

## Report of: Audit Wales

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### Subject: Audit Wales Report on Setting of Well-being Objectives

Decision Required: Yes

#### Recommendation:

- a. Members are asked to receive, note and present any views on the Audit Wales report on Setting Well-being Objectives
- b. Members are asked to agree the Organisational Response

#### 1. Key Messages

1.1 The report from Audit Wales on Setting of Well-being Objectives is attached.

#### 2. Background

2.1 Audit Wales undertakes a programme of performance auditing. As part of the Auditor General's local government studies programme in 2022-23, Audit Wales reviewed the governance arrangements across the National Park Authorities (NPAs) in Wales.

2.2 Their review considered the following:

- Was the process the Authority put in place to set its well-being objectives underpinned by the sustainable development principle?
- Has the Authority considered how it will make sure it can deliver its well-being objectives in line with the sustainable development principle?
- Has the Authority put in place arrangements to monitor progress and improve how it applies the sustainable development principle when setting its well-being objectives?

2.3 The high-level conclusion was that:

**“The Authority has applied the sustainable development principle when setting its current well-being objectives informed by a range of data and collaborative activity.”**

A bilingual copy of the report is included as Annex A.

2.4 Audit Wales have made the following recommendation:

#### **Performance reporting**

R1 As the Authority is strengthening its performance monitoring and reporting arrangements with the inclusion of baseline data and more detailed performance reports, the Authority should review the effectiveness of these arrangements to ensure the arrangements assist members in scrutinising and challenging performance information.

### **3. Management Response**

- 3.1 There is a requirement for the Authority to include an Organisational Response to the recommendations. This is prepared by officers of the Authority and is presented with the report. A draft is included as Annex B.

### **4. Presentation**

- 4.1 Officers from Audit Wales will attend the meeting to present the report and discuss this work with Members.

*(For further information please contact Tegryn Jones at [Tegrynj@pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk](mailto:Tegrynj@pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk))*

# Setting of Well-being Objectives – Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority

Audit year: 2024-25

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We welcome correspondence and telephone calls in Welsh and English. Corresponding in Welsh will not lead to delay. Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth a galwadau ffôn yn Gymraeg a Saesneg. Ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

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

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## Background: Our examinations of the setting of well-being objectives

- 1 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (the Act) places a ‘well-being duty’ on 56 public bodies. The duty requires those bodies to set and publish ‘well-being objectives’ that are designed to maximise their contribution to achieving each of the Act’s seven national well-being goals.<sup>1</sup> They must also take all reasonable steps, in exercising their functions, to meet those objectives.
- 2 The Auditor General must carry out examinations to assess the extent to which public bodies have acted in accordance with the sustainable development principle when setting their well-being objectives.<sup>2</sup> We are carrying out a rolling programme of these examinations, up to early 2025.<sup>3</sup>
- 3 To do something in accordance with the sustainable development principle means acting ‘in a manner which seeks to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs’. To achieve this, a public body must take account of the five ways of working: long term, integration, involvement, collaboration, and prevention.<sup>4</sup>
- 4 We designed an assessment framework to enable us to assess the extent to which public bodies have applied the sustainable development principle when setting their well-being objectives. **Appendix 1** sets out further information on our approach, including a set of ‘positive indicators’ that illustrate what good could look like.
- 5 In designing our approach, we considered what we could reasonably expect from public bodies at this point in time. Public bodies should now be familiar with the sustainable development principle and ways of working and be seeking to apply them in a meaningful way. At the same time, we appreciate that public bodies are still developing their experience in applying the sustainable development principle when setting well-being objectives. Therefore, the examinations include consideration of how public bodies are applying their learning and how they can improve in future.

<sup>1</sup> The seven national well-being goals are; a prosperous Wales, a resilient Wales, a healthier Wales, a more equal Wales, a Wales of cohesive communities, a Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language, and a globally responsible Wales.

<sup>2</sup> Section 15 (1) (a) Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

<sup>3</sup> The Auditor General must carry out examinations over the period set out in the Act, which begins one year before a Senedd election and ends one year and one day before the following Senedd election.

<sup>4</sup> Section 5 Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

## Carrying out our examination at Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority

- 6 The aim of this examination was to:
- explain how Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority (the Authority) applied the sustainable development principle throughout in the process of setting its well-being objectives;
  - provide assurance on the extent that the Authority applied the sustainable development principle when setting its well-being objectives; and
  - identify opportunities for the Authority to further embed the sustainable development principle when setting well-being objectives in future.
- 7 We set out to answer the overall question ‘to what extent has Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority acted in accordance with the sustainable development principle when setting its new well-being objectives’. We did this by exploring the following questions:
- Was the process the Authority put in place to set its well-being objectives underpinned by the sustainable development principle?
  - Has the Authority considered how it will make sure it can deliver its well-being objectives in line with the sustainable development principle?
  - Has the Authority put in place arrangements to monitor progress and improve how it applies the sustainable development principle when setting its well-being objectives?
- 8 We discussed the timing of the examination with the Authority, and we tailored the delivery to reflect its specific circumstances. We delivered this work between July and August 2024.
- 9 We gathered our evidence in the following ways:
- reviewing key documents; and
  - carrying out a small number of interviews.

