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Auditor General for Wales

# Well-being of Future Generations: An examination of Preventing and tackling Anti-social Behaviour – **Newport City Council**

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The team who delivered the work comprised Martin Gibson and Gareth Jones under the direction of Non Jenkins.

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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 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.
- 4 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.
- 5 The findings in this report are based on fieldwork that we undertook during the period July 2019 to August 2019.
- 6 This report sets out our findings from our examination of preventing and tackling anti-social behaviour, a step the Council is taking to meet its Well-being Objectives.
- 7 It also sets out the Council’s initial response to our findings.

### What we examined

- 8 Newport City Council’s fourth Well-being Objective in Corporate Plan 2017-22 is ‘to build cohesive and sustainable communities’ and one of its steps to achieve that objective is to ‘Prevent and tackle instances of anti-social behaviour impacting upon the residents and the business community including general poor behaviour, noise nuisance, fly tipping, illegal alcohol sales to children and doorstep crime’. We examined the extent to which the Council is acting in accordance with the sustainable development principle in preventing and tackling anti-social behaviour (ASB).
- 9 In order to act in accordance with the sustainable development principle public bodies must take account of the following ‘ways of working’ (**Exhibit 1**). We developed some indicators of these ways of working to help inform our work (**Appendix 1**):

## 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'<sup>1</sup> document.

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

- 10 Our examination found that: **The Council and its partners are committed to tackling anti-social behaviour, although they have not yet set out a long-term vision of how they can tackle its root causes that is informed by the public's views.**

<sup>1</sup> Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 The Essentials, Welsh Government (2015)

# Detailed report

## Part One: Examination Findings

The Council shares an ambition to prevent and tackle anti-social behaviour (ASB) with its Public Services Board (PSB) partners but it could improve how it plans and uses resources for the longer term

### What we looked for

- 11 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.

### What we found

- 12 We identified the following strength:
- The Council and its partners in the Public Services Board have stated their shared objectives to prevent and tackle anti-social behaviour which leads to a commitment to tackling ASB.
- 13 We identified the following areas for improvement:
- Explore the development of a clear long-term action plan to prevent and tackle ASB;
  - Work with other organisations to seek to expand the data sets used to understand current and future challenges that ASB presents;
  - The Council has not yet clearly defined its intended outcomes relating to ASB and its partners, which take account of the views of partners and the public; and
  - Consider collaboration with partner organisations to review how all ASB related funding could be used to ensure a long-term approach.

## The Council is seeking a more preventative approach to ASB but needs to better understand and tackle its root causes

### What we looked for

- 14 We looked for evidence of:
- a 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.

### What we found

- 15 We identified the following strengths:
- The Council is starting to shift resources to take a greater preventative approach in some service areas to tackle ASB. This has included the prevention team focusing on families at risk of becoming involved in ASB; and
  - Operation Bang<sup>2</sup>, although a time-specific preventative intervention, has evidenced a clear reduction in ASB.
- 16 We identified the following areas for improvement:
- The absence of explicit longer-term service outcomes currently limits how prevention can be planned and assessed. Enhancing understanding through shared data and capturing community intelligence could strengthen the Council and partners' preventative approaches to tackling ASB; and
  - The Council could consider strengthening qualitative and quantitative data sets to help design, monitor and evaluate effective preventative services over the short and longer term. This may enhance the Council's understanding of trends and root causes of ASB and support planning new approaches.

<sup>2</sup> Operation BANG (Be a Nice Guy) is a national initiative run by the 4 Police forces in Wales. It raises awareness of personal safety during the seasonal period around Halloween and Bonfire Night and helps to reduce anti-social behaviour in communities

## The Council and its partners have not yet fully aligned their organisational plans to deliver the greatest benefit for the community and meet their shared ambition to tackle ASB

### What we looked for

- 17 We looked for evidence of consideration of:
- how this step could contribute to the seven national well-being goals;
  - how delivery of this step will impact on the Council's well-being objectives and wider priorities; and
  - how delivery of this step will impact on other public bodies' well-being objectives.

### What we found

- 18 We identified the following strengths:
- There is a clear drive and ambition to tackle ASB across senior Council leaders and PSB partner organisations; and
  - The Council's objectives align to the PSB's shared objective to reduce ASB.
- 19 We identified the following areas for improvement:
- The Council has not yet evaluated with its partners how the strategic and operational plans of each PSB organisation delivering ASB activities contribute to the delivery of their own well-being objectives and enhance those of partners; and
  - There are opportunities to demonstrate how the activities to tackle ASB and subsequent outcomes may contribute to the seven national well-being goals.



