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**Future
Generations**
Commissioner
for Wales

Well-being in Wales: the journey so far

Future Generations
Commissioner for Wales

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Foreword

Purpose of this report

It is one year on from the public sector in Wales publishing how they will improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of our nation. Since April 2017, councils, health boards, national parks, fire and rescue services, Welsh Government and national organisations, such as Natural Resources Wales and Sport Wales, have been working towards a collective 345 objectives.



Shortly, public services boards (made up of the chief executives and leaders of those public bodies) will be publishing their joint objectives to improve the well-being of people in their local area. By law, all of these objectives must be designed to contribute to the **seven national well-being goals** – a collective vision for Wales – set by the [Well-being of Future Generation \(Wales\) Act 2015 \(the Act\)](#).

Setting well-being objectives and steps to meet them is how public bodies are showing the world how we, in Wales, are implementing this ground-breaking legislation, which places sustainable development at the heart of what we do.

To do this, we must think long-term, considering the impact of what we do now on future generations, working together in a joined up way as we seek to prevent problems from occurring or getting worse and involving people in our communities in working towards the seven national goals.

These are termed the **'five ways of working'** and are a big change from how we have worked in the past. The Wales Audit Office (WAO) examines how public bodies are setting objectives and steps using the sustainable development principle and the **five ways of working**. I have a duty, as the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales, to monitor and assess the extent to which these objectives are being met. Last year, the Auditor General for Wales and I signed a [Memorandum of Understanding](#) that describes these duties and how we are working together for the benefit of public bodies.

Both the WAO and my office have a bird's-eye view of how the Act is being grasped across the country in the public, private and voluntary sectors. As public bodies reflect on the first year of working towards their objectives and prepare their annual reports, the Auditor General for Wales and I have each written reports which collectively provide a snapshot in time of where we are in Wales – one year in – and where we need to go.

In order to drive transformational change, public bodies must:

See the Act as helpful

I have spoken many times about the Act not becoming a 'compliance-based' exercise. By this, I mean that we truly have an opportunity to challenge the way Wales works to create a better future for our nation and you should see the Act as a helpful vehicle in challenging the way decisions are made, as a framework for planning and evaluation, and as a method of changing the way the corporate centres of your organisation currently operate. This is not an easy task, but showing strong leadership and a willingness to change is vital; and setting well-being objectives is the first direction you will give to your organisation under the Act.

Use the lens of the Act

By this I mean that objectives should be arrived at by using the sustainable development principle and the **five ways of working** to shape thinking. This should be the starting point to setting objectives, rather than simply focusing on the **seven well-being goals** or the national well-being indicators.

Maximise your contribution to the seven national well-being goals

The Act states that objectives should be integrated, i.e. consider how an objective impacts or could impact on each of the goals. You should understand how your organisation is uniquely placed to contribute to each of the goals. Using the **five ways of working** effectively might prompt the need to collaborate with others and involve 'unusual suspects' to meet the objective and maximise your contribution to the seven goals.

Be targeted

Well-being objectives should not be based on 'business as usual', but should encompass everything that public bodies need to do individually or collectively. Objectives should go beyond traditional corporate objectives and take a more long-term view. It might be helpful to set out the wider context of why a particular objective has been chosen over other activities in the well-being statement and well-being plan. I have said previously that focusing deeply on a smaller number of issues and using the lens of the Act to look at them differently, could have a transformative effect on the well-being of people in Wales.

Our reports provide an overview of purpose, progress and pace. The Auditor General for Wales has provided his commentary on how the 44 organisations are beginning to respond to their duties. My report is complementary, outlining what the organisations have said they will do in this first year and providing advice on how they can best demonstrate they are taking effective steps to meet their objectives. This report is made up of 6 parts:

- 1** Foreword
the purpose of this report

 - 2** Key messages
what you will need to do and what I expect to see

 - 3** Introduction
my duties as Future Generations Commissioner for Wales

 - 4** Examples
what we have learnt so far

 - 5** Information
what the well-being objectives are telling us

 - 6** Advice
my expectations of annual reports

- Appendix
Resources to help

What you need to know

This report, written in parallel to *Reflecting on year one: How have public bodies responded to the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015*, a report being published by the Auditor General for Wales, is aimed at public and voluntary sector organisations in Wales.

Both reports are a reflection of how the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act has been adopted in the last year. Building on the findings and recommendations from my report last year [Well-being in Wales: Planning today for a better tomorrow](#), this report sets out how things have progressed in the past year and how public bodies should improve how they demonstrate they are taking effective steps to meet their objectives. The report contains resources, contacts and simple changes public bodies can make now.

We recognise that we need to support organisations as part of this continued journey and this report forms part of that commitment.

Expectation 1: Well-being objectives and goals

Public bodies must clearly set out their well-being objectives and the steps they are taking to meet them. This must include how the **five ways of working** and **seven national well-being goals** have been used to inform the setting of the objectives and steps. But this does not exhaust the duty of public bodies. The Act clearly makes setting objectives and steps a means, but only one means, of discharging the sustainable development duty. How does the organisation intend to maximise its contribution to the **seven national well-being goals** and reference the seven core areas of change in the statutory guidance? Public bodies must also provide information on how resources have been used to take steps to meet their well-being objectives.

Expectation 2: Sustainable development principle

Annual reports must describe how the organisation is making sense of its duty to use the sustainable development principle and articulate how this fits with other legislative duties (or direct the reader to more information), their corporate objectives, business planning and operational services.

Expectation 3: Looking ahead

Whilst recognising change takes time, public bodies must set out what successfully meeting their objectives would look like and an ambition of where they would like to be in 5, 10, 15, 25 years or beyond.

Expectation 4: Tracking progress

Public bodies must explain in their annual reports how far they have taken steps to meet their objectives, how effective these steps have been, how they are tracking progress and how they are adopting or adapting new ways of demonstrating progress.

Expectation 5: Applying and implementing the Act

Annual reports must set out how the seven corporate areas of change in the guidance of the Act have begun to adapt their ways of working, describe how decisions have been affected by applying the Act, provide examples of what it is they are doing differently and what they plan to do next. It is crucial that public bodies celebrate these simple changes in their annual reporting and future well-being statements.

Expectation 6: Self-reflecting

Public bodies should critically revisit their well-being objectives and consider how fit for purpose they are one year on. Where objectives have been reviewed and changed, this should clearly be explained in the context of the **five ways of working** and **seven national well-being goals**. Reports should be self-reflective, describe how the Act has been applied and explain the tensions of trying to apply it and lessons learnt from using the Act.

Expectation 7: Collaboration with other public bodies

As public services boards (PSB's) publish their well-being plans, I expect to see how public bodies are working together to contribute to the PSB's well-being objectives. This may also require public bodies to review their objectives. Explaining this thought process and showing their workings are part of the culture change needed to make the Act a reality.

Expectation 8: Accountability

Annual reports must provide evidence of how public bodies are being held to account by the public, elected members and PSB members in taking steps to meet their well-being objectives and using the sustainable development principle in everything they do.

Expectation 9: Making your reports clear

Public bodies should be doing simple things like dating documents, explaining the status of the publication and keeping the information simple avoids confusion, helping people to get involved. They should also be involving people in compiling, writing and presenting reports.

My duties as Future Generations Commissioner for Wales

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 came into force in April 2016. The legislation is world-leading in that it places sustainable development at the heart of what we do. The Act gives us the ambition, permission and legal obligation to improve what we do and how we do it.

By April 2017, local and national public bodies across Wales were required to publish their well-being objectives and steps, showing how they will improve the social, environmental, economic and cultural well-being of Wales and contribute to the **seven national well-being goals**.

A prosperous Wales

An innovative, productive and low carbon society which recognises the limits of the global environment and therefore uses resources efficiently and proportionately (including acting on climate change), and which develops a skilled and well-educated population in an economy which generates wealth and provides employment opportunities, allowing people to take advantage of the wealth generated through securing decent work

A resilient Wales

A nation which maintains and enhances a biodiverse natural environment with healthy functioning ecosystems that support social, economic and ecological resilience and the capacity to adapt to change (for example climate change)

A healthier Wales

A society in which people's physical and mental well-being is maximised and in which choices and behaviours that benefit future health are understood

A more equal Wales

A society that enables people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances (including their socio economic circumstances)

A Wales of cohesive communities

Attractive, viable, safe and well-connected communities

A Wales of vibrant culture and Welsh language

A society that promotes and protects culture, heritage and the Welsh language, and which encourages people to participate in the arts, sports and recreation

A globally responsible Wales

A nation which, when doing anything to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, takes account of whether doing such a thing may make a positive contribution to global well-being

In this first two years of the Act coming into force, public bodies have devoted much time and energy to ensuring they meet a challenging timetable set in law for publishing these objectives, working on assessments of well-being for their local area and developing joint well-being plans.

