

Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2017

Dear Vale of Glamorgan Public Services Board members and support team,

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to provide feedback on your draft Assessment of Local Well-being published in January.

The first thing I want to do is to make it clear that I fully recognise the challenges that you have faced in the development of the assessment this time around, and I congratulate your team on their hard work and efforts.

My primary focus in providing this feedback is to help you consider how well your work so far will help you to set your collective objectives and undertake well-being planning. For me Public Services Boards are one of the biggest opportunities for the public sector in Wales to change the way we do things in Wales and to collaboratively make decisions and deliver services that will benefit future generations. Your assessment is a key part of this, and whilst I appreciate that it may not be a full picture by the time you publish it, it is important that it sets out a clear and informed picture of the well-being of the Vale of Glamorgan and your communities, that is relevant now and into the future. **Your assessment should enable you to clearly identify key challenges for your area and communities, and to develop collective objectives that address these challenges.**

I attach a document that gives you detailed feedback on your draft assessment, and what you should think about building on both in the short term as you move towards well-being planning and in terms of assessing well-being in the future.

During 2017-18 one of your key tasks will be to develop your collective well-being objectives as part of your Well-being Plan. The legislation requires you to seek my advice on how to take steps to meet your objectives in accordance with the sustainable development principle (five ways of working).

Below I set out some of the things I will be looking for as my office continues to work with you. In my view those PSBs who have showed they are already taking account of the five ways of working will be well placed to develop objectives and Well-being Plans, which will have benefits for all organisations involved in terms of maximising their collective contribution to the goals and addressing inter-generational challenges.

Your work on **involving people and communities** in the development of your assessment has provided you with some useful material, and you need to think about building on this to make sure that you continue to provide opportunities for a broad range of stakeholders and citizens to get involved in influencing the development of your objectives, and be able to demonstrate that their input has an effect on what you do.

In terms of the **long term** there are some good examples of where you've used long term data around flooding, your aging population, housing and climate change, and in some cases this has been interpreted well for particular communities. There is scope for you to build on

this as you move towards well-being planning, giving attention to a wider range of long term trends and how they impact on all of your communities.

On integration, it is clear that you have worked hard to include detailed data and it is helpful that you are honest about where you need to develop your evidence base. I think there is potential for you to do further work on the links between the four themes, particularly in terms of key issues and challenges (the feedback document provides further detail on this). This will be particularly important in thinking about the relative roles of your different organisations in **maximising your contribution** to the goals.

A key element of the legislation is the focus on **preventing problems** from occurring rather than just responding to them and I see this as a key priority for your well-being planning. This is an area where you need to think about what the data and evidence is telling you, in order to make sense of key challenges you have identified.

And **collaboration** is key to all of this – I think you have the opportunity of taking your partnership working to a new level, collaborating with resources and finding new ways to deal with old problems. Your assessment should be helping you to identify the most fruitful opportunities to do this.

Your support team have worked hard to develop this assessment and the people who support your well-being planning will need your full buy-in and support. Key features of this are likely to be the leadership you show and your willingness to give people space and permission to explore new ways of addressing old problems. This cultural change is what the Well-being of Future Generations Act is all about.

In anticipation of the requirement for me to provide advice on how you should take steps to meet your collective objectives I would like to see further detail of how you will use your assessment as you move towards well-being planning. I would appreciate you letting my office know how you have responded to our feedback. With this in mind it will also be important for you to provide my feedback to the scrutiny committee that has the lead for scrutinising the work of the PSB. The need for a more constructive approach to scrutiny has been identified as an important part of maximising collective action at the local level.

I hope that our feedback is clear and useful at this stage. However, I must reiterate that I don't see the development of your assessment as a one-off event. Going forward I will be providing opportunities for PSBs to share learning and best practice which I hope you will be involved in, in order to provide the best platform for you to fulfil your ongoing obligations under the Act.