## The Council can show the value of collaborating widely to tackle ASB but should ensure that data and anticipated outcomes are shared with partner organisations and the public

### What we looked for

- 20 We looked for evidence that the Council:
- has considered how it could work with others to deliver the step (to meet its well-being objectives, or assist another body to meet its well-being objectives);
  - is collaborating effectively to deliver the step; and
  - is monitoring and reviewing whether the collaboration is helping it, or its stakeholders meet well-being objectives.

### What we found

- 21 We identified the following strengths:
- The Council has good working relationships with PSB partners to help tackle ASB and has further sought to engage the private and third sector to maximise the impact;
  - The Council is starting to develop local hubs in collaboration with other public services that may contribute to tackling ASB; and
  - Collaboration with other agencies around Operation Bang has contributed to a reduction in ASB.
- 22 We identified the following areas for improvement:
- Consider what outcomes the Council and partners are seeking to achieve and develop data sets to monitor and report on those outcomes over the short, medium and long term;
  - More detailed outcome-focused target setting to cover the range of ASB related activities could help the Council then draw together those elements into an overall view of ASB within Newport;
  - Extend the consideration of how all Council services could contribute to tackling ASB; and
  - Despite the effective working relationships, there are further opportunities for the Council to consider how to extend the working relationships with effective data sharing within the Council and with relevant partner organisations.

## There are some examples of the Council seeking and responding to the public's views on ASB, although the Council recognises it could strengthen its approach to involvement

### What we looked for

- 23 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

- 24 We identified the following strengths:
- The Council is developing some imaginative and innovative methods of engagement such as surveying the public through free Wi-Fi on buses; and
  - It shows a willingness to adapt and extend service design to incorporate the messages heard.
- 25 We identified the following areas for improvement:
- Continue to strengthen two-way channels of communication to all communities to ensure that their views on ASB can be heard and inform the Council's and partners' activities; and
  - Bear in mind the limitations of the Council's existing engagement with the public and continually seek to refresh public opinion in a proportionate way to inform the understanding of ASB in communities.

## Part Two: The Council's response

- 26 Following the conclusion of our fieldwork we presented our findings to the Council at a workshop in October 2019 that was attended by officers from the policy and partnership team, trading standards, children's services, community protection, environmental health and regeneration as well as Gwent Police representatives. 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.
- 27 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.

## Long term

The importance of balancing short-term needs with the need to safeguard the ability to also meet long-term needs.

### Strengths:

- The Council and its partners in the Public Services Board have stated their shared objectives to prevent and tackle anti-social behaviour which leads to a commitment to tackling ASB.

Areas for Development	NCC Management Response / Action(s)	By Whom?	By When?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explore the development of a clear long-term action plan to prevent and tackle ASB.</li> <li>The Council has not yet clearly defined its intended outcomes relating to ASB and its partners, which take account of the views of partners and the public.</li> <li>Work with other organisations to seek to expand the data sets used to understand current and future challenges that ASB presents.</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>NCC Response / Strengths</u></b></p> <p>We recognise that to effectively improve the safety of our communities and reduce anti-social behaviour in the long term (10 to 20 years) it requires an approach that is owned and delivered collaboratively between Newport City Council, our partners in the Safer Newport community safety partnership, Public Services Board (PSB) and the community.</p> <p>Since the review, the ASB theme group has finalised its terms of reference and governance structure that will support the delivery of a longer-term strategic plan. The group has already developed a delivery plan with shorter term actions that are both preventative and reactive to issues of ASB. A working group is in place of representatives from the Council, Police and other partners to review qualitative and quantitative data to inform our decision making and monitoring of ASB.</p>		

Areas for Development	NCC Management Response / Action(s)	By Whom?	By When?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider collaboration with partner organisations to review how all ASB related funding could be used to ensure a long-term approach.</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Action 1 – Mission Statement and an Action Plan</u></b>            Develop and review the current action plan to ensure long-term outcomes are included and owned by all partners involved with the Safer Newport partnership and its sub-groups. This should support the Public Services Board's Wellbeing Plan long-term objectives for resilient communities and preventions work such as Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and also support collaborative bids for ASB related funding / initiatives between partners.</p> <p><b><u>Action 2 – ASB Theme Group Governance and Structure</u></b>            Implement and review the effectiveness of the governance structure of the ASB Theme Group and its operational groups that will support the delivery of the long-term action plan.</p>	<p>Safer Newport Group</p> <p>Safer Newport Group</p>	<p>31 December 2020</p> <p>31 March 2021</p>

## Prevention

How acting to prevent problems occurring or getting worse may help public bodies meet their objectives.

### Strengths:

- The Council is starting to shift resources to take a greater preventative approach in some service areas to tackle ASB. This has included the prevention team focusing on families at risk of becoming involved in ASB; and
- Operation Bang, although a time-specific preventative intervention, has evidenced a clear reduction in ASB.

