

Setting of Well-being Objectives – Eryri 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.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 Eryri National Park Authority

- 6 The aim of this examination was to:
- explain how Eryri National Park Authority (the Authority) applied the sustainable development principle when reviewing its well-being objectives;
 - provide assurance on the extent that the Authority applied the sustainable development principle when reviewing its well-being objectives; and
 - identify opportunities for the Authority to further embed the sustainable development principle when reviewing well-being objectives in future.
- 7 We set out to answer the overall question **‘To what extent has the Authority acted in accordance with the sustainable development principle when reviewing its well-being objectives?’** We did this by exploring the following questions:
- Has the Authority put appropriate annual review and reporting arrangements in place, as required by the Act and advised in statutory guidance?
 - Has the Authority considered appropriate information that would enable it to determine the extent to which the objectives remain consistent with the sustainable development principle?
- 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 December and February 2024.
- 9 We gathered our evidence in the following ways:
- reviewing key documents; and
 - carrying out a small number of interviews.

How and when Eryri National Park Authority set its well-being objectives

- 10 Eryri National Park Authority (the Authority) commenced work on reviewing new well-being objectives during 2024 then agreed its new objectives in March 2024. **Exhibit 1** sets out those well-being objectives.
- 11 The Authority previously put in place arrangements for engagement and consultations to support its work of adopting their wellbeing objectives. Eryri’s well-being objectives are set out in the Authority’s Well-being Statement 2021-26⁵.

⁵ Eryri (previously Snowdonia) National Park Authority, Well-being Statement 2021-2026 (Adopted by the Authority in March 2021)

Exhibit 1: Eryri National Park Authority well-being objectives

Resilient environments:

1. Improve recreation management and any negative effects of recreation
2. Responding to the challenges of climate change
3. Improving the management and understanding of our cultural heritage
4. Addressing the challenges and opportunities of post Brexit land management scenarios
5. Addressing the decline in nature.

Resilient communities:

1. Maintaining and increasing the quality of life of residents
2. Supporting young people
3. Promote sustainable tourism to add value to local communities
4. Promote and actively support the Welsh language
5. Develop a local economy which supports both the designation and the management of Snowdonia as a National Park.

Resilient ways of working:

1. Developing a skilled workforce,
2. Developing and promoting best practice,
3. Effective partnership working,
4. Modernising governance arrangements,
5. Maintain and improve the understanding and support of local communities to the work of the National Park.
6. Balancing the Authority's resources and efforts

What we found

- 12 Overall, we found that **the Authority has applied the sustainable development principle in reviewing its well-being objectives but can improve the evidence basis it uses for this and how it monitors its progress in delivering them.** We set out below why we reached this conclusion.

Review and reporting arrangements

- 13 The Authority has arrangements in place to review its well-being objectives and has planned proportionate reviews of its well-being objectives. For example, the Authority's management team meet annually to discuss if changes are needed to their well-being objectives. In 2022 and 2023 the team discussed and agreed that no changes were needed. In 2024, the Authority changed its objective relating to balancing resources in response to challenges to its financial position. Having these arrangements in place helps the Authority to assess in a planned way if the Authority's objectives are still appropriate.
- 14 The Authority has put in place arrangements to monitor progress towards, and report on its well-being objectives. The Authority reports on its well-being objectives annually in its Annual Reports. These reports set out the Authority's evaluation of progress including performance indicators, the results aimed for or achieved and any actions it intends to take. We found the annual reports include information for each of the well-being objectives with an overview of the activities taken place to support delivery of each objective. The Authority also provides an overall assessment of progress against each objective rated with a Red, Amber, Green (RAG) rating. The Authority's Performance and Resources Committee receive updates each quarter and one annual report that pulls together the quarterly reports. These arrangements enable the Authority to publicly report on progress against the objectives. They also help to enable members to challenge and scrutinise performance against the well-being objectives.
- 15 The Authority sets out its evaluation of progress towards its Well-being objectives in its Annual Report. The Authority sets out some results and many of its performance indicators are linked to 'Cynllun Eryri', its statutory management plan and its outcomes. However, we found that some of the performance indicators set out in the Authority's Annual Report appear to describe activity rather than the outcomes or intended impact over the longer-term. For example, under the objective of supporting young people and developing the young ranger scheme, the Authority describes the performance indicator that they have created opportunities for young people to be ambassadors for the language and culture of the area (linked with a Cynllun Eryri outcome). The results against this objective are described as attendance numbers at young ranger sessions, consultation work, a manifesto, events, plans for exchanges with other Welsh national parks and funding either received or applied for. However, the Authority has not set out the shorter-term or longer-term impact sought from this activity. By not monitoring the

short and the longer-term impact of activities, it is difficult for the Authority to monitor and evaluate progress towards its intended outcomes.

