

ESPON QoL – Quality of Life Measurements and Methodology

Annex 11 to the Final Report
Case study: WALES

Applied Research

Final Report

30th October 2020

Final Report

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Annex 11 to the Final Report

Case Study 08:

Wales

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Methodology

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Disclaimer:

This document is an Annex to the final report.

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The final version of the report will be published as soon as approved.

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Abbreviations

FG Commissioner	Future Generations Commissioner for Wales
GVA	Gross Value Added
NRW	Natural Resources Wales
PB	Public Bodies
PBS	Public Services Board
QoL	Quality of Life
RBA	Results Based Accountability
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
TQoL	Territorial Quality of Life
WFG Act	Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

Introduction

This is one of the 10 case studies of the ESPON study “Quality of Life Measurements and Methodology”. The purpose and results of the study, including the definition and application of a territorial quality of life measurement methodology, the synthesis of all case study findings, targeted policy recommendations, ideas for fostering cooperation between ESPON, EUROSTAT, OECD and the UN and recommendations for further research, are illustrated in the Final Report, to which this case study report is annexed.

The purpose of the case studies is twofold:

- A) to collect good practices that can be adopted in other European regions, and
- B) to make use of the methodology developed and allow for adjustments through testing in case studies.

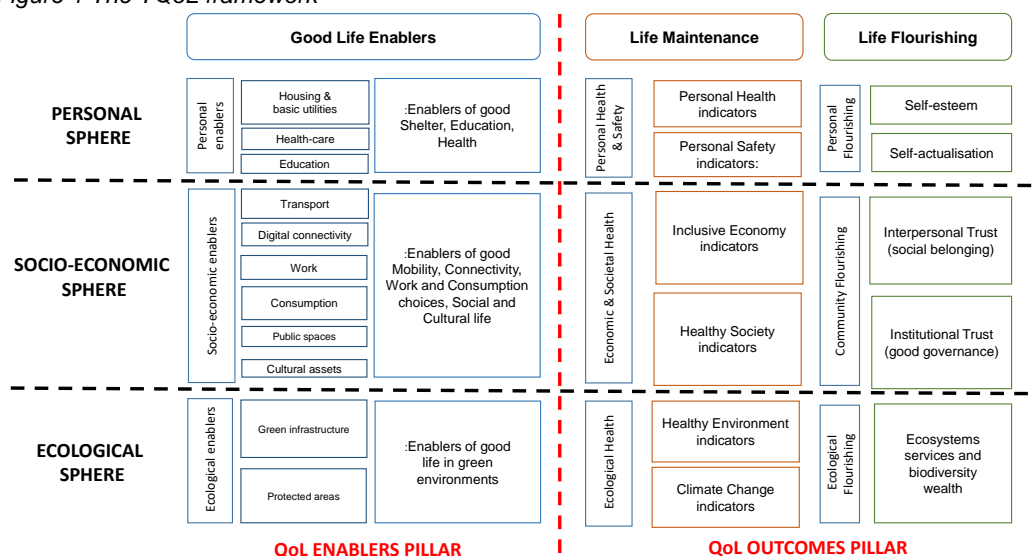
Each case study provides examples of application of the concept of quality of life (QoL) in a specific region. This complements the conceptual model and the research done at European level. The reasons why this region has been chosen forms part of Section 1.

For objective A) the case study report explores the policy context, in which QoL is used and measured in the region (Section 2). It is important to understand for which purpose the concept has been established, in which policy fields it is being used, how different levels of government are involved and which success factors and obstacles can be identified. Section 3 explains the indicators, measurement methods and data that are used for measuring QoL.

Objective B) is covered in Section 4. The study defines and tests a methodology to measure QoL at territorial (sub-national) level and offers guidance to policy makers at different levels – local, regional, national, European – on how to integrate QoL in policy processes and in territorial development strategies. We have applied to the case studies the methodology developed in the main report. This includes the Territorial Quality of Life (TQoL) measurement system and the system for coding indicators.

The TQoL framework defines the system and its main elements (pillars, spheres, sub-domains) to measure QoL facets with reference to territorial entities identified. This is shown in the TQoL framework in figure 1 below.

Figure 1 The TQoL framework



The system for **coding indicators** to represent and monitor adequately the different QoL domains, defined in the TQoL framework, is illustrated in Table 1 below.

Table 1 Coding of the indicator system in the TQoL framework

Dimension	Domain	Sub-domain	Definition
Good Life Enablers	Personal enablers	Housing & basic utilities	
		Health	
		Education	
	Socioeconomic enablers	Transport	
		ICT connectivity	
		Work opportunities	
		Consumption opportunities	
		Public spaces	
	Ecological enablers	Cultural Assets	
		Green infrastructure	
Life Maintenance	Personal Health and Safety	Protected areas	
		Personal health indicators	
	Economic and Societal Health	Personal safety indicators	
		Inclusive economy indicators	
	Ecological Health	Healthy Society indicators	
		Healthy Environment indicators	
		Climate change indicators	
Life Flourishing	Personal Flourishing	Self-esteem	
		Self-actualization	
	Community Flourishing	Interpersonal Trust (Social Belonging)	
		Institutional Trust (good governance)	
	Ecological Flourishing	Ecosystems services and biodiversity wealth	

Both, the TQoL framework and the coding system are applied in all case studies (Sections 4.1 and 4.2).

The methodology developed in this report includes further elements - a dashboard, the latent clustering approach and the citizen-centric approach - that are applied in the case studies, if sufficient data or information have been available. These elements are as follows:

- The indicators coded for local or sub-regional territorial units are presented in a **dashboard** (in an Excel-based tool). In the dashboard different points in time or objective and subjective indicators can be included and compared at territorial unit level. The specific indicators used to monitor the QoL domains are different in each case, as they take into account specific local circumstances that influence the selection of indicators (e.g. availability of data, local priorities and practices).
- In the case studies that cover a large number of territorial units the **Latent Class clustering model** helps to analyse underlying patterns and spatial differences of territorial QoL. However, the number of case studies falling in this category is small.
- A descriptive element of the TQoL approach identified in this applied-research project is the “**citizen-centric**” **approach**, where citizens are engaged in co-design, implementation and fact-checking activities (“factfulness” tests), to make the measurement of territorial QoL more responsive to the needs and aspirations of citizens to improve their everyday life. This can be promoted, recommended, and applied within the different case study contexts highlighting in particular any existing local practice of citizen engagement that could be adopted as a concrete example of the approach.

These methodological elements are considered in the case studies which were carried out to investigate and compare noteworthy experiences of territorial QoL measurements against the TQoL framework that has been developed with the aim of drawing lessons for further adjusting and fine tuning the methodology, which will eventually allow for its practical and widespread use for measuring QoL across territories in Europe.

1 Description of the region

1.1 Characteristics of the region

Wales is a constituent part of the United Kingdom of Great Britain¹ and Northern Ireland. Its total population, according to the most recent official estimate (mid-2018)² is 3,138,600 inhabitants. In 2011 it was 3,063,456, according to the 2011 census results. Since the 1980s, net migration has generally been positive and has contributed more to population growth than the natural change.

All major cities – Cardiff (362,750 population), Swansea (245,480) and Newport (151,500) –are located in South Wales, while large parts of the country, especially Mid-Wales are sparsely populated.

Wales was shaken by the decline of its industrial mainstay, coal mining, and has been in a long-term process of industrial transition. Since 2016 the steelworks at Port Talbot in South Wales, employing some 4,000 people, has been under the threat of closing down. The country has been developing a diversified economy, particularly in the cities of Cardiff and Swansea, while the countryside, once reliant on small farming, has become reliant on retirees from England and tourism became an economic staple.

Overall, the modern Welsh economy is dominated by the service sector. However, Wales has higher shares of employment in agriculture and forestry, manufacturing, and government than the rest of the UK and it provides concomitantly fewer jobs in financial and business services. There is active foreign investment in Welsh manufacturing, particularly in its high-technology industries, but Wales's GDP per capita and employment rates are far below average for the United Kingdom.

As the capital city of Wales, Cardiff is the main engine of growth in the Welsh economy and the significant service centre and economic driver for the wider south Wales economy. The city and the adjoining Vale of Glamorgan contribute a disproportionately high share of economic output in Wales. Cardiff is a centre for white-collar professions. The city relies principally on the retail, finance, media and tourism sectors and has been undergoing major regeneration since the late 20th century, particularly in Cardiff city centre and Cardiff Bay.

Since the late 1990s, Wales has enjoyed a high degree of devolution from central government. It has its own government (the Welsh Government) and democratically elected Parliament (the National Assembly for Wales), which can pass laws for Wales in areas, such as health, education, economic development, transport, agriculture, housing, planning and the environment. Hence, Wales has full autonomy in the field of QoL with its own legislation (the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015), institutional arrangements and procedures (territorially based assessment, planning, measurement and reporting).

The exact definition of Wales and its subregions is, as follows: the NUTS 1 region Wales includes two NUTS 2 units, 12 NUTS 3 units and 22 LAUs.

¹ Great Britain comprises England, Scotland and Wales

² Released on 26.06.2019 by the ONS
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates>

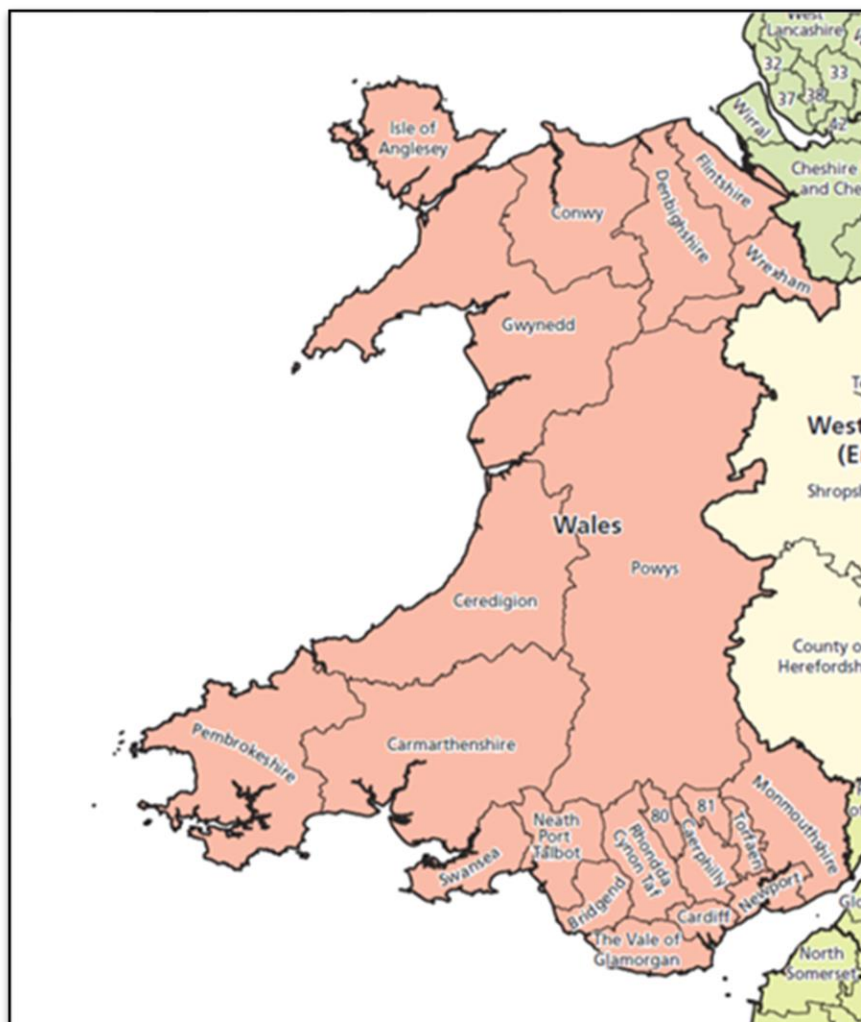
The case study covers the whole of Wales at NUTS 1 level, since:

- all the QoL provisions apply uniformly throughout Wales;
- the NUTS 1 level covers both ‘less’ and ‘most’ developed regions according to EU Cohesion Policy typology:
 - UKL1: West Wales and the Valleys (‘Less Developed Region’)
 - UKL2: East Wales (‘Most Developed Region’)
- the main sources of information for the case study are the same for any level NUTS classification.

In the ESPON typology, all the NUTS 3 regions³ are classified as “Region with industrial branches losing importance”, The regions are mainly either predominantly urban or rural, and they are coastal regions.

Figure 2 and Table 2 present the area covered by the case study and the statistical definition of Wales and its subregions.

Figure 2 Wales and its sub-regions (local authority areas, LAU)



Note: 80 – Merthyr Tydfil, 81- Blaenau Gwent

Source: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/methodology/geography/ukgeographies/eurostat#wales>

³ Except for UKL 12, 13, 14, 18, 22, which are not classified as regions of industrial transition

Table 2 Statistical definition of Wales and its sub-regions

NUTS 1 (1 unit)		NUTS 2 (2 units)		NUTS 3 (12 units)		LAU (22 units)	
UKL	Wales	UKL1	West Wales and the Valleys	UKL11	Isle of Anglesey	W06000001	Isle of Anglesey
				UKL12	Gwynedd	W06000002	Gwynedd
				UKL13	Conwy and Denbighshire	W06000003	Conwy
						W06000004	Denbighshire
				UKL14	South West Wales	W06000008	Ceredigion
						W06000009	Pembrokeshire
						W06000010	Carmarthenshire
				UKL15	Central Valleys	W06000024	Merthyr Tydfil
						W06000016	Rhondda Cynon Taf
				UKL16	Gwent Valleys	W06000018	Caerphilly
						W06000019	Blaenau Gwent
						W06000020	Torfaen
		UKL17	Bridgend and Neath Port Talbot	W06000012	Neath Port Talbot		
				W06000013	Bridgend		
		UKL18	Swansea	W06000011	Swansea		
		UKL2	East Wales	UKL21	Monmouthshire and Newport	W06000021	Monmouthshire
						W06000022	Newport
				UKL22	Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan	W06000014	Vale of Glamorgan
						W06000015	Cardiff
				UKL23	Flintshire and Wrexham	W06000005	Flintshire
						W06000006	Wrexham
		UKL24	Powys	W06000023	Powys		

Source: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/methodology/geography/ukgeographies/eurostat#wales>
<https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/nuts/local-administrative-units>

1.2 Rationale for selecting the case study

The main reasons for selecting Wales for this case study are: the fact that there is a well-developed and all-encompassing QoL system which is already operational; and, the diversity of the region.