Although important to communicate to the people of Wales the intentions and actions of the public sector, the processes attached to the legislation are just one part of the picture. To deliver the spirit and intentions of the Act, public bodies must consider how they carry out sustainable development in everything they do – governance, strategic planning and performance, project and service delivery and culture change - and communicate this change through their reporting.

As Future Generations Commissioner for Wales, I have duties to promote the sustainable development principle, and act as a guardian of the ability for future generations in Wales to meet their needs, encouraging public bodies to think about the long-term impact of what they do. For that purpose, I must monitor and assess the extent to which public bodies are meeting the well-being objectives they have set (Part 3, Section 18, 2015). In simple terms, this means watching and judging the progress of public bodies in meeting their objectives.

The Auditor General for Wales also has a duty to 'carry out examinations of public bodies for the purposes of assessing the extent to which a body has acted in accordance with the sustainable development principle when a) setting well-being objectives, and b) taking steps to meet those objectives.' An examination must be carried out in each public body between 2015 and 2020. There are no such conditions on my duty.

I have not yet provided insight or advice on the well-being objectives of public bodies because, in the first year of the Act, my duties set out in the Act relate to advising the PSBs. In 2017, I advised all PSBs on their well-being assessments and published *[Well-being in Wales: Planning today for a better tomorrow](#)* with recommendations applicable to all public bodies last year. I also must advise PSBs on how they might take steps to meet their objectives, but have no further powers to scrutinise their work.

Although I do not have a corresponding duty to advise individual public bodies on their well-being objectives or steps, I must now monitor and assess the extent to which they are being met. This is an anomaly which does not assist me or public bodies and PSBs in the flow of our duties, but nevertheless is what we are required to work to.

However, I have powers to provide advice, assistance and to encourage best practice and collaboration between public bodies in meeting their objectives and this report is an example of my advice. As well as collaborating with the Auditor General for Wales for this report, I have involved representatives of the public, private and voluntary sectors to understand what would be most useful to them to include here and what they want to see happen as a result of this exciting legislation.

I have shared my views with others, such as the Equality and Human Rights Commission, Older People's Commissioner for Wales, Children's Commissioner for Wales and the Welsh Language Commissioner, so that we may continue to work together to prevent placing additional burdens on public bodies responding to their statutory duties.

As a result, this report aims to provide examples of progress and advice on how the public sector can demonstrate they are taking effective steps to meet their objectives.

This report should inform how public bodies reflect on their work so far, review their well-being objectives and steps, and prepare their annual reports – the first indication of progress under the Act.

What we have learnt so far

It is only in the last year that we have seen the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) 2015 Act coming to life. Since April 2016, local public services boards (made up of the chief executives and leaders of different sectors in an area) have published assessments of well-being for their locality, drafted objectives to improve well-being and consulted on these plans with their communities.

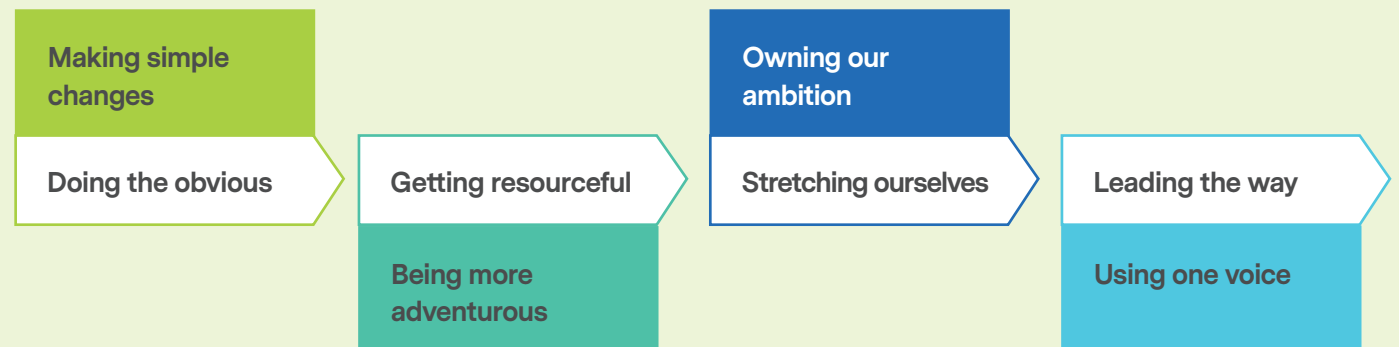
Public bodies, such as councils, health boards, national parks and Government have published their first well-being statements, describing the action they will take to improve social, environmental, cultural and economic well-being.

In this first year of action, my powers as Future Generations Commissioner for Wales have allowed me to understand where these organisations are on the journey to making the **seven national well-being goals** a reality for Wales. I believe this journey starts in a place of making 'simple changes', moves through various stages of challenging current practice, stretching ourselves and working with others in developing new approaches

and then enters a stage of transformation that changes people's lives. The final destination is where Wales is leading the way in sustainable development and the well-being of future generations – 'acting 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'.

Public bodies should be using the five ways of working to set well-being objectives and taking steps to meet these that reflect this journey from 'doing the obvious' to 'leading the way'.

Journey checker - 'Where are we now?'



I have been clear that this journey takes time and public bodies will not be fully applying the principles of the Act yet. In my report on the well-being assessments produced by public services boards (published in July 2017) I identified some key areas where PSB members and those providing support locally and nationally, including my office, needed to focus on in order to help public bodies and PSBs make the best of the Act, as not just a tick-box, compliance exercise, but a framework for improving public services, so that they are fit to meet the needs of current and future generations.

The Auditor General for Wales has said the Wales Audit Office welcome honest self-reflection on progress. I recognise that public bodies are making simple changes and getting resourceful, whilst a few are starting to stretch themselves already, but truly transformational change takes longer.

But over time both I, the Wales Audit Office (WAO) and the people of Wales will expect public bodies to be able to demonstrate how the Act is shaping what they do. Likewise, as we are now entering the third year of the legislation, I expect to see more public bodies adopting simple changes across Wales, as well as new approaches being adopted and a move towards making transformational change happen.

This part of the report provides an overview of how far public bodies have come, examples of progress and what we have learnt so far.

The Act is about behaviour change (individually and organisationally), taking different actions and being brave in the decisions we take. In responding to the Auditor General for Wales' call for evidence, most public bodies described the Act in positive terms and many see it as an opportunity.

The Act applies to everything public bodies do – from conception of an idea to making major policy decisions on services or infrastructure. It is not about merely publishing documents or demonstrating compliance with the **five ways of working** or the goals. It is about changing the way we think, plan and act. This is a significant change for the 400,000 employees of public services in Wales and it will not happen overnight.

The statutory guidance of the Act sets out seven areas for change within the corporate centres of organisations (risk, performance management, corporate planning, financial planning, workforce planning, assets and procurement) where the change needs to happen from within. Wales Audit Office found that very few bodies made explicit reference to these areas.

Yet, some public bodies and PSBs are embracing this change by making simple changes to the way they work. These are things that can be done at little cost, but make a big impact across a number of the national well-being goals. Public bodies need to learn from each other and consider whether they can and should be adopted for their organisation.

My office is developing a bank of easy, practical ways in which public bodies can meet the goals in the Act and the objectives they have set. I will want to see how public bodies are demonstrating how they are meeting their duties to take all reasonable steps to meet their objectives. To do this, public bodies must be willing to learn from each other and implement things that work.

Example

Do you need to cut the grass?

Several public bodies in Wales have made the decision to change the way they manage the spaces around their offices and assets. An example of looking at how an organisation can make an impact across well-being goals, some estates departments have reduced the frequency which they cut grass and are reseeded with wild flower mixes.

One Natural Resources Wales office that has adopted this approach has recorded at least 15 species of bees visiting the site, along with increases in orchids, butterflies and other wildlife.

