

# Setting of Well-being Objectives – Bannau Brycheiniog National Park Authority

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## Background: Our examinations of the setting of well-being objectives

- 1 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (the Act) places a ‘well-being duty’ on 56 public bodies. The duty requires those bodies to set and publish ‘well-being objectives’ that are designed to maximise their contribution to achieving each of the Act’s seven national well-being goals<sup>1</sup>. They must also take all reasonable steps, in exercising their functions, to meet those objectives.
- 2 The Auditor General must carry out examinations to assess the extent to which public bodies have acted in accordance with the sustainable development principle when setting their well-being objectives<sup>2</sup>. We are carrying out a rolling programme of these examinations, up to early 2025<sup>3</sup>.
- 3 To do something in accordance with the sustainable development principle means acting ‘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’. To achieve this, a public body must take account of the five ways of working: long term, integration, involvement, collaboration, and prevention<sup>4</sup>.
- 4 We designed an assessment framework to enable us to assess the extent to which public bodies have applied the sustainable development principle when setting their well-being objectives. **Appendix 1** sets out further information on our approach, including a set of ‘positive indicators’ that illustrate what good could look like.
- 5 In designing our approach, we considered what we could reasonably expect from public bodies at this point in time. Public bodies should now be familiar with the sustainable development principle and ways of working and be seeking to apply them in a meaningful way. At the same time, we appreciate that public bodies are still developing their experience in applying the sustainable development principle when setting well-being objectives. Therefore, the examinations include consideration of how public bodies are applying their learning and how they can improve in future.

<sup>1</sup> The seven national well-being goals are: a prosperous Wales, a resilient Wales, a healthier Wales, a more equal Wales, a Wales of cohesive communities, a Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language, and a globally responsible Wales.

<sup>2</sup> Section 15 (1) (a) Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

<sup>3</sup> The Auditor General must carry out examinations over the period set out in the Act, which begins one year before a Senedd election and ends one year and one day before the following Senedd election.

<sup>4</sup> Section 5 Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

## Carrying out our examination at Bannau Brycheiniog National Park Authority

- 6 The aim of this examination was to:
  - explain how Bannau Brycheiniog National Park Authority (the Authority) applied the sustainable development principle throughout in the process of setting its well-being objectives;
  - provide assurance on the extent that the Authority applied the sustainable development principle when setting its well-being objectives; and
  - identify opportunities for the Authority to further embed the sustainable development principle when setting well-being objectives in future.
- 7 We set out to answer the overall question ‘to what extent has Bannau Brycheiniog National Park Authority acted in accordance with the sustainable development principle when setting its new well-being objectives’. We did this by exploring the following questions:
  - Was the process the Authority put in place to set its well-being objectives underpinned by the sustainable development principle?
  - Has the Authority considered how it will make sure it can deliver its well-being objectives in line with the sustainable development principle?
  - Has the Authority put in place arrangements to monitor progress and improve how it applies the sustainable development principle when setting its well-being objectives?
- 8 We discussed the timing of the examination with the Authority, and we tailored the delivery to reflect its specific circumstances. We delivered this work between August and September 2024.
- 9 We gathered our evidence in the following ways:
  - reviewing key documents; and
  - carrying out a small number of interviews.

## How and when Bannau Brycheiniog National Park Authority set its well-being objectives

- 10 Bannau Brycheiniog National Park Authority commenced work on setting new well-being objectives during 2020 then published its new objectives in April 2023. **Exhibit 1** sets out those well-being objectives.
- 11 The Authority published its well-being objectives as part of its Y Bannau – The Future<sup>5</sup> management plan which included its well-being statement that is required under the Act.