The **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 ('the WFG Act')** has established well-being goals and institutional arrangements applying at regional and local level, including:

- the office of **Future Generations Commissioner for Wales ('FG Commissioner')**; and
- a **Public Services Board (PBS)** for each local authority area in Wales whose members represent all key public services.

It has also established a planning and implementation system, including Assessments of Local Well-being and Local Well-being Plans, as well as an extensive monitoring system that has been operational since 2016, involving 46 specially defined well-being indicators and progress reporting.

Wales at NUTS 1 level is a **highly diverse region**, comprising different types of area under EU Cohesion Policy and ESPON typologies. As such, it provides a very valuable opportunity for learning from the whole process of developing and operating policy approaches and tools at sub-Member State level.

2 Policy context

2.1 Outline of the QoL concept

The QoL concept, which has been legally defined and is being implemented in Wales, has been succinctly presented in the preamble of the WFG Act on 29 April 2015, as follows:

“An Act of the National Assembly for Wales to make provision requiring public bodies to do things in pursuit of the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales in a way that accords with the sustainable development principle; to require public bodies to report on such action; to establish a Commissioner for Future Generations to advise and assist public bodies in doing things in accordance with this Act; to establish public services boards in local authority areas; to make provision requiring those boards to plan and take action in pursuit of economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being in their area; and for connected purposes”.

This Act is a detailed 52-page legal document which established goals, institutional arrangements, as well as planning, monitoring and reporting procedures and tools.

Hence, the QoL concept in Wales comprises the following elements:

- a **legal framework**: the WFG Act;
- a set of **common goals** ('the well-being goals'), each with its own statutory descriptor, namely:
 - 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
 - a globally responsible Wales.
- newly created **institutional arrangements** specifically for QoL purposes:
 - the post (and the Office) of **Future Generations Commissioner for Wales** (FG Commissioner);
 - a **Public Services Board** for each local authority area in Wales.
- a **Well-being Duty**: a 'collective duty' on the **Public Services Boards** (PSBs) and 'individual duty' on **Public Bodies** (PBs) – see sub-section 2.3.
- **Provisions** regarding specific activities and processes by the above **core institutional players** (FG Commissioner, PSBs, PBs) in pursuance of the well-being goals and generally sustainable development.
- **Provisions** regarding specific activities and processes of **other institutional players** relating to QoL, including the Welsh Assembly, Welsh Government, local authorities (elected local government) and the Auditor General for Wales.

2.2 Evolution of the QoL approach

In 2011, the Welsh Government dedicated legal and policy resources to developing new legislation that would enable public services to tackle health and societal problems and mobilise civil society to serve and sustain future generations. Just as the United Nations initiated a global conversation on 'The World We Want', the Welsh Government initiated a national conversation about 'the Wales We Want', in 2014 to stimulate discussion across Wales on long term sustainable development goals for Wales to work towards. This approach enabled citizens to participate in defining a new sustainable development framework for Wales. The Welsh conversation involved over 7,000 people through, for example, engagement with individuals and community groups, the recruitment of 'future champions' to act as advocates of communities and organisations, and the organisation of stakeholder workshops, involving public service organisations. The outcome of this process influenced the legislation, which, after scrutiny and review by the Welsh Assembly, became the WFG Act in 2015.

An evolutionary approach continued during the implementation of the WFG Act with a strong emphasis on collaboration between all relevant institutional players and community involvement, in putting in place the remaining components. Two key aspects, where the QoL approach is still evolving, are:

- The development of milestones for Wales, which have been delayed and their eventual adoption could mark a big shift in measurement and accountability;
- Taking forward the better alignment of all public bodies with the expectations of the WFG Act.

Recent public consultations on the development of the milestones also provided feedback on the indicators, showing that there was no call to change the indicator set significantly, but a number of essential refinements were identified:

- amend the indicators around the quality of work, taking into account the recommendations of the Fair Work Commission;
- investigate a new National Survey for Wales question on 'active global citizens' to replace the indicator on SDG partnerships (No 46) that cannot currently be measured;
- extend the pay difference indicator to other population groups (e.g. ethnicity and part-time).

The recent (May 2020) major report of the FG Commissioner, Future Generations Report 2020, has put forward a series of recommendations to take this evolutionary process further, addressed to the different QoL actors under each well-being goal and priority area – see also under accountability and reporting in section 2.3.

2.3 Governance levels and the use of QoL in a policy context

The overall policy context in which the QoL approach is embedded is framed by an all-encompassing long-term strategy of the Welsh Assembly and Government for the improvement of public services, covering economic, social, environmental and cultural aspects.

The WFG Act places legal duties on the public sector to set their own well-being objectives that seek to improve well-being and maximise their contribution towards the seven nationally agreed well-being goals. It does not apply to the private sector.

The role of the core institutional players is outlined below.

Future Generations Commissioner for Wales

The WFG Act created the position of the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales (FG Commissioner) whose role is to promote the sustainable development principle, to act as a guardian for the interests of future generations in Wales, and to support the public bodies to work towards achieving the well-being goals; also, to monitor and assess the extent to which well-being objectives set by public bodies are being met.

The first FG commissioner, [Sophie Howe](#), was appointed by the Welsh Government in March 2016 for a seven-year term.

The FG Commissioner has a range of actions at her disposal and has used them extensively, notably:

- Assistance and advice to PBs and PSBs.
- Research including into the well-being goals and the sustainable development principle and how public bodies apply it.
- Dissemination of good practice.

The FG Commissioner has already pursued such activities extensively, for instance, producing a series of outputs (**'Art of the Possible'**) showcasing good practice and providing public bodies with a plethora of examples and options as to how they can meet the expectations of the legislation by providing practical steps that they can take. These resources are referred to as **'Journeys'** to the national well-being goals.

Another series is called **'Frameworks'** and sets out prompts and questions to ensure public bodies consider all elements of the WFG Act (goals, objectives and ways of working) and help them carry out sustainable development. These can also be used by other organisations, community groups and members of the public to ask public bodies to demonstrate their consideration of the legislation.

The FG Commissioner has also produced a large number of formal and informal reports and other communications that contain **observations and advice** on how public bodies can meet their duties, make better decisions or change their approach in specific policy areas, such as transport, education and decarbonisation.

The FG Commissioner has used a wide range of **other activities and tools** including: Live Labs, a Leadership Academy, newsletters and formal progress and annual reports.

In terms of policy areas covered, the FG Commissioner has generally covered public services. Certain policy areas have received particular attention⁴, such as:

- Land use planning and placemaking⁵
- Transport
- Housing
- Decarbonisation
- Skills for the future
- Adverse childhood experiences
- Health and wellness system

⁴ Future Generations Report 2020

⁵ Evaluating Well-being, The Planner, March 2020

Certain key aspects of public services, have also been specifically addressed particularly, procurement and, to a lesser extent, budgets.

The WFG Act has granted additional powers to the FG Commissioner, which have not been used so far, to:

- **Carry out reviews** into how public bodies are taking account of the long-term impact of their decisions; and
- **Make recommendations** to a public body about the steps it has taken or proposes to take to meet its well-being objectives. (Public bodies must take all reasonable steps to follow the recommendations made by the Commissioner).

Instead, the FG Commissioner and the public bodies have settled for a compromise, which involves the PBs conducting their own self-assessments while the FG Commissioner provides a 'personalised feedback' to each body. The PBs use a 'self-reflection tool' provided by the FG Commissioner in a form that encourages public bodies to think critically about the objectives they set, the progress they are making and their overall approach to the Act as an organisation. The tool was distributed to the 44 public bodies in November 2018 and, by July 2019, the FG Commissioner had received completed submissions from all 44 organisations. The FG Commissioner's feedback to each PB has been detailed and critical. In October 2019, the FG Commissioner published a synthesis of her overall findings, 'Progress towards the Well-being of Future Generations Act', which summarises the main findings across all PBs and the state of play by type of PB.

Public Services Boards

In line with the provisions of the WFG Act, a PSB has been set up for each of the 22 local authority areas in Wales. Following voluntary mergers between some neighbouring PSBs, there are now 19 PSBs in full operation.

The statutory members of each board are:

- the local authority;
- the Local Health Board within which a local authority falls;
- the Welsh fire and rescue authority;
- the Natural Resources Body for Wales.

Other public bodies (see below) and community organisations can be invited to sit on PSBs and are treated as 'partners'. The PSBs have limited own personnel and other resources; they are mostly supported by the respective local authority(ies)⁶ but operate autonomously in terms of decision making, communications (e.g. own website), etc.

The WFG Act has imposed a **well-being duty** on the PSBs, namely, to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of their area by contributing to the achievement of the well-being goals. Key steps are:

- **Assessments of local well-being:** A PSB must prepare and publish an assessment of the state of economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being in its area.
- **Local well-being plans:** A public services board must prepare and publish a Local Well-being Plan setting out its local objectives and the steps it proposes to take to meet them.

Work on the assessments started soon after the establishment of the PSBs, and all of the PSBs published their **Assessment of Local Well-being in 2017**.

⁶ They are subject to the 'Overview and Scrutiny Committee' of the relevant local authority.

Local Well-being Plans for 2018-2023 have been published by all PSBs. The whole process followed guidance issued by the FG Commissioner, including on the involvement of local communities which was very extensive and formal advice to each PSB in response to their draft assessment on the definition of their local objectives and actions. The Local Well-being Plans set objectives and address policy areas within the range of the well-being goals. The plans are sent formally to Ministers, FG Commissioner and Auditor General.

Annual progress reports on the implementation of the Well-being Plans started to be published in 2019 by all the PSBs. There is also provision for the reviewing of local objectives and updating of the Local Well-being Plans by the PSBs. The PSBs are required to produce a new plan at the beginning of every new local authority term (within a year of local elections).

Public Bodies

The WFG Act specifies precisely all the public bodies that should adhere to the provisions of the Act. They include both the Welsh Government ('Ministers') and the 22 local authorities (elected local government level). The remainder are:

- Local Health Boards
- National Health Service Trusts (Public Health Wales NHS Trust and Velindre NHS Trust).
- National Park Authorities
- Fire and Rescue Authorities
- Natural Resources Wales
- The Higher Education Funding Council for Wales
- The Arts Council of Wales
- Sports Council of Wales
- National Library of Wales
- National Museum of Wales

The Act imposes a **well-being duty** on all public bodies to carry out sustainable development⁷, including:

- setting and publishing objectives ("well-being objectives") that are designed to maximise its contribution to achieving each of the well-being goals, and
- taking all reasonable steps in exercising its functions to meet those objectives.

The form in which these activities are performed includes the following key steps:

- **Well-being Statement:** Public bodies publish a statement when setting their well-being objectives explaining how each objective will help them achieve the well-being goals. In doing so they must make sure that they involve people interested in achieving the goals and that those people reflect the diversity of their area.
- **Annual Reporting:** Each public body publishes an annual report showing the progress it has made in meeting its objectives. This is the normal corporate annual report of the organisation and does not follow any common specification as a result of the WFG Act.

The policy focus of each PB's Well-being Statement is usually its own policy area, e.g. health, but there are examples of PBs adopting a broader approach, for instance, cultural bodies having objectives to improve health. Partly due to this specificity, the objectives set by the public

⁷ Defined as the process of improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales by taking action, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, aimed at achieving the well-being goals.

bodies by April 2017 amounted collectively to 345 well-being objectives being set up across Wales!

The overall assessment of the FG Commissioner⁸ is that so far “no one public body has ‘cracked’ the WFG Act across all of its legal requirements and aspirations” and that “progress is being made towards meeting well-being objectives in some areas, but there is variation in how public bodies are applying the Act”. The FG Commissioner has been critical of some PBs, especially in the health sector, where she has bluntly stated that “Welsh Government processes and targets are a challenge and barrier” and that “Health bodies should consider setting broader well-being objectives and ensure that the steps they are taking to meet their objectives are clear”. On the positive side, the FG Commissioner has found that “National Park Authorities have embraced the Well-being of Future Generations Act and, with some development in corporate centres, could become an exemplar sector for the rest of the public bodies covered by the Act”.