There are numerous studies that show a lack of green space causes stress and the reverse – that better access to green areas increases productivity. Around public offices, an increase in productivity is good news for the Welsh economy, as well as for people's health and well-being.

Wild flowers not only act as a welcome habitat for wildlife but also sequester, rather than create, carbon – contributing to a more globally responsible organisation.

[Watch the video here:](#)

Example

Betsi Cadwaladr Engage to Change programme

Betsi Cadwaladr Health Board have looked at how they can support the local community to improve their skills and quality of employment. Looking at workforce planning across their area, the Health Board has partnered with the Engage to Change project, supporting local young people with learning disabilities into employment. Although only in its first year, the project is reported to be working successfully, with participants encouraged to up-skill throughout their internships and feeling like equal partners in work.

[Watch the video here:](#)

adopting impact assessments for the Act that do not encourage improvement - only ticking boxes and an assumption that we are 'doing this already' – when, looking at our national indicators and our well-being as a country, we are clearly not.

Whilst there is good practice in most organisations and most part of Wales, no one organisation is fully embracing the Act. Those who are honest and recognise where more could be done are more likely to be those who have the most success in meeting the Act's ambitious aspirations.

These examples show progress and now need to be part of a whole system change. Public bodies must celebrate these projects and show how they are changing outcomes across their organisation – rather than relying on innovative individuals within particular departments. It is important that they learn from each other's progress and follow in each other's footsteps on this journey – Wales is a small place and transformational change can spread quickly.

As well as well-paced progress, there are some frustratingly slow and sometimes backward actions being taken, such as persistent use of a definition of well-being that only focuses on economic value, officers

In order to realise the opportunities the Act presents to the challenges of austerity, demographic change and pressure on services, public bodies need to apply the Act to everything they do and every decision they take. It is not merely about setting objectives, but thinking about public services in a different way. The duty in the legislation requires public bodies to make positive contributions to all four aspects of well-being (economic, social, environmental and cultural) both in accordance with the sustainable development principle (including the **five ways of working**) and aiming at achieving all **seven well-being goals** as a whole.

In deciding the focus of my attention as Future Generations Commissioner for Wales, I have looked at what matters to the people of Wales and asked what challenges are facing us and our future generations. This has given me six priorities for my term, which are:

-  **Housing stock**
-  **Energy generation and efficiency**
-  **Transport planning**
-  **Skills**
-  **Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs)**
-  **Alternative models for improving health and well-being - often called 'social prescribing'**

Letters I receive from members of the public call on me to challenge how decisions are being made. People themselves want to see public bodies use the Act in their decision-making and the public bodies who represent them must also recognise this. For instance, a common theme in my correspondence last year was how people did not feel involved in the decisions that affect their lives. Setting my priority areas and hearing what people are telling me suggest we need to challenge the system – the legislation, administration, bureaucracy, decision-making and delivery of services.

If the roots of a tree are rotten, the tree will never grow.



In the early years of implementation, it has become obvious that there is a long journey ahead to change the culture of organisations and decision-making in Wales. Contributing to this challenge, there is a myriad of existing policies, guidance, budget allocations and performance indicators which do not embed the new requirements of the Act.

I see my role as recognising and removing barriers that get in the way of public bodies challenging the system effectively by using the sustainable development principle. The Auditor General for Wales has reported that public bodies have recognised that the Act provides a great opportunity for this. But, if the conditions of other legislation, policies and processes are not right, the right decisions cannot be made, and fulfilling the aspirations of the Act becomes another competing priority for public bodies.

I have, therefore, sought to work with government and others to re-cast policy where opportunities arise. This is to ensure that step-by-step, we are ensuring the whole system best supports all public bodies and decision-makers in Wales to implement the Act.

As the Auditor General for Wales has also found in his report, in some public bodies, there remains a feeling that the Act is 'unnecessary' and legislates for things they were already doing as an organisation. Here, the leadership of the organisation is vital. Where I am seeing new approaches and transformational change, it is often in circumstances where people have had to work outside of the system, bent the rules or say the Act has 'given them permission'. Leaders play a significant role in empowering their employees, generating new ideas, supporting innovation, encouraging well-managed risk-taking and learning from failures as much as successes.

Example

Transport

The new Wales Transport Appraisal Guidance (2017) for local authorities on new transport projects in Wales encourages public bodies to use the Well-being of Future Generations Act in their thinking throughout building a business case.

Planning

Often, communities feel that developments are imposed on them against their will. This suggests that public bodies are not finding the best ways to harness people's vision and knowledge of their own community. For example, a large number of letters I receive are about planning decisions. It is one of the systems that does not currently complement the Act, yet affects future generations. I welcome the Welsh Government's decision to recast their planning policies in light of the Act and I am working with officers to produce a revised draft of *Planning Policy Wales (2018)* that will help public bodies take decisions that consider applications in a more rounded and long-term way.

NHS

Public bodies have told me they find planning timetables and different legislation placed on them challenging. Different plans saying different things make it confusing for the public. I have pressured the NHS Planning Team within Welsh Government on how health boards can use the Act in their corporate planning to develop new approaches to the system and services of the NHS. It is pleasing to see that some health boards are eagerly grasping the opportunities the Act presents, such as Powys Teaching Health Board challenging the national guidance to create well-being objectives that better suited their context and their population.

Example

Championing the Act

Both Public Health Wales and Swansea Council have recently found ways to achieve multiple benefits by refurbishing their office spaces in a way that contributes to the **seven national well-being goals** of Wales.

Although they were pressured to take a traditional approach to procuring furniture, flooring and paint, leadership within the organisations pressured for a different way of doing things – using the Act as a lever for change.

Public Health Wales led the way in employing local social enterprises, such as Greenstream in Porth, Rype and Orangebox furniture, thereby creating good quality, local jobs of which many employees are disabled or have found difficulty in gaining employment. Swansea Council learnt from this approach in their recent office move – using many of the same techniques and enterprises.

Furniture has been recycled, including items intended for landfill that have been cleaned and recovered for use in the building, carpet tiles are recycled and the organisations have worked to make sure the building is fully accessible, seeking advice from RNIB and accessibility specialists.

Sally Attwood, Programme Manager of the Public Health Wales' office move, said: 'I am extremely proud of the way we have succeeded in fitting out the four floors. By maintaining our commitment to re-using furniture and using re-manufactured items, we have secured an excellent design that meets our needs and is value for money.'

'We have also been able to work with organisations based locally in Wales who are providing us with good quality furniture and fittings while, at the same time, provide valuable training and experience for people who have struggled to find work.'

Example

Healthy Hillides

Wildfires deliberately caused by arson affect the south Wales Valleys every year. In coming together as local leaders of the area, Natural Resources Wales, Wildlife Trusts of South and West Wales, Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council and South Wales Fire and Rescue Service have found a collaborative approach to better manage the Rhondda's natural resources to help minimise the impact and severity of wildfires.

Healthy Hillides involves proactive land management techniques that can help to reduce the extent of wildfires, to prevent them spreading across whole hillsides, devastating local wildlife and endangering communities. A project officer is coordinating the collaborative approach, part-funded by Natural Resources Wales and hosted by the Wildlife Trusts of South and West Wales, working with partners, local landowners and the community to produce a long-term strategy for reducing wildfires in the Rhondda, and coordinating preventative works on the ground.

Example

Greener Grangetown

The City of Cardiff Council, Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water and Natural Resources Wales, supported by the Landfill Communities Fund, are investing £2 million in Greener Grangetown, an innovative scheme to better manage rainwater in the community. Using the latest techniques, this scheme will catch, clean and divert rainwater directly into the River Taff instead of pumping it over 8 miles through the Vale of Glamorgan to the sea. It will help to make Grangetown a greener, cleaner place to live.

What the well-being objectives are telling us

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 should inform what public bodies and public services boards do and shape how they do it, rather than be about publishing documents and following a process. To deliver the Act, public bodies will need to consider how they carry out sustainable development in everything they do.

I appreciate that public bodies, public services boards members and local authorities, in particular, have spent a great amount of time and energy in meeting the challenging timescales for publishing their well-being objectives, well-being assessments and

developing local well-being plans. In these early stages of the Act's life, this information provides us with the clearest demonstration of where organisations are on the journey from usual business to transformational change.

