

Swansea's Assessment of Local Well-being: 2018 Update

The Well Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (the WFG Act) required Public Services Boards in Wales to prepare and publish an assessment of the state of economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being in their areas.

Locally, the first Assessment of Local Well-being was published by Swansea Public Services Board (PSB) in May 2017. The evidence base within the assessment was compiled by the PSB Research Group – a multi-agency team of researchers and analysts from a number of different public and voluntary sector bodies. The document and accompanying annexes are available via the link www.swansea.gov.uk/psbassessment

The main, initial purpose of the assessment was to help the Board identify a small number of well-being objectives for its Well-being Plan. These will contribute to the Wales well-being goals that have been set out in the WFG Act.

The 2017 assessment identified six well-being outcomes which, with their associated primary drivers, provided the basis for the structure of the document:

- Children have a good start in life
- People learn successfully
- Young people and adults have good jobs
- People have a decent standard of living
- People are healthy, safe and independent
- People have good places to live, work and visit.

At the early stages of preparing the Local Well-being Plan in summer 2017, PSB Partners, local voluntary and community organisations and citizens discussed what is important for a future Swansea. These conversations, which were informed by the Assessment and other sources, led to Swansea's first Well-being Plan, approved in May 2018. The Plan is structured in a different way, and the original Assessment outcomes have now evolved into four new objectives and a cross-cutting action:

- Early Years – To ensure that children have the best start in life to be the best they can be
- Live Well, Age Well – To make Swansea a great place to live and age well
- Working with Nature – To improve health, support biodiversity and reduce our carbon footprint
- Strong Communities – To build strong communities with a sense of pride and belonging
- 'Sharing for Swansea' – A cross-cutting action to work towards integrated public services in Swansea by sharing resources, assets and expertise.

In the Plan, as with the previous year's local assessment, each of the above objectives and action are accompanied by a set of primary and secondary drivers, together with a series of short, medium and long-term steps for each objective. The approved Local Well-being Plan is available at the web page www.swansea.gov.uk/localwellbeingplan

The 2017 Assessment acknowledged that it had plenty of scope for improvement. Gaps in the evidence base were identified in the document and the Research Group is committed to further consider these, locally or nationally, as part of the development of the assessment.

In addition, a number of issues raised in the assessment consultation (early 2017) could not be addressed at that time, and this update focuses on the proposals identified for the PSB Research Group to consider in the year following the assessment's publication.

In some areas, progress over this year has been relatively limited; to some extent this was inevitable as PSB partner resources have been focussed on the development of the emerging Plan. However, from now it is hoped that more progress can be made, especially with the planned development of a population level measurement framework and objective-based action plans, which will help provide a context for development of the evidence base.

The following table details the original Annex 6 'R' consultation proposals, with the comments column summarising progress to date and the Research Group's response to each proposal.

Areas for development, 2017/18 – Progress Report (PSB Research Group)