## How and when Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority set its well-being objectives

- 10 Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority (the Authority) commenced work on setting new well-being objectives during 2021 then published its new objectives in March 2022 in its Corporate and Resources plan 2022-23. **Exhibit 1** sets out those well-being objectives.
- 11 The Authority has subsequently published its well-being objectives as part of its Corporate and Resources Plan 2023-24 to 2026-27<sup>5</sup>, which included its well-being

<sup>5</sup> [Corporate and Resources Plan 2023/24 - 26/27 - Pembrokeshire Coast National Park](#)

statement that is required under the Act. The Corporate and Resources Plan 2023-24 to 2026-27 can be viewed on its website.

12 The Authority has three key documents conveying its priorities over different timescales:

- a National Park Management Plan 2020-2024;
- a high-level strategy 2022-2026; and,
- a Corporate and Resources Plan 2023-24 to 2026-27.

The Management Plan contains five themes, the high-level strategy contains four priorities, and the Authority used these four priorities to shape its four well-being objectives. Due to the different timeframes of each plan and when the Authority developed them, this may cause confusion when articulating the Authority's key priorities.

13 This risk may reduce as the Management Plan 2020-2024 is nearing its end. At the time of our fieldwork, the Authority was consulting on and developing a new Management Plan to cover the period up to 2029. The draft plan for consultation includes the Authority's current four priorities and well-being objectives with a view of retaining these. If this happens, there may be opportunities in the future to streamline key documents and help to alleviate any confusion as to the Authority's priorities.

### **Exhibit 1: Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority well-being objectives**

Conservation – To halt the decline and enhance biodiversity quality, extent and connectivity at scale, so nature is flourishing in the Park.

Climate – To achieve a carbon neutral Authority by 2030 and support the Park to achieve carbon neutrality and adapt to the impact of Climate Change.

Connection – To create a Park that is a Natural Health Service that supports people to be healthier, happier and more connected to the landscape, nature and heritage

Communities. To create vibrant, sustainable and prosperous communities in the Park that are places people can live, work and enjoy.



## What we found

### **The Authority has applied the sustainable development principle when setting its current well-being objectives informed by a range of data and collaborative activity**

### **The Authority used a wide range of evidence and involved others when developing its well-being objectives while also ensuring alignment with the national well-being goals**

- 14 The Authority drew on a broad range of data when developing its well-being objectives including from the Pembrokeshire well-being assessment and South-West Wales Area Statements. Therefore, the Authority has a good understanding of current risks and opportunities. It also reflected on its previous well-being objectives and identified a need to reduce the number of objectives from seven to four. This demonstrates that the Authority reviewed its previous approach and applied learning from this.
- 15 The Authority engaged, involved and consulted with its staff, members, partners and the public when drafting its well-being objectives. Preparations for developing its new wellbeing objectives took place during the Covid-19 pandemic. While this limited the Authority's ability to arrange in-person engagement events, the Authority consulted with stakeholders online. The Authority made some changes to its well-being objectives as a result of consultation responses, although it did not change the focus of its well-being objectives. This demonstrates the Authority's willingness to listen and respond to feedback.
- 16 The Authority produced a comprehensive Single Integrated Assessment to inform its well-being objective setting. In completing the Single Integrated Assessment, the Authority drew on a range of evidence from other organisations in England and Wales that captured the views of groups and individuals who share protected characteristics. This enabled the Authority to gain a better understanding of the potential impact of delivering its well-being objectives on individuals who share protected characteristics. While these views provide the Authority with a range of evidence, it is planning to undertake its own stakeholder mapping exercise. This activity should help the Authority to gather its own local intelligence and demonstrates a commitment to understand future collaborative opportunities that could benefit the full diversity of the local population. This has the potential to help the Authority develop actions based on the needs of the full diversity of the population, and therefore help it to secure value for money.
- 17 There is clear alignment between the Authority's well-being objectives and the national well-being goals. The Authority clearly sets out how it considered the national well-being goals and the sustainable development principle when developing its well-being objectives.

- 18 The Authority designed its well-being objectives to focus on delivering interventions to prevent problems escalating. For example, by delivering nature recovery on land and in the marine environment, supporting the protection of 30% of land and seas for nature by 2030. The focus on preventive or early intervention activities, demonstrates the Authority's understanding of the short, medium and long-term challenges and its commitment to tackle the root cause of these issues.

