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Shared Purpose: Shared Future

**Statutory Guidance for the Well-being
of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015
SPSF4 – Collective role (Community
Councils)**



Further information and related documents

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SPSF 4 - The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 – Statutory Guidance for community and town councils

This statutory guidance is issued under section 40(7) of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. It provides specific guidance to community and town councils on their duties in relation to local well-being plans.

Summary

What does the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act do?

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. It will make the public bodies listed in the Act think more about the long-term; work better with people and communities and each other; look to prevent problems; and take a more joined-up approach. This will help us to create the Wales that we all want to live in, now and in the future.

The Act establishes public services boards. Those boards are required to assess the state of economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of the local authority area they serve and then prepare local well-being plans setting out objectives for improving the well-being of the area and the steps the members of the board propose to take to meet those objectives.

What does the Act require community and town councils to do?

The Act places a duty on certain community and town councils to take all reasonable steps towards meeting the local objectives included in the local well-being plan that has effect in its areas. A community or town council is subject to that duty only if its gross income or expenditure was at least £200,000 for each of the three financial years preceding the year in which the local well-being plan is published.

If a community or town council is subject to the duty, it must publish a report annually detailing its progress in meeting the objectives contained in the local well-being plan.

Community or town councils which do not meet the criteria but still wish to contribute towards meeting the local objectives in the local well-being plan are welcome to do so on a voluntary basis.

How will community and town councils get involved?

Community and town councils which are subject to the duty will need to liaise closely with the Public Services Board for their area on the objectives in the local well-being plan. They are required to take all reasonable steps in their areas towards meeting the local objectives the public services board has included in its local well-being plan. Other community and town councils are encouraged to engage on a voluntary basis.

1. Overview of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act

Sustainable development

1. In the Act, “sustainable development” means the process of improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales by taking action, in accordance with the sustainable development principle (see para 2 below) aimed at achieving the well-being goals (see para 3 below).
2. The Act sets out a “sustainable development principle” which is about how organisations should go about meeting their well-being duty under the Act. In the Act, any reference to a public body doing something “in accordance with the sustainable development principle” means that the body must act 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.

The well-being goals

3. The Act sets seven well-being goals and gives a description of each of them:

Well-being goal	Description
A more 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 health 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 background and circumstances).
A Wales of cohesive communities	Attractive, viable, safe and well-connected communities.
A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language	A society that promotes and protects culture, heritage, and the Welsh language, and which encourages people to participate in the arts, and 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.

4. The seven well-being goals (the goals) show the kind of Wales we want to see. Together they provide a shared vision for the public bodies listed in the Act to work towards. They are a set of goals; the Act makes it clear the listed public bodies must work to achieve all of the goals, not just one or two.

The well-being duty of public bodies

5. Specified public bodies must carry out sustainable development. As part of doing so they must:
- a. set and publish well-being objectives that are designed to maximise their contribution to achieving each of the well-being goals; and
 - b. take all reasonable steps, in exercising their functions, to meet those objectives.
6. For purposes of Part 2 of the Act, the following are classed as public bodies and subject to the well-being duty:

The Welsh Ministers
All principal councils in Wales
All Local Health Boards in Wales
The following NHS Trusts – Public Health Wales, Velindre

All National Park Authorities for National Parks in Wales
All Welsh fire and rescue authorities
The Natural Resources Body for Wales
The Higher Education Funding Council for Wales
The Arts Council for Wales
The Sports Council for Wales
The National Library of Wales
The National Museum of Wales