<sup>5</sup> [Y-Bannau-The-Future.pdf](#)

## Exhibit 1: Bannau Brycheiniog National Park Authority well-being objectives

Climate – Reach net-zero greenhouse gas emissions across Bannau Brycheiniog National Park by 2035

Water – Clean, safe, resilient, plentiful water resources and water environments by 2030

Nature – Nature positive Bannau Brycheiniog National Park by 2030

People – Living, working, visiting safely, equitably and sustainably

Place – Beautiful, thriving and sustainable places. Celebrated for their natural and cultural heritage, now and forever

**What we found: the Authority applied the sustainable development principle when setting its well-being objectives which are designed to deliver long-term benefits, but lacks arrangements to resource and deliver them**

**The Authority has clearly applied the sustainable development principle by drawing on extensive evidence when setting its ambitious well-being objectives**

- 12 The Authority drew on an extensive range of information when setting its well-being objectives such as from the State of the Park report, and Landscape Assessments from working in partnership with a university. The Authority's consideration of a range of data and intelligence helped to ensure that it had a good understanding of key risks, challenges, and opportunities in setting its objectives.
- 13 The Authority captures and presents its extensive consideration and use of data within a 'Park Doughnut'<sup>6</sup>. Available on its website, it conveys the current state of the National Park and consists of several sections, including the ecology, environmental and socio-economic context. This demonstrates the range of data

<sup>6</sup> [Evidence and Research | Bannau Brycheiniog National Park Authority \(beacons-npa.gov.uk\)](https://www.beacons-npa.gov.uk)

considered as well as how the Park has used the data to shape and develop its well-being objectives.

- 14 The Authority's use of extensive data as shown within the Park Doughnut contributed to the Authority designing its well-being objectives which focus on delivering interventions to prevent problems escalating. For example, to reach net-zero greenhouse gas emissions across the National Park by 2035. Its focus on preventive or early intervention activities, demonstrates the Authority's understanding of the short, medium, and long-term challenges and its commitment to tackle the root cause of these issues.
- 15 The Authority also underwent comprehensive consultation and engagement exercises when determining its well-being objectives. Consultation began in summer 2020 and concluded in autumn 2022. The Authority established a Stakeholders Reference Panel (SRP) and Citizens Assembly which met regularly. It also undertook engagement with staff, volunteers, the public and partners. The Authority initially consulted on 20 themes but reduced these into five missions (well-being objectives) in its final management plan. This demonstrates the Authority's consideration of the outcomes from its consultation and engagement exercises. The creation of the SRP also gave the Authority's partners the opportunity to influence and shape the well-being objectives.
- 16 Whilst the Authority produced an Equality Impact Assessment to support its management plan, the Authority did not collate comprehensive demographic data during its consultation and engagement activity. Therefore, the Authority does not know if its consultation activity captured views which reflect the full diversity of the population. The Authority acknowledges it needs to deploy alternative mechanisms in future to engage effectively with a diverse range of people. The Authority demonstrated its commitment to improving its engagement by developing an equality impact assessment action plan. Delivering the action plan has the potential to help the Authority involve different groups within the population. Engaging with the full diversity of the population can help the Authority ensure that it develops actions that meet the needs of its population and users of the National Park.
- 17 In setting its current well-being objectives, the Authority has applied lessons learnt from the setting of its previous objectives. The key lesson learned was to ensure there was engagement and consultation with interested parties, communities, and partners. There is clear evidence the Authority actioned this learning within this management plan. The Authority has also learnt lessons from setting its current well-being objectives and is applying these lessons when developing other strategies, such as its Food Strategy.
- 18 There is clear alignment between the Authority's well-being objectives and the national well-being goals. The Authority clearly sets out how it considered the national well-being goals and the sustainable development principle when developing its well-being objectives. This helps to ensure that the Authority identifies opportunities to contribute to the national well-being goals.

- 19 The Authority is committed to understanding the priorities of other public bodies. We recognise that the geography of the National Park is complex with the Authority having a wide range of public bodies' well-being objectives to consider. For example, within the National Park boundary, there are nine councils, three Public Services Boards and three Corporate Joint Committees. However, understanding the well-being objectives of other public bodies can reduce the risk of duplicating actions and help to identify opportunities to secure multiple benefits.