It is one year since most public bodies set well-being objectives for the first time. This part of the report asks what did those objectives say? How far has the public sector moved on from doing the same, to using the Act and the goals to try something different? What do the well-being objectives say about the journey so far?

In general...

The statutory guidance for the Act states that public bodies must use sustainable development to shape **what** they do, **how** they do it and how they **communicate** (via reporting) the difference you are making. In reviewing the well-being statements published in April 2017, it is still difficult in many cases to understand this.

Many public bodies have published statements that make sense to them but are not particularly clear for others to understand. It is important that this is addressed in order to provide transparency for the public and to enable progress to be measured.

It is important that documents are easy to find online and clearly labelled as a well-being statement, with relevant dates that the document covers. Whilst I appreciate that, for most organisations, their well-being statement is integrated into their corporate planning, public bodies must still clearly set objectives and steps – and make these obvious for others to see.

It is promising that most public bodies have referenced the Act in their well-being statements, but few have shown how they have considered if their services currently contribute to the **seven national well-being goals** and what more they could do – alone or with others. At the moment, public bodies are committing to well-being objectives that largely resemble the corporate objectives they would have set prior to 2017.

Example

Raising educational attainment

Several public bodies have set well-being objectives relating to raising educational attainment for all young people. Steps to meet this objective include, for example, 'improve literacy standards', 'increase school attendance' and 'reduce inequalities in education'.

Although important, public bodies must demonstrate to me, the Auditor General for Wales and to others how they have considered the **five ways of working** in setting their objectives and steps, or how they can further contribute to the **seven national well-being goals**. They also need to set out what steps they intend to take to meet the objective and how they will go about doing this, referencing the seven core areas for change in the statutory guidance, in particular.

For example, in raising educational attainment, how has the organisation looked beyond the next five years and considered the skills young people might need in order to secure a job in the future? Evidence suggests the skills needed will be good communication, creativity, project management and an ability to adapt to change. How can the education service work with other partners to offer pupils the chance of learning these skills?

How are services integrated to ensure children experiencing difficult circumstances are identified at an early stage and supported through the education system, preventing poor attainment?

How are children with poor attendance involved in developing services that help them re-engage with school? Is the school environment encouraging good mental and physical well-being for pupils and staff? How can the education service work with others, including the local community, to ensure that schools are supporting cohesion and better outcomes for pupils?

How are pupils engaged with the natural environment around the school? How can estates departments work with others to design school buildings in a way that is conducive to learning, well-being and contributes to reducing carbon emissions? How can materials be procured that are sustainable, ethically sourced and Fairtrade?

The seven national well-being goals give us in Wales a clear direction of travel. The objectives set by public bodies should be pulling in this same direction, with each organisation publicly considering how their business currently contributes to these goals. In reviewing the well-being statements so far, public bodies are not yet developing objectives that explain how they currently contribute to the goals and how they might maximise their contribution to the goals in future.

Positively, many public bodies responded to the Auditor General for Wales' call for evidence and said they had done things differently in setting their first well-being objectives. I can see that some well-being statements describe how the **five ways of working** were used to determine an objective. This demonstrates progress and I expect to see more public bodies describing what that objective means to them and providing evidence as to why they are taking action.

But the Auditor General has also found in his report that 'while public bodies may feel they have applied the **five ways of working** to a greater extent, it is not always clear how the process was different or what has changed as a result.' Alongside the Wales Audit Office, I will be monitoring closely how this improves.

Example

Developing skills for the future

For example, 35 public bodies set objectives relating to developing skills and a workforce for the future in 2017. In many cases, it is explained how they have used data, such as the recently published well-being assessments, involved residents and thought about the long-term impact of not having a workforce fit for the future.

But then, rather than set steps that consider how they can maximise their contribution to the **seven national well-being goals**, the published steps include 'Deliver a Welsh Government programme to improve skills' or 'Support unemployed people to gain work'.

This is the 'what' but does not give adequate information of 'how' and when they will do it. Will the programme ensure skills are improved in low-carbon industries (contributing to a prosperous Wales), or in sustainable, Fairtrade business (contributing to a globally responsible Wales)? How will the opportunities made available be equal to all? How can the programme improve the health of participants?

The duties under the Act cannot be met by relying on traditional approaches. Each public body must demonstrate how they are implementing all of the ways of working and the national well-being goals.

As we are in the early stages of the Act's implementation, there tends to be a lack of integration and involvement of people in designing steps that achieve multiple purposes and benefits. Public bodies have reported to the Wales Audit Office that there is a lack of 'time and space to reflect'.

The Auditor General for Wales has recognised the barriers public bodies have described to changing their ways of working. Some examples, reported in his call for evidence from public bodies, include:

- *'Short-term funding and annual remit letters are a barrier to long-term planning'*
- *'A lack of flexibility over how grant funding can be spent and disproportionate monitoring requirements'*
- *'Legislative complexity and the difficulty of joining up statutory requirements in practice'*
- *'A focus on indicators and regulatory requirements, detracting from a focus on outcomes'*
- *'The complex governance environment and the need to support multiple partnerships, such as PSBs and Regional Partnership Boards.'*

I appreciate that there is a raft of legislation that public bodies have to meet, which creates huge amounts of activity. But by truly using the **five ways of working**, the noise of activity quietens and creative solutions to 'doing the things we have always done' can be found. I have already advised that the Act is not about doing 'the same things better', it's about doing 'better things'.

Well-being objectives should reflect the complexity of the delivery system within which we currently work. There are large projects in Wales, such as City Deals, infrastructure investments, reforms to health and social care, that are largely absent from well-being statements. Although well-being objectives and steps should not reflect everything an organisation does, understanding how the organisation currently contributes to the **seven national well-being goals**, and what other local and national organisations can do to help, will assist in making sense of other projects, legislation and partnerships.

Welsh Government also has a responsibility to create the right conditions to allow the aspirations of the Act to be met. For example, the [*Parliamentary Review in Health and Social Care*](#) calls for change from within and is an opportunity to recast performance indicators, workforce planning and budget allocations. The government response to this has the potential to incorporate the aspirations of the Act, making policy decisions and providing services that are more fit for the long-term, preventative, integrated and involving people much more.

Likewise, in their budget-setting process, government should be seizing the opportunity during their budget-setting to create opportunities for the Act to be implemented.

As financial planning is one of the seven core areas of change within the statutory guidance, I want to see how officials are defining prevention and preventative spend so that budget decisions are demonstrating a step-change in moving to preventative approaches

I am challenging Welsh Government on how they are involving the people of Wales in making budgetary decisions. There are opportunities for government to be setting an example to public bodies that enable easier implementation of the Act locally.

Public bodies must also be more ambitious and challenge back to government and others about doing the right things in order to create the right conditions that make sense to the people of Wales and improve well-being.

Only by challenging the system that currently exists can we move towards transformational change – the Act provides permission to challenge and question the system.

The Act gives public bodies permission to demand integration and, as such, other legislation can be an opportunity to drive practical change. For example, the Environment (Wales) Act has introduced area statements for Wales, which will provide a blueprint for people in a geographical area to promote and preserve natural resources for future generations. The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act is about improving well-being and giving people a voice in their care and support. The Planning (Wales) Act intends to improve the existing planning process to ensure the right

development is located in the right place. These are part of what the Act is about and should not be seen as separate or an additional burden to public bodies.

Although simple changes are taking place, my review of well-being statements in this first year and the correspondence I receive suggests that this is despite setting well-being objectives and steps. These changes are often driven by particular individuals who champion the Act and grasp opportunities.

Many public bodies have been reviewing their objectives and seeking to improve them. This is encouraging as it demonstrates that these public bodies have taken time to consider whether their first set of objectives were fit for purpose.

Example

Caerphilly Council

Despite support in Caerphilly for low carbon initiatives, a lack of funding has meant that it has been difficult to prioritise projects in the past. Following the introduction of the Act, the Council set an objective to 'take steps to reduce the Authority's Carbon Footprint and inform and assist others within the borough to do the same.'

This has resulted in the Council allocating funding to solar panelling on 20 schools. This year, the Council is installing an additional three solar schemes on corporate buildings, generating approximately 56 tonnes of carbon savings each year.

