

# Planning for future generations

Setting well-being objectives at the Welsh Revenue Authority

March 2026

# About us

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We have prepared and published this report under section 15 of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

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# Audit snapshot

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## What we looked at

- 1 Under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (the Act), the Welsh Revenue Authority (WRA) and certain other public bodies must set 'well-being objectives' to create a better Wales, both now and in the future. Having set these objectives, public bodies must also take all reasonable steps to meet them.
- 2 In setting objectives, public bodies must consider the impact on the national 'well-being goals' set out in the Act. They must also involve the public and other stakeholders in the process and consider how they might work with partners to deliver. Ultimately, public bodies must take a longer-term view, so they can meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. This is known as the 'sustainable development principle'.
- 3 We looked at how the WRA applied the sustainable development principle as it set its well-being objectives and began planning to deliver them. The WRA started developing the objectives in spring 2024 and published them at the start of April 2025.

## Why this is important

- 4 Well-being objectives should set the strategic direction for public bodies. They should help public bodies plan the short and medium-term actions they need to take to improve the well-being of the people and places they serve. If the Act is to have the desired impact, it will be important for public bodies to set their objectives effectively and to communicate how they have done that clearly.

## What we have found

- 5 Overall, we found that the WRA has applied the sustainable development principle to set well-being objectives that sit at the heart of the organisation. It has done this in a way that is proportionate to its remit but will need to go further, including engaging with more stakeholders, as its responsibilities grow. It is also not yet clear how the WRA will resource delivery of its objectives over the medium term, and it will need new performance measures.

## What we recommend

- 6 We have made five recommendations. They focus on ensuring the WRA can assess progress towards its well-being objectives. They also focus on ensuring the WRA expands stakeholder involvement when it next sets well-being objectives and includes all the necessary elements in future well-being statements.

# Key facts and figures

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## Well-being in Wales

- 7** National **well-being goals** for Wales:
- More equal
  - Resilient
  - Globally responsible
  - Vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language
  - Healthier
  - Prosperous
  - Cohesive communities

- 5** **Ways of working** that bodies must take into account when applying the sustainable development principle:
- Long term
  - Integration
  - Involvement
  - Collaboration
  - Prevention

## WRA's well-being objectives

- 3** **Well-being objectives** set by WRA for 2025-2028:
- Easy: we'll make it easy to do the right thing.
  - Fair: we'll be fair and consistent in the way we deliver our services.
  - Sustainable: we'll be a sustainable and future-focused organisation.

# Our findings

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## Planning

**The WRA drew on relevant information to set well-being objectives that sit at the heart of the organisation, but will need to engage with more stakeholders as its remit grows**

### Overall approach

- 7 The WRA became a named body under the Act on 30 June 2024. It was required to set its first well-being objectives by the end of March 2025.
- 8 This timetable coincided with the WRA's planned refresh of its Corporate Plan 2022 to 2025. This meant it was well-placed to bring together its well-being objectives and established corporate planning, in line with statutory guidance and good practice. It incorporated its well-being objectives into its Corporate Plan 2025 to 2028, published on 1 April 2025.
- 9 The Corporate Plan also includes the WRA's 'well-being statement'. The WRA is required to produce such a statement, and it should include certain information. The WRA's well-being statement does not cover all necessary information. For example, it does not include a description of how the WRA applied the sustainable development principle in drawing up the objectives (see also **paragraph 38**).
- 10 The WRA considers that the Act has always influenced its operations and that it is therefore well-placed to deliver on its new duties. It was also keen to learn from others. For example, it reviewed how other arms-length bodies, including Amgueddfa Cymru, the National Library of Wales, and Natural Resources Wales had gone about setting well-being objectives.

- 11 The WRA also sought advice from the Future Generations Commissioner (the Commissioner) on how it should approach the process (see **paragraph 21**). At the time of writing this report, the WRA was planning to hold a 'lessons learned exercise' to inform its future corporate planning.

