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Well-being of Future Generations: An examination of developing a range of options to improve rural transport – **Monmouthshire County Council**

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This document is also available in Welsh.

The team who delivered the work comprised Dave Wilson, Allison Rees, Lisa McCarthy, programme managed by Non Jenkins 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:
 - 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 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 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 November 2018 to March 2019.

What we examined

- 8 We examined the extent to which the Council is acting in accordance with the sustainable development principle when developing a range of options to improve rural transport.
- 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'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 well-being goals, and ensuring that those people reflect the diversity of the area which the body serves.

- 10 Our examination found that: **The Council has acted in accordance with the sustainable development principle in setting the step 'to develop a range of options to improve rural transport' but there are opportunities to further embed the five ways of working.**

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

Detailed report

Part One – examination findings

The Council has acted in accordance with the sustainable development principle in setting the step ‘to develop a range of options to improve rural transport’ but there are opportunities to further embed the five ways of working

The Council is at an early stage of understanding long-term needs and solutions

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.²

What we found

- 13 We identified the following strengths:
- the Council understands a lack of rural transport is a concern for many residents in the area.
 - the Council considers that greater integration between local transport providers is part of a long-term solution.
 - the Council is open to new ways of working that may have a long-term effect and is keen to explore these through, for example, the GovTech project.
 - the Council’s commissioned ‘Rural Transport Study’, funded by the Welsh Government 2014-2020 Rural Development Programme, suggests a long-list of actions the Council could take to improve the availability and quality of transport in Monmouthshire.

² See Appendix 1.

- the Council has bid for Community Transport Association funding to combine all transport modes to develop an accessible service but was unsuccessful.
- the Council received a £3.5m Welsh Government grant earmarked for spending by March 2019. £317,000 of this is allocated to buy new vehicles for the grass routes' bus service. The remainder of the funding is for active travel and transport infrastructure projects. Funding is also available to upgrade train stations.
- the Council initially assessed the financial implications of delivering the Council's well-being steps. The Council can use this information to decide to redirect resources to deliver these steps, if required.
- the Council's commissioned 'Rural Transport Study' identifies actions to move towards integrated service provision and co-ordination for the long term.
- in the short-term, the Council can focus on delivering measures that are in the Local Transport Plan.
- Monmouthshire's Wellbeing Action plan describes success as: technology being used to connect existing transport providers which have spare capacity and incentivising new providers to come to the market. The stated measures are:
 - percentage of people satisfied with their ability to get to/access the facilities and services they need;
 - percentage of people who are lonely;
 - emissions of greenhouse gases; and
 - levels of nitrogen dioxide pollution in the air.
- the Council is seeking to address the results of the lack of rural transport. These are described in the wellbeing assessment and include:
 - loneliness among older people is exacerbated by distance from family members;
 - factors such as affordable housing and employment opportunities increase pressure on families to disperse – older people who see their children once a month or less are twice as likely to feel lonely than those who have daily contact with their children; and
 - the prevalence of low-paid and fragile employment contributes to the risk of in-work poverty while infrequent public transport means that it can be difficult for those without private transport to travel for work.
- the Council has a wealth of Lower and Middle Layer Super Output Area data, with some at ward level. This includes average travel times by public and private transport to GPs, pharmacy, post office and local council services.

- 14 We identified the following areas for improvement:
- the title of the step may be misleading as it is also seeking to address the likely consequences of the lack of rural transport;
 - the Council has not fully clarified the short, medium or long-term success measures at the time it approved this step, although it later included these in a funding bid;
 - success measures to be developed as solutions emerge;
 - rural Transport Action Plan contains short-term actions only; and
 - the Council has assessed that additional resources may be needed but not where these resources will come from.

The Council has identified some of the problems caused by the lack of rural transport but has not yet identified potential solutions

What we looked for

- 15 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.
- 16 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

- 17 We identified the following strength:
- the 'Rural Transport Study' and local engagement have identified some challenges and opportunities in understanding and addressing problems caused by the lack of rural transport.
- 18 We identified the following areas for improvement:
- the Council has not yet fully engaged with those most affected by the lack of rural transport to help identify preventative measures to minimise the negative impact;
 - the Council has not identified its information needs to help plan and deliver this Step or agreed arrangements for information sharing between partners;

³ See Appendix 1.

