



Self-Reflection Feedback for Bridgend County Borough Council

Progress towards
Well-being Objectives: self-reflection tool 2017-18

July 2019



Sector specific findings: local government





Across local government

Capacity in Local Government

The Welsh Government has not sufficiently resourced the implementation of the legislation in terms of leadership development support for transformational change or delivering the infrastructure required under the Act – either in the sectors sponsored by Welsh Government or delivery of the legislation within the Welsh Government itself. As such:

- Financial pressure facing Local Authorities is limiting capacity to lead long-term change. This is not necessarily about needing
 resources for new services or more people, but rather about the capacity of the stripped back services and corporate areas of
 Local Authorities to lead change, think innovatively and reach out to collaborate and integrate with others whilst also managing
 increasingly pressurised day jobs.
- Challenges reported in implementing the Act commonly were the integration of process and legislation from Welsh Government,
 particularly the short notice of financial settlements and one year budget allocations. This leads to short-term decision-making to
 make the required savings and fear of innovation, failure and risk. Whilst this inevitably presents some challenges to Local
 Authorities in fulfilling their duty to carry out long-term planning, it should also be recognised that the vast majority of funding is
 relatively static and long-term planning can be undertaken on that basis if local authorities are genuinely embracing the Act as part
 of their core business, as we are advocating in this advice.
- There are a number of local government officers who are willing to drive new ways of working but overall there are challenges
 regarding lack of sufficient officer capacity to lead and drive transformational change. Implementing the Act requires the leadership
 of an organisation to demand change and create the culture that allocates time and resource to try different things, challenge the
 status quo and communicate learning. We want to see this shift in attitude and action what is different to before should be
 reported clearly and transparently.



Across local government

Capacity in Local Government (cont.)

- Local Authority officers who are change makers in their organisations can feel frustrated and isolated. We encourage
 joining networks like the Sustainable Development Co-ordinators' Cymru Network, the WLGA networks and others, and forming
 agendas that become learning sets to help honestly share challenges and innovative practice, especially in times of austerity
 where some are managing this challenge better than others.
- There is insufficient focus within Local Government on transforming ways of working in the seven corporate areas of change. Whilst there are good examples of some organisations seeking to reform their approach to procurement, like Monmouthshire Council, Cardiff Council and Conwy Counil, and quite a few examples seeking to accelerate reducing their carbon emissions through use of their assets, Local Authorities have made insufficient reference to how they are undertaking their work force planning risk management and financial planning in line with the five ways of working and their statutory duties to take all reasonable steps to meet their wellbeing objectives. The Commissioner set out in 'Well-being in Wales: the journey so far' that public bodies must begin reporting on how corporate areas of change are adapting their ways of working and we are monitoring your progress on this.
- Financial planning and risk management are two of the seven corporate areas that must place the sustainable development principle at their heart, and the Commissioner has recently agreed a <u>definition of preventive spend</u> with Welsh Government. Local Authorities should also adopt this and use it to inform spending decisions.



Progress is being made on meeting well-being objectives in some areas, but there is variation in demonstrating how setting objectives and decision-making is applying all of the five ways of working.

- Local Authorities need to better explain how they have applied the five ways of working and duties to take all reasonable steps to meet objectives
 to their decision-making. The Commissioner has provided resources to help with this such as the <u>Future Generations Frameworks</u>. In future
 years, she will be considering how you have demonstrated clearly that these resources have been used to work through proposals, decisionmaking and scrutiny.
- The Act is starting to bring about longer term planning and innovation. But, in meeting objectives, Local Government should more clearly demonstrate how they have considered long term trends and scenarios. Most, for example, have objectives on skills but very few have demonstrated how they have (with or without other partners) considered what skills will be needed in the future beyond planning for existing skills gaps. Aside from the use of well-being assessments, which considered the long-term trends and data for each area, consideration of long-terms trends is not yet embedded in decision-making processes. A large part of this appears to be due to capacity and expertise. The Government, Local Authorities and the WLGA should seek to find ways to build capacity in this area. Some Local Authorities have used PSB regional funding to build capacity for futures thinking (such as in Gwent), but Government should establish a targeted resource to individual public bodies specifically for this purpose.
- Whilst collaboration has increased through working at PSB level, Local Authorities should look for more opportunities to increase connectivity between their objectives and those of others. Local Authorities need to seek opportunities to for collaboration beyond the usual suspects. National bodies who do not play a part in PSBs, for example, as well as a broader range of third sector bodies, colleges, universities and private sector companies can play a role in jointly delivering well-being objectives. Local Authorities should undertake as assessment of the potential partners who could help them to deliver well-being objectives, and aim to find capacity for officers to identify and develop such partnerships.