### **The Authority has an ambitious and long-term vision for the National Park but has not identified how its delivery will be resourced**

- 20 The Authority has long-term ambitions for the National Park. The Authority's five-year management plan (2023-28) contains a longer-term vision for the National Park up to 2048 (25 years). Data and narrative in the plan describe the current state of the Park and it also includes a 'postcard from 2047'. This postcard illustrates what living within the National Park looks and sounds like in 25 years' time. The Authority developed an ambitious, innovative, and visual National Park management plan clearly communicating its long-term ambitions. This clarity should help interested parties, communities and partners develop a common understanding.
- 21 However, the Authority approved its management plan without understanding its resource implications. Consequently, the Authority has not identified resources to deliver the well-being objectives in the short term.
- 22 The actions needed to achieve the long-term vision will take time to deliver. At the time of the fieldwork, the Authority did not have implementation plans (or equivalent) detailing how it will deliver its well-being objectives. Implementation plans supporting delivery of the well-being objectives would provide the necessary clarity on who is responsible for delivery and by when. The absence of a clearly resourced delivery plan increases the risk of the Authority's well-being objectives not being delivered.

### **The Authority is committed to partnership working, but the contribution of the Authority's partners in delivering its well-being objectives are not formally captured**

- 23 Delivery of the Authority's well-being objectives is dependent on stakeholders committing to their delivery. The management plan shows the Authority's commitment to collaboration with individual projects highlighted to convey the breadth and range of partnership working.
- 24 Additionally, the management plan contains a section on the Authority's significant partnerships. There is clear narrative of the purpose and objectives of each as well as a summary of the future actions of each board/partnership. However, the Authority lacks formal mechanisms to understand and capture progress and performance information from key partners. This is particularly important due to the



extent of collaborative activity and partnership working required to deliver its well-being objectives. The lack of oversight arrangements risks the Authority not being able to accurately monitor progress in delivering its objectives.

### **The Authority has a clear performance monitoring framework for its well-being objectives**

- 25 The Authority has a framework that outlines its long-term monitoring arrangements for its well-being objectives. The Authority has a range of performance measures to enable the monitoring of progress. Its measures include updates on data used to develop the plan, such as ecological and socio-economic data, as well as visitor experiences and accessibility. Comprehensive information is available for each performance measure. This should help the Authority to monitor and manage the delivery of its well-being objectives. As many of the measures are generally outside of the control of the Authority, it underlines the importance of collaboration with partners on delivery and understanding their contribution.
- 26 The Authority took a collaborative approach and long-term view when identifying performance measures. These were identified through workshop sessions with Authority officers and the SRP. Measures were also chosen where data should be available to track change over a long time. This approach should ensure buy-in and an understanding from key partners of the extent to which progress is being made towards the Authority's well-being objectives. It also demonstrates that the Authority recognises the importance of monitoring progress over both the short and longer term.

## **Recommendations**

### **Implementation plan**

- R1 The lack of a resourced delivery plan increases the risk of the Authority's well-being objectives not being delivered. To address this, the Authority should urgently determine how its well-being objectives will be resourced and delivered by:
- 1.1 Developing implementation plans (or equivalent) to deliver its well-being objectives;
  - 1.2 Clarifying the resources required to deliver its well-being objectives; and
  - 1.3 Clarifying the resources that stakeholders intend to contribute to help deliver its well-being objectives.

## **Monitoring**

- R1 Delivering the Authority's well-being objectives is reliant on partners' contributions. The Authority should strengthen its arrangements to understand how its partners are contributing to the delivery of its well-being objectives.

