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Auditor General for Wales

Well-being of Future Generations: An examination of ‘Start Well – Help children to live healthy lifestyles’ – **Carmarthenshire County Council**

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This document is also available in Welsh.

The team who delivered the work comprised Jeremy Evans, Alison Lewis and Richard Hayward 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.

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'

- 2 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.
- 3 During 2018-19 the Auditor General is undertaking examinations across the 44 bodies covered by the Act to inform his report to the National Assembly.
- 4 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.
- 5 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.
- 6 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.
- 7 The findings in this report are based on fieldwork that we undertook during the period October 2018 to December 2018.
- 8 This report sets out our findings from our examination of 'We [the Council] will increase the range of physical activity opportunities available for children, and target those at higher risk of inactivity', a step the Council is taking to meet its well-being objectives.
- 9 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 when increasing the range of physical activity opportunities available for children, and targeting those at higher risk of inactivity.
- 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 well-being objectives may impact upon each of the well-being 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 well-being objectives.
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.

- 12 Our examination found that: **The Council has acted in accordance with the sustainable development principle in setting the 'step' and has effectively taken account of the five ways of working in the actions it is taking to deliver it.**

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

Detailed report

Part 1 – Examination findings

The Council has acted in accordance with the sustainable development principle in setting the ‘step’ and has effectively taken account of the five ways of working in the actions it is taking to deliver it

The Council has considered the long-term in setting this step and is already seeing improvement in the activity levels of young people

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 has a long-term aim to improve the health and well-being of children and young people (so that healthy children will go on to be healthy adults and as healthy parents bringing up healthy children);
 - the Council’s vision is for long-term generational changes, while recognising short-term benefits; for example, increases in the number of children and young people taking part in sport through the active young people programme and the use of young ambassadors.
- 16 We identified the following areas for improvement:
- the Council needs to collect data so it can:

² See Appendix 1

- understand the issues in sufficient detail;
- establish what success looks like (based on outcomes); and
- know how it is going to measure outcomes.
- whilst the vision is for long-term sustained change, the planning horizon the Council uses corporately for business planning is three years. The Council could consider how it might encourage services to think about planning over a longer timeframe;
- the Council could consider what makes a self-sustaining leisure offer to mitigate the issues associated with current annual funding cycles;
- the Council to look at how it measures the value associated with services it provides.

Consideration of prevention is fundamental to the actions the Council is taking

What we looked for

- 17 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.
- 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:
- preventing obesity and the problems associated with lack of physical activity is a central aim of this step;
 - the Council clearly understands that being physically active at a young age can prevent problems associated with inactivity in later life;
 - the Council is clearly aiming to break the cycle of obesity;
 - while the step is focused on young people, the Council wants to have a wider impact; fundamentally the step is aiming at creating healthier communities and generational behavioural change.
- 20 We identified the following areas for improvement:

³ See Appendix 1

- the Council to consider how improving data and understanding about childhood obesity and activity levels could enable more targeted and tailored approaches to addressing the issues;
- the Council to gain a better understanding of the outcomes of different interventions to help them build on successful practice.

The Council has effectively considered how the actions it is taking contributes to the well-being goals, its other objectives and the objectives of other public bodies

What we looked for

- 21 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

- 22 We identified the following strengths:
- the Council's business plans summarise the key actions for departments which are cross referenced against the Council's well-being objectives and the seven national well-being goals;
 - the Council takes a corporate view of the issue of increasing activity levels, across services it is looking at innovative ways to take this agenda forward for example by the concept of the life-style/wellness village.
 - the Council told us they feel integrated with Public Health Wales; both organisations are pursuing a shared goal of tackling obesity in Carmarthenshire.
- 23 We did not identify any areas for improvement in this area.
- 24 Our examination was also informed by the positive indicators for 'integration' that we have identified and used as part of this examination.⁴

⁴ See Appendix 1

The Council is collaborating with a range of partners in planning and delivering this step

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 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

- 26 We identified the following strengths:
- the Council actively considered collaboration when planning this step;
 - it is working with others to help them deliver the actions that contribute to the step and to have the widest impact. Partners include: Health Board, schools, Public Health Wales, Sport Wales, national governing bodies for sports, the Public Service Board, Sustrans, Carmarthenshire Association of Voluntary Services and the wider third sector;
 - the Council told us that education, children's and leisure services are working together effectively to deliver the step.
- 27 We identified the following areas for improvement:
- more engagement with some schools to maximise the benefit of using school buildings out of hours;
 - more engagement with Town and Community Councils to explore how they might better support the Council's ambitions.
- 28 Our examination was also informed by the positive indicators for 'collaboration' that we have identified and used as part of this examination.⁵

⁵ See Appendix 1

The Council is involving young people in the design and delivery of the step but could extend its engagement activities to be more inclusive

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:
- the Council use a number of methods to involve young people in the design and delivery of the step, including:
 - questionnaires to gather views and feedback for example play sufficiency, school sports survey;
 - consultation with the Youth Council;
 - establishing School Sports Councils (to make sure that the provision in schools is what young people want). 50% of secondary schools now have a sports council;
 - The Young Ambassadors Scheme - where young people are co-producing and delivering activities to other young people; and
 - Healthy Schools Programme – young people in schools helping to shape the priorities for the programme in the schools.
- 31 We identified the following areas for improvement:
- the Council could consider undertaking an equalities impact assessment at a step level to assure itself that it is being inclusive and is considering the requirements of young people from groups with protected characteristics.

Part Two: Council's response

- 32 Following the conclusion of our fieldwork we presented our findings to senior officers of the Council at a workshop in December 2018. 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 under specific themes.

Long-term
Review what data is currently available and identify what additional information is needed to evidence progress towards achieving outcomes / impact in the longer term.
Review opportunities to expand the business planning timeframe i.e. service plans to identify longer term (e.g. ten year) objectives and risks.
Identify the key aspects that underpin a self-sustaining leisure offer.
Identify how to measure the social value of services provided by the step.
Involvement
Undertake an Equality Impact Assessment on the step.
Identify and address any gaps in the groups / forums of young people used for consultation and engagement to ensure they are fully inclusive.
Collaboration
Further engagement with schools to maximise the benefit of using school buildings for out of hours activities / community benefit.
Further engagement with Town and Community Councils to identify opportunities for them to support the Council to deliver the step.
Corporate
Develop a system to provide assurance at a corporate level if the Council is considering the five ways of working in the actions to deliver the well-being objectives.
Develop a process to take the learning and embed it across the Council.

- 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

The table below sets out 'positive indicators' for each of the five ways of working that we have identified and will use to help inform our assessments of the extent to which bodies may be applying the sustainable development principle (SDP). We do not intend to use the indicators as a 'checklist'. They should be viewed as 'indicators' that will help us to form conclusions, rather than 'determinants' of the extent to which a body is acting in accordance with the SDP in taking steps to meet its wellbeing objectives.

Exhibit 1: Positive indicators of the five ways of working

What would show a body is fully applying the long-term way of working?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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 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 source 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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