Progress is being made on meeting well-being objectives in some areas, but there is variation in demonstrating how setting objectives and decision-making is applying all of the five ways of working. (cont.)

- There are clever examples of where the Act is driving innovation and different ways of doing things. We are drawing these together into our website resources, including many that are featured in the Commissioner's 'Art of the Possible' resources. But, innovation should be set within the context of a coherent long-term vision for the organisation, rather than being siloed and ad hoc examples. For example, in thinking innovatively about transport, we may consider electric, hydrogen or driverless vehicles to be the innovation, and this would move us along from 'business as usual'. However, true innovation is considering how to solve issues across the system, driving multiple benefits. Whilst electric vehicle infrastructure will be necessary, additional longer terms benefits to health, carbon reduction and poverty are more likely to be gained by introducing faster, convenient, cheaper, low-carbon public transport and infrastructure designed for pedestrians and cyclists not motorists. The Commissioner is developing resources using the futures-tool 'Three Horizons' to help all public bodies think more innovatively about their long-term vision.
- We cannot see clearly how the connection to other public bodies who are critical to meeting the well-being objectives set by Local Authorities are being adequately made. Explanation of how the priorities and delivery amongst city region or growth deal infrastructure, regional partnership boards and others are aligned with the delivery of local authority wellbeing objectives is lacking in some cases. Reporting in many cases, for example, lacks explanation of how objectives relating to skills / employment are being delivered with Growth Deals, City Regions, Regional Skills Partnerships and schools, colleges or any Higher Education Institutions within the area.
- We can see innovation in improving social well-being, in particular, through a number of examples relating to implementation of the Act. For example, well-being coordinators based in GP surgeries; social prescribing initiatives and school-based activities to improve health. But opportunities are being missed to approach meeting these objectives using the lens of social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being. For example, in designing social prescribing programmes, we cannot see evidence that Local Authorities and Health Boards are considering initiatives like 'heat on prescription', which not only improve social well-being in terms of health and fuel poverty, but contribute to environmental well-being through a reduction in carbon emissions also.

Progress is being made on meeting well-being objectives in some areas, but there is variation in demonstrating how setting objectives and decision-making is applying all of the five ways of working. (cont.)

- Local Authorities need to demonstrate they are taking action across all areas of their organisation especially in critical areas of change, such as decarbonisation. Despite some excellent initiatives, Local Authorities are not consistently demonstrating that they are taking action across all of their areas of business and throughout their objectives to consider these challenges facing current and future generations. This will need to significantly improve and Local Authorities must increase the pace of progress in meeting their well-being objectives. In providing advice on your well-being objectives, we have highlighted the challenges facing future generations in Wales and the actions we must collectively take to increase pace. For example: our targets to decarbonise and reduce emissions in Wales, the decline of biodiversity and ecological resilience, the changes to our jobs and skills linked to demographics and automation, our targets to increase Welsh speakers and more. We want to see how Local Government is moving from 'making simple changes' to 'leading the way' in contributing to our national well-being goals in this year's reporting.
- Some local authorities are missing opportunities to engage business and policy areas across the whole organisation to take all reasonable steps to meet their objectives. For example, despite over 100 well-being objectives being set on areas relating to skills, few Local Authorities provided any reference to how they're working with schools on understanding their responsibilities under the Act. Examples like this require action from both Local Government and Welsh Government in spelling out the requirement of the Act to education providers and showing how it's being embedded in the rollout of the new curriculum.
- Many Local Authories are missing opportunities to connect their objectives and create a more coherent picture across their organisation of how they are meeting their duty to take all reasonable steps and maximise contribution to the goals. For example, many Local Authorities have set objectives relating to giving children the best start in life alongside objectives to improve the natural environment or ensure housing is safe, accessible and affordable. Given the impact the natural environment (air quality, access to green space) and housing (see the WHO findings, for example) have on health and well-being, there are opportunities to connect objectives and reasonable steps more effectively. We expect to see at least consideration of this addressed in this year's reporting.





