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Auditor General for Wales

Well-being of Future Generations: An examination of the programme of regeneration in Barry and Barry Island – **Vale of Glamorgan 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 Samantha Clements, Lisa McCarthy and Ron Price under the direction of Sara-Jane Byrne.

Contents

The Well-being of Future Generations (WFG) Act requires significant change to fully embed the five ways of working and it will take time to do this. We recognise the Council can demonstrate that it has acted in the spirit of the WFG Act in its approach to regeneration in Barry.

However, there is scope for the Council to do more to embed the five ways of working, clarify its vision and strategic approach, and integrate its plans with those of partner organisations in its regeneration of Barry.

Summary report	4
Detailed report	
Part One: Examination Findings	6
The Council has considered short, medium and long-term needs in developing its approach to regeneration of Barry and now needs to ensure the longer term sustainability of this approach	6
The Council is undertaking many preventative activities, but there is scope to better consider the root causes of problems and the preventative benefits of the step	7
The Council has started to take an integrated approach but needs to consider more fully how this step contributes to its and others' wellbeing objectives to maximise the benefits the step could deliver	8
The Council has a track record of effective collaboration, but there is scope to develop a collective vision for the area with partners and stakeholders based on data and trend analysis	9
The Council can show a number of strengths in its approach to involving partners and other stakeholders, but it is not clear how the full diversity of the community is involved	10
Part Two: Council's response	11
Action Plan	11
Appendices	
Appendix 1: Positive Indicators of the Five Ways of Working	17

Summary report

Summary

Why we undertook the Examination

- 1 In accordance with the Wellbeing 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 wellbeing 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 wellbeing objectives, the principal focus of this work is the way in which public bodies are taking steps to meet their wellbeing objectives.
- 7 The findings in this report are based on fieldwork that we undertook during the period January 2019 to February 2019.
- 8 This report sets out our findings from our examination of the programme of regeneration at Barry and Barry Island, a step the Council is taking to meet its Wellbeing Objectives.
- 9 The report 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 in implementing the programme of regeneration in Barry and Barry Island.
- 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 wellbeing objectives may impact upon each of the wellbeing 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 wellbeing objectives.
Involvement 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.

- 12 Our examination found that: The Well-being of Future Generations Act requires significant change to fully embed the five ways of working and it will take time to do this. We recognise the Council can demonstrate that it has acted in the spirit of the Act in its approach to regeneration in Barry. However, there is scope for the Council to do more to embed the five ways of working, clarify its vision and strategic approach, and integrate its plans with those of partner organisations in its regeneration of Barry.

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

Detailed report

Part One: Examination Findings

The Council has considered short, medium and long-term needs in developing its approach to the regeneration of Barry and now needs to ensure the longer-term sustainability of this approach

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:
- significant progress in improving the supply and quality of housing and transport infrastructure, which has the potential to provide longer-term benefits for local communities;
 - consideration of the Sustainable Development Principle (SDP) in the local development plan (LDP); and
 - use of data to support long-term thinking.
- 16 We identified the following areas for improvement:
- the Council has made progress in addressing housing demand, but it recognises the need to apply longer-term considerations to support long-term sustainability of communities;
 - there is scope for the Council to consider wider societal trends to inform its plans; and
 - opportunity to review the sustainability of its long-term strategy for economic regeneration.

² See Appendix 1

The Council is undertaking many preventative activities, but there is scope to better consider the root causes of problems and the preventative benefits of the step

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:
- focus on engaging traders and businesses to understand the causes and to prevent further economic decline; and
 - substantial events and campaigns to increase and maintain Barry Island as an attractive tourist destination preventing further decline in job opportunities.
- 20 We identified the following areas for improvement:
- different people had different views on what they are trying to prevent across the organisation, and the root causes of problems;
 - opportunity to articulate system-wide preventative benefits to be delivered in regenerating Barry; and
 - the vision for future sustainable and active travel arrangements to Barry Island is not yet clear.

³ See Appendix 1

The Council has started to take an integrated approach but needs to consider more fully how this step contributes to its and others' wellbeing objectives to maximise the benefits the step could deliver

What we looked for

- 21 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.
- 22 Our examination was also informed by the positive indicators for 'integration' that we have identified and used as part of this examination⁴.

What we found

- 23 We identified the following strengths:
- senior officers and councillors understand how the successful regeneration of Barry will contribute to the Council's wellbeing objectives;
 - leadership within the Council has a focus on wellbeing objectives and a supportive culture to address community needs; and
 - positive collaboration between Council services to support sustainable communities.
- 24 We identified the following areas for improvement:
- scope to consider a wider contribution to National Wellbeing Goals within regeneration plans;
 - some consideration of multiple benefits of what this step can achieve, but there are opportunities to become more systematic;
 - there is scope to integrate plans more explicitly with partners to avoid duplication and maximise opportunities; and
 - broader understanding of integration within the Council in the context of the Act is needed.

