

Gwent Public Services Board's Draft Well-being Plan

Advice of the Office of the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales, 21st September 2022

Advice on your draft well-being objectives and steps

We thank you for involving us from an early stage, including us in various meetings as you develop your draft well-being plan. We have valued your open communication and reflection which has enabled us to identify how we can best support you in this process.

Most of the discussions have focussed on the approach to setting your objectives and steps, how as a Public Services Board (PSB) you can have the greatest impact on improving well-being for your communities while also responding to opportunities such as becoming a Marmot Region.

With this in mind, the draft advice below is split into two sections. The first section will summarise the conversations and advice given during the statutory 14-week period. The second section will include advice on your draft objectives and steps which should be taken into consideration as you finalise your well-being plan.

1. Advice Period.

Steps and Objectives

Your officers shared concerns with regards to emerging issues which were not captured within the well-being assessment; such as the cost of living crisis, Brexit and the war in Ukraine. Officers asked whether steps could be centred around research and mapping the landscape, to allow for upcoming Government announcements on funding for example. You sought advice on the number of objectives as you try to strike the balance of objectives and steps which can be translated across each local authority area to meet the needs identified for these communities and asked whether the objectives needed to be developed prior to the steps.

Our advice

Similarly to Covid-19, we can anticipate those in our communities who will be most affected by emerging issues e.g. the cost of living crisis; this is likely to be those who are already disadvantaged by the embedded inequalities in our society, as we have not adequately addressed the root causes. It is for PSBs themselves to determine what actions should be included in their steps; however, our office would encourage meaningful action. The Statutory Guidance states "The local objectives set should reflect where the board has decided that collective action can be taken that will have a positive impact on the state of well-being in the area." There could be value in undertaking research to establish where the PSB can work together to have the most impact as a collaborative to address any gaps, but we would like to see any research or mapping to have a clear scope, timeframe and purpose.

It is not our role to prescribe objectives, steps or how many, but to advise on how these reflect the findings of the well-being assessment, maximise contribution to the well-being goals, in line with the Sustainable Development principle, and are developed using the five ways of working. We

encourage the approach to determine the objectives and steps where the PSB as a collaboration are going to have the biggest impact in improving well-being; rather than attempting to cover areas of work where you do not have the levers for change, or by identifying so many objectives and steps that it is impractical to adequately apply the ways of working.

The steps should hold the detail of how the objectives will be achieved and should be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound (SMART), we have shared with you Chapter 4 of the Future Generations Report which includes a helpful guide for '[Setting good well-being objectives](#)'. It is positive that your framework for developing the draft plan defines a good objective; step; and regional action, and you have recognised the distinction and difference in your original draft objective of 'Health Inequalities' and your assessment showing broader 'Inequalities and Deprivation', taking steps to develop a broader objective which would address the needs identified within the assessment.

We advised there is no prescribed formula in whether objectives or steps are developed first. The objectives by their nature will be high level, the steps contain the detail of the actions (how the objective will be met), which is the important part. However, we cautioned against a desire to 'separate out' the issues, advising that you should embrace the five ways of working and maximising contribution to the goals.

While there can be a tendency to compartmentalise some issues, or defer to other networks such as regional growth deals on areas such as the economy, PSBs should recognise they can be a key influencer and informer on these areas of work. This is why it is important for PSBs to always hold the four dimensions of well-being in their thinking on objectives and steps, and not rush to separate or cut out a dimension of well-being in the interests of prioritisation.

We would like PSBs to articulate how the collective planning and action being taken now is different to what you have done before.

Response Analysis and Opportunities

You have reflected on where the PSB has the levers for change, and we have noted the frustrations surrounding decarbonisation of private rented housing. You have sought to take account of existing activity, including Equality Strategies and early years provisions which could be rolled out.

You acknowledged the energy and funding associated with becoming a Marmot region, and the associated benefits this could bring if harnessed through the well-being plan. However, there are challenges in how the Marmot principles meet the needs of the diverse areas within Gwent identified through your well-being assessment. You have acknowledged the challenges of rural vs urban communities, hidden deprivation, and how the principles align to priorities such as the climate and nature emergency.