Reporting is still seen as challenging given timescales and other requirements on Local Government.

- The timings of the legislation has been an issue for most Local Authorities. Elections shortly after the publication of objectives (May 2017) and the later publication of Public Services Board well-being assessments and well-being plans are viewed as anomalies within the Act. We would encourage critically revisiting objectives and steps on a regular basis.
- The requirements of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 are seen as a distraction. Local authorities have told us they are disrupting their desire to act for the long-term in requiring an annual report that shows measurable improvement annually. This is still driving the wrong behaviours and requires a change in approach from Government. The Local Government Bill is seen as an opportunity to clarify the situation, and we would encourage you engage with this Bill, push back to Government, challenge the current performance management structures using the Act as a catalyst for change.
- Local Authorities continue to inconsistently refer to well-being objectives and steps as 'priorities' or 'actions' or 'areas for improvement'. It is
 difficult to ascertain in some cases what the well-being objectives and steps are, which makes assessing progress to meet them difficult.
 The Act and the <u>Commissioner's expectations</u> states that public bodies must clearly set out their well-being objectives and take all
 reasonable steps to meet them. This must include how the five ways of working and national well-being goals have been used to inform the
 setting or reviewing of objectives and steps.

What you told us





What you told us

- You set out three well-being objectives in 2017/18, and reported moderate progress against them describing each as 'Being more adventurous' on the journey checker.
- The objectives did not change within the year; however, you were mindful of the local elections in May 2017 and as such the Corporate Plan was refreshed in 2018 following evidence from consultation exercises in 2017.
- Progress is described as being as expected across each of the three well-being objectives. Internally this progress is monitored quarterly via
 the Corporate Performance Assessment process, this alongside the Corporate Scrutiny Committee identifies and actions issues which may
 put progress at risk.
- You have introduced templates, systems and training to assist with the implementation and embedment of the Act, with a Cabinet Member being appointed as the "Champion" of the Act.
- You said you're content with progress to date and acknowledge the long-term nature of many of your plans and aspirations.
- You said that the recent health board boundary change from ABMU to Cwm Taf is affecting the level of resource needed to ensure a seamless provision of services to citizens using health services.
- With regards to the five ways of working, you believe you have good evidence across all of your objectives and across the corporate areas of change.
- For the purposes of the self-refection exercise, you have specifically highlighted different examples of the five ways of working in the narrative of the Annual Report. You believe you have most strongly embedded involvement across your objectives and have most successfully employed the five ways of working in the delivery of objective 3.
- You believe that the 5 ways of working, to a large extent, have historically been ingrained within your organisation. For example, working collaboratively to deliver integrated long-term services involving service users to shape the direction of travel. In this respect, the WFG Act has not provided too much of a shift, however the self-reflection exercise has made your organisation more conscious of the sustainable development principle and the need to better reflect and report on how the five ways of working are being implemented. This was also evident in the Annual Report.
- You scored your progress towards your well-being objectives as set out in the slides below:





Progress towards well-being objectives: section 1 of the self-reflection tool

Well-being Objectives	Getting started	Making simple changes	Being more adventurous	Owning our ambition	Leading the way
	1	2	3	4	5
Objective 1 Supporting a successful economy			x		
Objective 2 Helping people to be more self- reliant			X		
Objective 3 Smarter use of resources			X		





Your approach to self-reflection





Your approach to self-reflection

- The self-reflection tool was completed by two members of the Corporate Performance Team.
- There was no indication or evidence of additional involvement or sign off processes.
- We welcome that the self-reflection exercise has made your organisation more conscious of the sustainable development principle and the need to better reflect and report on how the five ways of working are being implemented across all staff areas and levels.