## Understanding the short and longer term

- 12 The WRA has a tightly defined role, described in its corporate plan as being 'to design and deliver revenue services and lead on the better use of Welsh taxpayer data'. It collects two taxes – the Land Transaction Tax and the Landfill Disposals Tax. Given this, many of the typical data sources that other bodies might draw on to shape their well-being objectives and steps to meet them are not as relevant to the WRA.
- 13 The WRA has used its own performance information to help set its well-being objectives. It used this information as a starting point, reviewing its past performance against the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) in its Corporate Plan 2022 to 2025.
- 14 The WRA has also looked at factors underlying aspects of its performance. It has carried out user research to understand why some people do not pay the taxes that are due. This is reflected in the WRA's continuing focus on making it 'easy for people to do the right thing', as described in its 'easy' well-being objective.
- 15 The WRA also uses other key data to plan its services. This includes market statistics to help plan its work on the Land Transaction Tax and estimates of the costs associated with collecting the new visitor levy.<sup>1, 2</sup> These data sources have informed the WRA's thinking on how it will need to work and expand its staff capacity to deliver its well-being objectives (see **paragraphs 32 to 34**).

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<sup>1</sup> The Land Transaction Tax and Anti-Avoidance of Devolved Taxes (Wales) Act 2017 requires the WRA to collect land transaction taxes from any individual that purchases a property of a higher cost than £225,000 or a second property higher than £40,000.

<sup>2</sup> The Visitor Accommodation (Register and Levy) Etc. (Wales) Act 2025 requires the WRA to create and maintain an accommodation register for Wales, and to collect and distribute the levy where councils choose to impose it.

- 16 The WRA's Corporate Plan 2025 to 2028 also sets out how it will use data to ensure its services are 'fair and consistent', as described in its 'fair' well-being objective. Specifically, it will use data to identify risks and draw on intelligence to help improve its system, processes, and guidance to the public and staff.
- 17 The WRA explores future trends with its board as part of its regular cycle of meetings. During these meetings, board members consider political, economic, social, technological, environmental and legal 'change drivers'. While the WRA did not carry out a dedicated exercise to review future trends when setting its well-being objectives, it told us that consideration of trends is well-established and senior leaders are aware of how they could impact activity.

## Involving others

- 18 The WRA sought to engage all staff in the process of setting its well-being objectives. Staff were asked for their views on the corporate plan and well-being objectives early on, at an all-staff away day in July 2024. Staff leading the process did not consider this to have generated the right level of involvement, so they led further discussions at team meetings across the organisation through Autumn 2024.
- 19 In their feedback, staff emphasised the importance of not adding to the number of organisational plans and objectives. This reinforced the WRA's view that it should not set well-being objectives separate to its corporate plan.
- 20 Senior leaders were directly involved in setting the objectives. The executive leadership team – Tîm Arwain – was involved throughout. The Board was asked to provide feedback on draft objectives. Tîm Arwain and the Board approved the final Corporate Plan 2025 to 2028.
- 21 The WRA engaged with the Commissioner in September 2024. The WRA sought advice on the general approach public bodies should take to setting the well-being objectives and, following that engagement, felt assured that it was doing so in line with expectations.