The Council already has several schemes to install LED lighting across its estates and has now also installed electric vehicle charging points in the county. The Council is close to getting an electric pool vehicle and working to get more electric vehicles across Meals on Wheels and other services.

Example

Powys Teaching Health Board

Powys Teaching Health Board initially accepted their corporate objectives as well-being objectives and were going to map these against the **seven well-being goals**.

However, the Health Board decided that these original corporate objectives were not fit for purpose, as they had not been set using the sustainable development principle and **five ways of working** or used the legislation as an opportunity to think differently and plan for the long-term. Therefore, 'retrofitting' them back into the legislation was difficult.

My team has steered the Health Board to use this as an opportunity to develop new objectives that meaningfully consider how they can maximise their contribution to the goals and make progress towards using the **five ways of working**.

As a result, Powys Teaching Health Board recently developed a new set of well-being objectives in the context of their integrated health and social care work, and building on their Public Services Board's local assessment of well-being.

In every letter of advice I recently sent to PSBs, I have said that I want to see how, individually, the organisations around the table are taking reasonable steps in exercising their functions to meet the objectives of the PSB. The work of the PSB should not be seen as something separate to the work of its member bodies, to other partnership frameworks or to regional working. The Act is about doing what makes sense to improve people's well-being in the area.

As part of reviewing objectives and producing annual reports, I expect to see how public bodies are seeking to contribute to the work of the PSB through their objectives and by working with the other organisations in the area.

Where we are, by theme...

We have undertaken an analysis of the 345 well-being objectives set by public bodies in 2017 and looked for common themes emerging across objectives and steps. This is not an exact science, given the breadth of topics covered, the lack of supporting detail supplied by public bodies in some cases and the subjectivity of such analysis. But it provides a useful insight into how public bodies intend to improve economic, environmental, social and cultural well-being.



99

objectives, set by **38** public bodies relate to health, social care, social prescribing, safeguarding and ageing well

98

objectives set by **37** public bodies relate to service delivery, organisational change, staff training or financial management of the organisation

74

objectives, set by **38** public bodies relate to communities, cohesion, safety, facilities and access to services

74

objectives, set by **35** public bodies relate to education, training, improving skills and volunteering

59

objectives, set by **31** public bodies relate to environment, including natural resources, extreme weather events, resilience of the environment and climate change

51

objectives, set by **29** public bodies specifically relate to the economy, economic growth, business and wealth creation

40

objectives, set by **24** public bodies relate to transport, connectivity, digitalisation and digital connectivity

38

objectives, set by **27** public bodies relate to culture, heritage, Welsh language, sport, tourism and arts

29

objectives, set by **21** public bodies relate to poverty, equality, fairness, (lack of) housing and homelessness

In analysing the objectives, it is clear to see that the majority of public bodies have stuck to their core business and have not yet considered how they can maximise their contribution to the **seven well-being goals** (alone or with others) in what they do and how they do it.

Overwhelmingly, objectives have a focus on improving the economic and social well-being of localities, with little emphasis on the environment or culture – despite the need to demonstrate how well-being objectives contribute to each of the seven goals.

Public bodies must set well-being objectives that maximise their contribution to all of the **seven well-being goals**, demonstrate how they have considered their current contribution and how they intend to do more.

For example, this analysis has shown that very few public bodies have shown a contribution to a more globally responsible Wales. Pembrokeshire National

Park and Velindre NHS Trust are examples of local public bodies which have considered their contribution to this goal and set objectives and steps to improve.

The majority of public bodies have not considered how they contribute to a more resilient Wales and, aside from the national parks and Natural Resources Wales, have not shown how they will enhance and protect biodiversity.

The duty sets out that public bodies must use the legally defined **seven national well-being goals** to consider how they can improve well-being for their area. The national indicators, set by Welsh Government, provide a national picture of our progress against the goals and can inform policy decisions and focus of how public bodies can make a contribution.

In reviewing well-being objectives and reporting on progress, public bodies must better express their current and planned contribution to each of the goals.

It is not surprising to see that my six priority areas, which are challenges facing future generations in Wales, are featured across the 345 objectives set in 2017.



97

objectives relate to skills

35

different public organisations set objectives on skills



59

objectives relate to alternative models to health and well-being

33

different public organisations set objectives relating to alternative models to health and well-being



37

objectives relate to ACEs

23

different public organisations set objectives on ACEs



32

objectives relate to housing

21

different public organisations set objectives on housing



30

relate to transport

20

different public organisations set objectives on transport



29

relate to energy

23

different public organisations set objectives relating to energy

I have looked in more detail at these well-being objectives to provide insight on how public bodies should improve how they demonstrate they are taking effective steps to meet them.



For the majority of public bodies who have set objectives and steps in relation to skills, the emphasis is on how skills should be developed to meet the needs of the economy. For example, 'Develop a skilled workforce to meet the demands of current and future business.' Although understandable, this is a narrow focus that has limited the way public bodies see developing skills and education as a way of also improving social, cultural and environmental well-being.

When it comes to objectives on skills, most public bodies have overlooked the wider social and cultural processes that influence employment opportunities like gender, ethnicity, childhood experiences and environment. There are some exceptions, where public bodies have described acquiring skills as improving other aspects of life – not just economic well-being. For instance, Sport Wales has set an objective for 'Children and young people to have the motivation, physical skills, knowledge, understanding and opportunities to take part in physical activity for life.'

The objectives and steps relating to skills tend to be ambiguous and based on an assumption that education and skills will improve quality of life – with no exploration of what this means practically in an area or reference to the other factors that affect people's well-being. For example, public bodies have set objectives such as 'Develop a multi-skilled workforce' with little explanation of how, what skills will be developed and by whom, and what information is being used to look to the long-term skills needs of the area?



The majority of objectives relating to housing are based on improving the availability of affordable housing stock, for example, 'Increase the supply of good quality housing.' The steps to meet these objectives tend to be based on improving stock to meet demand and have limited information on how the public body is considering how making more housing available impacts on a place – community safety, vitality, health, cohesion, heritage.

Some public bodies have set objectives and steps that relate to both housing and energy. For example, Swansea Council have set a step to '...build more energy efficient Council homes...' and Pembrokeshire County Council a step to 'explore potential for low-carbon affordable housing developments'. But in general, there is little information on the environmental impact of improving the availability of housing, such as what materials will be used, how the environmental impact will be monitored over time, how the material has been sourced – is it ethical and local, where possible? This demonstrates how public bodies are not yet seeing actions through the lens of the **seven national well-being goals**.

There is no evidence that the public bodies have considered how they are going to resolve tensions between increasing the availability and affordability of housing stock and creating culturally vibrant, cohesive, sustainable places that will contribute to well-being and the national well-being goals.



Social prescribing

Most objectives relating to social prescribing are about promoting active lifestyles – both in terms of physical activity and in being actively involved in a community. Many also focus on the individual's responsibility to maintain their own health. For example, 'Encourage people to take responsibility for their own health and well-being.' In the majority of well-being statements that mention social prescribing, the wider social, economic, cultural and environmental factors that contribute to a person's well-being are overlooked.

As with other themes, it is not clear from well-being statements how public bodies are critically looking at their services and interventions. There is little reference to the provision of how spaces can contribute to improving well-being. Public bodies should give more information about how they are considering if social prescribing schemes are effective, asking questions if they are not working and seeking to understand wider determinants of health and well-being.



Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs)

Objectives relating to ACEs are mostly about mitigating or preventing the effect of ACEs on personal outcomes. For example, 'Provide early intervention and prevention services to ensure children are safe and minimise harmful childhood experiences.' However, there is not much detail of the steps they will take to prevent ACEs or how they are investigating the best ways to prevent ACEs.

Tackling ACEs must be seen as a responsibility of the whole system, not just in terms of awareness but in terms of how the system actually operates. It is important for public bodies to consider how well the services, which currently respond to families where ACEs are a factor, are working and whether they are fit for purpose in terms of preventing ongoing adverse experiences for children and families. Applying the **five ways of working** to this issue would mean that services for families in criminal justice, housing, social services, early years, substance misuse, domestic abuse and others would be commissioned, reviewed and integrated in preventing and responding to ACEs.

It is positive that well-being objectives are seeking to prevent and mitigate the impact of ACEs, but it is not clear if public bodies have considered the complexities relating to types of ACEs and their severity. Different ACEs may require different interventions at different times in a lifetime. The critical assessment of how effective these interventions is not included in well-being statements yet.



