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# Well-being of Future Generations: An examination of the delivery of the priority investments for leisure facilities to increase participation in exercise and contribute to residents' health and well-being – **Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council**

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Mae'r ddogfen hon hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg. This document is also available in Welsh.

The team who delivered the work comprised Colin Davies, Justine Morgan, Gareth W. Lewis and Sara Leahy 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:
  - setting their well-being objectives; and
  - 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 from August 2019 to October 2019.
- 6 This report sets out our findings from our examination of 'the delivery of the priority investments for leisure facilities to increase participation in exercise and contribute to residents' health and well-being', a step the Council is taking to meet its Wellbeing Objectives.
- 7 It also sets out the Council's initial response to our findings.

### What we examined

- 8 We examined the extent to which the Council is acting in accordance with the sustainable development principle in the delivery of the priority investments for leisure facilities to increase participation in exercise and contribute to residents' health and well-being.
- 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: 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.

<b>The Five Ways of Working</b>
<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 wellbeing objectives may impact upon each of the wellbeing 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 wellbeing objectives.
<b>Involvement</b> The importance of involving people with an interest in achieving the wellbeing goals and ensuring that those people reflect the diversity of the area which the body serves.

- 10 Our examination found that: **there are clear examples of how the Council is applying the sustainable development principle to its investment in leisure facilities, but there are opportunities to develop longer term planning and involve people in shaping future leisure provision.**

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

# Detailed report

## Part One: Examination Findings

### The Council is ensuring the sustainability of the Leisure Service and securing long term benefits for the community, but should develop a long term vision for the Service

#### 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.
- 12 Our examination was also informed by the positive indicators for the 'long term' that we have identified and used as part of this examination.<sup>2</sup>

#### What we found

- 13 We identified the following strengths:
- the Council has a clear strategy for investing in its leisure facilities to ensure they are fit for purpose for service users;
  - the long-term aim of the Council is to increase the levels of participation in regular physical activity by its citizens;
  - the step has been specifically designed to achieve the wellbeing objective 'promoting independence and positive lives for everyone' to enable long term benefits to be secured;
  - the Council clearly understands the current need and context for investing in leisure facilities and has built in flexibility to respond to future changes to that context;
  - investing in the facilities represents a commitment to the long-term; and
  - the Council has reduced the operating costs of the leisure facilities, helping to secure their long-term sustainability.
- 14 We identified the following areas for improvement:

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix 1

- develop arrangements for horizon scanning and the analysis of long term data and evaluate how this is likely to impact leisure provision in the future, eg population change;
- develop a long term, strategic approach with Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board; and
- articulate a long term vision for the leisure service when updating the Leisure Strategy.

## The Council's investment in high-quality leisure facilities should encourage residents to maintain an active lifestyle and help prevent long-term ill-health, but current measures limit the ability to evaluate the impact on well-being

### What we looked for

- 15 We looked for evidence of:
- 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.
- 16 Our examination was also informed by the positive indicators for 'prevention' that we have identified and used as part of this examination.<sup>3</sup>

### What we found

- 17 We identified the following strengths:
- the Council has a clear understanding of how increasing participation in physical activity prevents deterioration in physical and mental health and well-being.
  - the Council has improved the fitness offer for citizens, leading to increased membership and wider usage of leisure facilities.
  - preventative services are making real, positive impacts on citizens lives e.g. the provision of pre- and post-natal classes, and the access to improved leisure facilities for teenagers helps prevent anti-social behaviour and potential drug use.

<sup>3</sup> See Appendix 1

- the Council is encouraging its citizens to own their health and wellbeing to provide long term, preventative benefits.

18 We identified the following areas for improvement:

- the Council recognises the need to make better use of outcome measures to evaluate the impact of the step;
- the Council is aware of anecdotal evidence on improved health outcomes but is not capturing these stories in a consistent or methodical way; and
- the Leisure Service expressed some frustration with the performance indicators it reports against as they do not provide a full picture of active citizens in RCT (eg Park Run numbers are not presented).

## The Leisure Service is working with internal and external stakeholders to ensure it can deliver wider benefits for the community

### What we looked for

19 We looked for evidence of consideration of:

- how this step could contribute to the seven national wellbeing goals;
- how delivery of this step will impact on the Council's wellbeing objectives and wider priorities; and
- how delivery of this step will impact on other public bodies' wellbeing objectives.

