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Well-being of Future Generations: An examination of delivering the Porthcawl Resort Investment Focus Programme – **Bridgend County Borough Council**

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Mae'r ddogfen hon hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg. This document is also available in Welsh.

The team who delivered the work comprised Lisa Williams and Ron Price under the direction of Huw Rees.

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Summary report

Summary

Why we undertook the Examination

- 1 In accordance with the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (the Act) the Auditor General for Wales (the Auditor General) is statutorily required to examine public bodies to assess the extent to which they have acted in accordance with the sustainable development principle when:
 - a. setting their well-being objectives; and
 - b. taking steps to meet them.
- 2 The Act defines the sustainable development principle as 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’.
- 3 In May 2018, the Auditor General published his report, ‘Reflecting on Year One – How have public bodies responded to the Well-being of Future Generations Act (2015)’. He concluded that, public bodies support the principles of the Act and are taking steps to change how they work.
- 4 In developing our approach to undertaking the examinations during 2018-19, we engaged with a range of stakeholders including through our pilot work during 2017-18. We also worked closely with the Future Generations Commissioner.
- 5 As the preliminary work in year one included a consideration of how public bodies had set their Well-being Objectives, the principal focus of this work is the way in which public bodies are taking steps to meet their well-being objectives.
- 6 The Auditor General must provide a report on his examinations to the National Assembly for Wales at least a year before each Assembly election. The first such report must be published by 2020, before the 2021 Assembly election.
- 7 The Auditor General has undertaken examinations across the 44 bodies covered by the Act to inform his report to the National Assembly during 2018-19 and 2019-20.
- 8 The findings in this report are based on fieldwork that we undertook during the period February to March 2019.
- 9 This report sets out our findings from our examination of ‘Deliver the Porthcawl Resort Investment Focus (PRIF) Programme’, a step the Council is taking to meet its Wellbeing Objectives. It also sets out the Council’s initial response to our findings.

What we examined

- 10 We examined the extent to which the Council is acting in accordance with the sustainable development principle in Delivering the Porthcawl Resort Investment Focus Programme. This aims to grow the value of tourism in the economy, increase employment and business opportunities and support a range of cultural, sporting and business events. It sits under the Council's Corporate Plan priorities of 'Supporting a successful economy' and 'Smarter use of resources'.
- 11 In order to act in accordance with the sustainable development principle public bodies must take account of the following 'ways of working':

Exhibit 1: The 'five ways of working'

The table below sets out the 'five ways of working' as defined in the Welsh Government's **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 The Essentials**¹ document.

The Five Ways of Working
Long-term The importance of balancing short-term needs with the need to safeguard the ability to also meet long-term needs.
Prevention How acting to prevent problems occurring or getting worse may help public bodies meet their objectives.
Integration Considering how the public body's wellbeing objectives may impact upon each of the wellbeing goals, on their other objectives, or on the objectives of other public bodies.
Collaboration Acting in collaboration with any other person (or different parts of the body itself) that could help the body to meet its wellbeing objectives.
Involvement The importance of involving people with an interest in achieving the wellbeing goals, and ensuring that those people reflect the diversity of the area which the body serves.

- 12 Our examination found that: We can see some positive aspects in how the Council has taken account of the sustainable development principle in its approach to delivering the Porthcawl Resort Investment Focus (PRIF) programme, but further work is required to consistently embed the five ways of working.

¹ Welsh Government, **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 The Essentials**, 2015.

Detailed report

Part One: Examination Findings

The Council has considered long-term data and aspirations for the town to successfully access funding but would benefit from developing a long-term and holistic vision for the town

What we looked for

- 13 We looked for evidence of:
- a thorough understanding of current and long-term needs and the associated challenges and opportunities;
 - planning over an appropriate timescale;
 - resources allocated to ensure long-term benefits; and
 - appropriate monitoring and review.
- 14 Our examination was also informed by the positive indicators for the 'long-term' that we have identified and used as part of this examination.²