Governance

The governance of QoL in Wales is essentially pursued at two territorial levels:

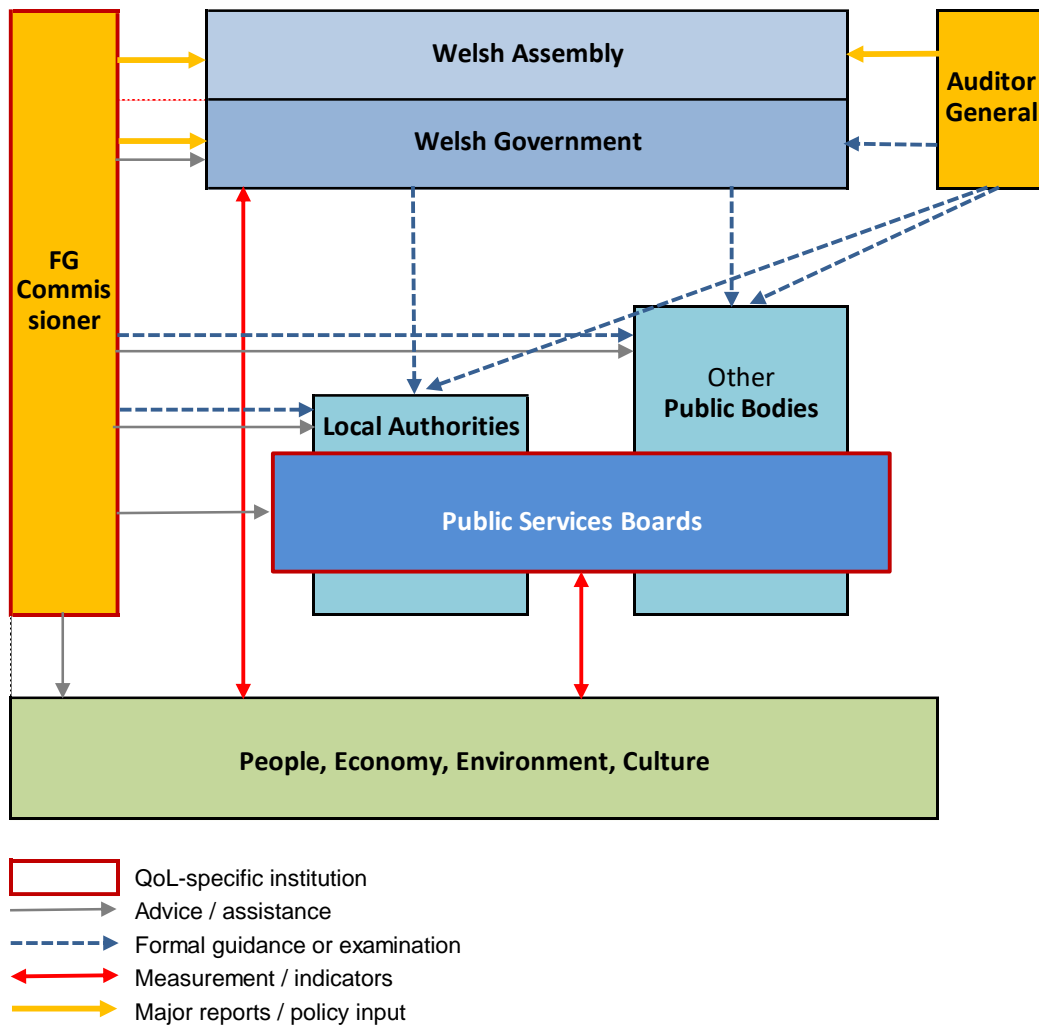
- At regional level, Wales-wide (NUTS 1 statistical level) through the Welsh Assembly and Government, PBs with a Wales-wide remit (e.g. NRW) and the FG Commissioner; and
- At local level (LAU statistical level) through the 22 local authorities and the 19 PSBs.

Some PBs operate at an intermediate level, especially the seven Local Health Boards and other PBs (e.g. National Park Authorities and Fire and Rescue Authorities) are at local level but not coterminous with LAU units.

The main roles, responsibilities and linkages are illustrated in the following diagram:

⁸ FG Commissioner: Progress towards the WFG Act, Overall Findings, October 2019

Figure 3 Main QoL institutions and linkages



Source: Author's elaboration

The main points can be summarised, as follows:

- The Welsh Assembly is responsible for establishing the well-being goals and setting up the whole scheme, as well as for oversight of its implementation;
- The Welsh Government ('Ministers') have a dual role: setting indicators and milestones and reporting progress against them; and (in reserve) issuing formal guidance to (other) PBs, as well as acting as a PB themselves (setting specific objectives for achieving the well-being goals);
- The PSBs conduct local well-being assessments and both PBs and PSBs set specific/local objectives, and take steps for achieving the objectives and ultimately the well-being goals.
- The FG Commissioner acts as the guardian of the whole scheme, advising and assisting all the participants, and taking action through formal guidance and reviews.

There is a complex set of linkages between the main actors regarding all stages of the QoL process, some of which are already established while others are still taking shape. The most important and clearly defined ones are:

- Between well-being goals (set out in the legislation) **and** specific/local objectives (set by PBs and PSBs);

- Between specific/local objectives **and** steps taken by PBs and by PSBs and their partner organisations towards these objectives **and** annual reporting of achievements;
- Between the FG Commissioner (and Ministers) **and** PBs and PSBs in the form of advice/assistance and formal guidance;
- Between the National Assembly (via Ministers) **and** external assessment by the FG Commissioner and the Auditor General, to ensure that public bodies are accountable for implementing the Act.⁹

Accountability and Reporting

Public bodies and PSBs are accountable for implementing the WFG Act. The role of the FG Commissioner and Auditor General for Wales is to ensure that the PBs and PSBs, properly and adequately, do so.

Much of this is based on self-assessment and self-reporting by public bodies¹⁰ and has attracted criticism of non-adaptation to the spirit and requirements of the WFG Act and over-reliance on qualitative assessment:

“Performance management and reporting is still following a traditional approach. It is too heavily focused on what has been done (‘the what’ / outputs), rather than how it was done (‘the how’) and its impact (‘the so what?’ / outcomes). Some of this is being driven by performance measures set by Government which should be systematically reviewed to ensure they are aligned with the WFG Act. ... Public bodies should be using more meaningful quantitative data and increasing their use of qualitative data to demonstrate how they are progressing towards meeting their objectives”.

However, it is important to note that:

- The national indicators are designed to represent the outcomes “for Wales and its people” and to help demonstrate progress towards the seven well-being goals. They **are not intended to be performance indicators for an individual organisation**¹¹. Indeed, PBs have long-standing performance indicators of their own (e.g. in the health sector) which, generally, are not in line with the WFG Act.
- As well as setting ‘**national indicators**’, the WFG Act also requires Welsh Ministers to set ‘**national milestones**’ to assist in measuring whether progress is being made at Wales level towards the achievement of the well-being goals. In 2019, the Government published a written statement around proposals for developing a set of national milestones. Following consultation, this led to an initial agreement on milestones for 14 indicators (one per indicator) and further work is now progressing. However, this exercise is behind schedule and proving controversial as it involves a tangible way for judging whether

⁹ In theory these assessments are partly based on measurement (indicators) by StatsWales (see following quotation) but in practice there is no evidence to that effect (e.g. in the case of the FG Commissioner’s Future Generations Report 2020). *“Given that the purpose of the Act was to promote collaboration and a joined-up approach to public services to support our progress towards the goals, then it was critical that the National Indicator set provided a collective set of outcomes that we wanted to see in Wales and that were not the responsibility of any single public body.”* Jones G. *et al* (2018) p. 8.

¹⁰ The Welsh Ministers report annually the progress they have made towards meeting their well-being objectives, and a copy of the report is placed before the Welsh Assembly (section 12 of the WFG Act).

¹¹ This has been attributed to ensuring that there was no confusion between the setting up of the indicators framework and a parallel exercise on the performance system for monitoring local government performance in Wales. (Jones G. *et al* (2018) p. 8)

satisfactory progress is being made, rather than merely checking the 'direction of travel' against indicators. This will clearly shift (or add) accountability at Government level.

The Wales-level reporting involves several reports by key institutional players. The most important of which and their intended audience / destination are outlined below.

The **Welsh Government** must publish an 'annual well-being report' on the progress made towards the achievement of the wellbeing goals by reference to the national indicators and milestones. 'Well-being of Wales: 2017' was the first such report and was followed by full updated reports in 2018 and 2019, based on the 46 Wales indicators. Furthermore, the Welsh Government must, within 12 months of a general election, publish a 'future trends report' that contains predictions of likely future trends in the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, and any related analytical data and information that the Welsh Ministers consider appropriate. These reports are produced by StatsWales, the Welsh Government's statistical service, under the responsibility of the Chief Statistician for Wales "independently of political influence".

The **FG Commissioner** publishes several types of formal reports:

- Annual Report (activity report, financial etc)
- Progress reports under various titles:
 - Well-being in Wales: the journey so far, May 2018
 - Progress towards the Well-being of Future Generations Act, October 2019 (including overall findings of review of objectives set by PBs).
- 'Future Generations Report' once per parliamentary cycle.

The Future Generations Report is a major statutory report that the FG Commissioner has to produce once every five years (four years in this first period). It must provide advice on improvements public bodies should make in order to set and meet well-being objectives which are the commitments they must make to improve the economy, society, environment and culture of their area most efficiently under that law. The FG Commissioner must send the report to the Welsh Government and must lay a copy of it before the Welsh Assembly.

The first such report was published in May 2020 and had not yet been discussed by the time this case study was completed. The report is very long and detailed (over 800 pages) and includes information and a critical assessment on the progress to date and recommendations on what should happen in the future by well-being goal and for each priority area (as already summarised above), but does not present any measurements based on indicators framework.

The **Auditor General for Wales** has an additional duty¹² under the WFG Act, over and above his normal audits of public bodies, and in May 2020 he submitted his first formal report to the National Assembly under the Act, 'So, what's different? Findings from the Auditor General's Sustainable Development Principle Examinations'. The Auditor General had already published his commentary in an early preparatory report, 'Reflecting on Year One: How Have Public Bodies Responded to the WFG Act'. He has also tested a separate methodology for reporting on individual PBs ('Auditor Guidance for undertaking examinations during 2018-19') and has conducted and published preliminary individual examinations of all 44 PBs.

To sum up:

¹² The Auditor General for Wales 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 wellbeing objectives; and taking steps to meet them.

- the Chief Statistician for Wales (Welsh Government), the FG Commissioner and the Auditor General for Wales publish annual and *ad hoc* progress (and other) reports that contribute to the overall QoL process or specific aspects of it;
- the FG Commissioner and the Auditor General for Wales submit major statutory reports to the Welsh Assembly once per parliamentary cycle to feed political debate about the overall direction of QoL in Wales

Linkages and collaboration

The relevant linkages were put in place soon after the WFG Act came into force. The necessary advice and assistance to PBs/PSBs started being issued by the FG Commissioner as early as 2016. The national indicators were adopted in March 2016 and the first Well-being of Wales report for 2016-2017 was published in September 2017. Some of the linkages are still evolving, notably between the PBs and the FG Commissioner, which in the 2018/19 period centred on self-assessments by the former and feedback by the latter.

Collaboration between the levels is reasonably well established. In the case of PBs and PSBs this is explicitly defined in the Act. Overall, the whole QoL scheme has been welcomed and is actively being implemented by all types of actors. The main actors that have not yet fully responded are some PBs, mainly in the health sector as indicated earlier on. Established institutional players, like the Auditor General have been making a special effort to adapt their methods of working to fit the spirit of the WFG Act.

Nevertheless, there are also some overlaps in responsibilities or at least not sufficient clarity. This is amply illustrated in reporting/assessing progress where the FG Commissioner and two well established players (The Chief Statistician for Wales and the Auditor General for Wales) have already issued several substantial reports since the WFG Act came into effect. This overlap has been acknowledged by the FG Commissioner and the Auditor General, who established a formal Memorandum of Understanding in November 2017.

2.4 Success factors and obstacles

QoL in Wales is well developed, all-encompassing, has progressed fast from inception to launch to the implementation phase, and is already more-or-less fully implemented.

Its **main strengths and success factors** can be summarised on the following lines.

First, the **legal basis** (dedicated and detailed legislation, the WFG Act) and the **comprehensive** nature of the adopted **approach** have laid strong foundations and represent the main source for success.

Second, there are **strong drivers** of the whole process, namely the QoL-specific institutional arrangements; especially, the active role of the **FG Commissioner** who acts with a high degree of independence and is backed up with by **highly motivated staff**. Most of the 19 **PSBs** have also become important drivers of the process both through the engagement of local communities and through their cross-cutting activities across all public services.

Third, a **high degree of acceptance and multi-actor commitment**, flowing from factors such as:

- Long-term political commitment and consensus in Wales regarding sustainable development and QoL aspirations;
- Engagement of established institutional players, such as the Chief Statistician for Wales and the Auditor General for Wales from the very start of the QoL process and similarly of some of the public bodies, e.g. Natural Resources Wales and the National Park Authorities;

- Openness to other sectors through the principle of ‘involvement’ which is embedded in the Act, especially taken up by voluntary organisations and groups.

Fourth, a good **balance** between, on the one hand, the **fast and decisive** translation of the QoL concept into action and the setting up and running of an extensive monitoring system and, on the other hand, a degree of **gradualism** and mutual learning process, facilitated by the FG Commissioner.

There are still some **weaknesses and bottlenecks**. The most relevant to this section of the case study, relating to the QoL concept and the way it has been implemented thus far, can be distilled, as follows:

- While the links of the Wales indicators to well-being goals (and the SDGs) are clear and explicit, there are very weak or altogether **missing links** between the Wales indicators and the well-being objectives set by the PSBs and PBs.
- The **plethora of well-being objectives** set by the PBs makes certain aspects of the whole process, including support and assessment, difficult or even unmanageable. Similarly, the articulation between local objectives set by the PSBs and the PB-specific objectives is an issue.¹³
- Not requiring the use of the Wales indicators for **performance measurement** by public bodies has left a gap. Delays in agreeing and introducing **milestones** (as a Wales-wide rather than organisation-specific measurement) a key manifestation of this shortcoming and remains a bottleneck in the full realisation of the concept.