Evidence basis for reviewing the well-being objectives

- 16 The Authority drew on a range of information when reviewing its well-being objectives. For example, the Authority drew on financial information and considered how changes to its resources might impact on delivery of its well-being objectives. The Authority sighted financial risks as a key consideration for making the change to its objectives in 2024 and updated the objectives as a result of the financial risks.
- 17 The Authority drew on some external sources of information when reviewing its well-being objectives. External sources of information used by the Authority included for example information gathered during interactions with partners on 'Fforwm Eryri'. This included for example aligning local and regional transport aims and policies with partners. Other sources of information that the Authority did not consider include for example any relevant demographic data. The Authority also does not have arrangements to ensure it takes account of the views of its communities when reviewing its well-being objectives. Although the Authority did undertake involvement activity when setting its well-being objectives. Involving the full diversity of those with an interest in the delivery of its well-being objectives is important to ensure that they reflect their needs.
- 18 The Authority considers some changes in the external environment and stakeholder priorities. For example, the Authority considers the Welsh Government's remit letter when reviewing its well-being objectives. But it does not consider the implications of the objectives of other public sector bodies as part of its review of its own well-being objectives, including when objectives of other public bodies may have changed or it works with new partners. By not ensuring that it takes into account the wider implications of its well-being objectives on other public sector bodies, the Authority risks duplication or missing opportunities to secure multiple benefits.

Recommendations

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| R1 | The Authority should strengthen its arrangements for assessing its performance against its well-being objectives. This includes setting out strategic performance measure to accompany its well-being objectives that capture the short and long-term impact it is aiming for. |
| R2 | When reviewing its well-being objectives in future, the Authority should ensure that it draws on a broad range of information to help determine if the objectives remain appropriate. Such sources could relate to changes in its |

internal and external environment. Examples could include, but are not limited to:

- New legislation⁶ and policy, including changes to the well-being goals.
- Trend information including for example the Welsh Government's Future Trends report.
- Advice published by the Future Generations Commissioners, including the Future Generations Report.
- State of Natural Resources Report (SoNaRR) for Wales – Natural Resources Wales' Area Based Assessments.
- Any relevant engagement activity undertaken by others that might be helpful or relevant.
- The well-being objectives of other public sector bodies

⁶ For example, Section 20 of the Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act 2023 introduces a change to the 'Prosperous Wales' well-being goal set out in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. This will mean 'fair' work will be substituted for 'decent' work. This change came into effect on 1 April 2024. Changes under this legislation require bodies to report on the duty each year. There are other changes including around the language of seeking consensus with social partners.

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 Authority acted in accordance with the sustainable development principle when reviewing its well-being objectives?	
1. Has the Authority put appropriate annual review and reporting arrangements in place, as required by the Act and advised in statutory guidance?	
	Positive indicators

To what extent has the Authority acted in accordance with the sustainable development principle when reviewing its well-being objectives?

1.1 Has the Authority put appropriate annual review and reporting arrangements in place, as required by the Act and advised in statutory guidance?

- The Authority reports on its well-being objectives annually, setting out a clear and balanced assessment of progress against previous well-being objectives.
- The Authority has planned appropriate and proportionate review arrangements that reflect its planning cycle. This may include reviewing the objectives to varying degrees across annual cycles.
- Where necessary, the Authority publishes changes to its well-being objectives.

2. Has the Authority considered appropriate information that would enable it to determine the extent to which the objectives remain consistent with the sustainable development principle?

2.1 Has the Authority considered internal sources of information determine the extent to which the objectives remain consistent with the sustainable development principle?

- The Authority considers how changes to its resources might impact on its well-being objectives and any changes that may be needed as a result.
- The Authority draws on its performance information, including its performance against its well-being objectives but also wider information such as service monitoring.
- The Authority uses the results of involvement activity that it has undertaken or may be available from its partners. – whether primary, secondary or a combination – reflects the full diversity of the population.
- The Authority involves key people from across the organisation in the process.
- There is appropriate challenge and scrutiny of performance information and any changes to the well-being objectives, and that is taken into account in any revisions.

To what extent has the Authority acted in accordance with the sustainable development principle when reviewing its well-being objectives?

2.2 Has the Authority considered external sources of information determine the extent to which the objectives remain consistent with the sustainable development principle?

- The Authority considers relevant external information on changes in the external environment to help it understand new and potential need, risk and opportunities that may impact its well-being objectives. This is likely to be drawn from a range of local and national sources, such as:
 - Trend information, including the Future Trends report.
 - The Future Generations Report,
 - The Well-being of Wales Report (s)
 - State of Natural Resources Report (SoNaRR) for Wales – Natural Resources Wales' Area Based Assessments
 - Public Services Board well-being assessments – Regional Partnership Board population assessments – The results of local involvement/ consultation exercises
- The body is drawing on its knowledge of partners' objectives/ activity, its relationships and collaborative arrangements to determine whether the well-being objectives are still appropriate. This could include Ministerial priorities, the Programme for Government and remit letters, where relevant.
- The body considers changes to the well-being goals as necessary.
- The Authority has considered how it will address the requirements of the Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act 2023 and its changes to national well-being goals.



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