Areas for Development	NCC Management Response / Action(s)	By Whom?	By When?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The absence of explicit longer-term service outcomes currently limits how prevention can be planned and assessed. Enhancing understanding through shared data and capturing community intelligence could strengthen the Council and partners' preventative approaches to tackling ASB.</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>NCC Management Response / Strengths</u></b></p> <p>We recognise that using and having a shared understanding of data to inform future ASB decision making is vital to enabling the Council and its partners to move more towards proactive approach. The Council and our partners are already capturing data to support decision making. However, the next challenge is for us to gain a shared understanding and use this data more effectively to deliver more focused and integrated approaches to ASB across the city.</p> <p>Following the audit review we have agreed to review the current multi-agency data working group that was established to look at the data we capture and how we can better use this to analyse ASB across the city.</p>	Safer Newport Group	31 December 2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council could consider strengthening qualitative and quantitative data sets to help design, monitor and evaluate effective preventative services over the short and longer-term. This may</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Action 3 – Shared data understanding</u></b></p> <p>Re-establish the multi-agency data working group to develop a common understanding across organisations and groups of anti-social behaviour across Newport. Using ASB data we will look to analyse and map the root causes of ASB across communities in Newport.</p>	Safer Newport Group	31 December 2020

Areas for Development	NCC Management Response / Action(s)	By Whom?	By When?
<p>enhance the Council's understanding of trends and root causes of ASB and support planning new approaches.</p>	<p><b><u>Action 4 – ASB Theme Group / Operational groups Information Sharing</u></b>            Through the implementation of the ASB Theme Group and its operational groups eg Local Action Groups / Problem Solving Groups, we will develop mechanisms to deliver short and long-term actions from the ASB action plan. These groups will also enable information (quantitative and qualitative) to be shared between the groups and communities.</p>		

## Integration

Considering how the public body's well-being objectives may impact upon each of the well-being goals, on their other objectives, or on the objectives of other public bodies.

### Strengths:

- Clear drive and ambition to tackle ASB across senior Council leaders and PSB partner organisations; and
- The Council's objectives align to the PSB's shared objective to reduce ASB.

Areas for Development	NCC Management Response / Action(s)	By Whom?	By When?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council has not yet evaluated with its partners how the strategic and operational plans of each PSB organisation delivering ASB activities contribute to the delivery of their own well-being objectives and enhance those of partners.</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>NCC Management Response / Strengths</u></b></p> <p>The symptoms of ASB and its impacts cross-cut many pro-active and reactive activities delivered by the Council and our partners eg Education (NEETS / Exclusions), Communities First, Youth Services, Youth Justice, Housing (Newport City Homes), Homelessness, Police, Fire Service and other activities. Utilising the good work and networks in place between the PSB, Safer Newport and other groups we will look towards improving how we integrate and collaborate in delivering our future plans.</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are opportunities to demonstrate how the activities to tackle ASB and subsequent outcomes may contribute to the seven national well-being goals.</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>See Action 1 – Mission Statement and Action Plan</u></b></p> <p><b><u>See Action 2 – ASB operational groups</u></b></p> <p><b><u>Action 4 – ASB Theme Group / Operational Group Information Sharing</u></b></p>		



Areas for Development	NCC Management Response / Action(s)	By Whom?	By When?
	<p><b><u>Action 5 – NCC Service Plans</u></b>            Service areas in Newport City Council that are involved in ASB work will incorporate objectives and key actions into their Service Plans to demonstrate and support delivery of the Council's Well-being Objectives.</p>	Policy, Partnership & Involvement Team	May 2020

## Collaboration

Acting in collaboration with any other person (or different parts of the body itself) that could help the body to meet its well-being objectives.

### Strengths:

- The Council has good working relationships with PSB partners to help tackle ASB and has further sought to engage the private and third sector to maximise the impact;
- The Council is starting to develop local hubs in collaboration with other public services that may contribute to tackling ASB; and
- Collaboration with other agencies around Operation Bang has contributed to a reduction in ASB.