⁴ See Appendix 1

The Council has a track record of effective collaboration, but there is scope to develop a collective vision for the area with partners and stakeholders based on data and trend analysis

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 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.
- 26 Our examination was also informed by the positive indicators for 'collaboration' that we have identified and used as part of this examination⁵.

What we found

- 27 We identified the following strengths:
- a focus on place using data and trend information is supporting collaboration with partners to address developing themes;
 - the Council's Economic Development Team is effective in building capacity in communities, encouraging social enterprise and working with the third sector; and
 - working with Barry Town Council on the establishment of 'Shop Local Campaign' and the potential establishment of the Business Improvement District.
- 28 We identified the following areas for improvement:
- scope to develop a common framework/vision to give assurance to all stakeholders about the direction of travel;
 - a refresh of the Town Centre Framework plans through collaboration with partners, stakeholders and citizens; and
 - opportunity to further develop collaborative strategies with partners to maximise the effectiveness of financial resources and meet the Wellbeing Objectives and National Goals.

⁵ See Appendix 1

The Council can show a number of strengths in its approach to involving partners and other stakeholders, but it is not clear how the full diversity of the community is involved

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.
- 30 Our examination was also informed by the positive indicators for 'involvement' that we have identified and used as part of this examination.⁶

What we found

- 31 We identified the following strengths:
- a focus on involving key partners – for example, the Town Centre Forum and the involvement of citizens on environmental issues at Barry Island;
 - willingness to try a variety of engagement methods;
 - use of external consultants to inform the engagement process – Sense of Place consultation and involvement – community engagement workshops; and
 - positive and effective use of social media.
- 32 We identified the following areas for improvement:
- scope to ensure that it has involved all sections of society, and the full diversity of those affected by the Act, in a more formal and structured way; and
 - opportunity to further evaluate the success and effectiveness of its approach to transferring assets to communities.

⁶ See Appendix 1

Part Two: Council's response

- 33 Following the conclusion of our fieldwork we presented our findings to the Council at a workshop in May 2019 that was attended by officers from the planning, regeneration and tourism departments and other senior officers. At this workshop the Council began to consider its response to our findings. As a result of discussions at the workshop and further reflection on our findings, the Council has developed an action plan, which is set out below.
- 34 We will continue to monitor the Council's progress in implementing its action plan, and the extent to which they address the issues we have identified in our findings.

Action Plan

- 35 This action plan is in response to the findings of the Wales Audit Office report on the Well-being of Future Generations Act examination of the programme of regeneration in Barry and Barry Island.
- 36 The action plan is structured around the five ways of working and based on the areas of development identified by the Wales Audit Office, identifying actions that can be taken associated with the regeneration of Barry and Barry Island as well as those that apply to the Council's work to deliver the Corporate Plan generally.

Exhibit 2: Action Plan

Long term
The Council has considered short, medium and long-term needs in its approach to the regeneration of Barry and now needs to ensure the longer-term sustainability of this approach.
Areas for Development <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Council has made progress in addressing housing demand, but it recognises the need to apply longer term considerations to support long-term sustainability of communities.• Ensure consideration of wider societal trends are built into plans.• Review the sustainability of its long-term strategy for economic regeneration.

Long term	
General Principles and Approaches	Actions for Barry and Barry Island Regeneration
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the Council continues to be aware of, and where possible, influences national policy standards in key areas, for example housing and regeneration planning. • When developing the new Corporate Plan, ensure a focus on sustainability is clear from the perspectives of living, working and travelling. • When taking decisions on priorities to include in the new Corporate Plan, ensure consideration is given to a range of trend data. • Consider ways in which the Council can develop its role as a 'community leader' in setting the standard – for example, in sustainable homes, not houses and ensuring actions taken are taken in line with the Act. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When designing (or approving) regeneration schemes, ensure these are 'future proofed' in terms of infrastructure and environmental impact (such as charging points for electric vehicles and ICT connectivity etc). • When developing Economic and Regeneration plans, consider longer-term trends in working practices in order to plan and accommodate (for example, co-working spaces which reduce the need to travel). • Develop a long-term vision in Economic and Regeneration plans, but ensure that demonstrable achievements can be delivered in years, not generations, and align with capital programme spending.
Integration	
The Council has started to take an integrated approach but needs to consider more fully how this step contributes to its and others' wellbeing objectives to maximise the benefits the step could deliver	
Areas for Development	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scope to consider a wider contribution to the National Wellbeing Goals within regeneration plans. • Some consideration of multiple benefits of what this step can achieve, but there are opportunities to become more systematic. • Integrate plans more explicitly with partners to avoid duplication and maximise opportunities. • Broader understanding of integration within the Council in the context of the Act. 	