Assessment of general progress





Assessment of general progress

We appreciate these comments are based on objectives set in 2017/18 and things will have developed since then for your organisation. We hope this advice is helpful as a feed-forward for the work you're currently doing to meet your objectives and for future reporting.

- The well-being objectives are of a strategic high-level nature, but for reporting purposes have a number of sub-categories sitting under them. The narrative details the actions and activities you undertook during the year in working towards and progressing the objective. The narrative includes statistics illustrating changes in outcomes and there are clear statistical and numerical measures of success and outcomes for each of the well-being objectives. We would encourage you to build on this in this year's reporting, using case studies and testimonials to demonstrate impact by involving the people of Bridgend. We would also like to see how you are using the five ways of working in approaching each objective through the narrative.
- You provide a health warning noting that some of the indicators measure long-term outcomes and these are not suitable for specific targets but described as increase or decrease. The Commissioner set out expectations in the <u>'Well-being in Wales: the journey so far'</u> and we would encourage you to revisit these they include measuring what matters, not merely what can be counted and setting out longer term what success in meeting objectives would look like.
- The evidence presented in the Annual Report suggests you have more to do regarding the implementation of the WFG Act and embracing it within your culture. However, there appears to be greater understanding set out in the Council's Corporate Plan which helpfully sets out the objectives, aims, context, programmes and steps to achieve the aim as well as your success indicators. It also references the well-being goals that the objective will contribute to. We would like you to build on this in annual reporting and provide more detail as to how your objective and steps is contributing to the well-being goals, rather than just a reference. The Commissioner will shortly be publishing a <u>suite of resources</u> intended as advice on the actions public bodies should take in order to contribute to each goal. We have already published the <u>'journey towards a resilient Wales'.</u> We hope these resources, as well as the <u>Future Generations Frameworks</u>, will assist you in exploring your contribution to the goals further.



Assessment of general progress

- There is understanding and recognition that transformation takes time. As a large complex organisation with many partners and suppliers, careful consideration and planning is required. There appears to be commitment to firmly embedding the sustainability principle, but it is described as being driven from the top down. We would encourage that the Act is not viewed as something which must be enforced from 'the top down' in order to change working culture. We often meet many frustrated champions of the Act working in various levels and service areas of public bodies, perhaps by identifying and supporting these employees they can help implement a complementary 'bottom up' approach. This alongside use of the Commissioner's resources can help improve understanding of how the Act can support ways of working to meet current and future challenges.
- You have identified integration as an area you are least confident on, and the evidence provided supports the view that the way of working is stronger in other areas. We note, however, that a Prevention and Well-being group has been established and themed groups are a way that some Public Bodies and PSB's have improved integrated working. We would like to see in your next report how this group is driving change and supporting improvement around the organisational approach to the five ways of working.
- You state that the five ways of working are taking longer to embed within your procurement team due to knowledge and awareness of the Act by suppliers. The Act should be the overarching framework for public procurement in Wales. The Act provides us with an opportunity to transform the way procurement is delivered to ensure the £6 billion spend delivers the best outcomes across all four pillars of well-being for current and future generations. Procurement is one of the seven corporate areas for change in the Act statutory guidance (SPSF1) and should be a key area of focus for public bodies in meeting their obligations under the Act. We have recommended that all Local Authorities focus more on these corporate areas of change in applying the Act and we would like to see how you are progressing with procurement in this year's reporting.



Specific Assessments on Progress





Objective

Specific Assessment on progress

Objective 1.1: To help local people develop skills and take advantage of opportunities to succeed and to extend that success to every community in the County Borough. (Ranked as being more adventurous)

It is good to see consideration for future skills of staff (5yrs), and it is positive to see projects such as the collaborative and innovative work of LSKiP to address the current mis-match between skills and employment opportunities. But we cannot see much evidence that you are thinking about the long-term future with regards to equipping young people and adults with skills for the future, including those in receipt of employability programmes. E.g. what is being done to upskill and help residents in preparedness for the possible centre of excellence for the compound semi-conductor facility. According to the 2018 Future of Jobs Report, 75 million jobs are expected to be displaced by 2022 in 20 major economies. At the same time, this could also create 133 million new roles, driven by growth in new products and services.