Areas for Development	NCC Management Response / Action(s)	By Whom?	By When?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider what outcomes the Council and partners are seeking to achieve and develop data sets to monitor and report on those outcomes over the short, medium and long term.</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>NCC Management Response / Strengths</u></b></p> <p>We welcome the WAOs assessment on the collaborative networks that have been built between PSB partners, Gwent Police, other public, private and not for profit organisations to tackle ASB across the city. It is also good to see that collaborative actions / activities are recognised at reducing instances of ASB in the city. Following the audit review we have finalised a governance structure for implementing actions and to look at the outcomes over the short to long term.</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More detailed outcome-focused target setting to cover the range of ASB related activities could help the Council then draw together those elements into an overall view of ASB within Newport.</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>See Action 1 – Mission Statement and Action Plan</u></b></p> <p><b><u>See Action 2 – Safer Newport Governance Structure</u></b></p> <p><b><u>See Action 3 – Shared data understanding</u></b></p>		

Areas for Development	NCC Management Response / Action(s)	By Whom?	By When?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extend the consideration of how all Council services could contribute to tackling ASB.</li> <li>Despite the effective working relationships, there are further opportunities for the Council to consider how to extend the working relationships with effective data sharing within the Council and with relevant partner organisations.</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>See Action 4 – ASB operational groups.</u></b></p> <p><b><u>See Action 5 – NCC Service Plans</u></b></p>		

## Involvement

The importance of involving people with an interest in achieving the well-being goals and ensuring that those people reflect the diversity of the area which the body serves.

### Strengths:

- The Council is developing some imaginative and innovative methods of engagement such as surveying the public through free Wi-Fi on buses; and
- It shows a willingness to adapt and extend service design to incorporate the messages heard.

Areas for Development	NCC Management Response / Action(s)	By Whom?	By When?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to strengthen two-way channels of communication to all communities to ensure that their views on ASB can be heard and inform the Council's and partners' activities.</li> <li>• Bear in mind the limitations of the Council's existing engagement with the public and continually seek to refresh public opinion in a proportionate way to inform the understanding of ASB in communities.</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>NCC Management Response / Strengths</u></b></p> <p>Involvement of all stakeholders that are impacted by ASB from the conception, development and feedback of our work is a challenging and rewarding area for the Council and its partners. We recognise that involvement is not a one way process and that for it to be effective, the involvement of those impacted by ASB is necessary to deliver the solutions. We are encouraged that WAO have recognised our different approaches to engaging and involving the communities in the decision making process promoting our services.</p> <p>To build upon the existing community action days and other initiatives Following the review we have finalised a governance structure that will involve community representatives and partner organisations to work closely together across Newport to develop and deliver actions from our long-term action plan.</p>		

Areas for Development	NCC Management Response / Action(s)	By Whom?	By When?
	<p><b><u>See Action 1 – Mission Statement and Action Plan</u></b></p> <p><b><u>See Action 2 – Safer Newport Governance Structure</u></b></p> <p><b><u>Action 6 – Improving Communication Channels</u></b>  We will look to undertake more collaborative approach in communicating positive outcomes from the work that the Safer Newport group and its sub-groups are delivering to tackle ASB, support the achievement of objectives and the involvement of communities and groups.</p>	Safer Newport Group	Ongoing

# 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 Well-being Objectives.

<b>What would show a body is fully applying the long-term way of working?</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• There is a clear understanding of what 'long-term' means in the context of the Act.</li><li>• They have designed the step to deliver the well-being objective/s and contribute to their long-term vision</li><li>• 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).</li><li>• They have designed the step based on a sophisticated understanding of current and future need and pressures, including analysis of future trends.</li><li>• Consequently, there is a comprehensive understanding of current and future risks and opportunities.</li><li>• Resources have been allocated to ensure long term as well as short term benefits are delivered.</li><li>• There is a focus on delivering outcomes, with milestones/ progression steps identified where outcomes will be delivered over the long term.</li><li>• They are open to new ways of doing things which could help deliver benefits over the longer term.</li><li>• They value intelligence and pursue evidence-based approaches.</li></ul>
<b>What would show a body is fully applying the preventative way of working?</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The body seeks to understand the root causes of problems so that negative cycles and intergenerational challenges can be tackled.</li><li>• The body sees challenges from a system-wide perspective, recognising and valuing the long-term benefits that they can deliver for people and places.</li><li>• 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.</li><li>• 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.</li></ul>

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

- Individuals at all levels understand their contribution to the delivery of the vision and well-being 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 well-being objectives and steps to meet them impact on other public sector bodies.
- Individuals proactively work across organisational boundaries to maximise their contribution across the well-being 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.

Wales Audit Office  
24 Cathedral Road  
Cardiff CF11 9LJ

Tel: 029 2032 0500

Fax: 029 2032 0600

Textphone: 029 2032 0660

E-mail: [info@audit.wales](mailto:info@audit.wales)

Website: [www.audit.wales](http://www.audit.wales)

Swyddfa Archwilio Cymru  
24 Heol y Gadeirlan  
Caerdydd CF11 9LJ

Ffôn: 029 2032 0500

Ffacs: 029 2032 0600

Ffôn testun: 029 2032 0660

E-bost: [post@archwilio.cymru](mailto:post@archwilio.cymru)

Gwefan: [www.archwilio.cymru](http://www.archwilio.cymru)