What we found

- 15 We identified the following strengths:
- the Council is facilitating the delivery of short-term projects through the PRIF that have the potential to support long-term aspirations for Porthcawl;
 - PRIF project fits into the Economic Prioritisation Framework (EPF) to develop key destinations for accessible and attractive tourism;
 - The Council has a Destination Management Plan (2018-2020) which sets out that the Council's aim for the county borough is to 'Develop a thriving visitor economy in Bridgend which celebrates the unique strengths of the place, supports jobs, generates business opportunities and improves the range of amenities available for visitors and local people';
 - Council officers worked with the Welsh Government Destination Management Group (DMG) to establish the future of Porthcawl as an 'Attractor Destination' to obtain long-term funding in a competitive situation;
 - long-term feasibility studies supported by external consultancy and input;
 - data has been used to support the long-term sustainability aspects of the step;
 - the Council has considered and re-profiled the resources needed to deliver the regeneration programme in Porthcawl; and

² See Appendix 1

- the Council has a Local Transport Plan (2015-2030). This includes some sustainable transport options for Porthcawl.

16 We identified the following areas for improvement:

- Whilst the Council has a Destination Management Plan for the county borough as a whole, we found there was scope to develop a clearer vision for Porthcawl.
- There is scope to further consider long-term transport solutions.

The Council has designed the step to prevent further decline in the town as a tourist destination. However, there is limited understanding of the root causes of this decline

What we looked for

17 We looked for evidence of:

- thorough understanding of the nature and type of problem the step could help prevent from occurring or getting worse;
- resources allocated to ensure preventative benefits will be delivered; and
- monitoring and review of how effectively the step is preventing problems from occurring or getting worse.

18 Our examination was also informed by the positive indicators for 'prevention' that we have identified and used as part of this examination.³

What we found

19 We identified the following strengths:

- the Council has recognised that adapting to changes in the tourist market to prevent further decline in prosperity is key to Porthcawl's future; and
- the Council has identified the risk of potential coastal erosion and recognise that they need to work with partners to access additional funding to support environmental improvements to prevent coastal erosion.

20 We identified the following areas for improvement:

- more work is required to understand the causes of the decline in tourism;
- a lack of clarity about how the PRIF will help socio-economic challenges in Porthcawl – e.g. unemployment, levels of deprivation; and
- there is scope to set out how the effectiveness of the PRIF will be measured, particularly in terms of the success of preventative activity.

³ See Appendix 1

The Council has designed the step to integrate plans with partners to access EU funding, but having a clearer vision for the town would facilitate a more integrated approach with partners

What we looked for

- 21 We looked for evidence of consideration of:
- how this step could contribute to the seven national wellbeing goals;
 - how delivery of this step will impact on the Council's wellbeing objectives and wider priorities; and
 - how delivery of this step will impact on other public bodies' wellbeing objectives.
- 22 Our examination was also informed by the positive indicators for 'integration' that we have identified and used as part of this examination.⁴

What we found

- 23 We identified the following strengths:
- the Council has adopted a National policy framework that recognises long-term issues of seaside towns across Wales; and
 - European Union funding requirements which have very similar criteria to be demonstrated as those contained in the WFG Act has given rise to an integrated bid application process requiring similar alignment to the WFG Act without explicitly referencing the five ways of working in every aspect.
- 24 We identified the following areas for improvement:
- the role and influence of the Public Services Board (PSB) is still developing and as such there is little evidence that integration at a strategic level has helped the design and delivery of the PRIF;
 - as we have mentioned in paragraph 17, there is scope to have a clearer vision for the town. This would then facilitate a more integrated approach with partners;
 - there is limited evidence of how clearly the PRIF can contribute to local and national Wellbeing Goals; and
 - input from National Resources Wales (NRW) will be necessary to strengthen coastal erosion defences to develop Sand Bay and Salt Lake areas.

⁴ See Appendix 1

The Council has considered how to collaborate with partners to deliver the PRIF projects. However, its approach to collaboration could be more strategic

What we looked for

- 25 We looked for evidence that the Council:
- has considered how it could work with others to deliver the step (to meet its wellbeing objectives, or assist another body to meet its wellbeing objectives);
 - is collaborating effectively to deliver the step; and
 - is monitoring and reviewing whether the collaboration is helping it or its stakeholders meet wellbeing objectives.
- 26 Our examination was also informed by the positive indicators for 'collaboration' that we have identified and used as part of this examination.⁵

What we found

- 27 We identified the following strengths:
- there are robust and effective working relationships with the Community Interest Company and now Credu Charity which is committed to providing learning, educational and employment opportunities for the whole of the community, while preserving and developing recreational spaces for future generations';
 - established governance arrangements at the Porthcawl Programme Board and input of Porthcawl Town Council;
 - positive collaboration with Visit Wales in identifying the attractor status of the town and successfully bidding for funding; and
 - PRIF is benefitting from common design elements and a focus on visual aspects of developments.
- 28 We identified the following areas for improvement:
- there has been limited articulation of a 'master plan' to enable stakeholders to understand how individual projects fit into a wider vision for the future of the town; and
 - we found limited collaborative outcomes to improve transport arrangements to deal with peak flows and mitigate the effect of an increase in road traffic.