Kind regards,



Sophie Howe,  
Future Generations Commissioner for Wales

## Feedback from the Office of the Future Generations Commissioner on

### VALE OF GLAMORGAN Public Services Board Draft Assessment of Local Well-being

#### 1. Introduction

The following report provides feedback to Vale of Glamorgan Public Services Board from the Office of the Future Generations Commissioner (OFGC) on the draft of the *Vale of Glamorgan Well-being Assessment Consultation* published in January 2017. This feedback is based on our project team<sup>1</sup> reviewing the following key documents and discussions:

- Executive Summary - Vale of Glamorgan Well-being Assessment Consultation Draft January 2017
- Vale of Glamorgan Well-being Assessment Consultation Draft January 2017
- Community Profile Consultation Drafts: Vale of Glamorgan; Barry; Eastern Vale; Western Vale.
- Vale of Glamorgan Well-being Assessment Evidence Reports: Section 1 Having a healthy and active future; Section 2 Being Part of Safe and Active Communities; ; Section 3 Maximising Opportunities and Attainment
- A discussion between the project team and members of the PSB team on 24<sup>th</sup> January.

It is intended that his feedback should be used to inform both the publication of the Assessment in Spring 2017, and the ongoing processes of assessment and well-being planning. It is intended that the feedback helps you to build on the work that you have already done and to continue to improve your understanding of well –being in your area.

The assessment has been reviewed by the project team using a set of criteria, developed specifically to focus on aspects of assessment production, methodology and analysis and the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations Act. These criteria enable us to review the wide range of approaches to local assessment of well-being that have been used across Wales. This has also enabled us to provide bespoke feedback to PSBs, highlighting strengths and potential areas for improvement. This consistent approach will also enable the Commissioner to identify key issues and highlight opportunities for shared learning, at a Wales-wide level, for the wide range of public sector and other bodies involved in well-being planning.

While we understand that the Well-being Assessment is an ongoing process, and that further work will be undertaken in coming months, it is important that the following

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<sup>1</sup> Dr. Alan Netherwood, Netherwood Sustainable Futures, Dr. Andrew Flynn, Cardiff University and Dr. Mark Lang, Mark Lang Consulting

comments are noted and acted upon as the assessment is developed, adapted and built upon to inform well-being planning across the PSB.

## 2. National well-being goals

One of the issues we have considered is how effectively the seven national well-being goals have been reflected in the assessment as the WFG Act requires PSBs to demonstrate how they plan to maximise their contribution to the goals. We understand that PSBs will develop different ways of reflecting well-being; however it is important that there is a clear link between the data, its interpretation and our understanding of all aspects of well-being in our communities.

It is positive that assessment illustrates a relationship between the 4 well-being themes<sup>2</sup> and the national well-being goals. However, throughout the assessment there is only limited explanation of *how* the issues that arise in each section contribute or impact on the national well-being goals. We are only provided with a list of which goals are relevant. The assessment could be improved by explaining the relationship between what the data is telling us and the implications for the well-being goals.

As well as being more explicit about this, there could be a stronger reflection of cultural well-being and its impact across the four themes, and some reflection of how the globally responsible Wales goal is relevant to the Vale of Glamorgan

## 3. Data content – area and place

The WFG Act requires well-being assessments to focus on the area and 'place' and reflect the variety of communities across your area. We have considered the extent to which the data content of your assessment does this.

The Lower Super Output Data provided for the Vale of Glamorgan as a whole and for the three community areas provides an excellent basis for the PSB to understand well-being in different localities and within localities. This approach should be commended. The community profile consultation drafts using this data are clear and well set out.

Three community profiles for Barry, Eastern Vale and Western Vale provide good information on engagement, projects and features but no analysis or synthesis of critical issues or commentary on the state of well-being. These community profiles could be improved by greater analysis of key challenges in each locality and commentary on how critical these issues are for each community area and the Vale of Glamorgan as a whole (see later points on interpretation of data). The data is left to stand on its own too often. It is positive that there is an intention to enhance these as project goes on to show differences within and between communities.

It is also good to see lists of projects and strategies within each area. These sections should indicate why these lists have been included and to provide some context, an indication of

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<sup>2</sup> Having a healthy and active future; being part of a safe and inclusive community; maximising opportunities for attainment; our environment.

their impact relative to the issue that they are trying to address. The list of assets and facilities under four themes, are understandably public sector focused. This could benefit from being developed to include critical energy, water, transport infrastructure and the assets from the perspective of businesses in urban, agricultural and tourism economies.

#### **4. Data content – how people need and use public services**

We think it is important that you have a clear picture of the different needs of people and communities now and in the future, and that the implications of these needs are understood. We have considered the extent to which the data content of the assessment focuses on public service needs, within communities and for particular groups of individuals.

It is positive to see the focus on public service needs through the inclusion of data from the Population Needs Assessment especially in the 'having a healthy and active future' section. The inclusion of a question on public service needs in the *Lets Talk* consultation has clearly provided a wealth of information for the PSB to consider.

