

**Welsh Government response to the consultation on the draft assessment of local well-being for Swansea, required by the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act.**

Thank you for sight of Swansea PSB's Assessment of Local Well-being.

Welsh Government acknowledges that the preparation of an assessment and the supporting evidence is a significant undertaking and recognises the amount of work that has been accomplished. Covid-19 has brought huge challenges to the public sector and PSB partners have demonstrated real dedication and resolve in overcoming some truly testing situations over this period. PSBs are demonstrating that they too have a crucial role to play in the recovery from the pandemic, in considering the social, economic, environmental and cultural impacts on communities and co-ordinating the longer-term response. Given all of this, we also recognise that the assessments have been prepared during extraordinary circumstances and this has been taken into consideration when reviewing them.

Our focus has been on the main areas we consider will go towards providing you with a comprehensive view of the state of well-being in your area, ultimately equipping you with a good, clear understanding of the sort of priorities you as a PSB can target your collective efforts to best effect on in your well-being plan. These are the second round of assessments and it is hoped that there will be lessons learned from the first iteration, building on what happened previously.

We have structured our response to the consultation on your assessment in the same way as in 2017 which is as follows:

- **General comments** providing an overview of thoughts on the assessment;
- More **specific comments** on the way in which the analysis has been undertaken and presented and the way in which the statutory requirements have been met;
- A **final summary table** which identifies the areas we would suggest could benefit from further development. We are adopting a consistent approach to these matters which have been categorised as follows:
  - **Category A** – these are significant issues which we would hope would be addressed prior to publication of the well-being assessment. They might relate, for example, to compliance with the statutory requirements or a fundamental issue with the quality of the analysis
  - **Category B** – these are matters which are important and would support a better informed well-being plan and we would hope could be addressed alongside the development of the plan
  - **Category C** – these are matters which would strengthen the assessment but could be addressed over time.

We will be using the same approach in responding to each of the assessments.

## **Overall Thoughts**

This assessment demonstrates clearly the commitment that Swansea PSB has made to embrace the challenge of assessing well-being in the area. It engages well with the key areas identified in the statutory and non-statutory guidance and demonstrates good use of a range of evidence to support the analysis. The assessment is very comprehensive and we recognise the amount of time and effort that has gone into this. The work that has been done provides a strong foundation to build on.

Our evaluation identifies some areas for further development which, if addressed could strengthen the assessment. These include more of an attempt to interpret what the data means for well-being and public services in Swansea and its communities (i.e. the response analysis), and also demonstrating a greater emphasis on the communities that have been identified and the differences that exist between them.

## **Comments on particular aspects of the Assessment**

### **Statutory Requirements**

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act (WFG Act) specifies a number of areas that the assessment must cover. This assessment appears to cover some, but not all, of the statutory requirements contained in the WFG Act.

The assessment is based around the same six community areas that were used in the 2017 well-being assessment. The introduction briefly sets out the community areas and they are occasionally referenced in parts of the assessment; however, we would like to see a lot more analysis broken down by these areas throughout the analysis and any differences or similarities between the community areas highlighted. By assessing the well-being of each community, it gives a better understanding of the diversity of the PSB area, and how the varying characteristics of each community impact on well-being, which in turn, helps determine the priorities. It would also be useful to include more background information on the community areas in the introduction, for example an overview of their key characteristics and features, in order to give the reader a better sense of the area and its geography.

The National Indicators have been referenced throughout the assessment, along with the statutory assessments and reviews which the WFG Act specifies the board must consider when preparing the well-being assessment.

## **Structure and Format**

The assessment follows a very clear structure. We particularly like the way topics are set out under the headings 'strengths and assets', 'changes over time', 'comparisons with other places', 'differences within Swansea', 'perceptions and perspectives', 'future trends and prospects' and 'conclusions and key messages'. Overall, this makes the assessment easy to read and the 'return to contents' function included in the footnote allows easy navigation through the document – something we haven't seen in other assessments.

The introduction provides a good overview of the assessment and how you have approached the various aspects of it. The demographic profile gives the reader a useful insight into the area which is particularly helpful for those who may not be familiar with it.

There is a good use of a range of tables and figures that are clearly explained and signposted throughout the assessment. However, it is important to ensure that they are consistently presented and include a title, an x and y label, and the data source.

One small, but important, observation we noted was that the map and table included on page 10 of the assessment has inconsistent colours, which makes it confusing to read e.g. Bay East is orange on the map, and green in the table. Additionally, it would be helpful if the map could be enlarged to make it easier to read the text and details on the map.

The use of case-studies throughout the assessment is effective to support analyses and highlight key areas of interest.

Finally, you may wish to consider including an overview of what the key issues are for Swansea. This will help the board members as they reflect on what priorities to focus on in the well-being plan.

## **Engagement**

It is clear that the PSB has set out to achieve meaningful engagement and involvement (as detailed in the accompanying annex), which aims to ensure that gaps are identified, seldom-heard voices considered and the perspective of citizens included. It is encouraging that all partners have been involved in the engagement exercise and that there has been collaboration with Neath Port Talbot PSB and West Glamorgan Regional Partnership Board. Your upfront acknowledgement of the difficulties with engagement faced as a result of Covid-19 also makes for a more credible assessment.