Well-being duty on public services boards

7. In addition to the well-being duty put on individual public bodies, the Act also puts a well-being duty on public services boards. That duty requires those boards to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of their areas by contributing to the achievement of the well-being goals.
8. Public services boards' contribution to the achievement of the goals must include:
 - a. assessing the state of economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being in their areas;
 - b. setting local objectives that are designed to maximise their contribution within their areas to achieving those goals;
 - c. the taking of all reasonable steps by members of the board (in exercising their functions) to meet those objectives.
9. Each public services board must:
 - Assess the state of well-being (economic, social, environmental and cultural) in its area;
 - Prepare and publish a local well-being plan setting out local objectives to contribute to the well-being goals and the steps it proposes to take to meet them.
10. Anything the board does to comply with the well-being duty placed on it must be in accordance with the sustainable development principle.
11. An obligation or power of a public services board is a power or duty of the members of the board acting jointly. This means a board cannot publish its assessment of well-being or local well-being plan unless all its members have agreed to do so.

Assessments of local well-being

12. Each public services board is required to undertake an assessment of the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of its area. The assessment must be published at least 12 months before it publishes its local well-being plan.
13. In practice, the assessment of local well-being would be published within the 12 months preceding each ordinary local government election because the Act provides that the local well-being plan must be published no later than one year

after an ordinary election, as defined in section 26 of the Local Government Act 1972.

14. Each board will assess the well-being of the community areas within its area of the board as well as the well-being of the area as a whole. The communities can be determined by public services boards or by regulations made by the Welsh Ministers. The community areas defined within the assessment will not necessarily correspond with the community councils in the board's area.

Local well-being plans

15. The local well-being plan will set out objectives the public services board has decided will maximise its participants' collective contribution within its area to achieving the well-being goals. Each public services board's local well-being plan must be published no later than 12 months following an ordinary local government election.

2. Public services boards

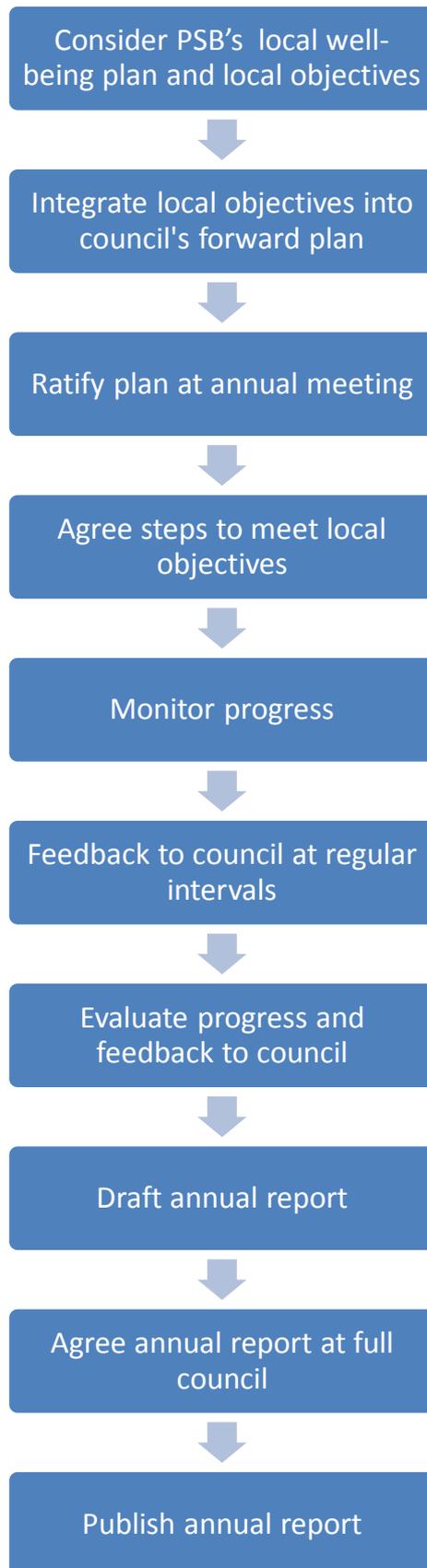
16. Public services boards will not be corporate entities but will be made up of four statutory members:
- a) the principal council for the Local Authority area;
 - b) the Local Health Board for an area any part of which falls within the Local Authority area
 - c) the Welsh Fire and Rescue Authority for an area any part of which falls within the Local Authority area
 - d) the Natural Resources Body for Wales.
17. The members will be required to invite certain persons to participate in the activities of the public services board. Those persons are:
- a. the Welsh Ministers;
 - b. the chief constable of the police force for a police area any part of which falls within the Local Authority area;
 - c. the Police and Crime Commissioner for a police area any part of which falls within the Local Authority area;
 - d. certain providers of probation services;
 - e. at least one body representing relevant voluntary organisations (whether or not the body is known as a County Voluntary Council).
18. Each board will be able to invite any other person to participate in the public services board's activities provided the person exercises functions of a public nature. A person who accepts an invitation to participate in the activities of a board does not become a member of it by virtue of accepting the invitation.
19. The Act requires each public services board to engage with key partners (referred to as "other partners") in the area who have a material interest in the well-being of the area or who deliver important public services in the preparation, implementation and delivery of work of the board. Each board must seek advice from its other partners and otherwise involve them in the ways and to the extent it considers appropriate. All community councils are "other partners" of their public services board regardless of whether they are subject to the duty to take all reasonable steps in their areas towards meeting the local objectives in the local well-being plan for their areas.
20. All community and town councils in a public services board's area will therefore be consulted on both the assessment of local well-being and local well-being plan, regardless of whether they are under a duty to take reasonable steps to meet the local objectives.
21. The board's other partners are:
- a. Community or town councils in its area
 - b. the Public Health Wales NHS Trust
 - c. any Community Health Council for an area which (or any part of which) falls within the Local Authority area
 - d. any National Park authority for a National Park in Wales any part of which falls within the Local Authority area