Energy

In setting well-being objectives relating to energy, many public bodies have looked at their own organisations and operations. For example, 'Reduce carbon emissions from Council assets' or 'Take steps to improve the Authority's carbon footprint.' Public bodies are also seeking to improve energy efficiency and some are linking well-being objectives on energy to transport and infrastructure – demonstrating a more whole system approach. For instance, Welsh Government have included an objective to 'improve integrated public transport networks (safe, reliable, affordable and low carbon)'.

Overall, however, there are few public bodies that are looking at the seven core areas of change set out in the statutory guidance (such as procurement and assets) to reduce their carbon footprint. In considering how they currently contribute to the **seven well-being goals**, I would expect to see all public bodies recognising the impact of their activity on the environment and climate change and seeking ways to reduce this.

Those that have set objectives in relation to energy mostly focus on how reducing emissions will mitigate the impact of high carbon energy on the environment, which is a significant contribution towards the Welsh Government ambition for a carbon neutral public sector by 2030. However, well-being statements have not yet suggested what role they could play in making renewable energy ventures more affordable and accessible to local communities or challenge the culture of energy usage in business?



Transport

Those public bodies that have set well-being objectives and steps in relation to transport focus mainly on connectivity – for economic growth, connecting people to local services or facilities and links to other areas. For example, 'Develop the transport infrastructure and employment sites'. It is positive that some public bodies have stated they are looking at sustainable modes of transport, but there is little evidence as of yet about what this might be.

In using the **five ways of working** to inform policy decisions, public bodies should be asking how transport infrastructure might impact on the well-being of their communities and those in surrounding areas. How can public bodies plan, design and locate future developments (as part of local development plans) in a way that contributes to a more globally responsible Wales and a resilient Wales? How can they seek to create communities that promote equality, have a vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language at their core and are safe, cohesive, well-connected and viable?

Transport and energy are two of the biggest things public bodies can influence to effect climate change. Public

bodies have a responsibility around transport, planning and infrastructure and must now consider this from the perspective of the **seven well-being goals** and how the **five ways of working** are framing thinking.

My duties as Commissioner are such that I was not able to advise public bodies on the objectives and steps they have set in 2017, but I have provided advice to the public services boards (PSBs). This feedback on their well-being assessments and advice on their draft objectives has resulted in early years, skills and adverse childhood experiences being themes across almost all of the local well-being plans adopted by PSBs in Wales. After being largely absent from previous community plans, such as the Single Integrated Plans published in 2013, the environment, environmental resilience and protecting habitats feature explicitly in the draft objectives of 16 out of 19 PSBs, which differs from the current set of public bodies' well-being objectives.

It is promising to see PSBs seeking to improve all aspects of well-being through setting objectives and steps that are holistic and I am hopeful that all public bodies will review their own well-being objectives with this in mind.

Example

NHS Forest

The NHS Forest works with healthcare professionals and organisations to make green spaces available for health purposes. The range of programmes seeks to inspire healthcare professionals to use green space to improve patients' lifestyles and aid recovery processes.

The NHS Forest was a project developed by a broad collaboration of many partners from environment and health and is co-ordinated by the charity, the Centre for Sustainable Healthcare (CSH) which focuses on the crossover between health and sustainability. It aims to encourage greater social cohesion between NHS sites and the local communities around them, spark projects that bring together professionals and volunteers to use existing space for art, food growing, reflection, exercise and encouraging biodiversity.

Spurred by concern for the impact of climate change on people's well-being and the environment, CSH works to inspire and support the NHS to cut its levels of carbon pollution and to become more sustainable. The pilot phase was funded by The Forestry Commission (FC) and Natural England, but there are four sites in north Wales, one at a GP practice, two at leisure centres and one at a dental practice. [Watch the video here:](#)

Example

Natural Resources Wales carbon positive project

Natural Resources Wales (NRW) have used the Act as an opportunity to understand and take action on the carbon impact of their organisation. The Welsh Government have set a long-term ambition for the public sector in Wales to be carbon neutral by 2030 and NRW set well-being objectives such as 'Champion the Welsh environment and the sustainable management of Wales' natural resources'. NRW looked at their own responsibilities as an organisation in meeting this objective and set a step to 'Promote and build on our carbon-positive status and aim to be an exemplar'.

Only 12% of their emissions were from direct use (e.g. electricity or vehicle fuel), while 88% are due to indirect use like procurement chains of goods and services, transporting timber and staff commuting. They identified four areas for action: buildings, transport, land and operational assets, and procurement – covering many of the seven core areas of change within the statutory guidance of the Act.

They have developed over 20 demonstration projects to showcase opportunities to reduce emissions or protect carbon stocks, including installing LED lighting in their buildings, installing solar PV onto their buildings, introducing electric cars into their fleet, woodland planting and peatland restoration, and trialling ways to reduce emissions through their supply chain.

NRW say that involving their staff across the organisation was very important. They identified that replacing 56% of their fleet saved £136,000 and 413 tonnes of CO₂ each year.

Example

Cardiff today, Cardiff tomorrow

Cardiff PSB have developed 'Cardiff today, Cardiff tomorrow' in their well-being planning and corporate planning for the Council. The PSB has thought about the long-term trends and risks for the city and how they can take collaborative action now to prevent problems from getting worse. Population growth and the associated transportation issues were identified as a problem.

For instance, Cardiff today: 'Over the last 10 years Cardiff's population grew by 12%, making it one of the fastest growing major British cities...over 90,000 people travel in and out of Cardiff every day from neighbouring local authority areas, 80% by car.'

Thinking long-term to what Cardiff tomorrow could be like: 'Over the next 20 years, Cardiff is projected to grow significantly faster than any other Welsh local authority area and faster than all major cities apart from London...With growth, a 32% net increase in traffic, a 20% increase in the numbers of people commuting to work is projected and an associated increase in journey times of approximately 41%.'

The PSB has agreed a step to 'Aim for 50% of all journeys in Cardiff to be by sustainable travel by supporting the development and delivery of the Cardiff Sustainable Transport Strategy.'

More recently, Cardiff Council have published a Green Paper, [***Changing how we move around a growing city***](#), putting forward ideas on how they will take steps to meet this objective.

Example

Help people live healthy lives by tackling obesity

How you could maximise your contribution to the seven goals, in considering how to meet this objective:

Prosperous Wales

Are shops and businesses in the area contributing to an obesogenic environment or a stressful environment, such as fast food outlets, gambling shops and a lack of green space?

How are people being supported into decent work and education that provides purpose, worth and wealth? (not low-paid or low-skilled)

How are homes being built and adapted to improve physical and mental health including being low carbon, energy efficient, safe and provide access to green space?

Resilient Wales

How are people connected to their natural environment and what opportunities can be provided for them to actively enhance the biodiversity of the area?

Are there local food growing initiatives already in existence?

How is an understanding of the ecosystem helping people to manage their own health e.g. understanding the impact of air quality, flooding, extreme heat and declining green space on our well-being?

Healthier Wales

How are people able to maintain and improve their own physical and mental well-being?

How are innovative approaches being used to help people stay well or manage their weight?

How are preventative approaches being considered at all levels, to ensure people stay well and not become obese?

More equal Wales

How is the disproportionate impact of poor health and unhealthy weight on those in poverty being addressed?

How can positive healthy behaviours be more attractive and accessible to all?

Are particular groups of the community disproportionately affected by obesity? How can improvements be targeted?

Wales of cohesive communities

Is public transport affordable and accessible, encouraging people to travel actively, especially for short 'everyday' journeys such as commutes?

What is the role of key community assets in helping people manage their weight?

What assets already exist in the community that could help people to manage their weight, such as the natural environment, sports and play facilities, cultural activities and walking or cycling routes?

Does everyone have equal access to improving their health wherever they live in an area?

How can healthy food bring people together from different walks of life and reduce the social stigma associated with being obese?

Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh Language

What opportunities exist to improve well-being through taking part in cultural activities?

How can different initiatives, like arts, sports and language opportunities, encourage people to engage in improving their personal and community's well-being?

Are people able to access services to manage their weight in the language of their choice?

Globally Responsible Wales

What opportunities are there for people to grow their own food and therefore reduce their environmental impact?