## **Balance and Comprehensiveness**

The assessment is well-balanced and has been structured into chapters covering the four pillars of well-being. It is noticeable however that social well-being contains the most analysis – despite also acknowledging the evidence gaps in relation to health and social well-being due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

It is good to see that culture has received a fair amount of focus, following the last round of assessments, where overall it was found that culture wasn't given as much attention as the other three themes.

An analysis of Swansea as a whole is covered, with good comparison with the rest of Wales.

Overall, the assessment is very comprehensive and covers a wide range of areas, which provides a really good starting point for understanding what the issues are.

## **Reflective and Critical Approach**

One of the positive aspects of the assessment is that overall it adopts an honest and reflective approach throughout. Each topic clearly sets out notes on the evidence source, their strengths and limitations, any inconsistencies or contradictions between them, and gaps / further research required. This provides an impressive systematic approach to the chapters and provides real credibility to the assessment.

## **Quality of Analytical Approach**

The assessment draws on a broad range of evidence and data to provide a thorough and comprehensive situation analysis.

In total there were 330 responses to the primary research exercise. Although this is not a huge amount in terms of a quantitative survey, it potentially provides a rich basis for qualitative analysis. Some of the analysis that has been conducted so far is presented quantitatively and with levels of precision (e.g. 40.2% agreed ...) which would imply the survey is representative while this is not necessarily the case. To strengthen the credibility, we would recommend highlighting that the findings cannot be said to be statistically representative of the wider population, and stating that any quantitative findings from the survey should be treated as indicative only of what the wider population might think, and instead focus on the qualitative intelligence gathered from the survey.

We note that further coding and qualitative analysis is being included in the next steps, along with inclusion of illustrative quotations and further breakdowns by

community area / age group etc. This approach is encouraging and we expect it will provide a strong basis for a plan that is informed by local engagement and intelligence gathering, coupled with the higher level quantitative analysis.

The annex outlines in detail the approach taken to the collection and analysis of evidence and data, but it would be useful to include a short methodology section in the main assessment summarising this information and providing some background to the methods used. For example, the assessment usefully draws on data from the National Survey for Wales in several chapters and the 'Perceptions and perspectives' section under Children, Young People and Families on p26 mentions evidence collected from members of Swansea Council's Corporate Parenting Board and Care Experienced Children and Young People since December 2020. It would be useful to provide some additional information on this exercise to emphasise the valuable engagement work that has been undertaken as part of the assessment, and also provide some background information for data sources such as the National Survey.

Overall, the assessment provides a thorough, comprehensive and methodical situation analysis. This can now be strengthened by starting the response analysis ("so what does this all mean for Swansea and the communities within it?") to inform the well-being plan.

### **Future Trends**

Future trends and prospects for Swansea are included as topics throughout the assessment. However, these sections could be strengthened by including more detail on projections and future trends, although we note this is part of your next steps and you will be using the latest Future Trends Report.

In order to strengthen this aspect of the assessment, we would suggest considering the PSB Futures Impact/Certainty Matrix and including this in the introduction or early on in the assessment in order to clearly set out issues that need to be monitored, issues that require further research and issues that are critical and need to be prioritised.

### **Feedback from other policy areas**

Based on the feedback we have received from policy specialists across the Welsh Government, there are some very specific areas which we highlight for your consideration. For example:

- The assessment is silent on Welsh medium childcare although there is a reference to Welsh medium education. It would benefit from further detail of

plans to increase the provision of Welsh medium childcare in the local authority so that there is a clear transition for some children into Welsh medium education.

- The assessment claims to embed poverty at the heart of its policies and this is apparent from the consideration of these issues throughout. It considers employment, living wage, data and digital poverty, child poverty, housing, fuel, race, religion and age as part of the poverty agenda.
- It feels like Swansea have considered the broad range of well-being across the area. Certainly when it comes to the 'early years', they have included strong information about how their work integrates with the broader economic, social and environmental well-being of their communities. And how it compares across the region.
- From a climate change perspective, the assessment is good. It has attempted to look at all aspects of well-being with the environment and climate as a central consideration.
- In terms of crime and policing, the assessment gives a good view of different types of offending behaviours and moreover considers the factors which drive offending behaviour under the 'street vulnerability' heading.

### **Areas for development**

<b>Category A</b>
<b>Category B</b>  More attempt to incorporate the response analysis (see 'Quality of Analytical Approach' paragraph).  More attempt to compare and contrast the community areas (see 'Statutory Requirements' paragraph).  Build on the future trends work by including more projections and consider using the PSB Futures Impact/Certainty Matrix (see Future Trends' paragraph).  Review the way results of the primary research are presented and focus more on the qualitative rather than the quantitative findings (see 'Quality of Analytical Approach' paragraph).

<b>Category C</b>