- 22 The WRA formally consulted trade unions on the objectives in January 2025. It reflected that the trade unions provided useful feedback and information on how other bodies had set well-being objectives. However, it recognised this came late on. It did not ‘seek consensus or compromise’ by consulting them at a ‘formative stage’ and otherwise throughout the process, as required under the [Social Partnership and Public Procurement Act 2023](#). The WRA is developing more formal arrangements for engaging with its trade unions to ensure it meets its obligations under this legislation.
- 23 The WRA told us that it engaged with counterparts in the Welsh Treasury, a part of the Welsh Government, when setting its well-being objectives. The final well-being objectives were then approved by the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and the Welsh Language. The corporate plan also describes the WRA’s intention to ‘continue to support Welsh Government with the design and delivery of revenue services’.
- 24 The WRA shared its new corporate plan and well-being objectives with its key partner, Natural Resources Wales (NRW). The WRA works closely with NRW to administer the Landfill Disposals Tax. There is a ‘Delegation Steering Group’, to which the WRA presented its proposed well-being objectives and draft corporate plan in January 2025.
- 25 At that time, the Delegation Steering Group anticipated it would need to develop a new joint strategy for the Landfill Disposals Tax and to refresh the Memorandum of Understanding between the two organisations. This work is ongoing, meaning the Group has the opportunity to ensure the new strategy reflects the well-being objectives of both organisations.<sup>3</sup>
- 26 The WRA did not engage with other organisations beyond NRW and the Welsh Government when setting its well-being objectives. However, the WRA describes the importance of building new partnerships and strengthening existing partnerships in the Corporate Plan.

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<sup>3</sup> Natural Resources Wales set out its current well-being objectives in [Our corporate plan to 2030: nature and people thriving together](#), published in March 2023.

- 27 Administering the new visitor levy will bring the WRA into contact with local authorities and accommodation providers ranging from booking platforms to individual owners. This means it will be important for the WRA to involve more, and more diverse, organisations when next setting its well-being objectives.
- 28 The WRA did not consult with the public or users of its services when setting its objectives. However, as described in **paragraph 14**, it has carried out user research to help shape its services. It has also engaged with future users of the visitor levy to inform its thinking on how it would deliver on that new responsibility.

### Integrated thinking

- 29 The WRA has considered how, within its remit, it can contribute to the well-being of Wales. It sees its main contribution as indirect, through the efficient collection of revenue to support public services. It does, however, recognise the direct contribution it can make through the way it delivers its services.
- 30 The WRA has identified the steps it will take to deliver its well-being objectives and has mapped them to the national well-being goals in its well-being statement. Steps focused on accessibility and Welsh language, for example, show how the WRA intends to contribute to a 'more equal Wales' and a 'Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language', alongside other positive impacts.
- 31 The WRA has also considered its operating model in the context of the Act. It replaced its previous corporate objectives on 'efficient' and 'capable' with 'sustainable'. The sustainable objective continues the focus on increasing efficiency in tax collection, as well as seeking to increase the resilience of the organisation to face future changes.

## Resourcing and delivery

### **The WRA intends to redesign its operations to be more sustainable, but it is not yet clear how it will resource delivery of its objectives over the medium term**

- 32 As the WRA was setting its well-being objectives, it was facing uncertainties as the Senedd was debating the Visitor Accommodation (Register and Levy) Etc. (Wales) Bill. The resulting Act introduces new responsibilities that mean the WRA is in a period of significant change. The WRA sees itself expanding from 82 staff in April 2024 to around 150 by 2026.
- 33 Under its 'sustainable' well-being objective, the WRA states it wants to become a 'more service-based organisation' to help manage its expanded responsibilities. This will entail a significant restructuring of the organisation. Since the outset, the WRA has organised its activity around each of the two taxes it collects. It is reorganising around its three services: registration, tax calculation, and payments.
- 34 The WRA believes that this reorganisation will achieve efficiencies and help it be more resilient. It sees this as a necessary step to help it deliver its well-being objectives and ensure it is well-placed to take on the administration of any other devolved taxes in future.
- 35 The Corporate Plan sets out steps to deliver the well-being objectives, with more detail provided in its 2025-26 Business Plan. The Business Plan was still in draft when we were carrying out our work. While there are parallels between business plan actions and the steps under each well-being objective, it was difficult for us to see a direct link. The WRA will need to develop clearer links to avoid complexity and ensure it is focused on delivering all the steps in its Corporate Plan.