A priority for my office is encouraging public bodies and PSBs to make sure that they are firstly involving people and communities in ways that give them greater insights into people's lived experiences of public bodies, and secondly acting upon these insights when they make decisions and deliver services.

While projects and 'interventions' are listed for each Community Profile - it is unclear what specific service needs are required and how this differs across the Vale of Glamorgan and within Barry, Eastern and Western Vale. The Community Profiles could be improved by further analysis and understanding of how patterns of service need differ across communities in the Vale.

#### **5. Quantitative and Qualitative Analysis**

We recognise the challenge of balancing data, insights and evidence to produce a rounded understanding of the well-being of communities and individuals in the short, medium and long term. One of our main considerations has been the extent to which both quantitative and qualitative analysis and methods in assessments provide a broad picture of environmental, economic, cultural and social well-being, together with initial commentary on the implications of this 'picture' for communities. i.e. what really matters?

As discussed in point 3 above, the assessment provides excellent levels of data, but in general, there is potential for far greater interpretation and analysis of key issues. Lists and tables need more interpretation to identify and communicate the critical issues for well-being at all levels. Qualitative data from *Let's Talk* has been used well in the detailed evidence reports: but again, a lack of interpretation of this makes it difficult to determine what well-being issues are most critical to address.

The level of interpretation in the detailed evidence reports is variable and very limited in some. The following paragraphs provide more specific feedback on each theme.

*Having a Healthy and Active Future* - This section provides; a concise overview of key trends and community views and links to the environment; data shows the variability and inequalities of health trends across the Vale; it provides a good and appropriate level of theoretical detail backed by data.; it shows a strong link between health, outdoors environment and play; a strong link with population assessment data; an excellent analysis on 'where do we need to increase our evidence base; it is less clear on future trends and implications of these for the Vale as a whole and particular communities.

*Our Environment* – This section could be improved generally by being more descriptive about what the data is telling us for the Vale rather than describing the data. In parts this feels generic, almost theoretical, with little understanding of the significance of issues to the Vale. This could be improved by: a clearer explanation of climate risk to the area by interpreting national Climate Change Risk Assessment data for the locality; a description of the *significance* of risks for the Vale as a whole and for particular communities in terms of current flood resource management.; an understanding of which designated sites/habitats/flora/ fauna are at risk in the Vale; clarity of the significance of air quality, fly tipping, soil quality to well-being in the area.

*Maximising Opportunities for Attainment* – This section sets out a strong evidence base but the description and layout is less accessible than the others. Linking sentences would help to orientate the reader around the data. We would expect to see the following type of data included in this section to provide an improved understanding of economic well-being: what people do for a living and where they do it; the local economy and inter-relationships with Cardiff and other areas – how it fits in with the region, and the nature of the opportunities from the City Region project; how businesses have been involved - have they been asked e.g. what do they think are the key issues for town centres? ; an understanding of patterns of commuting and their role in well-being; the future opportunities from improved IT and transport infrastructure; the role of the role of the agricultural and rural economy in a semi-rural area.

*Safe and Inclusive* – This section provides good data via the work on *Let's Talk* and work with the Older People's Commissioner. It provides an excellent summary. Of note are the sections on childcare, loneliness and isolation, inequality, ageing population, housing and domestic abuse. This section like the Health section provides a detailed analysis of 'where do we need to increase the evidence base'. The intention to think about communities in the future and their resilience is positive and reflects the authors' understanding of the WFG Act.

## 6. Key challenges

It is important that well-being assessments, in assessing the state of well-being, focus on key challenges to well-being over the short, medium and long term, as well as the positive attributes and assets in the area. This includes the trade-offs between different well-being goals, tensions, and deficits within the area.

The assessment provides a good description about what is positive about the Vale of Glamorgan and its assets. However, it could be improved by analysis and description of major challenges (e.g. multi-generational poverty) trade-offs (e.g. land use) tensions (e.g. housing) and how they impact on the Vale. Examples of where this is done well is in the commentary on loneliness and isolation, climate adaptation and housing, but a clearer understanding of which areas of the Vale will have particularly acute challenges via these trends (and others) would be beneficial. These are good examples of where key challenges have been identified.

The SWOT analysis provided in the concluding section does tease out some of the other trade-offs and challenges, but it is unclear at present how this and other issues identified in the assessment are to be further analysed, prioritised and selected for collective action by the PSB. A summary of both the key challenges for well-being in the Vale of Glamorgan and the process by which priorities will be chosen would improve the assessment.