Our advice

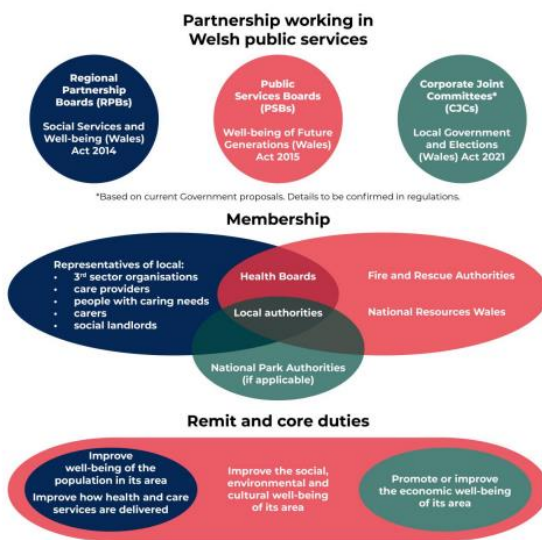
We commend your reflection through the Response Analysis for the Community Cohesion objective that targeting crime and substance misuse is not acting preventatively and that the root causes of crime are similar to the determinants of health. It may be helpful to keep in mind the definition of prevention and preventative spend the Commissioner agreed with Welsh Government:

- Primary prevention (PP) – Building resilience – creating the conditions in which problems do not arise in the future. A universal approach.
- Secondary prevention (SP) – Targeting action towards areas where there is a high risk of a problem occurring. A targeted approach, which cements the principles of progressive universalism*.
- Tertiary prevention (TP) – Intervening once there is a problem, to stop it getting worse and prevent it reoccurring in the future. An intervention approach.
- Acute spending (AS) – Spending, which acts to manage the impact of a strongly negative situation but does little or nothing to prevent problems occurring in the future. A remedial approach.

In using all available levers to improve well-being through the five ways of working, it is important to capitalise on energy and funding. In this way, there is no problem with utilising Marmot, with many of its principles being positive contributors for the wider determinants of health. We would, however, remind the PSB that a well-being plan needs to be a product of the well-being assessment for the area in question, detailing the objectives and steps that are required to target the key issues facing that region based on the evidence to hand. Marmot may well transpose itself onto certain problems and be a useful delivery mechanism (for example, with your key issue around inequalities); however, we would encourage you not to focus too heavily on the principles of Marmot in silo. Doing so may hinder your ability to fully address all needs identified in your well-being assessment and to maximise contribution towards all well-being goals.

We recommend referring to the report '[Inequality in a Future Wales](#)' to inform your thinking as you further develop your objectives and steps.

During initial discussions, your officers discussed using the Senedd Public Accounts Committee's Venn diagram (see below). This may help clarify overlaps and where the PSB as a collective can have the greatest impact.



Involvement

We were pleased to see an honest reflection of how Covid-19 impacted your ability to carry out involvement of citizens in the well-being assessment, and how you can use the public consultation on your well-being plan to act on our feedback to your assessment, thereby strengthening the objectives and steps.

You have considered the limitations of the initial response analyses and how this can be improved using the five ways of working. You have shared with us your proposed engagement plan.

Our advice

We welcome that you have undertaken pre-emptive work to inform your communities on the purpose of the PSB. It is positive you anticipate making significant changes as a result of the public consultation, with additional steps being identified by stakeholders and the public. Additionally, that you will use the consultation to help set performance measures, asking what 'good' will look like if you achieve the objectives and steps.

We have advised that to achieve meaningful involvement, it is important to communicate a draft well-being plan which is clear, uses understandable language and shows the evidential basis used to identify your draft objectives and steps. As such, the plan should outline what your objectives and steps are, explain how the PSB has used the five ways of working and considered the contribution you currently make (and could make) to each of the well-being goals. We have shared with you a number of resources on communicating the determinants of health including:

- ['How to talk about the building blocks of health'](#)
- The Health Foundations report ['Seeing Upstream'](#)
- The Health Foundations report ['A Matter of Life and Death'](#)

We have discussed with officers how they can strengthen their approach to involvement during the public consultation period, including recommending additional networks e.g. Urdd and Home Start Cymru; we have offered to broker these introductions.