There have also been two **major obstacles**, beyond the concept of the QoL scheme itself¹⁴:

- **Under-resourcing:** The Welsh Government has not sufficiently resourced the implementation of the WFG Act in terms of leadership development, support for transformational change and delivering the infrastructure required by the Act; both within their own organisation and the organisations they sponsor.
- **Slow PB adaptation:** there is variation in how public bodies are applying the Act and evidence that some of them have been making insufficient efforts so far largely due to a combination of competing priorities in a climate of funding constraints (‘austerity’) and traditional corporate attitudes. In the case of local authorities, a large part of this appears to be due to capacity and expertise.

2.5 Achievements and further plans

The QoL scheme has been applied to many policy areas across public services in Wales. A major effort has been going into adapting **policy making and administrative processes** but still a lot remains to be done, as evidenced by the criticism levelled by the FG Commissioner in her recent Future Generations Report 2020 and the very long lists of recommendations addressed to government Ministers and public bodies included in that report.

The Office of the FG Commissioner, most of the PSBs and several public bodies, e.g. Natural Resources Wales, are **institutions** that appear to be fully aligned with the QoL concept. Overall, the biggest change has been in **observation, monitoring and assessment**, with a

¹³ *“I cannot see clearly how the connection to other public bodies who are critical to meeting the well-being objectives set by Local Authorities are being adequately made”.* The FG Commissioner’s comment in Progress towards the WFG Act, Overall Findings, October 2019

¹⁴ Finding 2 of Progress towards the WFG Act, Overall Findings, October 2019

whole host of reports and data published annually by the FG Commissioner, the Chief Statistician for Wales and the Auditor General for Wales.

The **intentions for the future** are difficult to establish firmly in the current juncture. On the one hand, there is clearly an intention to deal with specific gaps of the scheme (e.g. setting milestones) and more fundamental weaknesses (traditional attitudes and mindsets in public bodies) which have been highlighted repeatedly by the FG Commissioner. However, on the other hand, some of the prevailing obstacles (under-resourcing and austerity) are unlikely to go away in the short-to-medium term, and may present even greater constraints due to the COVID-19 crisis. On the other hand, some of the prevailing obstacles (under-resourcing and austerity) could be more difficult to address in the aftermath of the COVID-19 crisis. However, both the short-term and the longer-term implications of the COVID-19 crisis on QoL in Wales are still too soon to assess. Although lockdown began to ease in June, as many of the emergency restrictions were still in force in Wales in mid-July 2020¹⁵ and additional measures were reimposed in most areas of Wales by mid-September¹⁶.

Nevertheless, the debate about the future direction of the post-COVID-19 recovery has already started. In a recent statement, the FG Commissioner said: “The pandemic has brought incredible challenges, but how we recover gives us a once-in-a-generation opportunity”. She called for “visionary ideas and transformative investment” in the recovery plan which “needs to address health, the economy and the ongoing climate and nature crises for the sake of Wales’ long-term future. We need a new definition of prosperity, based on well-being, and a fairer, greener way of living.”

The Commissioner called for a focus on quality of life over GDP, as the country begins the rebuilding process while restrictions remain in place to stem the spread of COVID-19. Among her recommendations is a multi-million pound stimulus package to support the decarbonisation of Wales’ housing stock – putting money into new low-carbon affordable housing and launching a national retrofitting programme to improve energy efficiency in existing homes – arguing that the benefits to people’s health, the environment, the jobs created and Wales’ housing stock, would outweigh the estimated costs.

The Commissioner¹⁷ also favoured investment to improve digital connectivity, as thousands remain working from home, taking pressure off transport networks and reducing carbon emissions; supported the Welsh Government’s commitment to fund transport improvements for pedestrians and cyclists; and argued that resources should also be shifted so Wales’ natural habitats can be restored, with green corridors linking the country and more investment in the new national forest being planted.

¹⁵ Restrictions in place include: certain businesses are not allowed to open; people should not gather indoors with anyone who is not a member of their household; social and physical distancing rules apply about keeping people apart when they go out; people must not gather in public places other than with members of one other household or extended household. (<https://gov.wales/coronavirus-regulations-guidance> accessed on 15.07.2020)

¹⁶ <https://gov.wales/local-lockdown> (accessed on 06.10.2020)

¹⁷ The Commissioner has continued contributing to the debate in Wales on the post-COVID-19 recovery, e.g. <https://www.futuregenerations.wales/news/support-a-shorter-working-week-to-save-jobs-says-future-generations-commissioner-and-wales-tuc/> and <https://www.futuregenerations.wales/news/future-generations-commissioner-calls-for-a-universal-basic-income-pilot-for-creatives/> (accessed on 06.10.2020)

3 Measuring Quality of Life

3.1 Indicators and measurement

The WFG Act put in place a requirement on the Welsh Government “to establish national indicators and milestones to help assess progress towards achieving the seven well-being goals, and report on them annually.” Work on developing the required set indicators commenced shortly after the Act came into force building on the preparatory work described earlier (‘The Wales We Want’), culminating in a national consultation was launched in October 2015 on ‘How do you measure a nation’s progress?’. This sought views on a set of 40 national well-being indicators for Wales and included a full technical description of how each of the indicators is to be measured.

This exercise attracted a good range of response – half of them from voluntary organisations, professional bodies and interest groups – and resulted in the framework of the 46 indicators currently in use.¹⁸ The indicators were formally laid in front of the Welsh Assembly in a written statement in March 2016. The full set of 46 Wales indicators is presented in Table 3, below, including their main characteristics.

Some 33% of the indicators are considered to be **subjective** or with subjective elements. In terms of **territorial** scale, some of the indicators are available only at Wales (NUTS 1) level but a large majority, nearly 85% of the total, are also available disaggregated, typically, at local authority (LAU) level. The **periodicity** of the data tends to be annual or quarterly (for nearly two-thirds of the indicators), as against multi-annual or *ad hoc*. With very few exceptions each indicator is of relevance to two or more **sectors** (see Table 3, below).

¹⁸ IAOS p 11

Table 3 Wales indicators and their characteristics

No	Indicator	Source of data	Frequency	Territorial level	Sector	Type	
						Collection base	Collection focus
1	Percentage of live single births with a birth weight of under 2,500g.	National Community Child Health Database	Annual	L	H S	OBJ	PR
2	Healthy life expectancy at birth including the gap between the least and most deprived.	ONS and Public Health Wales	Ad hoc	L	H S	OBJ	PR
3	Percentage of adults who have fewer than two healthy lifestyle behaviours.	National Survey for Wales	Annual	L	H S C	sub	PR
4	Levels of nitrogen dioxide (NO ₂) pollution in the air.	Air Quality Data, DEFRA*	Annual	L	E H	OBJ	pr
5	Percentage of children who have fewer than two healthy lifestyle behaviours.	Health Behaviours in School Aged Children Survey	Every 4 years	W	H S	sub	PR
6	Measurement of development of young children.	Foundation Phase Profile - on-entry assessments	Annual	L	EC S C	OBJ	PR
7	Percentage of pupils who have achieved the "Level 2 threshold" including English or Welsh first language and Mathematics.	Welsh Examinations Database	Annual	L	EC S C	OBJ	PR
8	Percentage of adults with qualifications at the different levels of the National Qualifications Framework.	Annual Population Survey	Annual	L	EC S	OBJ	PR
9	Gross Value Added (GVA) per hour worked (relative to UK average)	ONS regional Economic Analysis: Sub regional productivity indicators	Annual	L	EC	OBJ	PR
10	Gross Disposable Household Income per head.	ONS Gross Disposable Household Income per Head	Annual	L	EC H S	OBJ	PR
11	Percentage of businesses which are innovation-active.	UK Innovation Survey (BIS)	Annual	L	EC EN	OBJ	pr
12	Capacity (in MW) of renewable energy equipment installed.	Energy Generation in Wales, Welsh Government	Not Known	L	EC EN S	OBJ	pr
13	Concentration of carbon and organic matter in soil.	Countryside Survey, Glastir Monitoring and Evaluation Programme	Every 5 years	W	EC EN	OBJ	pr
14	The Ecological Footprint of Wales.	Stockholm Environment Institute	Not Known	L	EC EN	OBJ	pr
15	Amount of waste generated that is not recycled, per person.	Waste Data Flow Industrial & Com'l waste Survey	Quarterly	L	EC EN S	OBJ	pr
16	Percentage of people in employment who are on permanent contracts and who earn more than 2/3 of the UK median wage.	Labour Force Survey, ONS* New analysis	Quarterly	W	EC H S	OBJ	PR
17	Gender pay difference.	Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings	Annual	L	EC S	OBJ	PR
18	Percentage of people living in households in income poverty relative to the UK median, measured for children, working age and those of pension age.	Households below average income dataset, DWP*	Annual	L	EC H S C	OBJ	PR
19	Percentage of people living in households in material deprivation.	National Survey for Wales	Annual	L	EC H S C	OBJ	PR
20	Percentage of people moderately or very satisfied with their jobs.	National Survey for Wales	Every 2 years	L	EC H S	SUB	PR-I
21	Percentage of people in employment.	Annual Population Survey	Quarterly	L	EC H S	sub	PR
22	Percentage of people in education, employment or training, measured for different age groups.	Welsh Government measures of participation in EET	Annual	W	EC H S	OBJ	PR
23	Percentage who feel able to influence decisions affecting their local area.	National Survey for Wales	Every 2-3 years	L	S	SUB	PR-I

24	Percentage of people satisfied with their ability to get to/ access the facilities and services they need.	National Survey for Wales	Every 2 years	L	H S	SUB	PR-I
25	Percentage of people feeling safe at home, walking in the local area, and when travelling.	National Survey for Wales	Every 2-3 years	L	H S	SUB	PR-I
26	Percentage of people satisfied with local area as a place to live.	National Survey for Wales	Every 2 years	L	EN H S C	SUB	PR-I
27	Percentage of people agreeing that: they belong to the area; people from different background get on well together; and people treat each other with respect.	National Survey for Wales	Every 2-3 years	L	H S C	SUB	PR-I
28	Percentage of people who Volunteer.	National Survey for Wales	Annual	L	S C	sub	PR-I
29	Mean mental well-being score for people.	National Survey for Wales	Every 2 years	L	H S	sub	PR-I
30	Percentage of people who are lonely.	National Survey for Wales	Every 2-3 years	L	H S	SUB	PR-I
31	Percentage of dwellings which are free from hazards.	Welsh Housing Conditions Survey 2017/18	Not known	L	EN H S	OBJ	pr
32	Number of properties at medium or high risk of flooding from rivers and the sea.	Natural Resource Wales, Flood risk maps	Every 2-3 years	L	EN H S	OBJ	pr
33	Percentage of dwellings with adequate energy performance.	Welsh Housing Conditions Survey 2017/18	Not known	?	EC EN H	OBJ	pr
34	Number of households successfully prevented from becoming homeless per 10,000 households.	Statutory Homeless Data collection from local authorities	Quarterly	L	EC H S	OBJ	PR
35	Percentage of people attending or participating in arts, culture or heritage activities at least 3 times a year.	National Survey for Wales	Annual	L	H S C	sub	PR-I
36	Percentage of people who speak Welsh daily and can speak more than just a few words of Welsh.	National Survey for Wales and Welsh Language Use Surveys	Annual	L	S C	sub	PR-I
37	Percentage of people who can speak Welsh.	Census of Population	Annual	L	S C	sub	PR-I
38	Percentage of people participating in sporting activities three or more times a week.	Adult: National Survey for Wales Children: Sport Wales	Annual	L	H S C	sub	PR-I
39	Percentage of museums and archives holding archival/heritage collections meeting UK accreditation standards.	Museums Archives and Library Division, Welsh Government	Not Known	L	C	OBJ	pr
40	Percentage of designated historic environment assets that in stable or improved conditions.	CADW*	Not Known	L	EN C	OBJ	pr
41	Emissions of greenhouse gases within Wales.	National Atmospheric Emissions Inventory (by source)	Annual	W	EC EN H	OBJ	pr
42	Emissions of greenhouse gases attributed to the consumption of global goods and services in Wales.	Stockholm Environment Institute	Not Known	W	EC EN H	obj	pr
43	Area of healthy ecosystems in Wales.	Briefing Note, NRW*	Not Known	L	EC EN H S C	obj	pr
44	Status of biological diversity in Wales.	Currently under development		W	EC EN S C	OBJ	pr
45	Percentage of surface water bodies and groundwater bodies achieving good or high overall status.	Natural Resource Wales/ Water Watch Wales	Annual	W	EN H S C	OBJ	pr
46	The social return on investment (SROI) of Welsh partnerships within Wales and outside of the UK that are working towards the UN SDG.	Welsh Government information	Not Known	W	EC EN H S C	obj	pr

Source: 5 left hand columns based on <https://gov.wales/well-being-wales-national-indicator-technical-descriptions-and-data-links>;
3 right-hand columns based on own analysis

* Acronym denoting (UK or Welsh) government ministries or agencies

Territorial level: **W**, Wales (NUTS1); **L**, Local (mostly LAU)

Sector: **EC**, Economic; **EN**, Environment; **H**, Health; **S**, Social; **C**, Cultural

Collection base: **OBJ**, objective; **obj**, objective unconfirmed; **SUB**, subjective; **sub**, with subjective elements

Collection focus: **PR-I** people-related measured at individual level; **PR**, people-related; **pr**, place-related

Use of Wales indicators and links to well-being goals and UN SDGs

The annual ‘Well-being of Wales’ reports, by the Chief Statistician for Wales (Welsh Government) present progress against the well-being indicators (and in future against set milestones). Each of the 46 indicators is allocated to two or more of the seven well-being goals. Three of the indicators are assigned to all seven goals, for instance: No 19 (Percentage of people living in households in material deprivation). Overall progress against each goal is assessed through 18 to 31 indicators.