CONSULTATION PROPOSAL	PROGRESS OR RESPONSE
A gap in the evidence that relates to the circumstances where homelessness has not been prevented (proposal 11) – <i>The furthest end of the spectrum for people in this situation results in rough sleeping, which the most recent evidence will corroborate is on the increase in Swansea, particularly in relation to those people with complex needs.</i>	The Consultation Feedback Report (Assessment Annex 5) noted that this is “To be considered as an evidence gap and addressed in the future development of the assessment.” Further analysis around this issue will be taken forward as part of the Well-being Plan’s ‘Live well, age well’ objective.
The appropriateness of available housing, as well as levels (13) ... <i>This is going to be a significant challenge for the LA and other RSLs in the coming years and it appears that this has been omitted from your evidence sources... the narrative around this aspect of the Population Outcome refers to the prevention of homelessness.</i>	An amendment was made to the final version of the 2017 assessment – in driver F2. This issue will be further considered as part of monitoring and analysis around the ‘Live well, age well’ objective.
The impact of housing on a person’s health and wellbeing (18) – <i>Many areas seem to be a bit ‘housing light’ ... It’s not really mentioned until F2 & F3. There could be greater emphasis on the impact on mental health for example created by the home environment.</i>	This wider issue will be considered as part of future monitoring and analysis around the ‘Live well, age well’ and other relevant objectives.
The need for well-being scores to have clearly communicated reasons (22) ... <i>drivers may need to be broken down into many figures e.g. Driver F1 condenses down a huge amount of data and information into a single figure and so multiple figures could be included.</i>	The initial summaries for each of the 19 drivers attempted to do this, and the scores were the Board’s overall judgement of the evidence at the time. As noted in the assessment introduction, the scores were not scientific measures. Multiple figures within drivers were not considered feasible in light of the format adopted. Our future approach to scores will be reviewed as part of the development of a well-being measurement framework.
Analysis and communication of spatial data on well-being and area differences within Swansea, including between community areas (linked to proposals 23, 38, 47, 62, 77, 78, 86)	This was acknowledged as a limitation of the 2017 assessment. Spatial data was only sporadically included in the main document. Some initial statistical analysis was completed for Annex 2, and more detailed profiles of the Community Areas have been done, based on the Council’s ward profile format. The Research Group will look to develop local analysis and the use of spatial data within the measurement framework.
Further analysis of the potential impact of long-term / future trends on local well-being under all outcomes and drivers (proposals 24, 34, 66, 70, 88, 103, 104)	Whilst the assessment chapters tried to do this, mostly in the driver section <i>Future Prospects</i> , the way this was approached throughout the document varied, in part due to resources available and what was considered important.

	The measurement framework and future assessments will aim to strengthen this aspect as far as possible, in light of national advice and available resources.
The Climate Change Risk Assessment 2017 can help assess future prospects, address risks and link to the 'globally responsible Wales' goal (24)	The Risk Assessment appeared too late to fully consider in the 2017 document, but should assist analysis of future trends and other aspects of the well-being assessment in future.
Environmental drivers may be slightly weaker in scope – links between the natural environment and the well-being of people could be further explored (36)	Drivers F1 to F3 attempted to do this as far as possible. The changed focus provided by the new objectives and cross-cutting action in the Local Well-being Plan will enable further exploration and development of these links.
Relatively less evidence relating to cultural well-being (36)	The final version of the assessment made some improvements to this aspect of driver F4. Additional monitoring and analysis around the new 'stronger communities' objective may also help in this regard.
The well-being of people in the community; in particular the perspectives of the interest groups identified in the statutory guidance (37) <i>...it is possible that some of these perspectives could significantly alter the overall picture of well-being in the area, or suggest a more nuanced approach... suggest more discussion of the possibilities and availability of evidence in this regard.</i>	The assessment considered the needs of specific groups to a variable extent – often where the links between groups and drivers were most explicit. Limitations in the evidence base and analytical resources available were also factors. The Research Group will continue to review this and develop these aspects as far as possible.
Barriers for accessing health services, particularly in rural and deprived areas (40)	In the assessment, this was most closely related to evidence in outcome E, but should now be considered as part of future monitoring and analysis around the 'Live well, age well' and other relevant objectives.
The needs of offenders within custody and in the community (42 & 60)	This can be considered as part of future monitoring and analysis, especially around the Plan's 'Stronger communities' objective.
The use of the Welsh language and its links to culture (43)	More detailed analysis of evidence around the Welsh language was included within the final version of driver F4. This will also be considered further as part of the evidence base for the Well-being Plan's 'Stronger communities' objective in particular.
Housing issues, including the private rented sector, park homes and adaptations to homes (44)	These issues will be considered as part of future monitoring and analysis around the 'Live well, age well' and other relevant objectives.
The need for clarity on the implications of evidence gaps and limitations, and what can be done to address them (45)	This will be taken forward in the context of analysis of evidence around all Plan objectives and drivers, the measurement framework, and in working towards the next assessment.
To use a greater variety of data presentation methods (47, 49)	Swansea's 2017 assessment was a largely text-based document. The Research Group will