2. Further Advice

As above, we welcome your intention for meaningful engagement through the public consultation period, and that you anticipate making significant changes as a result of the public consultation, with additional steps being identified by stakeholders and the public.

The draft objectives and steps you have shared have some good examples of long-term thinking and reflect the sustainable development principle that public bodies 'must act in a manner which seeks to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.' The key will be to ensure that you consistently apply the five ways of working across all objectives and steps, including recognising the integration between these

objectives and steps. We can see how the framework you have produced (with reference to the well-being goals and five ways of working) will aid your thinking as you move forward. Your well-being assessment considered each of the dimensions of sustainable development in detail and we look forward to seeing how this is followed through into developing your well-being plan.

As you continue to develop your objectives and steps you should consider the following.

The statutory guidance for PSBs states *'in setting its local objectives a board must also take into account the latest Future Generations Report.'* As we have discussed, alongside our final response we will be sharing annexe 2 that includes recommendations from the Future Generations Report 2020. We encourage you to ensure you are taking these into consideration with respect to your proposed steps. Most chapters within the report have recommendations listed for public bodies and PSBs on the last few pages.

A strong understanding of the definition of each of the well-being goals is important to help widen your understanding of well-being, which in turn may reveal opportunities that exist for each of your objectives. We encourage you to consider who else, beyond the PSB partners, you need to collaborate with and involve to meet your objectives and maximize your contribution to the well-being goals. Are there people or organisations needed around the PSB table to help you interconnect decision-making and improve well-being for the challenges you are trying to tackle?

Welsh Language

From the draft objectives and steps which have been shared with us, it is not clear how these are maximising contribution towards the well-being goal of 'A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language'. We would encourage you to use the public consultation period to involve stakeholders that represent the Welsh language sector and draw views from the community to see how this can be integrated and enhance your objectives and steps.

Your well-being assessment went further than analysis of "number of people who speak Welsh" and included statistics on employers such as the Police, Health Board, and public sector more generally. You should consider this information and how your well-being plan can help build on this.

The Welsh Language Commissioner's Office have advised that your well-being plan should align with your Welsh Language Promotion Strategy, and this may be helpful for you in identifying which local partners to engage with. We have attached the Welsh Language Commissioner's resources 'Considering the Welsh language in the Local Well-being Plans' and [standards relating to promoting the Welsh Language](#) which we hope you will find helpful.

Additionally, please also use the Future Generations Report Chapter on A [Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language](#) and a [Journey to A Wales of Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language](#)

Objective 1 - Inequality

1. *By reducing the inequality gap in the number of years lived in good health between the most and least deprived communities in Gwent*
2. *By creating equitable opportunities in education and training and by reducing the attainment gap*
3. *By supporting the creation of employment and training opportunities that enable Gwent residents to receive fair pay for the work they do and minimises both in work and out of work poverty*
4. *By improving low or zero carbon transport links that enable access to employment, education, culture and leisure opportunities*
5. *By working with housing providers and other stakeholders to ensure good quality, efficient and appropriate housing for all.*

As above, we support your approach to widen the draft objective from health inequalities in recognising the determinants of health. In considering your objectives and steps, it is necessary to identify whether there are any barriers or tensions that may exist? What are the potential steps you (or others) can take to remove them?

During the advice period, we discussed the importance of housing in contributing to well-being, however you explained that you had limited levers in this area. We are keen to see within the final well-being plan how you intend to utilise the PSB to influence stakeholders in this important area. The Future Generations Report's chapter on [Housing](#) and [Land Use Planning and Placemaking](#), and our report [Inequality in a Future Wales](#) can support you in developing this further.