## 7. Engagement, involvement and collaboration

The WFG Act clearly indicates that collaboration and involvement are two of the five ways of working which PSBs need to consistently apply to their work. As a consequence, we have been particularly interested in the level and method of engagement, involvement and collaboration across the partnership in producing the assessment, including engagement with communities, public, third sector and private sector organisations.

It is pleasing to see the wide range of stakeholder engagement via *Let's Talk* and the range of other methods which have been used to gather both quantitative and qualitative data to inform the assessment. The collaboration with Cardiff Council on *Let's Talk* is a positive example of collaboration. It is also positive that there is clarity for stakeholders that there will be continuing engagement through the consultation period, and that the assessment is an ongoing process.

It is unclear from the assessment to what extent the private sector has been involved or consulted on well-being in the area. This is clearly important for the '*Opportunities*' section, but equally important for their insight into other aspects of well-being. This is especially relevant in the context of understanding different spatial scales from the city region, the agricultural economy across the Vale, and in town centres. This either needs to be reflected more strongly if consultation and engagement with the private sector has occurred, or needs to be addressed in future work on the assessment and well-being planning.

## 8. Integration

One of the key aims of the WFG Act is to develop integration at all levels across the public sector. We believe it is important to understand the inter-relationship between environmental, social, economic and cultural well-being. As a result we have been keen to consider the level of integration between traditional policy and organisational silos in producing the assessment.

This is an area for you to give further consideration as you finalise your assessment for publication, and as you move toward well-being planning. There is scope for far greater

integration and more exploration of the relationship of policy/challenges between each theme. There is only limited evidence that data from each section has been considered alongside that of the others, or that the inter-relationships have been considered. There is some mention of the importance of the environment across the other three sections, however, in general these feel like four separate sections with limited reference to each other. It is important that the data listed in the assessment is explored across traditional silos to interpret what this means for well-being in the area.

## 9. Foresight and future trends

One of the key challenges from the legislation is to consider the short, medium *and long term* well-being throughout the assessment and well-being planning. We are interested in the level of foresight and use of future trends analysis in producing the assessment and recognition of the well-being of future generations.

There are some good examples in the assessment where long term data has been used around flooding, ageing population and housing and climate change. Previous comments have highlighted where this has been interpreted well for particular communities.

Generally, there needs to be far greater attention given to the potential impact of long term trends on the Vale as a whole and in the three community areas, and this is something we would expect to see improve as the assessment and Plan is developed.

A simple approach could be adopted to address this issue. Summarising the short, medium and long term challenges for each section (also see point 6), identifying where there are potential significant implications for the area, and gaps in your understanding of long term trends might help the PSB to prioritise critical challenges where collective action is needed.

Welsh Government will be producing their Future Trends Report in May 2017. The current plan is to include six key themes: Population, Economy, Natural Resources & Climate Change, Health, Land Use & Infrastructure & Societal Change. Your ongoing work on assessing well-being will need to take account of data included in this, and you should also aim to provide a clearer emphasis on long term challenges to well-being in the initial assessment published in the spring.

## 10. Cross boundary issues

Integration and collaboration are central to public bodies applying the sustainable development principle to their activities. One of our aims has been to review the extent to which the assessment has considered cross boundary issues for regional and national action.

We believe that a more detailed understanding of key regional and cross border issues which affect the Vale of Glamorgan would be beneficial, to inform the well-being plan process. The assessment could provide a clearer explanation of the area's 'role' within the region. It will also be important for PSBs to consider the conclusions of neighbouring local assessments of well-being as plan production develops.



Although there is a section on the City Region it is unclear what the implications of this major, long term project might be for *all* aspects of community well-being across the Vale. Even if the specific impacts are uncertain at present, it will clearly have an influence on cohesion, equality, resilience and so on. The project's potential influence should be included for all sections of the assessment, beyond the 'Opportunity' section, as it is likely to have multiple impacts across different parts of the area. Greater insight could be provided on the significance of commuting patterns to well-being, critical issues for transport infrastructure and the nature of inter-relationships with Cardiff, Cwm Taf, Bridgend and other regional partners.

## 11. Data quality and data gaps

The WFG Act intends that well-being planning will be a continuous process where the evidence base will be gradually improved over time, to enable public bodies and others to understand and plan for well-being in their communities. We are keen to understand the approach of PSBs to data quality and data gaps during the assessment and data issues moving forward.

