

Setting of well-being objectives – Amgueddfa Cymru

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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 48 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.¹ 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.² We are carrying out a rolling programme of these examinations, up to early 2025.³
- 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.⁴
- 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.

¹ 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.

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

³ 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.

⁴ Section 5 Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

Carrying out our examination at Amgueddfa Cymru

- 6 The aim of this examination was to:
- provide assurance on the extent that Amgueddfa Cymru applied the sustainable development principle when setting its well-being objectives; and
 - identify opportunities for Amgueddfa Cymru 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 Amgueddfa Cymru 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 Amgueddfa Cymru put in place to set its well-being objectives underpinned by the sustainable development principle?
 - Has Amgueddfa Cymru considered how it will make sure it can deliver its well-being objectives in line with the sustainable development principle?
 - Has Amgueddfa Cymru put in place arrangements to monitor progress and improve how it applies the sustainable development principle when setting its well-being objectives?
- 8 We gathered our evidence between August and October 2023. This included:
- reviewing key documents; and
 - running a workshop with some of the key people who were involved with setting the well-being objectives.
- 9 This was not designed to be an in-depth examination. We maintained a tight focus on our audit questions and took a proportionate approach to our evidence gathering.
- 10 We have also taken account of the independent ‘Tailored Review’ of Amgueddfa Cymru.⁵ The Welsh Government appointed a panel to conduct the review in August 2022. The panel published its final report in July 2023. The review had a broad remit and covered some areas pertinent to our examination.
- 11 We have reported recently on wider governance issues at Amgueddfa Cymru following our audit of its Consolidated Accounts 2021-22.⁶ The matters raised in that report are outside the scope of this examination.
- 12 After we completed our evidence gathering and prepared our draft report, Amgueddfa Cymru received the news that it will see a 10.5% reduction in its revenue budget from the Welsh Government in 2024-25. Amgueddfa Cymru has described the ‘sizeable impact’ this will have on its operations and the difficult choices it is likely to face.⁷ We have reflected this context in this report. We may

⁵ The Welsh Government Commissioned tailored review of Amgueddfa Cymru, [Final Report](#), July 2023

⁶ Auditor General for Wales, [Governance arrangements relating to an employment dispute at Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales](#), November 2023

⁷ Amgueddfa Cymru, [Statement: Welsh Government 24/25 Draft Budget Announcement](#), December 2023

also carry out further work that considers Amgueddfa Cymru’s response to the budgetary position during 2024-25.

How and when Amgueddfa Cymru set its well-being objectives

- 13 Amgueddfa Cymru began work to develop its new Strategy 2030 during 2019. It finalised the strategy in February 2021, but published the document alongside the launch of its new branding in June 2022.⁸ It also published a separate well-being statement, as required under the Act, in March 2023.⁹
- 14 The well-being statement describes how the strategy helps Amgueddfa Cymru discharge its responsibilities under the Act. It states that the strategy includes ‘a series of Commitments, Enablers and high-level Outcomes’ and that ‘Together these form our Well-being Objectives’. **Exhibit 1** sets out the commitments.
- 15 Amgueddfa Cymru also sets out more specific objectives to deliver these commitments, which it also refers to as well-being objectives. They are included in the well-being statement, business and operational plans.¹⁰

Exhibit 1: Amgueddfa Cymru’s strategic commitments to 2030

Make sure that everyone is represented
Inspire creativity and learning for life
Help protect and restore nature and our environment
Support well-being through inspirational spaces and experiences
Discover and explore the museum digitally
Build global connections

⁸ Amgueddfa Cymru, [Strategy 2030](#), 2022

⁹ Amgueddfa Cymru, [Well-being Statement 2030](#), 2023

¹⁰ Amgueddfa Cymru’s Business Plan 2021-2026 and annual operational plans can be viewed on its [website](#)

What we found

Amgueddfa Cymru has applied the sustainable development principle to set well-being objectives that sit at the heart of the organisation but needs to consider the resources required to deliver them in the context of its budget position and develop more appropriate performance measures

The process for setting the well-being objectives

The planning process

- 16 Amgueddfa Cymru set out to improve on how it set its first well-being objectives in 2016. It drew on advice and tools developed by the Future Generations Commissioner to reflect on where it could improve its application of the sustainable development principle. It also engaged with and sought to learn from other public bodies.
- 17 Amgueddfa Cymru identified two main areas for improvement. Firstly, it recognised that it had developed its first well-being objectives outside of its core planning arrangements. It addressed this by putting its new well-being objectives at the heart of its Strategy 2030. This approach reflects statutory guidance and good practice.
- 18 Secondly, it identified the need to strengthen staff and stakeholder involvement in setting its new well-being objectives. The action it took to achieve this is described below.