⁵ See Appendix 1

There is limited formal involvement and input to ensure that the full diversity of stakeholders is represented

What we looked for

29 We looked for evidence that the Council has:

- identified who it needs to involve in designing and delivering the step;
- effectively involved key stakeholders in designing and delivering the step;
- used the results of involvement to shape the development and delivery of the step; and
- sought to learn lessons and improve its approach to involvement.

What we found

30 We identified the following strengths:

- consultation took place between January 2015 and October 2015 on specific elements of the PRIF project. Subsequent consultation has been through formal planning processes, and reporting;
- engagement with some community-based groups and specific interest groups to encourage tourism (eg surfer community);
- community displays used to increase awareness among residents; and
- local member and cabinet briefings held for residents to engage with the process.

31 We identified the following areas for improvement:

- it is less clear how residents and visitors are involved in providing input to the PRIF in a clear and structured way;
- beyond the standard consultative mechanisms, there has been limited involvement of citizens;
- involvement appears ad hoc and opportunistic rather than strategic; and
- scope to ensure that the Council involves all sections of society, and the full diversity of those affected by the Act, in a more formal and structured way.

Part Two: Council's response

32 Following the conclusion of our fieldwork we presented our findings to the Council at a workshop in May 2019 that was attended by officers from the strategic regeneration department and senior executive officers. At this workshop the Council began to consider its response to our findings and as a result of discussions at the workshop and further reflection on our findings the Council has developed the following actions.

Exhibit 2: Council's response

Area of Development	Response/Action	Responsible Office	Date of Delivery
Long-term			
Whilst the Council has a Destination Management Plan for the county borough as a whole, we found there was scope to develop a clearer vision for Porthcawl.	A review of the Masterplan for Porthcawl is now underway. This audit is welcomed and its findings will be integrated into that process.	Strategic Regeneration	2020
There is scope to further consider long-term transport solutions.	The Council will take forward consideration of long-term transport solutions through the development of the Strategic Transport Plan and the Local Development Plan review process.	Planning and Transportation	2022
Integration			
Role and influence of the PSB still developing – little evidence that integration at a high level has helped the PRIF to be designed or delivered.	With its PSB partners the Council is welcoming of opportunities to learn of best practice from other PSBs that can be shared and will feed these through its review processes.	Corporate Planning	On-going
Limited evidence of how clearly the PRIF can contribute to local and national Wellbeing Goals.	The Council will regularly review how to integrate local and national Wellbeing Goals as early as possible in decision-making processes.	Corporate Planning	On-going
Input from NRW will be necessary to strengthen coastal erosion defences to develop Sand Bay and Salt Lake areas.	The Council will continue to build on its already close working relationship with NRW on all areas of work relating to coastal erosion.	Coastal Erosion	On-going

Area of Development	Response/Action	Responsible Office	Date of Delivery
Involvement			
Less clear how citizens have been involved in providing input to the PRIF in a clear and structured way.	The audit findings will be presented to the Council's engagement team and PSB Co-ordinator to consider ways in which the Council can better articulate the wide variety of approaches it takes when involving citizens in its decision-making processes. The Council is welcoming of any opportunities to learn from best practice in other areas.	Engagement PSB Co-ordination	
Beyond the standard consultative mechanisms there has been limited involvement of citizens.			
Involvement appears ad hoc and opportunistic rather than strategic.			
Collaboration			
Limited articulation of a 'master plan' to enable stakeholders to understand how individual projects fit into a wider vision for the future of the Town.	A review of the Masterplan for Porthcawl is underway and the findings of this audit will be integrated.	Strategic Regeneration	2020
Limited collaborative outcomes to improve the transport arrangements to deal with peak flows and mitigate the effect of an increase in road traffic.	Long-term transport solutions will be considered as part of the Strategic Transport Plan and the Local Development Plan review process.	Planning and Transportation	2022
Prevention			
More work required to understand the root causes of the decline in tourism.	The opportunity to take forward this area of work will be explored with Visit Wales on a pan-Wales level.	Destination Management	2019
A lack of clarity about how the PRIF will help socio-economic challenges in Porthcawl – eg unemployment, levels of deprivation.	The evaluation of the PRIF will be tasked to clearly articulate how mechanisms for supporting socio-economic challenges and the targets for the PRIF project that were outlined in the business plan, the funding application and approved by the funder have been delivered.	Destination Management	2021
Limited target setting to indicate how effective the PRIF will be in measuring the effectiveness of preventative activity success.			