While we are pleased to see reference to reducing the gap in educational attainment, your public consultation will be an important mechanism for identifying some of the barriers that parents and children face. The [Adverse Childhood Experiences](#) chapter in the Future Generations Report 2020 will be of use to you and you may want to consider resources from the Child Poverty Action Group such as '[Cost of the School Day](#)'

We are pleased to see the reference to zero carbon transport links, within your assessment you highlighted the cost of public transport as a barrier to use which will be an important element to consider within this step, alongside active travel. The Future Generations Report 2020 chapter on [Transport](#) will be useful as you develop this further. We hope to see integration between all your objectives and steps, including between the steps '*By supporting the creation of employment and training opportunities that enable Gwent residents to receive fair pay for the work they do and minimises both in work and out of work poverty, ensuring these employment and training opportunities are skills for future.*' and '*By enabling access for everyone to valuable work through enhancing skills and education opportunities and taking advantage of emerging sectors.*' under objective 2.

We would like to see consideration further than upskilling the existing population to also ensuring businesses can grow and recruit. The Future Generations Report 2020 chapters on [Skills for the Future](#) and a [Prosperous Wales](#) will be of use, additionally Public Health Wales have resources on fair work which you may find helpful. <https://phw.nhs.wales/services-and-teams/wider-determinants-of-health-unit/fair-work-for-health-well-being-and-equity/>

We appreciate that you have taken PSB members' Equality Strategies into account, however we would also like to see consideration for and commitment to Wales wide action plans such as Welsh Government's [Strategic Equality Plan](#) and the different equality characteristics, in order to increase diversity.

Objective 2 – Community Cohesion

1. *By creating a safer Gwent through reducing ASB, preventing crime as much as possible, improving road safety and enhancing our green spaces.*
2. *By ensuring that Gwent is a welcoming, diverse and thriving place to live and visit by being inclusive and creating cultural opportunities for all.*
3. *By creating volunteering opportunities across the region which will empower residents to have control over their own communities.*
4. *By creating access to good quality, healthy and affordable food with secure supply chains and opportunities for local growth.*
5. *By reducing digital exclusion and embrace digital innovation.*
6. *By enabling access for everyone to valuable work through enhancing skills and education opportunities and taking advantage of emerging sectors.*

As above, we were pleased to hear through the response analysis work the recognition that many of the determinants of crime are also the root causes of other inequalities.

Through your well-being assessment you identified where the COVID-19 crisis has shown what can be achieved when communities are given permission to take the initiative and collaborate to offer support. We would encourage you to consider not just how you can create opportunities, but to harness and build on the existing good practice and community spirit going forward. Your public consultation period will be an important mechanism for an asset-based approach, we would be happy to suggest key organisations to engage with for this such as [Building Communities Trust](#).

We remind you that the statutory guidance (SPSF3) sets out that PSBs must ensure Town and Community Councils (which meet the criteria set out in the Act) are fully engaged in the process of identifying local objectives, given they will be required to take all reasonable steps towards meeting those local objectives. Town and Community Councils can also be a useful mechanism for local involvement and collaborative action which can support the local delivery groups for your region.

It can be helpful to set out the definition of the well-being goals and collectively agree what is meant by some of the terms used in the well-being plan e.g. it may be worth defining digital exclusion, is this in relation to internet connection or e.g. family of 4 sharing a computer? Or in addition, if digital exclusion means a lack of knowledge in using some Apps or navigating websites? Terms like diversity, inclusion and cultural opportunities need clear interpretation (what, who, how). If the

excluded groups are not clearly mentioned, this can be easily misunderstood. It is also important to consider intersectionality in this respect, especially to explore how you can upskill those furthest from the labour market, including collaborating with other regional boards e.g. the Regional Skills Partnership.

PSBs should also review the Welsh Government's [Nation of Sanctuary strategy](#) to identify any ways to improve their approach to refugees and asylum seekers through setting collective well-being objectives. PSBs should also consider how to develop a strategic approach which considers cultural differences and language deficiency in co-ordination and integration to avoid a feeling of exclusion for refugees and asylum seekers.