Consultation and involvement

- 19 Amgueddfa Cymru set out to gather a cross-section of views to inform its Strategy 2030 and well-being objectives. It sought to maximise staff involvement through 30 focus groups, held across all museum sites. Staff who could not attend were invited to drop-in sessions or to provide views via email or phone. Amgueddfa Cymru sought the views of Trustees, Trade Unions and Welsh Government representatives at further workshops.
- 20 To complement this activity, Amgueddfa Cymru planned extensive external engagement, aiming to connect with stakeholders and diverse communities. However, it had to adapt its plans due to COVID-19 restrictions. It refocused its external engagement to an online survey to both stakeholder organisations and the public. It also held 15 focus groups with stakeholders, volunteers, its youth forum

- members, and Amgueddfa Cymru Producers.¹¹ It worked through partner organisations to promote its consultation to under-represented groups.
- 21 In addition, it sought the views of children and young people through tailored methods. This included sending out ‘family activity packs’ through partner organisations to over 850 families across Wales.
- 22 Amgueddfa Cymru received 751 responses to its survey (including 77 from stakeholder organisations). Despite its efforts to reach different groups, its analysis of responses revealed it had a low response rate from younger people, disabled people, and people of different ethnicities. The number of family activity packs returned was also lower than hoped.
- 23 Amgueddfa Cymru reflected that it would have achieved better representation if it had been able to hold workshops across Wales, particularly in community facilities, as it had intended. However, it sought to mitigate this by inviting representative organisations to the focus groups it was able to hold.
- 24 Amgueddfa Cymru is seeking to improve how it engages with communities it has consistently failed to reach. In 2020, it commissioned a series of in-depth research conversations in partnership with the Arts Council of Wales to understand what it should do differently. The research led to the development of the a [‘Widening Engagement Action Plan 2022-2025’](#).¹² Amgueddfa Cymru told us this work also informed action in the strategy. The commitment ‘Make sure that everyone is represented’ describes the organisation’s ambition to find new ways of working with communities and there are corresponding activities designed to achieve this in supporting plans.
- 25 Amgueddfa Cymru sought the views of a diverse range of stakeholder organisations and received 77 responses. We recognise that engaging with all relevant stakeholders is a challenge for a national body, but there are opportunities for Amgueddfa Cymru to expand on this. For example, despite inviting views from councils it did not receive any responses from them. This is a notable gap for those local authority areas where museum sites are located. There are other local public bodies, such as health boards, who it did not seek responses from. When setting future well-being objectives, Amgueddfa Cymru should build on its efforts and consider how it can capture the views of certain other key public bodies. Seeking the views of such bodies could also help when reviewing its current well-being objectives and developing or revising steps to meet them (see also **paragraph 31**).

Other sources of evidence

- 26 Amgueddfa Cymru drew on the Welsh Government’s Future Trends report.¹³ It explored the trends with managers at internal sessions to develop the strategy, and objectives. This included using the ‘three horizons model’ to explore scenarios and

¹¹ [The Amgueddfa Cymru Producers](#) are young people aged 16-25 from across Wales. They collaborate to develop activities, events and more at the museum.

¹² Arts Council of Wales and Amgueddfa Cymru, [Widening Engagement Action Plan: 2022-2025](#), 2022

¹³ Welsh Government, [Future Trends Report](#), 2021

potential impacts on Amgueddfa Cymru's work over the next decade.¹⁴ It also explored trends with wider staff at each of the 30 internal focus groups.

- 27 It is not clear how Amgueddfa Cymru has used an assessment of its performance against its previous well-being objectives to inform the setting of its new well-being objectives. Amgueddfa Cymru produces an annual report on its well-being objectives, as required by the Act. The annual report includes a narrative on key achievements under each well-being objective. However, it does not set out performance information, making it difficult to evaluate overall progress against each well-being objective and identify what further or different action might need to be taken. Clearer evaluation of progress could provide a useful starting point for new setting well-being objectives. **Paragraphs 39 and 40** set out further information on measuring progress.

