea being the first local authority area in Wales to set up a Poverty Truth Commission and the Council passing a motion expressing its solidarity with BAME communities in Swansea and across the world in their fight for justice, which also committed the Council to celebrating and memorialising a greater range of Swansea’s citizens of the past, particularly women, BAME, disabled, LGBT and working-class people. Swansea has also been a City of Sanctuary since 2010 and an asylum seeker dispersal area since 2001. In the culture chapter, the assessment also discusses engagement with the Black Lives Matter movement in the summer of 2020, alongside events and celebrations such as LGBT+ month and Diwali.

The assessment also provides a thorough analysis and exploration of crime in Swansea, covering a wide range of topics which includes: Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence; substance misuse; street vulnerability; evening and night time economy; hate crime; community cohesion and wildfires.

We acknowledge the assessment highlights existing gaps. Building on the positive work undertaken to date, we recommend:

- Ensuring all [‘protected characteristics’](#) outlined in the Equality Act are considered within the assessment.
- Some consideration is given to how intersectionality affects people in the area. For example, what is like to be young and LGBTQ+ in Swansea? We note in the ‘Listening to young people’ section, children and young people highlighted ‘Equality for LGBTQ+ children and young people’ as a key issue.
- Making the links to your engagement work on engaging with seldom heard voices, as this develops.

We also encourage you to consider the implications of our recent [‘Inequality in a future Wales’](#) report. This highlights the how future of work, changing demographics and climate change could increase existing inequalities if the impacts on different groups in society are not factored in.

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:

Welsh Language	<p>The draft assessment provides strong consideration of the Welsh language. This includes key statistics, cultural initiatives and events in the area, making the links to Cymraeg 2050 and the important role Swansea played in the history of Welsh language and culture: <i>“The Welsh Language owes much to the history of Swansea; the deep roots of the language and it’s literature can be traced back beyond the medieval period through Welsh language poets and their patrons”</i>.</p> <p>As the PSB’s attention shifts to the well-being plan, we recommend clear links are made to your local authority’s promotional strategy and your relevant Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP).</p>
Fair and local procurement	<p>The assessment acknowledges <i>“Local sourcing of goods and services by residents, businesses and public sector plays an important role in both supporting the local economy and reducing environmental impact.”</i> 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.</p>
Brexit	<p>Likely to have an impact for Swansea and its residents, e.g., EU citizens residing in the city, the ability of businesses to import and export goods, and sectors such as tourism and the creative industries that have relied on free movement of people. The WCPP’s briefing: ‘The impacts of Covid-19 and Brexit on well-being’ is a helpful resource on this.</p>
Regional Skills Partnership	<p>It’s not clear if the links have been made with your local Regional Skills Partnership. 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 for the future.</p>

Other areas for consideration (desirable)

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

- Localised data:** The draft assessment provides some breakdown of data to smaller geographies within Swansea, but this could be more consistent through the document (where possible to do so). Comparison of different areas can be helpful to highlight local inequalities, any best practice from programmes delivered at a local level, and to identify where targeted interventions may be required.
- Integration:** A strong feature of the assessment which recognises many issues are inter-connected. Structuring a well-being assessment by well-being dimension does work well but there are some sections where clearer links could be made to other areas/chapters of the assessment. For example, the chapter on poverty is extensive and includes fuel and food poverty, and further links could be made here to the environment and economy chapters. Similarly, while integration is discussed in relation to digital connectivity where it states: *“there are also links to aspects of the social chapter, including housing and poverty”*, it would be helpful in examples like this if some further information/context could be provided on how this is the case.
- 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.

- **Overall conclusions:** The 'economy' chapter finishes with a section on 'Overall Conclusions'. For consistency, you may wish to include a similar section in the other three main chapters.
- **Net Zero:** The environment chapter refers to Welsh Government's Low Carbon Delivery Plan (Prosperity for All, 2019). Please note, this document has been updated and replaced with ['Net Zero'](#).

Minor considerations

There are a few minor considerations with formatting you may wish to address for the final assessment:

- The subheading 'adult social care' is the same as the topic heading 'social care'. This could be made clearer.
- Links to the sub-topics where they are listed in the introductory chapter would be beneficial and increase navigability.
- Reference not included properly on page 151. Similarly, text for 'insert image' remains on page 201.

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](#)