It is really positive to see the sections 'how we need to develop our evidence base' –under three of the sections. This should also be included for the 'Environment' section of the assessment. These lists provide a good understanding of specific data gaps, and could be improved by communicating which of these are critical to well-being planning over the coming year and which would be developed over a longer time period.

A section summarising these would improve the final section of the assessment. This will be important to understand if there are any patterns in data needs from across the four themes, and how these gaps can be best addressed. This would enable the PSB to build on existing work and plan for improving data quality during the next year and beyond, helping PSB partners to build in data research and management into their business and corporate planning. It would also provide an indication to Welsh Government, the FGC Office and Data Unit Wales on PSB needs.

## 12. Use of the sustainable development principle

The statutory guidance places a responsibility on PSBs to *maximise* their contribution to the well-being goals by utilising the sustainable development principle in the way that it operates. We have been keen to understand how the five ways of working that make up the sustainable development principle have been utilised during the process of developing well-being assessments.

There are some references to the ways of working which show that to some extent they have been considered as part of the process of assessment development.

- *Involvement* – via Let's Talk
- *Collaboration* – with PSB partners and Cardiff Council
- *Long term* – use of readily available climate, housing and population data
- *Prevention* – early years intervention discussed in the sections *-Having a healthy and active future; being part of a safe and inclusive community*

However, there is little evidence that the sustainable development principle has been applied as a *modus operandi* to this assessment, see comments on *Integration* (point 9). There are only notional references to the sustainable development principle and several references to the 5 ways of working.

The assessment would benefit from being clearer about how the principle has changed the approach of the PSB to this work, and how the five ways of working will shape the well-being planning process.

### 13. Looking forward to plan production

A critical issue for our review of this assessment was whether the documentation was clear about how the work would be carried forward to develop local objectives and plan production.

The section 'How will the PSB pick its priorities' provides some understanding of the process moving forward and the timetable for Plan production. More information on how stakeholders could remain engaged would be useful.

Greater clarity could be provided about exactly *how* and *why* the particular priorities listed have been picked. How has the analysis resulted in these issues being chosen above others? We have identified particular areas in the assessment which need greater analysis and interpretation as part of this feedback – more information on these issues might inform priorities for further work.

The Executive summary could be improved by providing greater a clarity on the key challenges for the Vale (see 6) and how these issues interrelate (see 8) - at present it repeats contents from the sections, and does not summarise the key findings from the assessment, it just lists them. There is potential for analysis and interpretation to really improve this document.

### 14. Overview

The documentary analysis above has identified a number of areas where we believe the assessment could be strengthened, both in the short term, before its publication and over the medium term as the response analysis develops and the Plan is produced. In addition to this we organised a phone call to discuss the assessment with members of the PSB team who had been involved in the process. The aim of the phone call was to provide us with an opportunity to clarify/explore particular issues that our initial review has highlighted and to enable the PSB to flag up issues which are part of the broader context of assessment production.

A number of clear, recurring broad themes have emerged from our review and the conversation. We believe the following issues need to be tackled to improve the assessment, which are applicable to the Vale of Glamorgan as a whole and the individual community areas:

*Integration across themes* – a greater focus on the inter-relationships between the data gathered on the four themes and the implications of this for well-being

*Interpretation of the data* – more explanation of how the issues identified through the data impact on well-being of individuals and communities

*Challenges* – provide a clearer analysis of short, medium and long term challenges (and opportunities) to (for) well-being

*Regional context* – a greater understanding of the impact on well-being of Vale of Glamorgan's place in the region and its inter-relationships with neighbouring areas and communities

*Future Trends* – greater attention given to the potential impact of long term trends on well-being in the Vale as a whole and in the three community areas

*Moving forward* – provide a clearer description of how the priorities are being selected for further work – and the rationale behind the choices

It is recognised that some of these may be addressed in the PSB's proposed activities between now and the final publication of the assessment.

In revising the assessment and working towards well-being planning it is important for the PSB to understand and acknowledge the determinants of well-being which are within its own influence and those which are the responsibility of other bodies. This will be important in developing collaboration and integrated approaches with local, regional and national partners through the Plan.

We hope that the issues raised above will inform the ongoing work of the PSB so that these elements are reflected more strongly in the final Vale of Glamorgan Well-being Assessment.