Planning to improve well-being

- 28 Amgueddfa Cymru's well-being objectives are cross-cutting in nature and are clearly designed to contribute to different well-being goals. They are focused on the long term, with activities relating to health, well-being and education aimed at delivering outcomes beyond 2030.
- 29 Amgueddfa Cymru considered how its well-being objectives related to the priorities and objectives of some key partner organisations. For example, it aligned the strategy and objectives with the term of government remit letter (2021-2026), which it received from the Welsh Government.¹⁵ The remit letter reflects different aspects of the programme for government and, by association, aligns to the delivery of various well-being goals.¹⁶
- 30 Amgueddfa Cymru also told us that it explored the connections to Natural Resources Wales' objectives, and to the Arts Council of Wales' objectives through its widening engagement work (see **paragraph 24**). It was able to explore the alignment with the National Library through its consultation.
- 31 However, there is scope for Amgueddfa Cymru to expand on this and consider the connections between its objectives and those of other bodies. This could include local authorities and Public Services Boards (PSBs), for example. Doing this could identify opportunities to work together, as well as how partner activity might affect Amgueddfa Cymru. For instance, local authority decisions relating to culture, regeneration, or transport plans. The Future Generations Commissioner has brought together well-being objectives from across Wales as a resource to help bodies do this.¹⁷

¹⁴ The three horizons model is a framework to aid long term planning. Public Health Wales and the Future Generations Commissioner developed a [three horizons toolkit](#) for public bodies.

¹⁵ Welsh Government, [Term of Government Remit Letter](#), 2021

¹⁶ Welsh Government, [Programme for government 2021-2026](#), 2021

¹⁷ This information can be provided by the Future Generations Commissioner's office on request.

- 32 Notwithstanding this, there is a major focus on collaboration throughout the strategy and supporting plans. The operational plan identifies numerous activities designed to be delivered with partners to help Amgueddfa Cymru achieve its broad-ranging well-being objectives. The plans do not specify all the partners who might be involved in delivering the well-being objectives. Given the nature of the objectives, Amgueddfa Cymru might need to develop new relationships or strengthen existing networks to deliver them.
- 33 We note that the Tailored Review identified the need for Amgueddfa Cymru to continue developing its collaborative arrangements. It found that ‘the depth and quality of partnerships vary greatly’ and recommended that Amgueddfa Cymru develops a ‘strategy for partnership and community engagement’ (see **footnote 5**). It also highlighted opportunities to develop relationships with various partners, including PSBs, local authorities and Public Health Wales. Amgueddfa Cymru told us it recognises the need to continue strengthening partnership working. We have not tested the quality of partnership arrangements as part of this examination.

Delivering the well-being objectives

- 34 Amgueddfa Cymru has designed its key supporting plans to deliver the strategy and well-being objectives. There is a 5-year business plan covering the period 2021-2026. There are also annual operational plans that set out the short- and medium-term steps that Amgueddfa Cymru intends to take to meet its longer-term well-being objectives.
- 35 While these plans set out activity to deliver the objectives, they do not include information on resources. Amgueddfa Cymru has arrangements that are designed to align departmental delivery plans with budget planning, but we have not reviewed them as part of this examination. However, the Well-being Statement 2030 does not include information on how the organisation plans to ensure resources are allocated to deliver the steps each year. This is a requirement under the Act.¹⁸
- 36 Amgueddfa Cymru faces significant financial challenges, and it will need to consider the deliverability of its objectives in this context. The Tailored Review highlighted the reliance on reserves to meet current spending. It stated that the ‘lack of a long-term strategic approach’ to financial planning ‘needs to be reviewed as a matter of urgency’ (see **footnote 5**). Since then, the financial position has worsened, with Amgueddfa Cymru set to receive a 10.5% reduction in its revenue funding from of the Welsh Government in 2024-25. This clearly has significant implications for the delivery of the objectives and reinforces the importance of a strategic approach to financial planning.
- 37 Amgueddfa Cymru is responding to the Tailored Review and the budget position by developing its financial planning arrangements. It told us that, following the

¹⁸ Section 7 (1) (c) of the Act states that Well-being Statements must set out the steps that public bodies propose to take to meet their well-being objectives in accordance with the sustainable development principle. This must be accompanied by certain other information, including how it proposes to ensure that resources are allocated annually for the purpose of taking such steps.

announcement of the proposed budget, it has started a programme of work to identify how it can reduce costs and promote future financial sustainability. It intends to do this in the context of the well-being objectives. Amgueddfa Cymru also recognises it needs to consider the capacity and skills it will require to deliver the well-being objectives over the lifetime of the strategy.