The Well-being of Wales reports also include a matrix showing how the Wales indicators have been assigned to individual goals, as illustrated in the following figure:

Figure 4 Allocation of indicators to the well-being goals

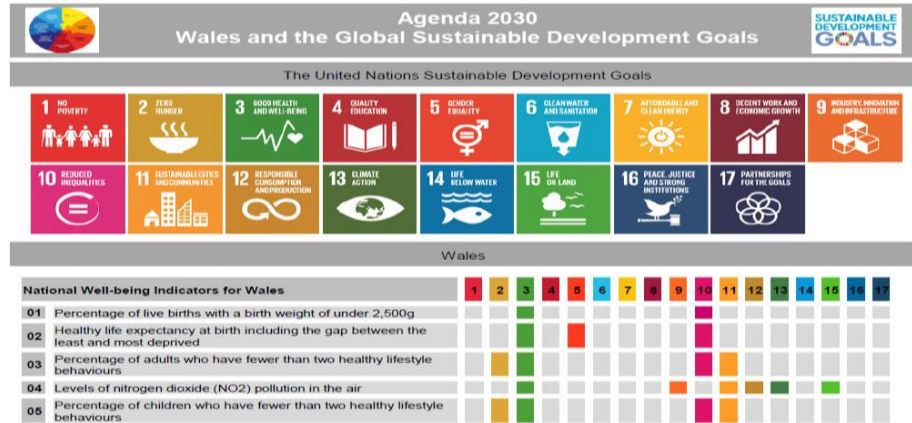
The seven well-being goals for Wales														
Goal 1	Goal 2	Goal 3	Goal 4	Goal 5	Goal 6	Goal 7								
A Prosperous Wales	A Resilient Wales	A Healthier Wales	A More Equal Wales	A Wales of Cohesive Communities	A Wales of Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language	Globally Responsible Wales								
The way in which we are measuring progress														
National Well-being Indicators for Wales							1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
01	Percentage of live single births with a birth weight of under 2,500g													
02	Healthy life expectancy at birth including the gap between the least and most deprived													
03	Percentage of adults who have fewer than two healthy lifestyle behaviours													
04	Levels of nitrogen dioxide (NO2) pollution in the air													
05	Percentage of children who have fewer than two healthy lifestyle behaviours													

Source: Well-being of Wales report, 2017

The PSBs are required to take into account the Wales indicators in their local well-being assessments. An analysis of a cross-section of local wellbeing assessments and plans shows that PSBs have done so at assessment stage but that the proportion of the indicators used has been fairly small: 16 out of 46 indicators in the case of the Conwy and Denbighshire PSB. Some of the local well-being plans have established a set of indicators, including a selection of Wales indicators, for monitoring the progress of implementation of their local well-being objectives. For instance, the local well-being plan of Cardiff PSB, has used 20 or so of the Wales indicators or similar (but differently defined) ones, e.g. on loneliness or recycling, in a total of 45 locally-set indicators under the seven local well-being objectives of the plan. Cardiff PSB also reports progress against these 45 locally-set indicators in its annual progress reports.

Many of the Wales indicators are expected to “help tell a story of progress in Wales against more than one of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals”. This is done through the annual Well-being of Wales reports, produced by the Chief Statistician for Wales (Welsh Government), which also include a matrix assigning the Wales indicators to the SDGs, as illustrated in the following figure.

Figure 5 Allocation of indicators to the SDGs



Source: Well-being of Wales report, 2017

3.2 Data sources for QoL

The sources of data used for each of the indicators are listed in Table 3, above. Most of the indicators (32) are based on sources that have been published as Official Statistics. Twelve indicators are based on other sources, such as administrative data held by government departments, and two indicators currently have no data. Practically all of them are available online¹⁹, together with links data sources and technical information.

Several indicators rely on regular surveys, mainly the National Survey for Wales, which covers the bulk of the subjective indicators; for instance, No. 23 (Percentage of people who feel able to influence decisions affecting their local area), No 28 (Percentage of people who volunteer) and No 30 (Percentage of people who are lonely).

Indeed, the National Survey for Wales, is a valuable source of pertinent data:

*“If we were to truly consider an outcome-based approach to measuring well-being we felt it was critical to develop new data sources to capture individual perceptions of personal well-being. The National Survey for Wales, an annual household survey of over 11,000 people, was already in place to provide an understanding of a range of topics including the performance of public services and personal well-being. The Survey therefore provided an ideal mechanism to develop new questions to support the more subjective indicators. As a result, the Survey is the source for 14 of the Indicators, ranging from questions around satisfaction with the local area, involvement in decision making, to the aforementioned topic of whether people feel safe”.*²⁰

The following table illustrates the use of different types of data:

Table 4 Overview of data used for measuring QoL in Wales

Description of selected indicators	Data used	Geographical unit	Time series from-to, periodicity	Data source
No 04: Levels of nitrogen dioxide (NO2) pollution in the air	Average level of NO2 (pollutant in ambient air)	1. Wales 2. Local Authority &	Annually since 2007	Calculations based on 3 different sources

¹⁹ <https://gov.wales/well-being-wales-national-indicators>

²⁰ Jones G. et al (2018) p. 9

Description of selected indicators	Data used	Geographical unit	Time series from-to, periodicity	Data source
		Local Health Board		
No 06: Measurement of development of young children	Assessment records of school children in different areas of learning	Wales	Annually since 2018	On-entry school assessment, Welsh Govt
No 15: Amount of waste generated that is not recycled, per person Indicator	Amount of residual waste	1. Wales 2. Local Authority	Annually since 2012	Waste data flow system & surveys
No 30: Percentage of people who are lonely	De Jong Gierveld loneliness scale	Wales	Annually since 2016	Survey

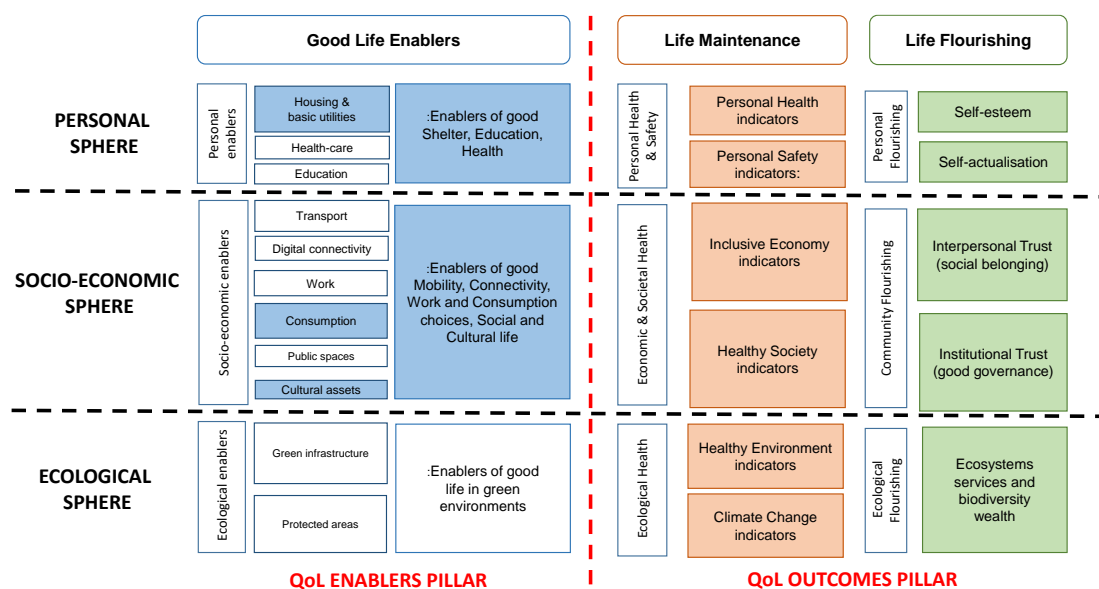
Source: Author's elaboration

4 Analysing and testing the methodology used in the case study as compared to the TQoL approach

4.1 Comparing the QoL approach in the case study with the TQoL framework

The Territorial QoL Framework developed in the main report, comprises three QoL spheres, two pillars, three dimensions, nine QoL domains and 22 sub-domains. This framework provides the basis for mapping out the approach followed in Wales, as illustrated in Figure 6, below. The 46 indicators used in Wales cover all spheres, dimensions and pillars, and all but one of the domains. Thus, at first glance, the conceptual TQoL map appears fully covered. When looking into more detail, especially at sub-domain level, we note that the QoL Enabler Pillar is much less well covered. This is due to the fact that the indicators reflect very much outcome levels, but to a much lesser extent enabling factors, like accessibility, affordability and availability.

Figure 6 Territorial Quality of Life framework



Source: Author's elaboration based on the framework presented in the main report

4.2 Coding the indicators

For coding the indicators against the TQoL framework, we tried to assign all 46 Wales indicators to the domains and sub-domains of the framework. This is shown in Table 5 below. Each indicator has been allocated to the domain/sub-domain that offered the best fit on the basis of the descriptive information available. From this exercise the following observations have been made:

First, the majority correspond to the Life Maintenance dimension in the Outcomes Pillar and all three domains of this dimension are very well covered. All three domains of the Life Flourishing dimension in the same Pillar are also covered.

Second, the Good Life Enablers dimension (Enablers Pillar) is only partially covered. Currently, there are no Wales indicators that correspond to the Ecological enablers domain. In the Personal enablers domain, the sub-domains Health-care and Education are not covered, and the same applies to four sub-domains in the Socio-economic enablers domain including Digital connectivity. These gaps are noteworthy, especially as the quality of public health services (“the

NHS”) in Wales has been a major area of concern and public debate and, similarly, ICT connectivity (especially broadband in rural areas, such as a large part of the territory of Wales) is a high-profile issue in Wales as well as in the rest of the UK and many other countries.

These omissions highlight that the ‘quality of place’ aspect of QoL has been accorded a lesser importance in the framework of QoL in Wales. Life Maintenance predominates and the Life Flourishing aspect of QoL is also fully represented. As such, the TQoL approach is mostly people-oriented rather than place-oriented.

When looking at a finer granulation of which indicators are used at sub-domains level, there are some more observations:

- In some sub-domains a large number of indicators is used where we can assume that the indicators are highly correlated (e.g. housing with electricity and hazards, healthy society with several indicators on poverty).
- There are a few cases where we do not have a one-to-one correspondence, but we can choose a close approximation, which still leaves a scattered picture (e.g. housing, healthy environment).

It is also worth noting that two types of Wales indicators cover domains which are lacking in the TQoL scheme illustrated in Figure 6 and have not been assigned in the mapping exercise:

- Two indicators concerning the ‘economy’: Gross Value Added (GVA) and innovative businesses;
- One cross-cutting indicator reflecting a supra-regional/local dimension: No 46 (The social return on investment of Welsh partnerships within Wales and outside of the UK that are working towards the UN SDGs). As already mentioned, this indicator is due to be replaced.

It should be stressed, regarding the ‘economy’ indicators, that the FG Commissioner has emphasised that *“One of the unique features of the Well-being of Future Generations Act is our definition of prosperity. It does not measure well-being in traditional ways such as how much money we earn, how much we contribute towards the economy or the value of our goods and services. It makes no reference to our Gross Domestic Product (GDP) or Gross Value Added (GVA)”*²¹. This may not be wholly shared across all players involved in QoL in Wales, as GVA is actually used as an indicator, albeit in comparative formulation *vis-à-vis* the UK average.

The following table shows the allocation of the Welsh indicators, which were presented in section 3 (Table 3), to the TQoL measurement system.