- e. the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales
- f. any institution in the further education sector or the higher education sector situated in whole or in part within the Local Authority area
- g. the Arts Council of Wales
- h. the Sports Council for Wales
- i. the National Library of Wales
- j. the National Museum of Wales

3. The duty on community and town councils

22. Section 40 of the Act places a duty on certain community and town councils to take all reasonable steps towards meeting the local objectives in the local well-being plan that has effect in their areas. Community or town councils are subject to that duty only if they meet certain criteria.
23. A community or town council meets those criteria if, for each of the preceding three financial years prior to the local well-being plan for its area being published, either its gross income or its gross expenditure was at least £200,000.
24. Each community and town council subject to the duty must form its own judgement of what steps it would be reasonable for it to take towards meeting the local objectives in its area, on the basis of its own knowledge and consideration of the circumstances and characteristics of its area.
25. If a community or town council is subject to the duty, it must publish a report for each relevant financial year, detailing the progress it has made in meeting the objectives contained in the local well-being plan.
26. Community and town councils that are not subject to the duty are also encouraged to consider what steps they could take to contribute to meeting the local objectives included in the well-being plan.

Proposed planning cycle for community and town councils:



4. Mainstreaming local objectives into community and town council forward plans

Integrating objectives contained in the local well-being plan

27. Public services boards must consult all community and town councils in their areas on their local well-being plans by providing them with a draft copy of those plans. Community and town councils can respond to that consultation, including making representations about the proposed objectives. The requirement on public services boards to consult community and town councils means that community and town councils will know what local objectives those boards propose to set (although those proposed objectives may change as a result of the consultation responses).
28. Community and town councils should consider the local well-being plan when the plan is published and review the local objectives alongside their own objectives for the year ahead. There may be common threads or similarities between the two sets of objectives which mean that they may be easily integrated to form the community or town council's objectives.
29. It is important to stress that the community or town council subject to the duty is responsible for deciding for itself how it will take "all reasonable steps" towards meeting the objectives in the well-being plan. This allows the council to take ownership for the objectives and affords the discretion to perform this duty in a manner best suited to its capacity and capability.
30. It is for the community or town council to decide if it wishes to seek further advice from the public services board on the local objectives it has chosen to take steps towards meeting.
31. The council may also consider whether it wishes to collaborate with any of the "other partners" in meeting the specified well-being objectives.