What local supply chains can be created to enable people to access sustainable, Fairtrade produce? How can voluntary work, in Wales and overseas, help people's mental and physical health?

Using the five ways of working to challenge how this objective could be delivered:

Long-term

What are the key future trends and scenarios related to this objective? What information about these trends is available and what is missing?

What are the long-term, intergenerational consequences of obesity?

What opportunities could be provided for managing weight more effectively in the long term? For example greater automation of routine health services could enable greater resource to prevent children from becoming obese.

Prevention

What do we need to invest in now to prevent cycles of unhealthy weight from continuing?

How can we prevent people who have unhealthy weight already from becoming more obese

What innovative approaches, such as social prescribing, can be adopted that prevent weight gain?

Involvement

How are services understanding people's lived experiences, and what leads to their weight gain in meeting this objective?

How are people involved in defining what 'healthy' means to them, in explaining how they can contribute to their own health and well-being and in reducing the social stigma associated with obesity?

How is the learning and previous dialogue with people being considered in decision-making.

Collaboration

How can organisations across public, private and third sectors, come together to improve weight management?

How well is existing collaboration on weight management initiatives working and are there any missed opportunities?

Do the way services currently work together make sense for those who use them?

Integration

How are services aimed at reducing obesity integrated?

How can better weight management deliver improved social, cultural, economic and environmental well-being?

How is it linked to the other objectives of the public body, other public bodies in the area and the local public services board?

Expectations of annual reports

As explained, I do not have a duty to advise public bodies on their well-being objectives but my powers could include doing so. I have a duty to monitor and assess the extent to which objectives are being met, and the Auditor General for Wales has a duty to examine the extent objectives have been set using the five ways of working.

Both my duties and those of the Auditor General for Wales are centred on how culture and behaviour need to change to improve the social, economic, cultural and environmental well-being of Wales. Public sector needs to act in new ways and reporting this to others is challenging, but necessary. Members of the public in Wales want to see public bodies use the Act in their decision-making and understand how progress is being made towards improving well-being for their area.

I have already provided examples of progress and described how well-being statements can be improved in future.

Public bodies are now at a point of reflecting on the first year of working towards their objectives, publishing annual reports on progress during 2017/18 by the 31st March 2019.

For the people of Wales, the Auditor General for Wales and for me, as Commissioner, these reports are important indications of how well public bodies are meeting the objectives they have set - how well are they improving the well-being of Wales?

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act is both about the 'what' and the 'how'. Public bodies must demonstrate 'what' they are doing – something we are relatively used to reporting – but also the 'how' we are doing it - which can be less easy to explain.

This part of the report sets out what I would like to see reflected in annual reports.

Expectation 1:

Well-being objectives and goals

Public bodies must;

- *clearly set out their well-being objectives and the steps they are taking to meet them. This must include how the **five ways of working** and **seven national well-being goals** have been used to inform the setting of the objectives and steps*
- *highlight how the organisation intends to maximise its contribution to the **seven national well-being goals** and reference the seven core areas of change in the statutory guidance*
- *provide information on how resources have been used to take steps to meet their well-being objectives.*

Questions a reader might ask

Why have you chosen that well-being objective? What has made you set this objective and not another one?
How will you be improving economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being through meeting these objectives? When do you think you will meet this objective?

As part 5 of this report explains, public bodies are not yet giving enough evidence to describe how they have used the sustainable development principle and considered the **seven well-being goals** in setting their objectives and steps. The well-being statements are mixed with clear differences in approach from varying departments within public bodies, sometimes retrofitting their work against the **five ways of working** and seven goals, rather than describing how it has informed their thinking and decision-making.

Although well-being statements and annual reports need to be clear, they should also be inspiring and celebrate the work of the organisation for people to understand how the public body is improving well-being in their area.

Setting objectives and steps does not exhaust the duty of public bodies. The Act clearly makes setting objectives and steps a means, but only one means, of discharging the sustainable development duty. Well-being statements should give information on how resources, including financial, are going to be allocated every year, for the purpose of taking steps to meet objectives. Annual reports should give evidence on how this has been realised during the year and whether particular barriers have stopped the public body from making progress towards its well-being objectives and steps.

Public bodies should describe how they have considered the interventions needed to tackle the scale of the issue. Have enough resources been allocated or are not enough available?

Expectation 2:

Sustainable development principle

Annual reports must describe how the organisation is making sense of its duty to use the sustainable development principle and articulate how this fits with other legislative duties (or direct the reader to more information), their corporate objectives, business planning and operational services.

Questions a reader might ask

How are you meeting your duties around equality? How are you meeting your duties around biodiversity? Where can I read more about how you are promoting the Welsh language as an organisation? How are you using your existing powers differently now to before the Act was in place?

The Auditor General for Wales (AGW) has found that the challenge remains for public bodies to better explain how they intend to change the way they work. As the statutory guidance of the Act states, public bodies must use sustainable development to shape **what** you do, **how** you do it and how you **communicate** (via reporting) the difference you are making.

It is not clear to me from reading well-being statements how the organisation is making sense of its duties and how this relates to other legislation, their corporate objectives, business planning and day-to-day business. An annual report should be integral to the work of the organisation and the sustainable development principle should not be 'bolted on'.

Well-being objectives and steps do not need to cover everything a public body does, although the Act can help to integrate duties through use of the **five ways of working** and contribution to the **seven well-being goals**. Where a statutory duty is not being met by the objectives and steps set by the public body, direction to a different document would be helpful.

Expectation 3:

Looking ahead

Whilst recognising change takes time,

- *Public bodies must set out what successfully meeting their objective would look like and an ambition of where they would like to be in 5, 10, 15, 25 years or beyond.*

Questions a reader might ask

When will you meet this objective? How will you know? What is your criteria for successfully meeting this objective? How are you going to get there?

My review of well-being statements suggests that few public bodies have articulated what successfully using the sustainable development principle would look like and how they will be taking action towards this for their organisation. Public bodies are not yet using these documents to define what meeting their objectives looks like and how they intend to get to this destination.

Setting a direction that is understood throughout the organisation is vital if they are to deliver on their ambitions and maximise the opportunities of the Act.

Expectation 4:

Tracking progress

Public bodies must explain in their annual reports how far they have taken steps to meet their objectives, how effective these steps have been, how they are tracking progress and how they are adopting or adapting new ways of demonstrating progress.

Questions a reader might ask

What have you done so far? What does it mean for me? Where do you want to be on this issue in the next 5, 10, 25 years and beyond? How are you going to get there?
How will I see improvement in my local area or life?

Similarly, annual reports must set out the progress public bodies have made so far in meeting their objectives. This should be based on outcomes and outputs, rather than commitments and inputs made in the past. What interventions are making the most material impact? What isn't working so well and may need to be reviewed?

Currently, many public bodies adopt traditional performance indicators to track their progress, based on statistical data. Whilst this method is useful, it is important that we measure what matters, not merely what can be counted. I appreciate this takes time, but I expect to see public bodies exploring other ways of defining their impact and monitoring their progress to clearly report on this.

The setting of milestones by the Welsh Government will need to be understood and owned by all. These will assist public bodies in understanding the progress and pace required under the Act for us all to meet the **seven national well-being goals**.

Expectation 5:

Applying and implementing the Act

Annual reports must

- *outline how the seven corporate areas of change set out in the guidance of the Act have begun to adapt their ways of working*
- *describe how decisions have been affected by applying the Act*
- *provide examples of what it is they are doing differently since the implementation of the Act and what is planned next.*

It is crucial that public bodies celebrate these simple changes in their annual reporting and future well-being statements.

Questions a reader might ask

What's new and different from how things were done before? How are you actually changing things on the ground? How are these things contributing to meeting your objectives? How are they contributing to the well-being goals? How have systems and services been critically looked at and adapted, using the Act? How would you explain progress to a child in 2043? What are you doing now that will impact on the long-term well-being of Wales?

The guidance for the Act also sets out where change needs to happen within seven corporate functions of an organisation - risk, performance management, corporate planning, financial planning, workforce planning, assets and procurement. These are the parts of the organisation that should be seeking to do things differently since the introduction of the Act because they affect the rest of the organisation's services.

I have provided examples of how some public bodies have already adopted changes within their organisations and I expect to see more reflected in annual reports. Annual reports should describe what difference the Act is making to how the organisation would have usually functioned. How has the Act affected a decision? Did it change the outcome? Is day-to-day business affected? Annual reports should describe what is different for each public body in these corporate services and what further changes are planned.