²¹ Future Generations Report 2020, p 166

Table 5 Coding system of the Wales indicators

Dimension	Domain	Sub-domain	no	Indicator	
Good Life Enablers	Personal enablers	Housing & basic utilities (b11)	12a	Electrical Generation	
			12b	Heat Generation	
			26	% of people satisfied with local area as a place to live.	
			31	% of dwellings which are free from hazards.	
			32a	Number of properties (homes and businesses) at medium or high risk of flooding - river	
			32b	Number of properties ... - surface	
			32c	Number of properties...tidal	
			33	% of dwellings with adequate energy performance.	
		Healthcare (b12)	NA		
		Education (b13)	NA		
	Socio-economic enablers	Transport (b21)	NA		
		Digital connectivity (b22)	NA		
		Work opportunities (b23)	NA		
		Consumption opportunities (b24)	24 % of people satisfied with ability to access the facilities and services they need.		
		Public spaces (b25)	NA		
		Cultural assets (b26)	39 % of museums and archives holding archival/heritage collections		
		40 #			
Ecological enablers	Green infrastructure (b31)	NA			
	Protected areas (b32)	NA			
Life Maintenance	Personal	Personal Health (m11)	1	% of live single births with a birth weight of under 2,500g	
			2a	Healthy life expectancy at birth (male)	
			2b	Healthy life expectancy at birth(female)	
			3	% of adults who have fewer than two healthy lifestyle behaviours (% of all adults +16)	
			5	% of children who have fewer than two healthy lifestyle behaviours	
			6	Measurement of development of young children	
			38	% of people participating in sporting activities >2 times a week (% of all adults +16)	
			29	Mean mental well-being score for people	
				Personal Safety (m12)	25 % of people feeling safe at home, in the local area, and when travelling (% of all adults +16)
			Economic and Health	Inclusive Economy (m21)	7
	8	% of adults with qualification to National Qualifications Framework level 4 or above			
	10	Gross Disposable Household Income per head			
	16	% of people in employment with permanent contracts and earn more than 2/3 of the UK median wage.			
	17	Gender pay difference (female earnings compared to male earnings; median; hourly rate; gross payment; full-time workers)			
	21	% of people in employment (% of all adults in working age)			
	22	% of people in education, employment or training, measured for different age groups.			
	18	% of people living in households in income poverty relative to the UK median			
	19	% of people living in households in material deprivation (% of all adults +16)			
	34	Number of households successfully prevented from becoming homeless			
	Ecological Health	Healthy Environment (m31)	14	The Ecological Footprint of Wales	
			15	Amount of waste generated that is not recycled, per person (annual)	
			45	% of surface water bodies and groundwater bodies achieving good or high overall status.	
		13	Concentration of carbon and organic matter in soil		
		Climate Change (m32)	4	Levels of nitrogen dioxide (NO ₂) pollution in the air	
41			Emissions of greenhouse gases within Wales.		
42	Emissions of greenhouse gases (related to consumption of global goods and services)				
Life Flourishing	Personal Flourishing	Self-esteem (f11)	27 % of people agreeing that they belong to the area; that people from different background get on well together; and that people treat each other with respect (% of all adults +16)		
		Self-actualization (f12)	20 % of people moderately or very satisfied with their jobs (% of all adults +16) % of people attending or participating in arts, culture or heritage activities at least 3 times a year (% of all adults +16)		
	Community Flourishing	Interpersonal Trust (societal belonging) (f21)	35	% of people who speak Welsh daily and can speak more than just a few words of Welsh (% of all adults +16)	
			36	% of people who can speak Welsh (% of all adults +16)	
			37	% of people who are lonely (% of all adults +16)	
			30	% of people who are lonely (% of all adults +16)	
	Ecological Flourishing	Institutional Trust (good)	28	% of people who Volunteer (% of all adults +16)	
			23	% who feel able to influence decisions affecting their local area (% of all adults +16)	
			43	Area of healthy ecosystems in Wales.	
			44	Status of biological diversity in Wales.	

4.3 Other relevant features of the approach

4.3.1 QoL in a territorial context

The **territoriality of the QoL approach** followed in Wales resides primarily in the local Public Services Boards and their activities associated with the Assessments of Local Well-being and the Local Well-being Plans for which they are responsible (see section 3). The analysis of a sample of these documents shows that they address, in their local objectives and indicators, both the 'quality of place' dimension and the 'territorial QoL', as defined in the main report.

For instance, the Cardiff PSB includes in its objectives 'Cardiff is a great place to grow up' and also 'Safe, Confident and Empowered Communities'. Similarly, among the indicators defined in the plan²² there are indicators relating to all three dimensions of the TQoL scheme as defined in the main report and summarised above.

The territoriality of the Local Well-being Plans is underpinned by the fact that the objectives of Public Bodies (PBs) are integrated into those of the PSB in which the PB is a member. It is also complemented by some related exercises undertaken by certain PBs outside the scope of the PSBs, notably by those of Natural Resources Wales which produces 'area statements' with a natural environment focus. By contrast, the mapping of the indicators above reveals that the 'quality of place' dimension is less pronounced in the Wales indicators.

4.3.2 Objective and subjective indicators

The overall approach regarding QoL in Wales can be discerned from the characteristics of the scheme put in place through the development, adoption and implementation so far of the WFG Act. The approach followed in Wales has been to encompass and balance both the **objective and subjective dimensions** of well-being. This was clear in the development of the indicators' framework, which sought a **balanced approach**:

"There was significant interest in the development of the indicators around the balance of subjective and objective measures. Some of the concepts that support individual well-being simply cannot be measured by objective administrative data or survey responses. If we really want to understand whether people consider themselves to be 'safe' or living in 'cohesive communities' then it is important to understand people's perceptions and subjective opinions. We also wanted to ensure we were not reliant on measurement issues related to administrative data that meant they would not truly capture outcomes".²³

The outcome of the process of defining the indicators confirms that a fairly balanced approach has been established between 'objective' and 'subjective' indicators, with one-third of the indicators considered to be subjective or with subjective elements. Examples of objective indicators include:

- Levels of nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) pollution in the air (No 4);
- Percentage of adults with qualifications at the different levels of the National Qualifications Framework (No 8);
- Gross Disposable Household Income per head (No 10).

Examples of subjective indicators are:

- Percentage of people moderately or very satisfied with their jobs (No 20);
- Percentage who feel able to influence decisions affecting their local area (No 23);

²² A mixture of selected Wales indicators and other locally defined ones

²³ Jones G. *et al* (2018) p. 9

- Percentage of people feeling safe at home, walking in the local area, and when travelling (No 25).

Use of 'subjective' indicators is also made at local level, in Local Well-being Plans, as in the case of the Plan of Cardiff PSB which is using the Life satisfaction, Anxiety, Happiness, Worthwhile, and Job satisfaction indicators.

4.3.3 Involvement of citizens – Citizen-centric approach to Quality of Life

There are several elements of a citizen-centric approach to QoL but it is difficult to characterise the overall approach in Wales as purely 'citizen-centric'. It lacks data collection by citizens and the use of big data, and there is no formal co-designing of the assessment of QoL based on an explicit mapping and planning scheme, as outlined in the main report.

However, the approach as implemented, at both regional and local levels, has greatly emphasised the 'involvement' of people, as one of the five ways of working towards achieving the well-being goals of the WFG Act. Indeed, at local level the PSBs have conducted various forms of consultations ('conversation with our communities', 'public engagement boards'²⁴, etc) during all stages of the assessment, planning and monitoring process.

At regional level, widespread public consultation before the Act and subsequently at different stages could also be interpreted as an aspiration towards or, even, a partial fulfilment of a citizen-centric approach. As already mentioned above, under the principle of 'involvement' envisaged by the Act, an extensive consultation was conducted on 'How do you measure a nation's progress?' seeking views and contributions on a draft set of 40 national well-being indicators for Wales and resulting in the framework of the 46 indicators currently in use²⁵ (listed in Table 3).

QoL measurement in Wales relies to a considerable extent on people-related indicators, which represent almost two-thirds of the total in the indicators' framework. An analysis of the indicators' framework reveals that almost two-thirds of all Wales indicators (29 out of 46 or 63%) are people-related – see Table 3.

Regarding gaps towards a citizen-centric approach and scope for ameliorating them, this analysis points to the following:

First, there are no gaps in the case of 13 out of the 29 people-related indicators, which have been identified as 'subjective' indicators in Table 3 and the collection of data is at the individual level, i.e. it involves the individuals' own assessment or reporting.

Second, there are gaps in the case of the remaining 16 indicators that have been identified as people-related but do not involve data collection at the individual level, as for example in the case of indicators No 3 (adults with fewer than two healthy lifestyle behaviours) and No 18 concerning households living in income poverty. In these instances, it can be generally assumed that these gaps can be addressed by substituting or supplementing with indicators involving individuals' own assessment or reporting. Perhaps the main exception would be indicators relating to children.

Third, the main gaps are in the case of indicators that are not people-related, and are mostly place-related such as those measuring soil or atmospheric quality. Seventeen out of the 46 indicators fall in this category – see Table 3. However, some of them could be ameliorated through substitution with people-related indicators. For example, an individual entrepreneurship

²⁴ E.g. the Cwm Taf PSB

²⁵ IAOS p 11

indicator could be used instead of No 11 (Percentage of businesses which are innovation-active) and Nos 31, 32 and 33²⁶ could be converted into people rather than property related measurements.

This strong affinity towards a citizen-centric approach has also built on other related experiences, such as the ‘population accountability’ and other features of the Results Based Accountability (RBA) which has been used extensively in Wales²⁷.

Misperceptions vs fact-based evidence

Although the approach adopted in Wales does not apply a specific **factfulness** methodology, like the one suggested in the main report and tested in some of the case studies, it does emphatically follow an evidence-based approach. For instance, the WFG Act requires, once every parliamentary cycle, a major ‘Future Generations Report’ based on the annual ‘Well-being of Wales’ reports on progress against the set indicators and a ‘Future Trends Report’.

The process of local well-being assessments and plans explicitly draws on a systematic and very extensive ‘evidence base’ which is open to participants on an on-going basis. This includes consideration of “which are the most important dimensions of QoL” and factual information about past evolution and future forecasts. The formal advice provided by the FG Commissioner to each PSB during this process includes a large number of specific suggestions and information sources to ensure a sound factual basis in defining local objectives and translating them into a local well-being plan. It can, therefore, be concluded that the approach implemented in Wales already approximates or, at least, is endeavouring to reach the attributes of the factfulness approach advocated in the main report.

4.4 Application of the methodology in the case study context

The Welsh case study has a very comprehensive set of data, which allows ample scope for testing the dashboard approach developed in the main report.

First of all, all the indicators presented in Table 3 were compiled from official sources. We allocated the indicators to the nesting system (see section 4.2). For each of the sub-domains we chose between two and four indicators for the dashboard. This selection was based on an assessment of which indicators cover the sub-domain in the best way, trying to avoid too many overlaps between the indicators. Also, we had to select only from those indicators which are available at LAU level.

As the data are from slightly different time periods, we took the most recent data, defined as the period 2016-2019. The dashboard for this period shows the sub-domains reflecting the QoL in a sub-region as compared to other sub-regions, including its ranking – see Figure 7.

For Wales we are in the favourable position to have comparable data for a previous point in time. Again, we chose a time period which is reasonably covered by indicators’ data (2010-2012). Thus, we provide a second dashboard for this period in Figure 8, below. This allows – for each of the sub-regions – a comparison between its relative position in the recent period (2016-2019) to a past period (2010-2012).

The following figures represent an example of the application of the dashboard. With data for the LAU Cardiff the dashboard shows its relative position in the QoL domains and sub-domains

²⁶ No 31, Percentage of dwellings which are free from hazards; No 32, Number of properties (homes and businesses) at medium or high risk of flooding from rivers and the sea; No 33, Percentage of dwellings with adequate energy performance.

²⁷ Adamson D. & Burgess K. (2012), Natural Resources Wales (2015), Jordan R.(2010)

in relation to the other territorial units in Wales. The dashboard is available for all 22 sub-regions (LAU). Each sub-domain is shown as a bar chart for the normalised average of the chosen indicators. Figures 7 and 8 provide the recent and the past version.

Figure 7 Dashboard for Wales: scales for domains and sub-domains – recent version (2016-2019)

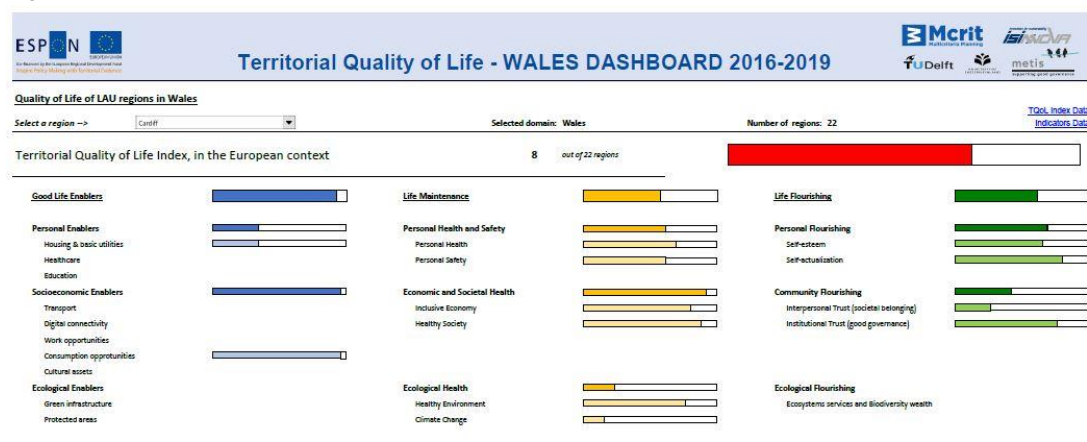
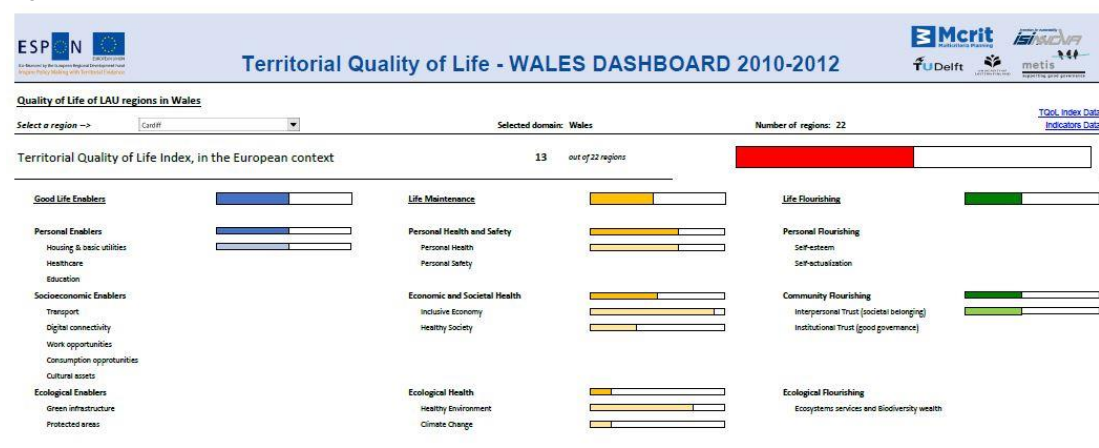


Figure 8 Dashboard for Wales: scales for domains and sub-domains - past version (2010-2012)



Figures 9 and 10, below, map out all sub-regions of Wales for the same two periods, 2016-2019 and 2010-2012 respectively. The recent version (2016-2019) shows a generally expected pattern of lower values in the TQoL index for the traditional industrial areas of South Wales and Wrexham in the North-East. However, a comparison with the index values for 2010-2012, reveals several changes, for instance, placing The Vale of Glamorgan and Denbighshire in top bracket (dark green) in 2016-2019 raised significantly from the values in 2010-2012. Conversely, the TQoL index values fell for some sub-regions, e.g. Pembrokeshire.