Long term	
General Principles and Approaches	Actions for Barry and Barry Island Regeneration
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Map the wellbeing objectives of the Public Services Board (PSB), partners and the Council as a means of identifying where joint approaches could lead to reduced duplication and increased impact in terms of contribution to the National Wellbeing Goals. • Seek to expand the understanding of Council colleagues and members of what the ‘integration’ way of working means and its benefits when redesigning the Council’s Corporate Plan 2020-2025. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further develop the approach to ‘place based budgets’ bringing together the spending of multiple Council departments – and partners (including the Town Council) – based within defined geographical areas to support joint Economic and Regeneration plans. • When developing Economic and Regeneration plans, with stakeholders and partners, consider the funding regimes and available grants to different organisations, in order to maximise the impact of funds available.
Involvement	
<p>The Council can show a number of strengths in its approach to involving partners and other stakeholders, but it is not clear how the full diversity of the community is involved.</p>	
Areas for Development	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scope to ensure that it has involved all sections of society, and the full diversity of those affected by the Act, in a more formal and structured way. • Further evaluate the success and effectiveness of its approach to transferring assets to communities. 	

Long term	
General Principles and Approaches	Actions for Barry and Barry Island Regeneration
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopt an approachable style to consultation and engagement that uses understandable language and is targeted at appropriate audiences. • Consider expanding the use of digital methods to enable all parts of our community to be communicated with and involved in shaping and commenting on policy decisions, supporting digital literacy skills where required. • Seek to use data in a more effective way to identify and target specific groups and exploit the knowledge and experience of Council departments who may have existing relationships with these groups (eg, within Housing, Social Services, Communications teams). • When designing involvement, engagement, consultation and communication exercises, consider the way the results will be evaluated early on. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take learnings from the way in which consultation was undertaken for potential car parking charges as this reached a large audience. • When developing new Economic and Regeneration plans, seek to involve the community (residents and business owners) in shaping this plan and its direction). • Develop the work of the 'place board' to input into the development of Economic and Regeneration plans, including representatives from different sections of the community. • Seek to speed up the community asset transfer process to enable the transfer of appropriate assets to the community. Support communities to develop the skills and access the resources needed to take on assets. • Promote the Strong Communities Grant Fund to community groups interested in community asset transfers to promote the sustainable operation of these assets. • Mainstream a community mapping toolkit approach to empower the communities of Barry to identify their, social and physical assets. The aim being to stimulate new regeneration activities and build capacity within communities. Community mapping has been proven to be an invaluable tool in identifying priorities in the rural Vale and for the allocation of Section 106 funding.

Long term	
Collaboration	
<p>The Council has a track record of effective collaboration, but there is scope to develop a collective vision for the area with partners and stakeholders based on data and trend analysis.</p>	
<p>Areas for Development Scope to develop a common framework/vision to give assurance to all stakeholders about the direction of travel. Opportunity to further develop collaborative strategies with partners to maximise the effectiveness of financial resources to meet the wellbeing objectives and National Wellbeing Goals. A refresh of the Town Centre Framework plans through collaboration with partners, stakeholders and citizens.</p>	
General Principles and Approaches	Actions for Barry and Barry Island Regeneration
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on a place-based approach to break down possible silos within and across organisations. • Develop a shared understanding of assets across organisations and the opportunities to work together to maximise their value. • Bring together partners to identify and share data that can inform the development of future strategies. • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider ways of introducing a cluster/hub based approach to regeneration activity with partners, for example, how to work more closely with partners on anti-social behaviour. • Develop Economic and Regeneration plans in the context of the wider City Region Deal in positioning Barry as an investment zone of multiple sectors. • When developing Economic and Regeneration plans, involve all partners from the inception and base the vision on a series of joint and agreed priorities. • Be innovative and creative in securing 'ownership' of Economic and Regeneration plans and by engaging with all local stakeholders to ensure a 'bottom-up' approach to the development of policies.
Prevention	
<p>The Council is undertaking many preventative activities, but there is scope to better consider the root causes of problems and the preventative benefits of the step.</p>	
<p>Areas for Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different people had different views on what they are trying to prevent across the organisation, and the root causes of problems. • Articulate system-wide preventative benefits to be delivered in regenerating Barry. • Clarify the vision for future sustainable and active travel arrangements to Barry Island. 	

Long term	
General Principles and Approaches	Actions for Barry and Barry Island Regeneration
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work in partnership with all current and potential partners to develop long-term prevention strategies. • Seek to set long-term budgets wherever possible to enable longer-term preventative planning to take place. • To understand the root causes of issues properly, we will seek to engage with as many people as possible. • Preventing problems will involve adopting a multi-agency approach wherever possible, for example with Transport for Wales, NHS and Police. • Seek to use the assets (including our maritime heritage, new housing, transport links, tourism, leisure and technology) in the area as a way of preventing future problems in new and innovative ways. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximise the live-work benefits of Barry with its coast and quality of life in the context of the South Wales city environment. • In the context of Barry as an active travel hub (with four railway stations and plentiful cycling and walking routes), consider long-term traffic management for Barry based on reducing car usage with measurable targets for sustainable transport use. • Through information provision and marketing, seek to further improve the perception of Barry as a place to live, work, visit and invest in. • Prepare Economic and Regeneration plans in consultation with a wide range of stakeholders to achieve a common understanding of any problems, their root causes and how together we can tackle them.

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 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 3: Positive Indicators of the Five Ways of Working

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 wellbeing 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?

- 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 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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