Considering funding implications

32. Taking steps towards meeting the local objectives may entail funding considerations. It is expected that any proposed budget allocation will be considered as part of the overall annual budget decisions for the forthcoming year. It is for the community or town council to consider the staffing and other resource implications of steps to meet the well-being objectives and decide how best to implement the steps it plans to take.

Engaging with the community

33. The Welsh Ministers consider community and town councils should engage with their communities on the local objectives and the proposed steps by which the council intends to contribute to these objectives.
34. Current engagement methods such as the use of websites, social media, public meetings and work shops, local notice boards would all play their part.

Agreeing steps

35. The full spectrum of objectives in the council's forward plan and the resulting action plan will need to be reviewed and approved by full council. Thereafter, the steps may be delegated to a committee or sub-committee to be delivered.
36. It is expected the forward plan would be published on the community or town council's website.

5. Implementation and monitoring progress

37. Depending on the decision made by the council, the implementation and monitoring of the steps to be taken may be delegated to a council committee or sub-committee with administrative support provided by the clerk. However, it may be that the clerk takes responsibility for these functions.
38. The clerk will be responsible for feedback through regular reports to full Council. The clerk will also take responsibility for overseeing the production and dissemination of the annual report.

6. Evaluation

39. The clerk will evaluate the progress made by the end of the reporting period and assess to what extent the council has met the commitments on the steps to be taken made at the outset of the year to meet objectives in the local well-being plan.
40. This information will be fed back to the full council and will inform the content of the Annual Report.

7. Preparing an Annual Report

41. Some community and town councils already publish annual reports. For the purpose of the Act, the annual report needs to detail progress made in its area in taking steps towards meeting the local objectives included in the local well-being plan.
42. Councils which currently produce hard copy or e-mail newsletters may incorporate an annual report into these. Annual reports may also be posted onto the council website. Social media and local press may be used to advertise the location of the annual report.
43. The following is a possible format for an annual report which may be followed:
- A foreword, to include an introduction to the role of the Council and its vision and the local objectives in the local well-being plan.
 - Mayor/Chairman's and/or Clerk's report on the steps the council decided to take towards meeting the local objectives in the local well-being plan.
 - Progress made in achieving these steps towards meeting the local objectives.
44. Should the council wish to widen the scope of the annual report so that it also covers the activities of the council which do not specifically relate to the local objectives in the local well-being plan, the latter will need to be clearly identifiable.
45. A committee or sub-committee may be delegated responsibility for drafting the annual report. It will though need to be approved by full council before it is finalised. It must be published as soon as reasonably practicable following the end of the financial year to which the report relates.

46. The annual report at year end will be submitted to the public services board for it to consider in producing its own annual report.
47. Community and town councils may also wish to produce quarterly monitoring reports as feedback on progress to the public services board. This is optional and will need to be agreed by the public services board.

8. Seeking the advice of the Future Generations Commissioner

48. The Future Generations Commissioner for Wales' role is to act as a guardian for the interests of future generations in Wales, and to support the public bodies listed in the Act in working towards achieving the well-being goals.
49. In drafting their local well-being plans, the public services boards must seek the advice of the Commissioner on how to take steps to meet their local objectives in a manner which is consistent with the sustainable development principle.
50. Community and town councils may find it helpful to refer to the Commissioner's advice which will be published at the same time as the public services board's local well-being plan.
51. The Commissioner may provide advice or guidance to anyone who the Commissioner considers is taking (or wishes to take) steps that may contribute to the achievement of the well-being goals.
52. This means community and town councils to whom the duty in section 40 of the Act applies can seek advice or assistance from the Commissioner about how they can comply with their duty to take all reasonable steps in their areas towards meeting the local objectives in the local well-being plans.