Figure 11 shows the changes in the ranking of all the sub-regions in the same period. An example of the highest gains (dark green) is the Isle of Anglesey in the North-West and, at the opposite end (dark red), an example of the highest drop in ranking is Monmouthshire in the South-East.

Figure 9 Dashboard for Wales: Map of Wales Territorial Quality of Life Index 2016 – 2019

Figure 10 Dashboard for Wales: Map of Wales Territorial Quality of Life Index 2010 – 2012

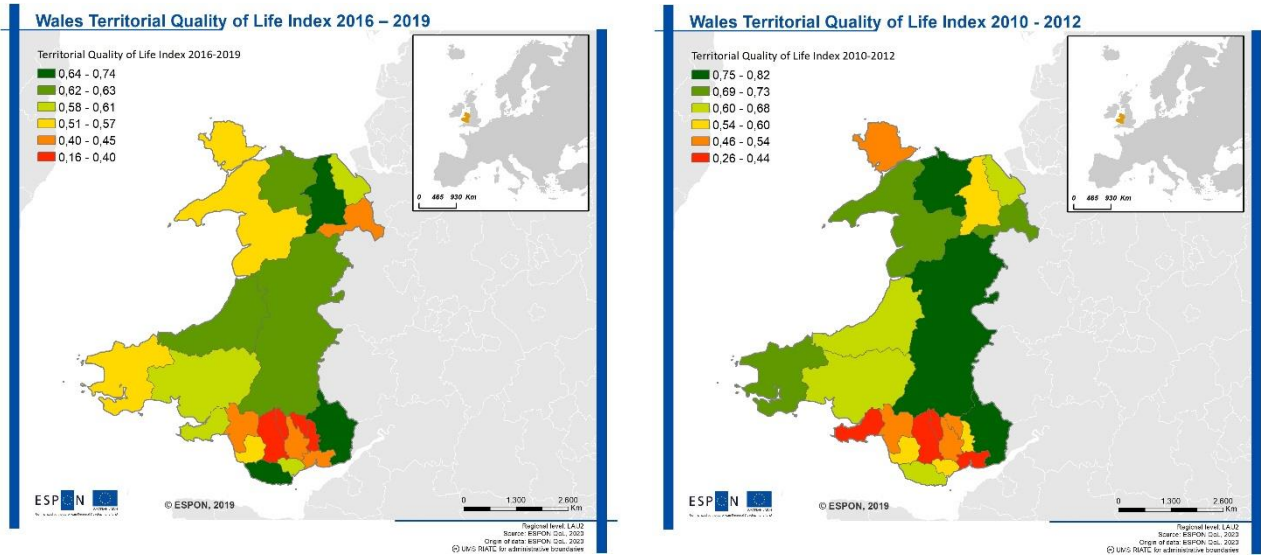
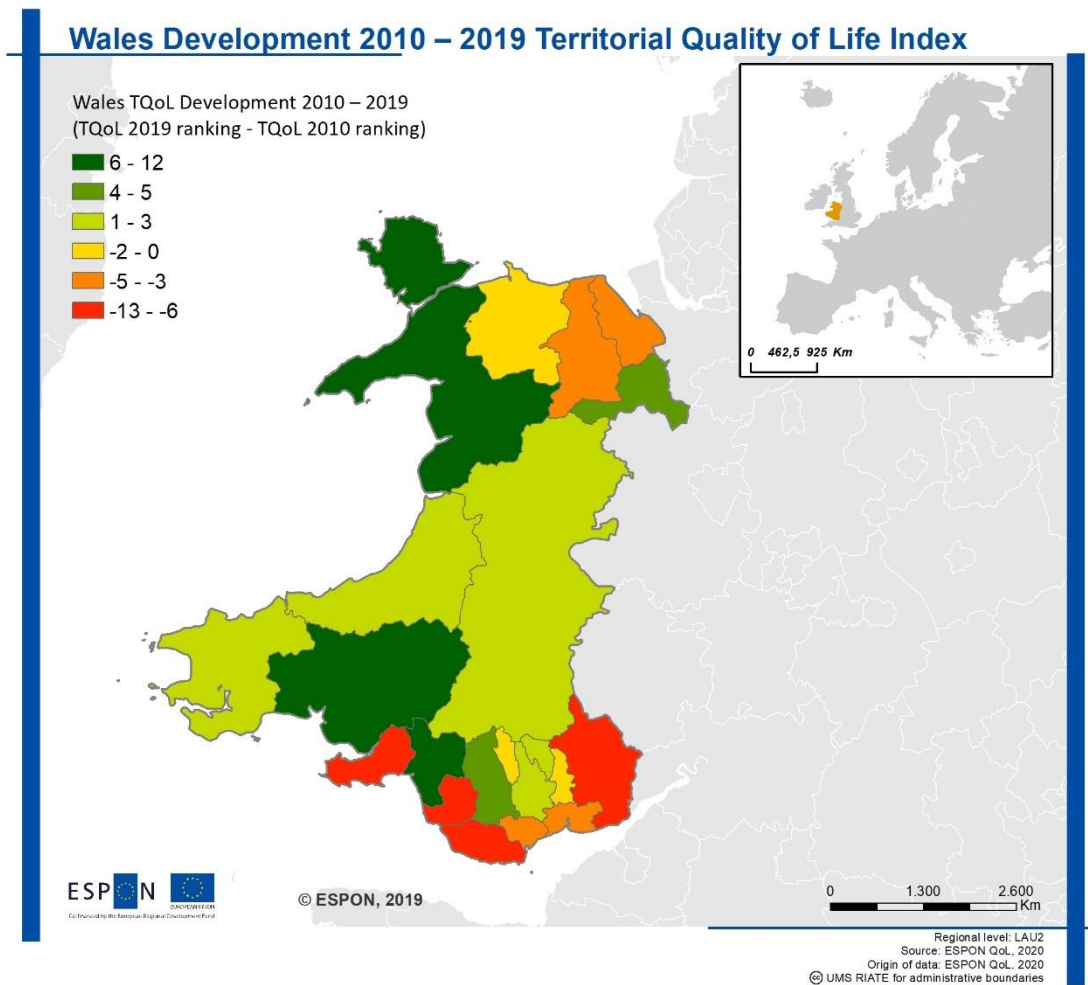


Figure 11 Dashboard for Wales: Map of Wales Development 2010 – 2019 Territorial Quality of Life Index



The second outcome of the dashboard is to offer a quick overview on the ranking of all sub-domains: green is for a high ranking, while the exclamation marks in yellow show intermediate rankings and the red crosses show low ranks. Figures 12 and 13 show the position of Cardiff in the recent and past version, respectively.

Figure 12 Dashboard for Wales: composite indices – recent version (2016-2019)

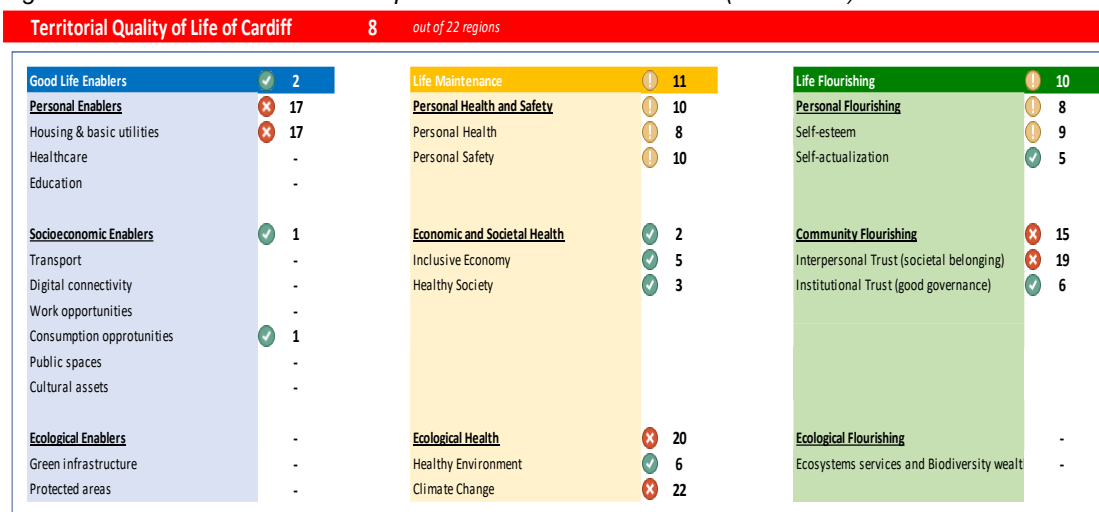
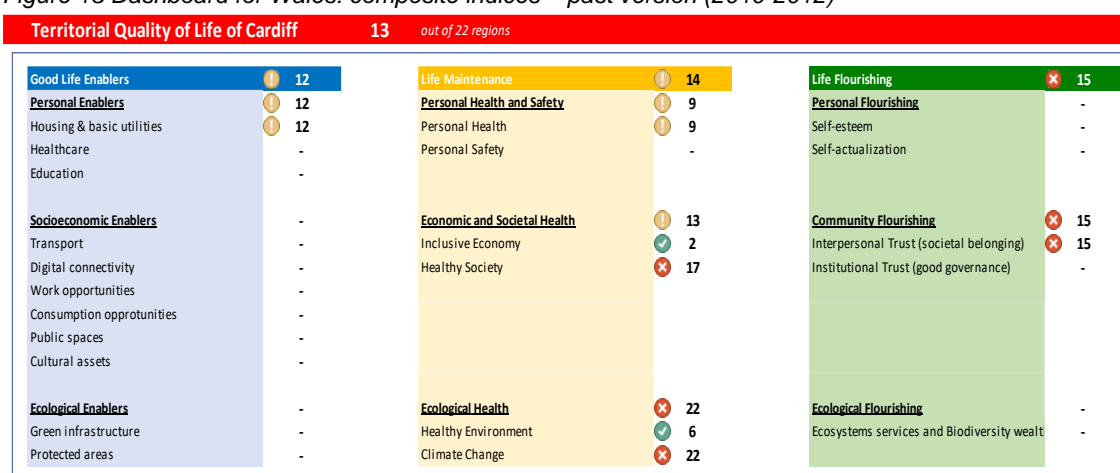


Figure 13 Dashboard for Wales: composite indices – past version (2010-2012)



Finally, the dashboard allows us to go into greater depth. For instance, in Figures 14 and 15, below, we have mapped out the TQoL index values for the Life Maintenance Pillar for the same recent and past versions (2016-2019 and 2010-2012, respectively). These show similarities to the picture painted in the general TQoL index (e.g. lower values for the traditional industrial areas of South Wales), but also some differences such as in the values accorded to the rural areas of East Wales (see Figures 9 and 14). The comparative position of several sub-regions has also changed differently under the Life Maintenance Pillar (see Figure 16). For example, Carmarthenshire’s ranking dropped under this Pillar although it had gained significantly under the general TQoL index (Figure 11).