### What we found

20 We identified the following strengths:

- the Council has considered how improved leisure facilities, in association with increased participation, support the national well-being goals.
- the Leisure Service has a clear strategy that makes links to the Council's four well-being objectives and the PSB's Well-being Plan.
- the Leisure Service is now more integrated with other Council services – for example, Leisure and Education have an integrated plan for the development of 3G pitches as community facilities.
- the Leisure Service has proactively sought out opportunities to work with other services.
- there is wider understanding outside of the Leisure Service about the benefits that leisure investment can bring. There is greater integration in the ways of working between Leisure, Estates, Finance, Education and Regeneration within the Council.



- the Council is not just seeing leisure centres as places for fitness – there is broader thinking about the use of buildings. The Council has created shared work spaces for Council functions within its leisure centres, integrating its Asset Management Plan with its Leisure Strategy.
- 21 We identified the following areas for improvement:
- the Leisure Service has recognised it could be more explicit in evaluating how its investment and related activity integrates with the well-being objectives and activity of the Council, the Heath Board and the Public Services Board.
- 22 Our examination was also informed by the positive indicators for ‘integration’ that we have identified and used as part of this examination.<sup>4</sup>

## The Council has worked with a range of partners, internally and externally, and there are good examples of collaborative projects

### What we looked for

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

### What we found

- 24 We identified the following strengths:
- collaborative working is a key component of the Council's Leisure Service. The Council has worked with a wide range of public and private partners in delivering its improved leisure facilities.
  - the Council is delivering a number of effective, collaborative projects such as the development of 3G sports pitches; the Pontypridd Lido; social prescribing schemes; tourism involving the Royal Mint, Rhondda Heritage and the Lido.
  - internal collaboration between different Council functions has improved greatly as a result of the increased investment in leisure facilities e.g. With schools and with parks.

<sup>4</sup> See Appendix 1

- 25 We identified the following areas for improvement:
- the Leisure Service recognises the need to further develop collaborative strategic working with Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board and neighbouring councils – currently a lot of collaborative work is driven through initiatives from Sport Wales, Public Health Wales and Welsh Government.
- 26 Our examination was also informed by the positive indicators for 'collaboration' that we have identified and used as part of this examination.<sup>5</sup>

**The Council has consulted stakeholders on the remodelling of its leisure facilities and listens to feedback from service users, but should consider opportunities to involve citizens in shaping future services**

#### What we looked for

- 27 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

- 28 We identified the following strengths:
- the Council's leadership has been actively involved in driving the investment in the leisure facilities.
  - the Council has worked with community groups to deliver the leisure review.
  - the Council gathers feedback from citizens in a wide range of ways, such as surveys, face to face meetings, and social media channels.
  - the Leisure Service uses an app to gather real time feedback from service users on the quality of its offer. This method of involvement allows the Council to respond promptly to suggestions.
  - the Leisure Service receives valuable feedback from its own employees on how to improve the offer to citizens. Many members of staff are also service users.
- 29 We identified the following areas for improvement:

<sup>5</sup> See Appendix 1

- the Leisure Service, in its move to be more customer focused, would like to speed up the process for recruiting new staff to be able to respond to the demands of its customer base.
- the Council should look to involve citizens early in the shaping of future services by asking open questions ('What do you want from a Leisure Service?'). This would help inform an update of the Council's Leisure Strategy.

## Part Two: Council's response

- 30 Following the conclusion of our fieldwork we presented our findings to the Council at a workshop in October 2019 that was attended by senior officers of the Council, and operational officers from the project team. At this workshop the Council began to consider its response to our findings.
- 31 The Council will submit this report to the Audit Committee for its consideration, and our examination findings will be used to ensure the Council and its services are acting in accordance with the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations Act including the Sustainable Development principle when developing and implementing its Service Delivery and Priority Plans and plans for key projects.
- 32 We will continue to monitor the Council's progress in addressing the issues we have identified in our findings.

# 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 Wellbeing Objectives.

#### What would show a body is fully applying the long-term way of working?

- 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 the 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?

- 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 wellbeing 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 wellbeing objectives and steps to meet them impact on other public sector bodies.
- Individuals proactively work across organisational boundaries to maximise their contribution across the wellbeing 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.

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