- 36 The WRA does not have a medium-term financial plan as such. However, its modelling shows a significant, and growing, gap between its estimated revenue budget and its estimated costs over the current corporate plan period. This is after accounting for efficiencies that WRA aims to achieve through service design.
- 37 We have not tested the assumptions in the WRA's modelling. However, it shows there is a risk the WRA will not fully deliver on its corporate plan and well-being objectives without an increased budget allocation and/or reducing costs.
- 38 In addition, the WRA is required to describe in its well-being statement how it proposes to ensure resources are allocated annually to fund delivery of its well-being objectives. The WRA's well-being statement does not include this.

## Monitoring

### **The WRA will continue using some established indicators to monitor its performance but recognises it needs some new measures to fully reflect its well-being objectives**

- 39 The WRA has established performance indicators, which it has used to monitor progress against previous corporate plans. The WRA's Board sees performance information on a quarterly basis.
- 40 The WRA intends to use its existing indicators to monitor its well-being objectives. It has identified certain 'external' indicators that will be the main focus of performance discussions. They have been included in the corporate plan under each well-being objective, along with some targets. The WRA will also monitor and report internally on additional indicators, designed to provide further context on progress and delivery.

- 41 The WRA has identified that it may need to develop a fuller range of measures to reflect its well-being objectives. It may need to do so for the 'sustainable' well-being objective, for example, as this has a different emphasis from previous corporate plan objectives. The WRA has identified that it may need to adapt measures for this objective over time. It also intends to prepare narrative reports to describe progress, but has not yet determined what will be included.
- 42 The WRA may also need to develop new measures as it takes on new functions. Specifically, it may need to develop new measures relating to the administration of the Visitor Levy.
- 43 At the time of our fieldwork, the WRA had begun work on updating the performance indicators. This included seeking the views of staff on the current and potential new measures. The WRA intends to develop some narrative to complement its quantitative performance indicators and targets.
- 44 The WRA is also planning to develop a narrative report on how it is embedding the five ways of working across the organisation. It has not yet decided what it will include or what form it will take.

# Recommendations

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45 Our recommendations seek to ensure the WRA can deliver its current well-being objectives effectively and apply the sustainable development principle to a greater extent when next setting them.

**R1** The WRA should review its existing performance measures as it takes on new functions and moves to become a service-based organisation in line with its well-being objectives (see **paragraphs 39 to 42**).

**R2** The WRA should establish a clearer and more direct connection between its corporate plan and business plan, specifically between the steps it has said it will take to deliver its well-being objectives and actions set out in the business plan. This should help avoid complexity and ensure it is focused on delivering all the steps in its Corporate Plan (see **paragraph 35**).

**R3** While the WRA explores future trends as part of its regular cycle of board meetings, it should build on this by incorporating consideration of future trends as part of the process of setting its well-being objectives (see **paragraph 17**). This could create opportunities to involve wider staff in exploring future trends and help WRA balance short and long-term considerations when shaping its objectives.

- R4** The WRA should expand and strengthen involvement of stakeholders when it next sets its well-being objectives, including by:
- 4.1** working with trade unions at a formative stage and throughout, to meet the requirements of the Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act 2023 (see **paragraph 22**);
  - 4.2** seeking the views of partner organisations, including new partners such as local authorities, to reflect its new responsibilities (see **paragraphs 26 and 27**);
  - 4.3** seeking the views of the diversity of users, and potential users, of its services, recognising that this will need to be proportionate (see **paragraphs 27 to 28**).

- R5** When it next develops a well-being statement the WRA should ensure it covers all the information required under the Act, including by:
- 5.1** explaining why it considers it has set well-being objectives in accordance with the sustainable development principle (see **paragraph 9**);
  - 5.2** setting out how it proposes to ensure that resources are allocated annually for the purposes of taking steps to meet its well-being objectives (see **paragraph 38**).

# Appendices

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# 1 About our work

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## Scope of the audit

Under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, the WRA must set and publish well-being objectives that are designed to maximise its contribution to achieving each of the national well-being goals.

The Auditor General must examine the extent to which the WRA has acted in accordance with the sustainable development principle when setting its well-being objectives. The Act requires an examination of this nature at least once in a specified reporting period. The current reporting period ends in May 2029.