Public bodies need to set clear well-being objectives and steps that drive the work of the organisation. These need to be communicated to all staff and employees need to understand their importance. Everyone in the organisation would be using the **five ways of working** in carrying out their roles and seeking to maximise the contribution of the public body to the **seven well-being goals**. There should be a clear indication of who is scrutinising this in the organisation and externally.

After this first year, this report and the work of the Wales Audit Office has shown that we are not there yet, but we are seeing green shoots of progress. However, these examples are often not reflected in well-being objectives and steps of an organisation but are happening elsewhere. Public bodies should consider how they articulate what they have done differently for future generations.

Expectation 6:

Self-reflecting

- *Public bodies should critically revisit their well-being objectives and consider how fit for purpose they are one year on.*
- *Where objectives have been reviewed and changed, this should clearly be explained in the context of the **five ways of working** and **seven national well-being goals**.*
- *Reports should be self-reflective, describe how the Act has been applied, the tensions of trying to apply it and lessons learnt from using the Act.*

Expectation 7:

Collaboration with other Public Bodies

As public services boards (PSBs) publish their well-being plans, I expect to see how public bodies are working together to contribute to the PSBs' well-being objectives. This may also require public bodies to review their objectives. Explaining this thought process and showing their workings is part of the culture change needed to make the Act a reality.

Questions a reader might ask

How has this process gone so far? Are objectives still right one year on? How are you working together to meet these objectives in my area?

Public bodies are expected to build up evidence and approaches that enable them to make a clear assessment of whether their well-being objectives are fit for purpose. Annual reports should explore how far the organisation has got in building up this evidence and provide a critique on whether the steps being taken to meet the objective are having an impact. Annual reports demand self-reflection and some public bodies may wish to review and change their objectives based on what's working or not working.

Annual reports should describe the tensions public bodies have grappled with and address the difficult issues where there is a debate on a direction of policy or service change. How has the Act been used to overcome these challenges? What are the challenges which persist? How could they be addressed?

In guidance provided to the countries of the United Nations (UN) on reporting to the international Sustainable Development Goals, the UN advises that reporting should share practice, lessons learnt, describe where the organisation wants to learn from others and be accessible to all. Wales is a small country and we can learn from each other in moving from simple changes, towards leading the way in sustainable development.

Expectation 8:

Accountability

Annual reports must provide evidence of how public bodies are being held to account by the public, elected members and board members in taking steps to meet their well-being objectives and using the sustainable development principle in everything they do.

Questions a reader might ask

What do others think about your work? How honest have you been in describing the progress and pace of change?

In trying to understand how objectives set by public bodies are being met, I am also interested in how progress is being scrutinised by the public, elected members and board members.

Involvement is one of the **five ways of working** set by the Act and public bodies must consider how others are involved in providing a critical view of their work. I expect annual reports to explain how others have been involved in evaluating decision-making, the content of the annual reports and providing scrutiny to the public body and the system within which it operates. Are there parts of the system working well? What barriers are in place?

Expectation 9:

Making your reports clear

- *Public bodies should be doing simple things like dating documents, (Explaining the status of the publication and keeping the information simple avoids confusion and helps people to get involved).*
- *They should also be involving people in compiling, writing and presenting reports and plans to help them provide this information in a way that is more accessible to the reader.*

Questions a reader might ask

What does this mean? How will it affect me? Is this the right document?

Many public bodies have written their first well-being statements in a way that is specific to them, writing about the 'what' but not setting the context or explaining the 'how'. This means that public bodies are often not communicating the key things they are doing well to outside readers. The documents are not yet transparent and that makes it difficult to build up trust with others and enable them to meaningfully get involved in the business of the organisation.

Annual reports need to be clearer and set out information in a simple way. Currently, accessing relevant information published by public bodies is difficult and understanding it is a challenge, even for an informed reader.

Public bodies should be involving people in how information is presented and made meaningful to them, as one of **five ways of working** of the Act. Children in Wales have worked with Public Health Wales to produce a great example of this in working with young people to design and write [**A Young person's Annual Quality Statement \(2016/17\)**](#). The work has just been awarded a Patient Experience Network National award for championing the public.

I will be working with the Auditor General for Wales in how I monitor and assess the extent to which public bodies are meeting the objectives they have set and using this to provide particular advice or assistance to public bodies and public services boards. As well as the resources my own office is producing, we are working with other public bodies, the third sector, academia and business to drive the changes needed and these will be published on my website as they become available. The questions posed in this section will inform our work. I look forward to working with public bodies and with other organisations as we continue to deliver this leading legislation.

If you have any comments on this report or wish to discuss it further with me, please write to contactus@futuregenerations.wales

Appendix

Resources to help

My programme of support to public bodies is about achieving the 'Art of the Possible'. It intends to help them progress on this journey and increase their pace of change, by shining a light on good work that is already improving well-being in communities across Wales and by encouraging them to think about ways that they can design policy or deliver services to maximise benefits to all of the national well-being goals, rather than just in a specific area of focus.

Over the next 18 months, people from a range of organisations such as Sport Wales, Public Health Wales, Wales Co-operative Centre, are now working within my team through partnerships or secondments, building on what already works in Wales and beyond, giving practical encouragement, support and tools to public bodies so they can realise what is possible, learn from the best and help them raise their game – exactly how these examples of work so far are demonstrating.

We are involving a range of people from across Wales to gather their stories of change, share innovation and support public bodies to achieve the art of the possible. Get involved by e-mailing contactus@futuregenerations.wales

Any way that public bodies and PSBs are held to account or scrutinised provides an opportunity to encourage that decisions are made using the Act as a lens. For the public, elected representatives and board members, seeking answers about the pace and progress of public organisations is an important and essential part of this role. My team is currently developing a series of questions that can be used to scrutinise decision-making.

In order to assist public bodies to use the lens of the Act in everything they do, I have published a [Future Generations Framework for Projects](#) and, published jointly with the Welsh Government, [a Future Generations Framework for Service Design](#).

Both frameworks are intended to help public bodies apply the Act to their work. The frameworks are continuously being developed to be most useful to public bodies and communities and I would be interested in hearing about examples of where they have been used effectively or to little effect – tell us by e-mailing contactus@futuregenerations.wales.

I have worked with other Commissioners in Wales to develop supporting documents that can help public bodies and public services boards integrate their duties and consider different groups of the population. For example, I have been working closely with the Children's Commissioner for Wales, to produce a toolkit on taking a child's rights approach to maximising contribution to the **seven national well-being goals**. The Well-being of Future Generations Act upholds the spirit of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and it is important to recognise children's rights across each of the well-being goals and how they should inform Wales' approach to implementing the **five ways of working** (please see our website for more details or e-mail contactus@futuregenerations.wales).

I have the power to provide advice, assistance, encourage best practice, promote awareness and encourage public bodies to work with each other and others – where this can assist in meeting well-being objectives. As well as the resources my own office is producing, we are working with other public bodies, the third sector, academia and business to drive the changes needed, using the **five ways of working** ourselves, and these will be published on my website as they become available.

Example

Llanelli Life Science and Well-being Village

The Village Project will include sport and leisure, alongside assisted living and medical research companies. Carmarthenshire County Council has led the project, working alongside three other local authorities, Swansea University, Abertawe Bro Morgannwg University Health Board, Hywel Dda University Health Board, third sector stakeholders and a private sector investment consortium.

It is the largest ever regeneration project in south west Wales and is a key project for the Swansea Bay City Region. Carmarthenshire County Council chose to use the Future Generations Framework for Projects to help and said:

'The framework has proved to be a practical, useful tool for triangulating the seven national goals and **five ways of working** with the operating principles of the project, resulting in a more evidence-based and forward-looking proposal. It has encouraged strategic and operational thinking across the different aspects of well-being – social, economic, cultural and environmental.

Engaging in discussion on future generations at the formative stages can maximise impact and realise benefits. It can also help to 'future proof' the project by thinking about the interrelationship between social, economic, cultural and environmental well-being. Working in this way fosters better outcomes – thinking holistically, exploring synergies, building collaborative networks and ensuring citizen participation makes it possible to achieve more with fewer resources, even within the field of economic development/regeneration.'