Figure 14 Dashboard for Wales: Maps of Wales TQoL Index 2016 – 2019 Life Maintenance Pillar

Figure 15 Dashboard for Wales: Maps of Wales TQoL Index 2010 – 2012 Life Maintenance Pillar

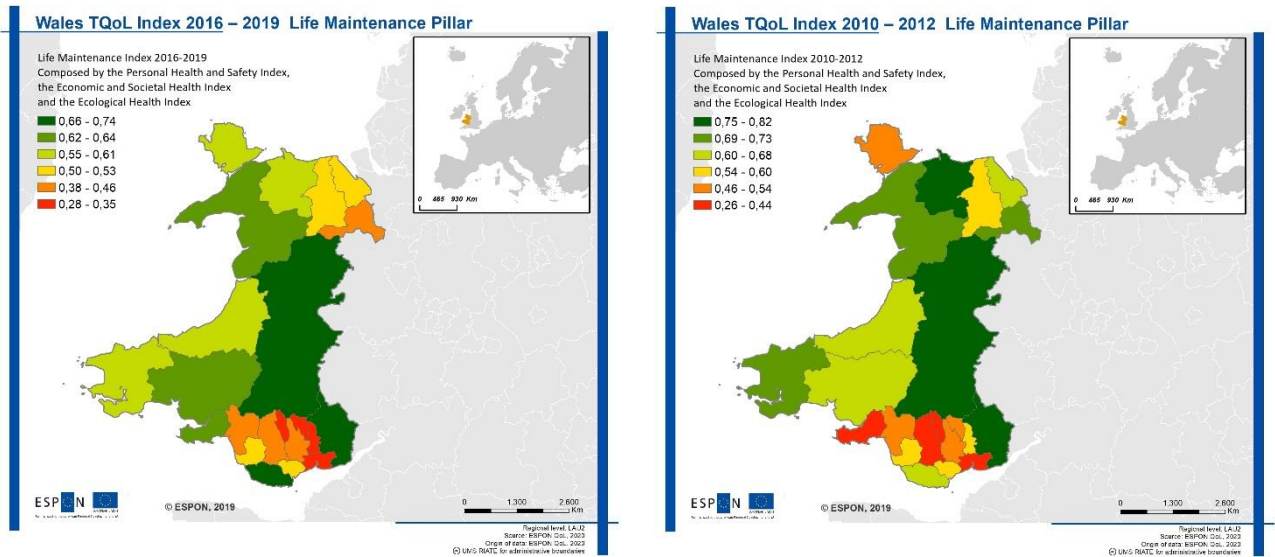
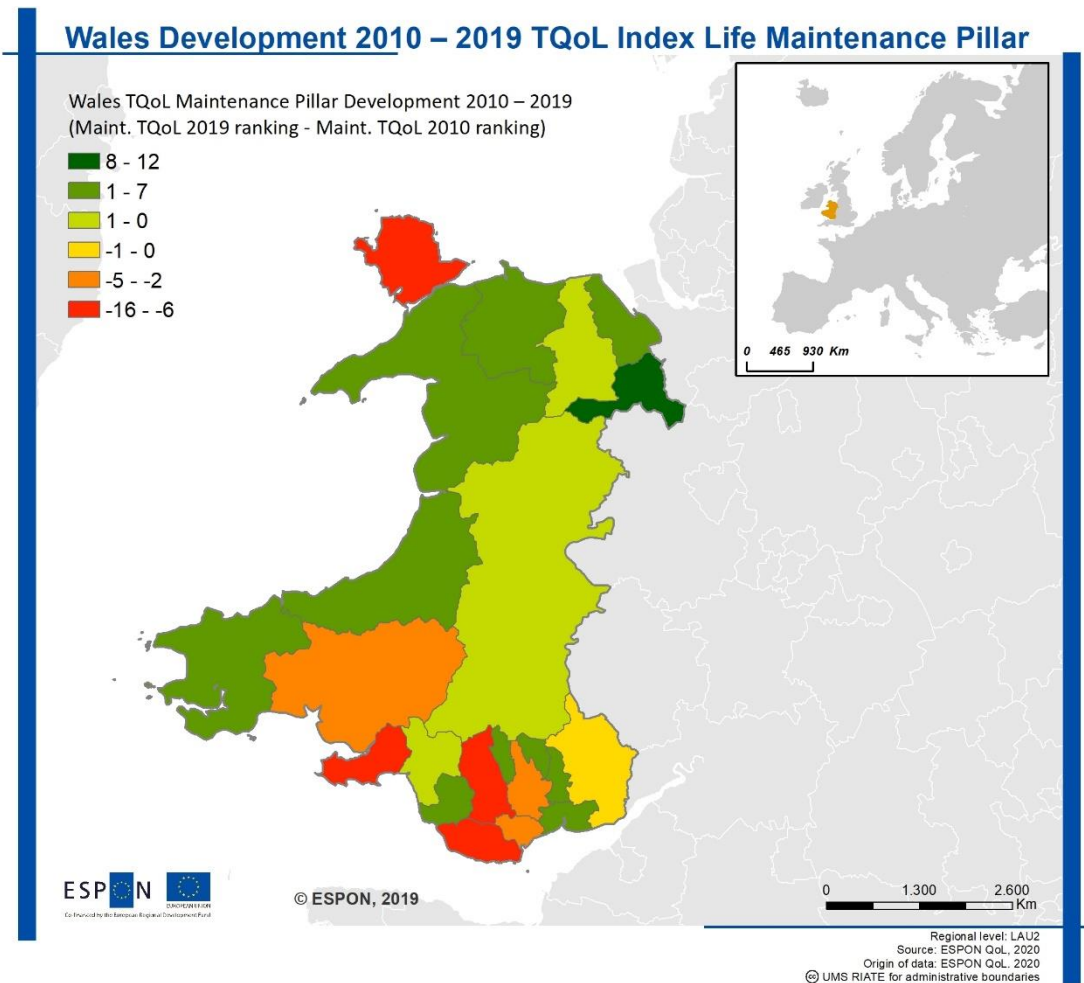


Figure 16 Dashboard for Wales: Map of Wales Development 2010 – 2019 TQoL Index Life Maintenance Pillar



5 Synthesis and conclusions

The previous sections have provided answers to the main issues addressed in line with the purpose of the case study. These can be distilled as in the following points.

First, the policy context in which the concept of QoL is used is broad covering the full range of public services and many sectors, including: land use planning and placemaking, transport, housing, decarbonisation, skills for the future, adverse childhood experiences, and health and wellness. In all these areas the concept of QoL is used in setting specific objectives, and defining and pursuing actions for achieving them and contributing to the seven overarching well-being goals for Wales, which in turn are measured through the 46 indicators for Wales.

Second, the speedy introduction of the concept through comprehensive legislation, QoL-specific institutional arrangements and the setting up and operationalisation of a measurement and reporting system are considerable achievements. However, a number of shortcomings have also been highlighted, including missing direct links between the Wales indicators and specific objectives set by PBs and PSBs.

Third, there is a high degree of acceptance of the concept as a policy instrument and multi-actor commitment and major strengths have been identified, such as the forceful championing role of the FG Commissioner for Wales. However, the implementation of the concept is still encountering some systemic obstacles, e.g. public bodies' resistance to adaptation by some public bodies combined with under-resourcing, as has been for some time the case with PBs in the health sector.

A number of consultation interviews with the main stakeholders²⁸ have helped clarify some more **specific issues**.

As explained in sub-section 4.3.1, the **territoriality of the QoL approach** followed in Wales resides primarily in the local Public Services Boards and their activities associated with the Assessments of Local Well-being and the Local Well-being Plans for which they are responsible. Through these vehicle they address, in their local objectives and indicators, both the 'quality of place' dimension and the 'territorial QoL', as defined in the main report.

QoL as pursued since the introduction of the WFG Act in 2015 **relates to economic, social environmental and cultural well-being**. It takes socio-economic, demographic and territorial factors fully into account, but territorial patterns and disparities are not presented as a distinct area of concern. The concept and measurement of economic growth seems to be an area of disagreement as pointed out in sub-section 4.2.

The QoL concept and its measurement are used to **identify shortcomings**, e.g. in the PSBs' local well-being assessments and plans. The objectives ensuing from this knowledge lead to **actions whose progress is monitored via indicators** set for each objective. It should, however, be clarified that these QoL assessments and corresponding actions are not oriented

²⁸ Face-to-face interviews with each of the consultees on 12 February 2020 in Cardiff:

Glyn Jones, Chief Statistician for Wales

Andrew Charles, Head of Futures Department, Welsh Government

Marie Brousseau-Navarro, Director Policy, Legislation and Innovation, Office of the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales

Cathryn Holzinger, Office of the Auditor General for Wales

towards attracting investments from outside to particular locations using their QoL attributes as pull factor.

The extent of **digital innovation** in the design and implementation of QoL measurement is fairly limited. There is a significant involvement of public and private sector organisations and local communities in what should be measured and how and, indeed, the whole scheme can be considered to be to some extent citizen-centric. However, so far there has been no exploiting of new big-data sources or engagement of citizens in the co-production of data.

Overall, the QoL concept and its application in Wales contains several elements that can be considered **good practice** with potential transferability. They have been outlined in the previous sections and can be briefly summarised, as follows:

- All-encompassing QoL concept underpinned by:
 - a distinct own legal basis;
 - institutional innovation;
 - multi-level governance provisions;
 - a fully developed measurement system;
- Broad policy spectrum covered by QoL concept and the measurement system;
- High proportion of subjective and people-related indicators, measured at individual level;
- Participatory approach with a degree of adaptability combined with a strong advocacy of QoL (notably through the championing role of the FG Commissioner).

The **feedback from the testing of the dashboard** in the case of Wales has been particularly fruitful. Applying the TQoL measurement system allowed first a quick analysis as to which of the proposed domains and sub-domains are covered. Although the framework seems to be very comprehensive, certain gaps have been noted, mainly relating to the Good Life Enablers dimension.

When using the nesting system for allocating the indicators to the domains and sub-domains, we established that there is very good coverage of the Life Maintenance and Life Flourishing dimensions, using also a number of subjective indicators. However, some sub-domains (mainly regarding 'inclusive economy indicators') are covered by several indicators that measure very similar aspects.

Using the dashboard provides a very quick overview of the situation in each sub-region as compared to the other sub-regions, at small territorial unit (LAU) level. As data are also (largely) available for a previous point in time, it has been possible to fill a second dashboard allowing a comparison between the relative position of a region in two different time periods.

To conclude, the concept and the measurement of QoL in Wales are well developed, all-encompassing and advanced in implementation,

The scheme is particularly rich in legal and institutional provisions. These have been put into effect fast since 2015 and are almost fully operational. However, their complexity also results in overlaps and inconsistencies in the application of the concept.

In terms of measuring QoL, the scheme recognises and follows the tenets of the approach advocated in the main report, i.e. that *"Quality of Life cannot be **gauged and explained** by a single composite index, but should be measured and explained by using a set of qualitatively distinct indicators and methodologies that help to detect underlying patterns"*.

Although the concept itself and its implementation are relatively robust, there are some gaps and some key aspects need attention, especially:

- Using of same indicators or at least a core sub-set at both Wales and local (PSB) level would be highly desirable for internal consistency and measurability;
- Using systematically the established indicators framework in the FG Commissioner's reports.

Further improvements could include:

- Adding indicators (especially on health-care and digital connectivity) would ensure better coverage of the Good Life Enablers dimension on the lines of the TQoL scheme proposed in the main report;
- Moving further towards citizen-centric approach by substituting or supplementing some indicators with people-relevant ones;
- Using, even experimentally, big data a source.

In the context of the COVID-19 crisis and post-crisis recovery, there could be further significant shifts in QoL priorities and measurement in Wales. The Good Life Enabler dimension is particularly relevant, as access to healthcare, digital connectivity, public spaces and green infrastructures is essential. This dimension is relatively weak in the QoL scheme in Wales and it could receive more attention. As indicated in section 2.5, there are also other broader and potentially more ambitious improvements that could flow longer term from the vision advocated by the FG Commissioner for “a new definition of prosperity, based on well-being, and a fairer, greener way of living.”

6 Recommendations

6.1 How the QoL concept and indicators could be further developed in the region

There are two main areas of potential improvement of the QoL scheme in Wales: the measurement system and certain institutional and policy aspects.

The **measurement system** would be considerably enhanced by actions, such as the following:

- Introduction of territorial analyses and examination of disparities within Wales; also, consistent use of indicators by PSBs, based on a large sub-set of the 46 Wales indicators and drawn from those available at LAU level.
- Use of the relevant Wales indicators by the public bodies in defining their QoL objectives and actions, and in reporting progress; also, systematic use of the full set of the indicators by the FG Commissioner in assessing/reporting progress towards the well-being goals.
- A further shift towards a citizen-centric approach by substituting and complementing the existing indicators with people-related indicators measured at individual level.
- Boosting the indicators relating to the Good Life Enabler dimension of the TQoL scheme, especially regarding healthcare and digital connectivity. Strengthening of this dimension is important in the context of the COVID-19 crisis as access to healthcare, digital connectivity, public spaces and green infrastructures is essential.

The **institutional and policy** aspects of the QoL scheme would benefit from:

- Better coordination and a resolution of the overlaps between the roles of the FG Commissioner, Chief Statistician for Wales and Auditor General for Wales.
- Building on the good policy coverage that has already been achieved and develop further the in-depth focus on cross-cutting aspects, such as planning, budgeting and procurement.
- A broadening of the WFG Act and its provisions to cover, to an appropriate extent, the private and voluntary sectors.

In the longer term, there could be broader and potentially more ambitious improvements in the QoL concept and overall scheme in Wales, stemming from a reorientation in the post-COVID-19-crisis recovery, in favour of “a new definition of prosperity, based on well-being, and a fairer, greener way of living” as advocated by the FG Commissioner for Wales.

6.2 How the QoL concept of this ESPON project can be improved and enriched

The main area of QoL, in which this ESPON project which could benefit from the approach adopted in Wales, concerns the comprehensive nature of the Welsh approach and its elements that represent good practice, such as:

- its distinct legal basis;
- the broad policy spectrum covered by QoL concept and the measurement system;
- the extensive indicators framework and the matrix-based linking of indicators to goals, which allows qualitative elements to be taken and judgement in interpreting all relevant measurements;
- the high degree of institutional innovation, especially the independent championing role of the FG Commissioner, and the cross-cutting and partnership-based local public services boards (PSBs).

7 Sources

7.1 Literature and websites

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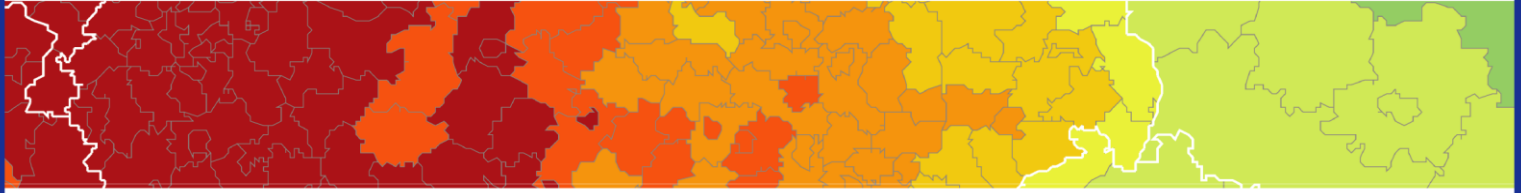
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