We are pleased to see the step relating to food and supply chains. You should also consider how, as a PSB, you can review your procurement policies for all member organisations and ensure that they include fair and ethical practices (to include: fair trade, marine stewardship council and forestry stewardship council) and check whether your contracts meet the needs of the Modern Slavery Act.

The following chapters of the Future Generations Report can support you as you develop this objective and the steps:

- [A Wales of Cohesive Communities](#)
- [A Globally Responsible Wales](#)
- Please also use our resource on [procurement](#)

You may find Victim Support's recent report about the experience of hate crime amongst children and young people in Wales useful: '[Its Soul Destroying](#)'.

We are aware your officers attended the Wales Centre for Public Policy workshop on 'Community Well-being' which will aid you further with this objective and steps.

Objective 3 - Environment

1. *By reducing the environmental impact of production and consumption.*
2. *By declaring a nature emergency in Gwent.*
3. *By responding to the climate emergency and protecting and preparing communities for the risk associated with climate change.*
4. *By exploring and promoting community energy projects.*
5. *By transforming food transport and energy in Gwent.*
6. *By recognising biodiversity as an asset, addressing the root causes of biodiversity loss and better managing the pressures on natural environments.*

We appreciate that your PSB representative from Natural Resources Wales (NRW) has been a key partner in the drafting of this objective and these steps, however we have attached a short paper on the potential action and steps PSBs can take to help address the climate and nature emergency. This

helpful paper was prepared for our office to share with PSBs, and your local NRW representatives are aware of the work and the actions it sets out.

Your well-being assessment discusses the impact of Brexit on agriculture, land use, food production, and food and drink exports, alongside the loss of social funds, and the tourism sector. It is important that the wider issues highlighted here are fully considered within the context of this objective.

Our report [Inequalities in a Future Wales](#) contains recommendations on how you can support your communities as we see the impacts of climate change.

Annex 1

Summary of activity between Gwent PSB and the Office of the Future Generations Commissioner during the 14 week consultation period

Below is a record of correspondence during the consultation period:

Date	Activity	Comments
17 th May and 14 th June 2022	Response Analysis meeting	Good to hear honest reflections on the areas identified, including how community cohesion should be more preventative and improving involvement within the process. Requested advice on setting steps
21 st June 2022	First meeting between Gwent and OFGC.	Agreed timescales. Agreed points of contact Question on steps answered Ongoing dialogue welcomed and agreed to meet again.
5 th July 2022	Meeting following PSB	Advised on number of objectives Advised on frameworks to develop the plan to reflect findings from the assessment Agreed summary of our advice/meetings to be sent in monthly briefing to PSB.
12 th July 2022	Response Analysis meeting	Advised on using the five ways of working and maximising contribution
8 th August	Email from Gwent	Shared the framework with draft objective and steps
8 th August 2022	Meeting between Gwent and OFGC	Discussed progress, how best to utilise Marmot. Requested advice on communicating the determinants of health

9 th August 2022	Email from OFGC	Provided an update and interim advice to the PSB, including on the approach to public consultation and sharing chapter 4 of the Future Generations Report
15 th August 2022	Email from OFGC	Provided information on how to communicate the determinants of health.
17 th August 2022	Email from Gwent	Shared the updated framework with draft objectives and steps
24 th August 2022	Email from Gwent	Shared the engagement plan for protected characteristics
30 th August 2022	Email from Gwent	Shared the updated framework with draft objectives and steps
30 th August 2022	Meeting between Gwent and OFGC	Discussed advice from OFGC which would be helpful for GSWAG Advised on groups to include within engagement plan
1 st September	Attended GSWAG	Reminded the group of their statutory duties to be evidential in their decisions on objectives and steps, alongside the need to use accessible and understandable language.
8 th September 2022	Email from OFGC	Provided an update and interim advice to the PSB including the advice given at GSWAG
14 th September	Email from OFGC	Shared draft written advice and suggesting organisations to be included within the engagement plan
14 th September	Email from Gwent	Shared the updated framework with draft objectives and steps
14 th September	Meeting between Gwent and OFGC	Discussed progress and draft written advice.
21 st September	Email from OFGC	Formal advice from OFGC issued.