	consider the scope to develop presentational aspects as part of the measurement framework.
The use of qualitative evidence sourced through the engagement work (47 & 86)	The Swansea 'Qualitative Evidence...' report from the regional commission was published as Annex 4, but its links with (and messages for) Swansea's assessment were not felt sufficiently clear or able to be incorporated at that time. In future, the measurement framework will consider effective ways to involve citizens.
Development of the asset-based approach, including scope to reframe some of the analysis to emphasise strengths – exploring opportunities as well as challenges (48)	Through each driver section 'Swansea's strengths' the assessment attempted to do this, although ultimately some of its content was framed around challenges and weaknesses. Future analysis will aim to develop this approach.
Some means of summarising the evidence either at driver or outcome level (51)	In the final assessment this was done for outcomes (at the start of each chapter) and at driver level alongside the (0-10) scores.
Driver score movements up or down will need to be informed by available evidence and understanding of causality (52)	There were mixed views about the use of subjective scoring, and if this is retained as part of a future framework these issues will be reconsidered. The drivers in the new Plan are mostly different, limiting the potential for analysis of score moves in the short-term.
Driver scores and objectives should be informed by comparisons with non-Welsh areas – other UK / 'best in class' (55)	The opportunity to do this was included in the guidance issued to content contributors, and incorporated where it provided insight. Future analysis should continue to be aware of the wider context and relevant comparisons.
Findings from other scrutiny work/inquiries should inform the assessment (57)	Selected scrutiny findings were included in the final assessment, and these should remain part of the developing evidence base as appropriate.
A broader description of well-being challenges for Swansea over the short, medium and long term to provide the context for the 6 outcomes and 19 drivers (61 & 64)	To some extent this has been overtaken by events and the changes in Plan's structure for objectives and drivers. However, this can also be considered at the early stages of the next assessment (2022).
More explanation on the significance of the data and key challenges to well-being across all drivers (63)	The assessment tried to do this as far as possible, and will also be considered in the early stages of planning for the next assessment.
How the assessment data is intended to be used, data gaps are to be managed and how well-being planning will progress (67)	Some amendments to address this were made in the final version (Introduction) and carried forward into the Well-being Plan. Evidence gaps noted in the assessment were also summarised as part of Research Group paper RG 18 02.

To consider data and evidence around the preventative agenda – for a clearer understanding of communities and people that have resilience or are vulnerable to current and future trends (71 & 95)	These issues will require greater understanding and consideration going forward, particularly in the context of the ‘Stronger communities’ but also in other objectives.
Summary / ‘About this outcome’ sections should be more explicit about their impact on well-being – the national goals might provide a useful tool for this (75)	The final assessment tried to improve this aspect as far as possible, and the Local Well-being Plan takes this further by making the links to the national goals more explicit.
Inclusion of further data on critical energy, water, transport and other critical infrastructure (79)	The outcomes and drivers included by the PSB in the 2017 assessment were those considered most significant at that time. These issues will be considered in the measurement framework and the future development of the assessment.
‘About the evidence’ sections can be strengthened to provide a good resource for the PSB to understand data gaps and the potential to address them (90 & 108)	Data gaps, including those noted in ‘About the evidence’ sections of the assessment were referenced and summarised in RG paper 18 02. It would be helpful to circulate this summary more widely, including to PSB partners.
Outcome B – limited mention of the Universities or Colleges in Swansea and no mention of continuing education (92)	The evidence in this outcome around the HE/FE sector was strengthened in the final assessment. This will also be considered further as part of the evidence base for the ‘Stronger communities’ and other objectives.
The inter-relationships between data from (and within) each section and between the 19 drivers (101)	The assessment did not always bring out these inter-relationships in a consistent and comprehensive way. The Plan’s approach and structure, together with the new measurement framework, will aim to improve this.
Further consideration of community cohesion issues – linked to the Community Cohesion National Delivery Plan 2017-18 and the national ‘cohesive communities’ goal (113).	The developing evidence base for the ‘Stronger communities’ objective in particular will consider the latest developments in these issues.