

Barriers to the successful Implementation of the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

Neath Port Talbot Public Services Board Response

Q1. Awareness and understanding of the Act and its implications.

The Board has a good awareness and understanding of the Act and its implications and this is reflected in its terms of reference. We are committed to delivering on our Well-being Objectives as outlined in our Well-being Plan 2018-2023 [The Neath Port Talbot We Want](#), and have regularly monitored and reviewed our progress around these objectives as detailed in our most recent [Annual Report](#). The Board considers the Sustainable Development Principle in all its workstreams and is mindful of the five ways of working.

Partners of the NPT PSB generally have a good awareness and understanding of the Act within their organisation and this is embedded in their policies and procedures.

We are aware, however, that there is a general lack of awareness and understanding amongst the general public. This is something that could be improved upon at both a local and national level.

Q2. The resources available to public bodies to implement the Act and how effectively they have been deployed.

Resource continues to be a major barrier to the delivery of the Act with partners agencies expected to pool existing resources to deliver on the well-being objectives. Whilst a good idea in principle this is quite often difficult to deliver on in practice with public service budgets being increasingly under pressure and capacity in terms of staff resource consistently fully utilised in day to day responsibilities.

A certain level of co-ordination is essential in order to drive and deliver on new workstreams, and whilst a small amount of money is made available from Welsh Government on a regional basis this is a limited amount with quite strict criteria. This funding was not available during 20/21 despite the PSB being required to play an active role in the multi-agency recovery planning for its area following the Covid-19 outbreak. We understand there are plans to reinstate this for 21/22.

The lack of funding available to the PSB to deliver the Well-being Plan is in stark contrast to Regional Partnership Boards (RPB) where central funding is made available to support the development and delivery of RPB work.

Q3. Support provided to public bodies by the Future Generations Commissioner.

NPT PSB were pleased to welcome the Future Generations Commissioner to a board meeting earlier this year and found it helpful to hear some examples of good work in Wales and beyond.

The Commissioner has provided some tools and documentation to help support the implantation of the Act, along with a regular newsletter. In general, support is felt to be fairly limited although it is understood that the Commissioner's team is quite small.

Q4. The leadership role of the Welsh Government.

There has been very limited Welsh Government representation at meetings of the NPT PSB.

We do believe that there could be a clearer leadership role undertaken by the Welsh Government in relation to the awareness and promotion of the Act. There is regular correspondence between Welsh Government and PSB Support Officers, but direction and guidance is limited. There also appears to be limited connection between Welsh Government and the Commissioner's office.

Q5. Any other barriers to successful implementation of the Act (e.g. Brexit, COVID, etc.).

This year our PSB has been focusing on, firstly the emergency response to the Covid outbreak, followed by a partnership effort to understand the areas most impacted by the pandemic. We are now working on plans to reduce these negative impacts as much as we can and support recovery for our communities and businesses. The emergency situation has resulted in improved partnership working and a greater connect with citizens and communities as a whole, and this is something we would like to build on going forward. Whilst we are still awaiting the guidance on the next local assessment of well-being, we had planned to build on our recent Community Impact Assessment to establish a picture of well being in our area and would not want to be undertaking a massive assessment exercise that would detract from our work around recovery.

Whilst we understand the importance of assessment to inform our next well-being plan, the flexibility to respond to the local need in our area is essential.

For our partners that are represented on more than one PSB, we recognise the challenge of the number of strategic partnerships, some with competing remits, as being a major issue for public sector organisations within Wales.

Although we are yet to see the full impact of Covid 19, we are aware of the potential impact on public service budgets that may be to come, which could in turn impact the delivery of well-being plans unless specific funding is made available to PSBs.

Q6. How to ensure that the Act is implemented successfully in the future.

In order to ensure that the Act is implemented successfully in the future, and to progress the good work of the PSBs it is crucial that funding is made available. Access to available funding streams will enable for the pooling of knowledge and resources by working collaboratively across partner organisations to the benefit of our local communities and future generations, together with the ability to adopt 'one-off' financial support to ensure some initiatives get off the ground as part of embedding long terms goals for shaping and sustaining communities of the future.

Raise awareness and understanding of the Act amongst the general public. This can be done at a national and local level. It has been noted that people only tend to be aware of the Act when something has affected them personally and they are looking at ways to challenge decisions, often around environmental issues.

Getting communities and citizens more involved in the implementation of the Act is crucial moving forward. We need to build on work already started, avoiding duplication and strengthening collaboration.