### **The Authority has allocated resources in the short-term to support delivery of its well-being objectives and has clear actions to identify resources for the medium to long term**

- 19 For 2023-24, the Authority allocated specific funding to deliver each of its well-being objectives. For 2024-25, the Authority did not do this due to the well-being objectives being considered too interrelated to allocate specific resources for each. However, the Authority did allocate resources to support delivery of its well-being objectives. The Authority intends to revisit the possibility of allocating specific resources for each well-being again when setting its 2025-26 budget.
- 20 There are delivery plans supporting each well-being objective. The Authority also has eight separate delivery plans focusing on cross-cutting themes. One of these focusses specifically on resources with three priority actions to improve the financial position and resilience of the Authority, supported by medium-term actions. This demonstrates the Authority's commitment to identifying future resourcing opportunities to help it deliver its priority activities which increases the likelihood of the Authority delivering its well-being objectives.

### **The Authority is committed to partnership working and collaboration**

- 21 The Authority is committed to working collaboratively. The Authority works with numerous partners and stakeholders on projects that help deliver its well-being objectives. One example is the Authority's involvement in a Roots to Recovery project. The Authority works with Mind Pembrokeshire to deliver a range of activities to encourage greater access to the outdoors for social and mental health benefits of its participants and to prevent the worsening of mental health issues. By working collaboratively, this can help the Authority to achieve better value for money and improved outcomes through, for example, the sharing of resources and expertise.
- 22 The Authority has also demonstrated alignment with key local partners. For example, there is synergy with one of Pembrokeshire's Public Services Board well-being objectives that focuses on the nature emergency. The Authority is a key contributor in delivery of this well-being objective. Additionally, the Authority has a partnerships framework which identifies its significant partnerships. This framework enables the Authority to understand how each partnership contributes to the delivery of its well-being objectives. Considering how partners can contribute to the

delivery of its well-being objectives can help the Authority to avoid duplication and identify opportunities to secure multiple benefits.

- 23 The Authority captures its collaborative working in an annual report. In July 2024, the Authority considered its first annual Partnerships Monitoring Framework report, for the period 2023-24. The report contains each of the four well-being objectives with an overview of the activities taken place to support delivery of each. In addition, there is an overall assessment of each partnership with a Red, Amber, Green (RAG) rating and the required resources to deliver the activities. This report enables monitoring and scrutiny of the Authority's collaborative activity.

### **The Authority regularly monitors its performance in delivering its well-being objectives**

- 24 The Park Authority monitors its progress in delivering its well-being objectives through its delivery plans for each of the four well-being objectives. Monitoring arrangements include;
- Performance reporting system and Case Impact Studies;
  - Management Team Dashboards;
  - Committee performance reports; and
  - Annual Report on meeting its Well-being Objectives.
- 25 Each delivery plan contains outcomes and priority actions. These have milestones, measures, timescales, resource implications and the responsible team for delivering each action. At the time of our fieldwork, the Authority was strengthening its performance monitoring and reporting arrangements by collecting baseline data supporting several performance indicators. At that time, the Authority had yet to receive a performance report with this additional information, so we are unable to comment on its effectiveness. However, the inclusion of baseline data to support its targets in future performance reports should improve the Authority's ability to more accurately monitor progress.
- 26 At the time of our fieldwork, the Authority were trialling a different approach to monitoring and reporting. The Authority's Operational Review Committee receive a detailed, focused report on one well-being objective at each quarterly meeting. The committee also receives a quarterly performance report on progress against the Authority's priority indicators and projects against all its well-being objectives. The Audit and Corporate Review committee also receives quarterly performance reports. These arrangements help to facilitate scrutiny and challenge by Authority members.
- 27 The Authority has arrangements to be able to demonstrate progress in delivering its well-being objectives. Performance reports include an assessment using the Red, Amber and Green (RAG) ratings. There are clear and detailed definitions for each of its RAG ratings. At the time of our fieldwork, the Authority was reviewing

its RAG ratings descriptions following a review of its performance management framework.

## Recommendations

### **Performance reporting**

- R1 As the Authority is strengthening its performance monitoring and reporting arrangements with the inclusion of baseline data and more detailed performance reports, the Authority should review the effectiveness of these arrangements to ensure the arrangements assist members in scrutinising and challenging performance information.

# Appendix 1

## Key questions and what we looked for

The table below sets out the question we sought to answer in carrying out this examination, along with some sub-questions to guide our evidence gathering. They are based on the positive indicators we have previously used in our sustainable development principle examinations, which were developed through engagement with public bodies and informed by advice and guidance from the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales. This list is not a checklist, but rather an illustrative set of characteristics that describe what good could look like.