- the Council has not yet reviewed how effectively resources available for rural transport are used and how these might be used differently, for example, subsidies and concessions; and
- work is underway to consider how the effects of the lack of rural transport can be prevented – this work sits under separate steps and has not yet been drawn together.

The Council is committed to integrated solutions but rural transport is not well recognised within Council and partner plans

What we looked for

- 19 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.
- 20 Our examination was also informed by the positive indicators for ‘integration’ that we have identified and used as part of this examination.⁴

What we found

- 21 We identified the following strengths:
- ‘developing new technologies for improving rural transport’ is part of Monmouthshire’s Wellbeing Plan with links to the following national wellbeing goals: Prosperous Wales, More Equal Wales, Cohesive Communities and a Globally Responsible Wales;
 - the Council is the lead public sector body (within the Monmouthshire Public Service Board – PSB) on improving rural transport with links to the following Well-Being Plan objectives:
 - provide children and young people the best possible start in life;
 - respond to challenges associated with demographic changes;
 - protect and enhance the resilience of the natural environment whilst mitigating and adapting to climate change;
 - rural transport integrates with other steps within Monmouthshire’s wellbeing plan:
 - Active citizenship

⁴ See Appendix 1.

- Design and planning
 - Renewables
 - Active and Sustainable travel
 - City Deal
 - the Council has tentatively discussed rural transport with the Community Transport Association and Cardiff Capital Regional City Deal;
 - the Council is now working more formally with Transport for Wales (TfW) and is one of three pilot areas for rural transport development, and TfW is contributing data to inform the GovTech project; and
 - the Council recognises that an integrated solution is required.
- 22 We identified the following areas for improvement:
- this Step is not referred to within potentially relevant Council business plans such as the enterprise and communities plan or social services business plans.
 - this Step is not referred to in partner plans such as Health Board or the NHS Ambulance plans. The Council does not know whether partners have quantified the impact of the lack of rural transport on their services.

The Council has started to collaborate in the planning and scoping of some solutions and would benefit from engaging with more partners to identify root causes and additional sustainable solutions

What we looked for

- 23 We looked for evidence of:
- consideration of how it could work with others to deliver the step (to meet its wellbeing objectives, or assist another body to meet its wellbeing objectives);
 - effective collaboration to deliver the step; and
 - monitoring and reviewing whether the collaboration is helping it or its stakeholders to meet well-being objectives.
- 24 Our examination was also informed by the positive indicators for 'collaboration' that we have identified and used as part of this examination.⁵

⁵ See Appendix 1.

What we found

25 We identified the following strengths:

- Council officers are members of a wellbeing sub-group of TFW. There is opportunity for officers to highlight Monmouthshire's rural transport issues and it creates the opportunities to work collaboratively with others.
- positive collaboration in the planning stages with the research provider, MAGOR initiative and GovTech.
- the Council is collaborating with five partners as part of the GovTech project.

26 We identified the following areas for improvement:

- the Council is unclear about the willingness of partners to collaborate with the Council in delivering this step, although it is clearly in some partners' interests to do so;
- the Council's Strategic Transport Group is made up of Officers and Members and has the potential to be effective in helping to deliver this Step, but this group has not yet been involved; and
- rural transport step has been discussed at the PSB but at this stage PSB partners have not yet entered into meaningful collaboration with the Council to deliver the Step.

Whilst there are positive examples of stakeholder involvement, the Council could benefit from involving the public at an earlier stage and producing comprehensive equality impact assessments for all policy decisions on major service change

What we looked for

27 We looked for evidence of:

- identifying who needs to be involved in designing and delivering the step;
- effectively involving key stakeholders in designing and delivering the step;
- using the results of involvement to shape the development and delivery of the step; and
- learning lessons and improving its approach to involvement.

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

⁶ See Appendix 1.

What we found

29 We identified the following strengths:

- this step was identified as a result of the engagement with local residents feeding into the wellbeing assessment. For example:
 - public transport was raised as an issue in the Access for All workshop held for older people and people with disabilities; and
 - the Youth Forum identified that public transport needs to be addressed.
- the Council's commissioned 'Rural Transport Study' involved and consulted many stakeholders at a workshop. Fifty-three participants attended, including Council services, community representatives, health services and transport operators, including bus, taxi and community transport.
- baseline research into non-statutory services commissioned by the LEADER programme looked at five community areas in Monmouthshire and rural Newport.
- the Council's commissioned 'Rural Transport Study' has approximately 30 case studies of how the issue of poor rural transport provision is being addressed elsewhere.
- the Council is engaged with the MAGOR representatives in developing proposals for a walkway station in the community.
- the Council is considering working with Severn Wye Energy Agency – it picked Grossmont in Monmouthshire to dig deep into that community but has not progressed this - although the Council knows how they are going to do it.
- co-production of solutions was one of the criteria used to select the firms the Council is working with on the GovTech project. Co-production will form part of the next phase of the assessments; and
- the Council has completed an overall equality impact assessment for the Step.