We examined how the WRA went about setting its first well-being objectives, which it did between April 2024 and April 2025. We gathered and analysed our evidence between July and September 2025.

This was a relatively high-level review. Our main focus was on the process leading up to the publication of the objectives. We have considered corporate and financial planning in so far as they relate to how the WRA developed its well-being objectives and began planning for their delivery. We have not assessed the overall effectiveness of the WRA's corporate and financial planning.

## Audit questions and criteria

### Questions

In carrying out this work, we explored the following:

- Was the process the WRA put in place to set its well-being objectives underpinned by the sustainable development principle?
- Has the WRA considered how it will make sure it can deliver its well-being objectives in line with the sustainable development principle?

- Has the WRA put in place arrangements to monitor progress, learn, and continue improving how it applies the sustainable development principle when setting its well-being objectives?

## Criteria

We used audit criteria to inform our assessment. The audit criteria describe what good looks like and cover each of the sustainable development principle's five ways of working. They are based on the positive indicators we have previously used in our sustainable development principle examinations. We developed these indicators through engagement with public bodies and informed by advice and guidance from the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales.

## Methods

We reviewed a range of documents, including the WRA's corporate plan and well-being statement, evidence that has informed its thinking on the well-being objectives, and minutes of key meetings.

We also interviewed staff who had led the process of developing the well-being objectives and a sample of senior staff.

## 2 Key terms in this report

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| Term   | Description   |
|--|---|
| <b>The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015</b> | The Act places a duty on public bodies to carry out sustainable development, which is defined as ‘the process of improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales by taking action, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, aimed at achieving the well-being goals’.   |
| <b>Sustainable development principle</b>                     | <p>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’.</p> <p>The sustainable development principle is made up of five ways of working:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Long term</li> <li>• Integration</li> <li>• Involvement</li> <li>• Collaboration</li> <li>• Prevention.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Long term</b>   | The importance of balancing short-term needs with the needs to safeguard the ability to also meet long-term needs.  |
| <b>Integration</b>   | Considering how the public body’s well-being objectives may impact upon each of the well-being goals, on their objectives, or on the objectives of other public bodies.   |

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <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.  |
| <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>Prevention</b>                                     | How acting to prevent problems occurring or getting worse may help public bodies meet their objectives.   |
| <b>National well-being goals</b>                      | <p>The Act sets out seven well-being goals.</p> <p>The Act makes it clear public bodies must work to achieve all of the goals, not just one or two.</p>   |
| <b>National indicators</b>                            | A <u>set of indicators</u> to measure the progress towards achieving the well-being goals at a national level, rather than the performance of individual public bodies.   |
| <b>Well-being objectives – and steps to meet them</b> | <p>Public bodies must set and publish well-being objectives that are designed to maximise their contribution to achieving each of the well-being goals.</p> <p>They must also take all reasonable steps (in exercising their functions) to meet those objectives.</p>   |
| <b>Well-being statements</b>                          | <p>When publishing well-being objectives, public bodies must also publish a well-being statement. Well-being statements must include certain information. Among other things, this includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• why a body considers that meeting the objectives will contribute to the achievement of the well-being goals; and</li> </ul> |

- the steps a body proposes to take to meet those objectives.

**Future Generations  
Commissioner for  
Wales**

The general duty of the Commissioner is to promote the sustainable development principle. In particular, to act as a guardian of the ability of future generations to meet their needs, and encourage public bodies to take greater account of the long-term impact of the things that they do. The Commissioner's [website](#) provides more information about their work.

# About us

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The Auditor General for Wales is independent of the Welsh Government and the Senedd. The Auditor General's role is to examine and report on the accounts of the Welsh Government, the NHS in Wales and other related public bodies, together with those of councils and other local government bodies. The Auditor General also reports on these organisations' use of resources and suggests ways they can improve.

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Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth a galwadau ffôn yn Gymraeg a Saesneg.