- 33 We will continue to monitor the Council's progress in implementing these actions, and the extent to which they address the issues we have identified in our findings.

Appendix 1

Positive Indicators of the Five Ways of Working

Exhibit 1: Positive Indicators of the Five Ways of Working

The table below sets out 'positive indicators' for each of the five ways of working that we have identified. We have not used the indicators as a checklist. They should be viewed as indicators. They helped us to form conclusions about the extent to which a body is acting in accordance with the sustainable development principle in taking steps to meet its Wellbeing Objectives.

What would show a body is fully applying the long-term way of working?

- There is a clear understanding of what 'long-term' means in the context of the Act.
- They have designed the step to deliver the well-being objective/s and contribute to their long-term vision.
- They have designed the step to deliver short or medium-term benefits, which are balanced with the impact over the long-term (within the project context).
- They have designed the step based on a sophisticated understanding of current and future need and pressures, including analysis of future trends.
- Consequently, there is a comprehensive understanding of current and future risks and opportunities.
- Resources have been allocated to ensure long-term as well as short-term benefits are delivered.
- There is a focus on delivering outcomes, with milestones/progression steps identified where outcomes will be delivered over the long-term.
- They are open to new ways of doing things which could help deliver benefits over the longer term.
- They value intelligence and pursue evidence-based approaches.

What would show a body is fully applying the preventative way of working?

- The body seeks to understand the root causes of problems so that negative cycles and intergenerational challenges can be tackled.
- The body sees challenges from a system-wide perspective, recognising and valuing the long-term benefits that they can deliver for people and places.
- The body allocates resources to preventative action that is likely to contribute to better outcomes and use of resources over the longer term, even where this may limit the ability to meet some short-term needs.
- There are decision-making and accountability arrangements that recognise the value of preventative action and accept short-term reductions in performance and resources in the pursuit of anticipated improvements in outcomes and use of resources.

What would show a body is taking an 'integrated' approach?

- Individuals at all levels understand their contribution to the delivery of the vision and wellbeing objectives.
- Individuals at all levels understand what different parts of the organisation do and proactively seek opportunities to work across organisational boundaries. This is replicated in their work with other public bodies.
- Individuals at all levels recognise the cross-organisation dependencies of achieving the ambition and objectives.
- There is an open culture where information is shared.
- There is a well-developed understanding of how the wellbeing objectives and steps to meet them impact on other public sector bodies.
- Individuals proactively work across organisational boundaries to maximise their contribution across the wellbeing goals and minimise negative impacts.
- Governance, structures and processes support this, as do behaviours.

What would show a body is collaborating effectively?

- The body is focused on place, community and outcomes rather than organisational boundaries.
- The body has a good understanding of partners' objectives and their responsibilities, which helps to drive collaborative activity.
- The body has positive and mature relationships with stakeholders, where information is shared in an open and transparent way.
- The body recognises and values the contributions that all partners can make.
- The body seeks to establish shared processes and ways of working, where appropriate.

What would show a body is involving people effectively?

- Having an understanding of who needs to be involved and why.
- Reflecting on how well the needs and challenges facing those people are currently understood.
- Working co-productively, working with stakeholders to design and deliver.
- Seeing the views of stakeholders as a vital sources of information that will help deliver better outcomes.
- Ensuring that the full diversity of stakeholders is represented and they are able to take part.
- Having mature and trusting relationships with its stakeholders where there is ongoing dialogue and information is shared in an open and transparent way.
- Ensure stakeholders understand the impact of their contribution.
- Seek feedback from key stakeholders which is used to help learn and improve.

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