# Appendix 1

## Key questions and what we looked for

The table below sets out the question we sought to answer in carrying out this examination, along with some sub-questions to guide our evidence gathering. They are based on the positive indicators we have previously used in our sustainable development principle examinations, which were developed through engagement with public bodies and informed by advice and guidance from the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales. This list is not a checklist, but rather an illustrative set of characteristics that describe what good could look like.

**To what extent has the body acted in accordance with the sustainable development principle when setting its new well-being objectives?**

**Planning: Was the process the body put in place to set its well-being objectives underpinned by the sustainable development principle?**

<p><b>Has the body used data and other intelligence to understand need, risks and opportunities and how they might change over time?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The body has a clear and balanced assessment of progress against previous well-being objectives that have been used to inform the body's understanding of the 'as is'/ short-term need.</li> <li>• The body has set well-being objectives based on a good understanding of current and future need, risk and opportunities, including analysis of future trends. This is likely to be drawn from a range of local and national sources, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Public Services Boards' well-being assessments</li> <li>– Regional Partnership Boards' population assessments</li> <li>– The results of local involvement/consultation exercises</li> <li>– Service monitoring and complaints</li> <li>– Future Trends report</li> <li>– Natural Resources Wales' State of Natural Resources Report (SoNaRR) for Wales and Area Based Assessments</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The body has sought to understand the root causes of problems so that it can address negative cycles and intergenerational challenges through its well-being objectives.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Has the body involved others in developing its well-being objectives?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The body uses the results of involvement to help select its well-being objectives. That involvement – whether primary, secondary or a combination – reflects the full diversity of the population.</li> <li>• Involvement reflects good practice and advice from the Future Generations Commissioner.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Has the body considered how the objectives can improve well-being and have a broad impact?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The well-being objectives have been designed to improve well-being in the broadest sense and make a contribution across the seven national well-being goals.</li> <li>• The well-being objectives have been designed to reflect and capitalise on the connections between different areas of work.</li> <li>• There is a well-developed understanding of how the well-being objectives impact on/relate to what other public bodies are trying to achieve and opportunities to work together.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Has the body designed the objectives to deliver longer-term benefits, balanced with meeting short-term needs?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The body has set objectives that are sufficiently ambitious and have been designed to drive activity across the organisation.</li> <li>• The objectives are designed to meet short and longer-term need. Where objectives are set over a short to medium timeframe, they are set in the context of longer-term considerations or ambitions.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Resourcing and delivery: Has the body considered how it will make sure it can deliver its well-being objectives in line with the sustainable development principle?</b></p>	
<p><b>Has the body considered how it can resource the well-being objectives?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resources have been allocated to ensure the objectives can be delivered over the short and medium term, but the body has also considered longer-term resources, risks and/or how it can resource longer-term objectives.</li> <li>• The body has allocated resources to deliver preventative benefits, where these are described in its well-being objectives.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Has the body considered how it can work with others to deliver their objectives?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The body is drawing on its knowledge of partners' objectives/activity, its relationships and collaborative arrangements to make sure it can deliver on cross-cutting ambitions.</li> </ul>

**Monitor and review: Has the body put in place arrangements to monitor progress and improve how it applies the sustainable development principle when setting its well-being objectives?**

**Has the body developed appropriate measures and monitoring arrangements?**

- Performance measures are designed to reflect the sustainable development principle, eg by focusing on outcomes that cut across departmental/organisational boundaries and deliver multiple (including preventative) benefits over the longer term.
- There is a 'golden thread' that will allow the body to clearly and transparently report on progress to meeting the objectives.

**Is the body seeking to learn from and improve how it has applied the sustainable development principle to setting its well-being objectives?**

- The body shows self-awareness and a commitment to improving how it applies the sustainable development principle so that it can do so in a meaningful and impactful way.
- The body has learnt from setting previous well-being objectives and from applying the sustainable development principle more generally and has improved the process for setting its new well-being objectives.
- The body has or plans to reflect on how it has applied the sustainable development principle in this round of setting well-being objectives.





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