With creativity as an important skill for the future world of work, you should also be investing in encouraging young people to participate in arts, sport and recreation. We will shortly be <u>publishing a journey</u> towards the goal of a vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language, which you should find useful in taking steps to meet this objective.

In next year's report, we would like to see case studies and citizen's voice represented. For example, within the Employability Programme supporting evidence, you report "30 current apprentices, and 17 former apprentices, who have gone on to secure permanent jobs at the council, all came together to discuss their experiences". The inclusion of this sort of information in this year's reporting would demonstrate involvement and provide more insight into the programme. Similarly, whilst you say that the lessons learned are not included within the annual report as they relate to internal barriers, it would have been beneficial to have used the self-reflection process to explore what these barriers were e.g. why were no apprenticeships taken up by looked after children? What is being done to address this? We would like to see more honest self-reflection in annual reporting and in future self-reflection tools.



Objective

Specific Assessment on progress

Objective 1.2 to create conditions for growth and enterprise. (Ranked as being more adventurous)

We are encouraged that you are seeking to influence and work with the Cardiff Capital Region and the Regional Skills Partnership to assist you in meeting this objective. We can see that you are working with local businesses and we would like to see further evidence of how you are supporting the circular economy to reduce and re-use a wider range of resources. We would suggest that a good starting point would be a discussion on opportunities which could exist with local social enterprises. We would like to see evidence of how you are working further with the region and with business in this way in this year's reporting.

It is positive to see that you are progressing with the Caerau Heat Scheme which the office has shared as good practice. However, as per comments on objective 1.3, we would like to see how the adaptability of housing for this new heat source is being considered e.g. the new Sunnyside Development.

It is also encouraging to see that the Replacement LDP is linked to the Well-being Plans of both Bridgend Council and your PSB, also that within the self-reflection tool that you reference your Biodiversity and Ecosystems Resilience Forward Plan in support of this. The World Health Organisation have identified that only 10% of the gap in health between top and bottom income guintiles for men and women within European countries is due to health services. Differences in quality of living conditions contributes to 29% including access to green space. Lack of agency, trust, belonging and insecure neighbourhoods explain 19% of the gap. We would expect to see such aspects reflected within the replacement LDP and individual planning decisions.

National guidance, including WelTag and Planning Policy Wales 10, have been updated to help you to consider equality of access, health, air quality, promoting active travel and reducing carbon emissions when you formulate options for infrastructure decisions. We would like to see how you are applying the new Planning Policy Wales 10, which embeds the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations through your future Local Development Plan and individual planning decisions to ensure that planning design and infrastructure within communities supports this (and other) well-being objectives.

Objective

Specific Assessment on progress

Objective 1.3: To create successful town centres. (Ranked as being more adventurous)

It was positive to see that you are engaging with Cardiff City Region and Housing Associations in developing new housing, and that you have to some extent considered wider implications such as providing a 'pocket park' and how developments are benefitting the local economy. We look forward to seeing in future reporting how this work is supported by your empty properties, homelessness strategies and reviewed LDP in having a focus on regenerating and decarbonising existing homes and empty homes and buildings rather than merely focusing on building new.

The <u>Independent Review into Affordable Housing</u> has recently reported with their findings, providing recommendations on a new approach to housing, which should also consider adaptability to future needs. We cannot currently see evidence that you are considering housing that is 'fit for the future' e.g. protected from future challenges like extreme weather, adaptable for different demographic groups especially relevant to Bridgend would be the ability to adapt to changes in energy source.