**To what extent has the body acted in accordance with the sustainable development principle when setting its new well-being objectives?**

**Planning: Was the process the body put in place to set its well-being objectives underpinned by the sustainable development principle?**

<p><b>Has the body used data and other intelligence to understand need, risks and opportunities and how they might change over time?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The body has a clear and balanced assessment of progress against previous well-being objectives that has been used to inform the body's understanding of the 'as is'/ short-term need.</li> <li>• The body has set well-being objectives based on a good understanding of current and future need, risk and opportunities, including analysis of future trends. This is likely to be drawn from a range of local and national sources, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Public Services Boards' well-being assessments</li> <li>– Regional Partnership Boards' population assessments</li> <li>– The results of local involvement/ consultation exercises</li> <li>– Service monitoring and complaints</li> <li>– Future Trends report</li> <li>– Natural Resources Wales' State of Natural Resources Report (SoNaRR) for Wales and Area Based Assessments</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The body has sought to understand the root causes of problems so that it can address negative cycles and intergenerational challenges through its well-being objectives.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Has the body involved others in developing its well-being objectives?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The body uses the results of involvement to help select its well-being objectives. That involvement – whether primary, secondary or a combination – reflects the full diversity of the population.</li> <li>• Involvement reflects good practice and advice from the Future Generations Commissioner.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Has the body considered how the objectives can improve well-being and have a broad impact?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The well-being objectives have been designed to improve well-being in the broadest sense and make a contribution across the seven national well-being goals.</li> <li>• The well-being objectives have been designed to reflect and capitalise on the connections between different areas of work.</li> <li>• There is a well-developed understanding of how the well-being objectives impact on/ relate to what other public bodies are trying to achieve and opportunities to work together.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Has the body designed the objectives to deliver longer-term benefits, balanced with meeting short-term needs?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The body has set objectives that are sufficiently ambitious and have been designed to drive activity across the organisation.</li> <li>• The objectives are designed to meet short and longer-term need. Where objectives are set over a short to medium timeframe, they are set in the context of longer-term considerations or ambitions.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Resourcing and delivery: Has the body considered how it will make sure it can deliver its well-being objectives in line with the sustainable development principle?</b></p>	
<p><b>Has the body considered how it can resource the well-being objectives?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resources have been allocated to ensure the objectives can be delivered over the short and medium-term, but the body has also considered longer-term resources, risks and/or how it can resource longer-term objectives.</li> <li>• The body has allocated resources to deliver preventative benefits, where these are described in its well-being objectives.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Has the body considered how it can work with others to deliver their objectives?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The body is drawing on its knowledge of partners objectives/ activity, its relationships and collaborative arrangements to make sure it can deliver on cross-cutting ambitions.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Monitor and review: Has the body put in place arrangements to monitor progress and improve how it applies the sustainable development principle when setting its well-being objectives?</b></p>	
<p><b>Has the body developed appropriate measures and monitoring arrangements?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performance measures are designed to reflect the sustainable development principle, e.g., by focusing on outcomes that cut across departmental/ organisational boundaries and deliver multiple (including preventative) benefits over the longer term.</li> <li>• There is a 'golden thread' that will allow the body to clearly and transparently report on progress to meeting the objectives.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Is the body seeking to learn from and improve how it has applied the sustainable development principle to setting its well-being objectives?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The body shows self-awareness and a commitment to improving how it applies the sustainable development principle so that it can do so in a meaningful and impactful way.</li> <li>• The body has learnt from setting previous well-being objectives and from applying the sustainable development principle more generally and has improved the process for setting its new well-being objectives.</li> <li>• The body has or plans to reflect on how it has applied the sustainable development principle in this round of setting well-being objectives.</li> </ul>







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# Management response form



**Report title:** Setting of Well-being Objectives – Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority

**Completion date:** December 2024

**Document reference:** PCNPA/2024-25/WBO

Ref	Recommendation	Management response Please set out here relevant commentary on the planned actions in response to the recommendations	Completion date Please set out by when the planned actions will be complete	Responsible officer (title)
R1	As the Authority is strengthening its performance monitoring and reporting arrangements with the inclusion of baseline data and more detailed performance reports, the Authority should review the effectiveness of these arrangements to ensure the arrangements assist members in scrutinising and challenging performance information.	Authority will carry out a review of its performance monitoring and reporting arrangements following the end of 2024/25 (allowing for full year of new process to have occurred) to assess effectiveness of new approach and to identify where improvements can be made. It will engage and seek feedback from key officers and Members as part of this review and consider relationship of our performance data with the national indicators and milestones.	30 September 2025 (this will enable us to also take into account activities linked to preparation of Annual Report on Meeting Well-being Objectives for 2024-25 and other annual reporting requirements)	Performance and Compliance Officer