



Swansea Public Services Board Joint Committee – 15 October 2020

Local Well-being Assessment

Purpose:	To set out issues and initial outline proposals for undertaking an Assessment of Local Well-being 2022
Link to Well-being Objective:	Cross cutting
Recommendation(s):	It is recommended that: 1) The report be noted. 2) The Board consider how the Assessment might be undertaken in Swansea, in light of matters raised in this report and advice anticipated shortly from Welsh Government.

Introduction

- The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 required Public Service Boards (PSBs) in Wales to prepare and publish an assessment of the state of economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being in its area once every five years. The first (2017) Assessment and appendices, including an outline of the process followed, is available at www.swansea.gov.uk/psbassessment
- The Act specifies that assessments have to be undertaken and published one year before a local Well-being Plan, and the plan must be published no later than one year after Council elections. In practice therefore, effective completion of next assessment would be required by April 2022.
- As things stand, the next assessment should be undertaken in line with the Act and accompanying guidance issued by Welsh Government in 2015-16. However, it is anticipated that there will be new and/or revised guidance issued this autumn.

The previous assessment

- In 2017, the Assessment was published mainly based on the former Local Service Board's (LSB's) then six priorities. However, following a 2016 review by the Public Services Board of the existing population outcomes and primary drivers – which aimed to ensure consistency with the Welsh Government's four strands of well-being (economic, social, cultural and

environmental) and the seven national well-being goals included in the Act – some limited changes were made. The 2017 Assessment was structured against these six outcomes and the 19 primary drivers within them.

- The 2017 Assessment was well-received, and the limited change to priorities was both expedient and generally supported at that time. However, whilst the Assessment did inform the Well-being Plan developed in the following year (2018), as required by the Act, the Plan was based on a quite different structure (four different objectives and a cross-cutting action) to that used in the Assessment.
- In February 2016 (coming up to 5 years ago now), the former Swansea LSB Research Group first considered proposals to undertake the initial Assessment of Local Well-being, with work in earnest being undertaken during the remainder of 2016 and early 2017 by partner representatives of the (successor) PSB Research Group. Therefore, it will be necessary to prepare for the next assessment shortly, with work commencing in early 2021.

Assessment structure

- For the 2022 Assessment, there are a number of identified options for the high-level structure of document, in part based on approaches used across Wales for 2017:
 - The four 'pillars' of well-being: Social, Economic, Cultural and Environmental (this approach was followed by 9 PSBs in Wales for 2017, including NPT)
 - The seven national well-being goals (used by 2 PSBs, Caerphilly and Wrexham)
 - Other approaches used in 2017, e.g. five life stages (used by Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire and Ceredigion), seven place-based outcomes (Cardiff)
 - Current Swansea Well-being Plan themes
 - Any further advice received from Welsh Government, the Future Generations Commissioner, etc.
- In addition to the high level document structure (above), it will be necessary to consider the organisation of content underneath, including supporting documents and appendices. Clearly, several of the 'pillars' of well-being and national goals have many, diverse aspects.
- For Swansea's 2017 Assessment, the broad headings under each primary driver within an 'outcome' chapter were:
 - Evidence (list of sources)
 - Suggested well-being score (overall judgement, scale of 0-10)
 - Swansea's strengths (main strengths or assets around this driver)
 - Changes over time (trend information)
 - Comparisons with other places (with/within Wales and UK)
 - Differences within Swansea (community areas, population groups)
 - Perceptions and perspectives (survey evidence, public opinion, research reports)
 - Future prospects (future trends if the current situation/direction continues)
 - What would improvement look like (if we were to give a score +1)
 - About the evidence (sources, strengths and limitations, evidence gaps).

- The 'top level' assessment document could again be based on (a version of) the above chapter headings. The *Equalities Statistics Review January 2020* (undertaken for the Council's latest Strategic Equality Plan - www.swansea.gov.uk/sep) used a broadly similar, but simplified set of headings under each protected characteristic, namely: *Data sources; Key statistics; Local variations; Change over time; Future trends; Conclusion*. The above has some parallels with headings used in 2017 Assessment, but may fall short in respect of some of the requirements of the Act, e.g. asset focus, public engagement. Clearly, other variations of this could ultimately be used in the main assessment document.
- Underneath the main document, consideration should also be given to how the evidence base is constructed and presented; to develop (where possible) the 2017 approach.

Group structure

- For the 2017 Assessment, the evidence was compiled and the documents drafted under the steerage of the LSB / PSB Research Group, which generally met every 2-3 months at that time. The content within each outcome was brought together by six designated 'outcome leads', from Council and other partners, based on subject matter expertise. Early drafts were presented to the Research Group for consideration and (group) agreement, although as the Act stipulated, the Assessment was formally published by the Board itself.
- For 2017, some outcome leads set up (or used existing) groups or partnerships to compile the evidence base and write content; whilst other assessment outcome chapters were compiled (sometimes of necessity) by the individual lead working more independently – although always with input from subject experts along the way as required.
- Clearly, a number of significant contributors to the 2017 Assessment will no longer be around or available this time. Previous momentum generated by the Research Group, which ceased meeting soon after the first assessment's publication in mid-2017, has been lost, and overall research and analytical resource across partners is likely to have reduced over the last three years. However, counter to this, the involvement and contribution of some new people within the partnership could bring some new perspectives and thinking.
- To produce the 2022 assessment, consideration needs to be given to a working group structure, and an initial proposal is outlined below:
 - *Editorial group*: a smaller, tighter group of approximately 6-8 named people, to be mainly responsible for co-ordinating the assessment, collating and editing content. This group could consist of representatives from all four statutory partners, and the four current objective-based groups. In some cases there may be overlap – so an individual(s) may cover both. Further work and discussions on this can follow agreement on an overall approach. Such a group would require a Chair, ideally with broad interests (across all aspects of well-being), a research focus and the skills and qualities required to conduct meetings, agree actions and progress the project through to conclusion. This group would receive steer, refer decisions and report progress to the Joint Committee.
 - *Research forum*: a broader forum drawing upon the wide range of research-related expertise across the partnership, to draw out relevant evidence around well-being

which has a local impact. In the short term at least, this forum will operate mostly on a virtual basis (e.g. via 'Teams' or similar platform) and participants will need to be effectively engaged early in the process, both on a regular ongoing basis, e.g. via 'newsletter' updates, and suitable events around key events or milestones. This forum would require co-ordination and resource to function, and would need to effectively link with the editorial group.

Other initial issues to consider

- As before, the Population Assessment required under the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act will be developed over a similar time frame. Last time around, the relationship between the projects was relatively limited in practical terms, despite there being some cross-over in respect of subject matter. Opportunities for collaboration on certain aspects of the assessments could be explored, initially through dialogue with West Glamorgan Regional Partnership as national advice emerges and the projects develop.
- As with many aspects of partners' current work, the pandemic will continue to have an impact on the logistics of large, collaborative projects in particular. Clearly, the sort of large, face-to-face group meetings held in 2016 and 2017 may not be possible for some time, and this will provide an additional set of challenges.
- Of course, due to its impact on all aspects of economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being for the foreseeable future, COVID-19 will inevitably form a strong backdrop to many of the issues and themes to be considered during the preparation of the next Assessment.
- At time of writing, national advice on the next round of Assessments of Local Well-being is not yet forthcoming, although is anticipated shortly. The proposals in this paper may need to be further reviewed in light of what emerges, and the following meeting of the Board (scheduled for December 2020) would seem the appropriate point to confirm arrangements for undertaking the 2022 Assessment.

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