We would like to see evidence of how you intend to move towards 'owning your ambition' in progressing towards this objective. For instance, you should be considering the influence you can have in developing Welsh enterprises and a supply chain that can deliver future-fit housing (through your skills objectives and work on procurement). Developing the green economy by improving skills in house-building, maintenance and improvement should create jobs, businesses throughout relevant supply chains and contribute to a thriving low-carbon Welsh economy in which people earn decent incomes from doing meaningful work. We would like to see evidence that you have considered the net positive environmental impact of increasing housing supply (carbon and energy consumption; whole life energy / material cost of building and constructions; plus interaction between buildings and ecosystems / landscapes).

A new approach to housing could create many opportunities for Wales including a shift towards low-carbon green economy and better-quality work through supporting more vibrant and cohesive communities through improved place-making with access to green space and better integration with other services and local services/assets, with a reduction in raw material consumption and waste production and well-connected resilient environments for everyone in Wales. As such we would expect to see in future reporting how your progress towards this objective is supportive of other objectives, such as objective 1.1.

Objective	Specific Assessment on progress
Objective 2.1: To give people more choice and control over what support they receive by providing early access to advice and information (Ranked as being more adventurous)	
Objective 2.2: To reduce demand by investing in targeted early help and intervention programmes (Ranked as being more adventurous)	encourage you to look at the problem from a system-wide perspective and seek to use the five ways of working to overcome any barriers to working together. It is also encouraging to see collaborative working through JAFF and MASH. The Commissioner has recently agreed a definition of preventive spend with Welsh Government and we would like Local Authorities to also adopt this and use it to inform spending decisions and help you understand the different points of intervention. Whilst is positive to





Objective	Specific Assessment on progress
Objective 3.3: To make the most of our physical	You are considering the influence you can have over reducing the carbon footprint of your buildings, and are progressing Caerau Heat Scheme. In this year's reporting, we want to see evidence on how you're accelerating action to reduce your emissions, whilst bringing wider well-being benefits.
assets, including school buildings	You have a duty to maximise contribution to each of the well-being goals. Currently, there is limited evidence on how you have considered the full legal definition of 'a resilient Wales'. We are facing unprecedented nature decline; we're now among the most nature-depleted countries in the world, with Wales seeing 57% of wild plants, 60% of butterflies and 40% of birds in decline, and 1 in 14 threatened species with extinction from Great Britain. You should be considering how steps to meet this objective can support ecological resilience, making the environment healthier for wildlife and people. The Commissioner has recently
(Ranked as being more adventurous)	published the 'Journey towards a resilient Wales', which is intended as advice and resource of case studies on how public bodies can seek to maximise contribution to the goals. This should give you an indication of how to increase this pace of change. We would like to see further steps to ensure that your objectives adequately considers this goal in future reporting.
	The Welsh Government have also recently published the 'Low Carbon Pathway for Wales' linked to our targets to reduce our total emissions by 27% by 2020 and 67% by 2040. We expect to see further momentum within this objective to map the control you have over the biggest emissions; and to have a plan in place to reduce them. The immediate areas of focus should include carbon reduction through procurement, ultra-low emissions vehicles (fleet), buildings, fossil fuel divestment, decarbonising heat, transport and tourism.
All Objectives	It is encouraging to see the steps you are taking in meeting your objectives. We welcomed the plethora of evidence submitted, however, we would like to see evidence in future reporting of an awareness as to existing interdependencies and opportunities to maximise your contribution towards the well-being goals, such as linking skills with future developments. This would include demonstrating that you have critically understood and identified a coherent picture across your organisation, how the organisation as a whole is performing and where there are areas that could use development.





Thank you & next steps

Thank you for taking part in this self-reflection process. We will be publishing overall findings later in the year.

We're using your feedback from your returns and the regional collaboration workshops to publish a revised tool you can download and use to inform your work.

The Commissioner will be shortly publishing advice on journeys to meeting the all of the national well-being goals that will assist you in reviewing the objectives and steps you have set.

We'll be providing more tailored advice on progressing towards your well-being objectives. This will be based on the most common themes arising from objectives across Wales. We'll be seeking your views on this approach as it develops.



This report was prepared with support from an Independent Review Team who designed and undertook the self-reflection of organisations progress against their well-being objectives for 2017-18.

Thank you to:





