

## **Welsh Government response to the consultation on the draft assessment of local well-being for Vale of Glamorgan, required by the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act.**

Thank you for sight of the Vale of Glamorgan PSB Assessment of Local Well-being as a partner among what is clearly a wide range of stakeholders consulted.

Welsh Government acknowledges that the preparation of an assessment and the supporting evidence is a significant undertaking and recognise the amount of work that has been accomplished.

We have structured our response to the consultation on your assessment as follows (we will be using the same approach in responding to each of the assessments):

- General comments providing an overview of thoughts on the assessment
- More specific comments on the way in which the analysis has been undertaken and presented and the way in which the statutory requirements have been met
- A final summary table which identifies the areas we would suggest could benefit from further development. We are adopting a consistent approach to these matters which have been categorised as follows:
  - Category A – these are significant issues which we would hope would be addressed prior to publication of the well-being assessment. They might relate, for example, to compliance with the statutory requirements or a fundamental issue with the quality of the analysis
  - Category B – these are matters which are important and would support a better informed well-being plan and we would hope could be addressed alongside the development of the plan
  - Category C – these are matters which would strengthen the assessment but could be addressed over time

## **Overall Thoughts**

This Assessment demonstrates the commitment Vale of Glamorgan PSB has made to embrace the challenge of well-being assessment. Although our evaluation identifies some areas for further development, which is to be expected with such a significant shift in practice over a challenging time-scale, the Assessment engages meaningfully with the key areas identified in the statutory and non-statutory guidance. Continued development will ensure the PSB is well informed and using evidence in creative and sophisticated ways to aid its decision-making.

The Assessment might benefit from developing its demonstration of the evidence used within the narrative. Easier references to where the evidence underpins the statements made would benefit the reader to fully understand the issues.

The Assessment has some areas of strength, for example it does try to provide an assets based approach, which draws in the reader and aids understanding – particularly in the conclusions section with the use of the SWOT analysis. This underlines the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in the area in a coherent way.

## **Comments on particular aspects of the Assessment**

### **Statutory Requirements**

The Assessment appears to have covered all the statutory requirements contained in the Act. Along with identifying and assessing the well-being of three community areas, the Assessment documents the national indicators that were used, and references to the statutory reviews and assessments considered are very clear.

Please see further paragraph in relation to future trends.

### **Structure and Format**

The summary sections and the start of each chapter are useful and provide a good overview of the chapter itself. The addition of boxed examples in relevant places is interesting and they help to add a more local context to the text.

However, the themes on which the structure is based could be improved. Currently, the environmental chapter is embedded within the introduction, which does not seem to flow given that it is one of the core well-being themes.

On the other hand, the way that the community areas are used allows the Assessment to flow well, whilst not detracting from differences where they arise. The approach of commenting on the community areas where they were found to be significant seems sensible and the way the Assessment compared and contrasted between towns, as well as community areas,

brought about interesting results. This provides additional insight which may otherwise have been missed.

## **Engagement**

Recognising that the full engagement report is yet to be published, the information given in the Assessment shows that substantial attempts at engagement were made. The mixed methods of survey, attending events and targeting specific groups will have ensured that a wide variety of people were involved in the Assessment. On the basis of the information given in the Assessment, one suggestion would be for more specific engagement with schools to target young people for future Assessments, and considering further ways of engaging with the less engaged, hard to reach groups (the Assessment highlights engagement as a specific issue with some groups in more deprived LSOAs).

The evidence gained from the engagement work is used extensively and adds a lot of value to the evidence presented. A strong sense of community, and distinctiveness across the Vale, is evident to the reader. The findings are well placed within the summaries at the start of the chapters but could this could be developed further by weaving them throughout the narrative.

## **Balance and Comprehensiveness**

The Assessment provides a good overview of social, economic and environmental well-being, but is less detailed on cultural, which is likely to be an area for future development across Wales. Additionally, although the detail on environment is well balanced with the other themes, the position in the structure of the Assessment gives a mixed signal on its importance.

Based on the feedback we have received from policy specialists across the Welsh Government, there are some very specific areas which we highlight for your consideration. For example:

- Some further detail around the economic impact of ill health would be beneficial. For example, the Assessment references the gap in healthy life expectancy, talks about causes and facts, but it does not discuss what this means in terms of impact on local health / education services.
- The assessment might be developed further by assessing trends in traffic volumes on the roads over recent years, and/or pressures for future development that may affect air and noise pollution
- Some development of the commentary on housing and homelessness would be helpful. It is evident that some analysis has been undertaken for example the reference to rates of preventing homelessness but overall the Assessment relies on a narrative approach and could be strengthened by more facts, figures or infographics

- Some sources could be updated with more up to date figures, for example 2014 figures for greenhouse gas emissions are now available for use.
- A perceived lack of evidence from partners such as Probation, Community Rehabilitation Companies and Youth Offending Teams, who would provide background on needs of offenders within custody and in the community

### **Reflective and Critical Approach**

The Assessment uses a good range of data and statistics from a variety of sources. It does well to pull in some academic evidence on well-being and present this alongside the wider local evidence.

The presentation of evidence gaps at the end of each chapter is useful and comprehensive. The Assessment provides details as to why they are important, such as identifying explicit gaps, like the availability of the most recent Childcare Sufficiency Assessment, and acknowledging the importance of reviewing the evidence at a later date.

A reflective approach has been provided in relation to some aspects of well-being, such as social isolation and loneliness – should the PSB want to enhance the assessment, a further attempt in future to discuss the well-being of more marginalised groups (such as the LGBT community, disabled people, or homeless people) would add more depth.

### **Quality of Analytical Approach**

The way that the evidence is presented in the Assessment leans towards an assets approach in that it focusses on the positive things about the area, such as the environment, location in relation to Cardiff and the airport and good transport, and this approach could be further strengthened by looking at other aspects in the same way. The Assessment makes good attempts to link the evidence to well-being; some sections of the environmental chapter are particularly good at this. However, the Assessment frequently makes links to well-being without stating the evidence on which the links are based, for instance 'positive associations between mental and physical wellbeing and increased trees and green space in urban areas' – this is clearly evidence based but it would benefit the reader to know the source.

A greater linking to well-being would particularly helpful for the employment and childcare sections. For example with business and industry on page 83 - links are made between the strong economy, employment and income, but how do these factors impact on the well-being of the people in those communities?

A minor point exists on the presentation of data in some of the area profiles. It would be helpful if the satisfaction bar charts on the area profiles presented data in an ordered way (from very satisfied, to satisfied, to neither, dissatisfied, very dissatisfied), to ease interpretation.

## **Future Trends**

On the whole, the Assessment could make better use of future trends. There are instances where future projections are mentioned, but these would benefit from following through with the potential impacts that these would have on well-being. The environment section makes more use of potential future trends and scenarios but these could be strengthened further by weighing up the specific implications for the Vale. We recognise that at this stage that interim information is available at a national level, which will be strengthened over time. Therefore challenges may arise due to a lack of evidence for what the implications might be for the area, however the Assessment could benefit from presenting these gaps in evidence.

## **Areas for development**

Category A

Category B

Environmental well-being (see “Structure and Format”)

Detail on Cultural well-being (see “Balance and Comprehensiveness”)

Specific comments that might develop the assessment further (see “Balanced and comprehensiveness”)

Sources of information (see “Quality of Analytical Approach”)

Future Trends (see para)

Category C

Drawing on further statutory reviews, assessments (see “Statutory Requirements”)

Engagement and marginalised groups (see “Engagement” and “Reflective and Critical Approach” para)