Monitoring the well-being objectives

38 Amgueddfa Cymru has not set out measures for its well-being objectives in the strategy. The 5-year business plan includes a selection of key performance indicators (KPIs). Amgueddfa Cymru produces quarterly monitoring reports that provide a progress update against the KPIs and associated targets, along with an update on actions in the operational plan. However, these indicators do not fully reflect the nature of the well-being objectives. For example, the two KPIs under 'make sure everyone is represented' are:

- number of visits recorded across all sites; and
- loans within Wales.

These KPIs do not provide insight into, for example, how effectively Amgueddfa Cymru is reaching diverse communities or citizen perspectives on representation in the collection.

39 Amgueddfa Cymru has recognised that it does not have the right performance measures in place to monitor delivery of the strategy and well-being objectives. It has established an Insights Team, to strengthen its use of intelligence. The team has begun work on developing more appropriate performance measures. It is also looking to develop new performance measures through its Widening Engagement work with the Arts Council of Wales.

40 Amgueddfa Cymru told us that it plans to undertake a comprehensive review of its well-being objectives five years into the strategy. Having appropriate outcome measures, along with milestones or targets should support effective review. It will also help Amgueddfa Cymru understand the relationship between resources and performance as it implements cost reduction measures.

Recommendations

Involvement, collaboration, and integration

- R1 Amgueddfa Cymru should build on its work with other bodies by expanding:
- its engagement activity to cover certain other local public bodies.
 - its consideration of the connections between its objectives and those of other bodies. This could include other Welsh Government arm's length bodies, or local authorities and Public Services Boards.

It should do this when reviewing its current well-being objectives and developing/ revising steps to meet them, as well as when setting future objectives. (See **paragraph 25 and 31**)

Resources

- R2 When developing future well-being statements, Amgueddfa Cymru should set out how it proposes to ensure resources are allocated annually for the purposes of taking steps to meet its objectives. (See **paragraph 35**)
- R3 In developing its medium-term financial planning arrangements, Amgueddfa Cymru should:
- consider the resources required to delivering its Strategy 2030 and well-being objectives and the resourcing risks that might impact delivery; and
 - ensure it is able to consider the impact of measures to reduce costs and improve financial sustainability in the context of the well-being objectives. (See **paragraphs 36 and 37**).

Monitoring the well-being objectives

- R4 Amgueddfa Cymru should develop and report against outcome measures that reflect the strategic, cross-cutting nature of the well-being objectives so that it can effectively measure progress against them. (See **paragraphs 39 and 40**)

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?

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

<p>Has the body used data and other intelligence to understand need, risks and opportunities and how they might change over time?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The body has a clear and balanced assessment of progress against previous well-being objectives that has been used to inform the body’s understanding of the ‘as is’/ short-term need. • 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"> – Public Services Boards’ well-being assessments – Regional Partnership Boards’ population assessments – The results of local involvement/ consultation exercises – Service monitoring and complaints – Future Trends report – Natural Resources Wales’ State of Natural Resources Report (SoNaRR) for Wales and Area Based Assessments • 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.
<p>Has the body involved others in developing its well-being objectives?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • Involvement reflects good practice and advice from the Future Generations Commissioner.

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

Has the body considered how the objectives can improve well-being and have a broad impact?

- 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.
- The well-being objectives have been designed to reflect and capitalise on the connections between different areas of work.
- 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.

Has the body designed the objectives to deliver longer-term benefits, balanced with meeting short-term needs?

- The body has set objectives that are sufficiently ambitious and have been designed to drive activity across the organisation.
- 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.

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?

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

<p>Has the body considered how it can resource the well-being objectives?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. The body has allocated resources to deliver preventative benefits, where these are described in its well-being objectives.
<p>Has the body considered how it can work with others to deliver their objectives?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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.
<p>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?</p>	
<p>Has the body developed appropriate measures and monitoring arrangements?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Performance measures are designed to reflect the sustainable development principle, e.g., 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.

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