30 We identified the following areas for improvement:

- social services know the people affected by the lack of rural transport and where they live. The ones the Council do not know about are the isolated people who do not engage with services. The Council has not decided how to contact these people yet.
- as this step develops there will be more opportunities to involve those most affected by the lack of rural transport in finding solutions – local residents and service providers.
- some of those most affected by rural transport should be engaged throughout the implementation of the solution.

- the Council says it knows who the major stakeholders are and has initiated contact with some, but it finds some others more difficult to engage with because Council officers are unclear who to contact within these organisations to start discussions.
- the college next door to County Hall is accessible but information about students affected by rurality is not available.

Part Two: Council's response

31 Following the conclusion of our fieldwork, we presented our findings to the Council at a workshop in March 2019 that was attended by the Head of Policy and Governance, Performance Manager, Performance Officer, Rural Development Plan Manager, Project Manager for GovTech bid and Sustainability Policy Officer. At this workshop the Council began to consider its response to our findings and following discussions at the workshop and further reflection on our findings the Council developed the following actions.

Exhibit 2: the Council's actions

Desired Outcome	Action	Relevant WoW	Who/When	Resources
Better understanding of future trends	Utilise the Future Trends reports delivered through Gwent PSBs and subsequent workshops to ensure that insight and transport scenarios are used to inform and shape future commissioning of transport options.	Long term	Head of Policy and Governance Key decision points/Spring 2020	Funded through Welsh Government Grant for PSBs.

Desired Outcome	Action	Relevant WoW	Who/When	Resources
Prevent demand arising where possible by identifying the root causes of issues	Ensure that commissioned projects consider and address the root causes that result in transport demand.	Long term Preventative	Head of Policy and Governance/ Head of Enterprise and Community Development Spring 2020	No additional resources required.
A sustainable transport solution is in place that meets the needs of current and future service users	Ensure that procurement decision at the end of GovTech Catalyst is taken based on an understanding of long-term costs including the potential benefits of prevention.	Long term Preventative	Head of Policy and Governance/ Head of Enterprise and Community Development Spring 2020	To be determined by final submissions.
Understand the needs of those who are not presently accessing services as well as those who are	Use user research carried out in phase 1 of the GovTech challenge to form comprehensive understanding of user needs at the local level.	Prevention Involvement	Future Monmouthshire Co-ordinator May 2019	Existing staff capacity using research funded by Government Digital Service.
Effective use and sharing of data between different partners	Seek a long-term solution that enables data and insight from multiple partners in a single place to provide better information about needs, potential supply and gaps.	Integration	Head of Policy and Governance / Head of Enterprise and Community Development Spring 2020	Development of pilot pending allocation of phase 2 funding from Government Digital Service.

Desired Outcome	Action	Relevant WoW	Who/When	Resources
Effective learning from phase one of the GovTech Catalyst informs the future developing of transport solutions	Work with the Government Digital Service and use the outputs from phase 1 to produce a revised scope for phase 2 tendering exercise seeking further collaboration with private providers.	Involvement Collaboration	Future Monmouthshire Co-ordinator May 2019	Existing staff capacity.
An effective transport eco-system is in place that enables a multiplicity of providers across different sectors to supply services from a single platform	Produce a specification for phase 2 of the GovTech Catalyst that specifies the requirement for a solution to enable multiple providers to collaborate as part of a single platform or brand.	Collaboration	Head of Policy and Governance/ Head of Enterprise and Community Development Spring 2020	Existing staff capacity for Monmouthshire County Council. Dependent on phase 2 funding from Government Digital Service.

32 We may monitor the Council's progress in implementing these actions and the extent to which they address the areas for improvement we identified in this report.

Appendix 1

Positive Indicators of the Five Ways of Working

Exhibit 3: 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 Well-being 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 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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