



Monday, 17 April 2023

FAO

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3c.c. Well-being of Future Generations Commissioner, Derek Walker

Is this as good as it gets?

The Regeneration of Porthcawl, Sustainability, and Community Involvement

Like many organisations based in Porthcawl, Sustainable Wales (SW) has tried to engage with Bridgend Borough Council Planning Department over many years, as plans emerge for the regeneration of the town's waterfront. (see below, where we mention some SW contributions.)

The community consultation over the years, offered by BCBC to new planning developments, we feel, has been old style and limiting. This has caused a degree of alienation, definitely more so now with the growth of social media.

Thus, many people feel disengaged from politics, even though many of their ideas are sensible and exciting. There is a lack of trust in the process.

Because of the climate and ecological emergency, generally agreed to exist, we need to move forward. Sustainable development requires **informed participation** - this we have known for years. Futures will be different and we need to **share a vision** and start the transition now. The planning process we have is not fit for purpose. It is also imposed upon us.

Requiring urgent discussion is what sort of town might Porthcawl become? How do we plan with consideration of the past, the present and future, in a fair and just way, for people and planet? **Residents have had no chance to establish a vision together.**

Indeed, there are many participatory techniques available to replicate, which have been tried and tested across the UK and further afield.

The Well Being of Future Generations Act, Planning Policy Wales, and the Local Government Association Gunning Principles all state the need for deeper consultation (see below).

Thus, the question is how do we implement these requirements? Other countries administrations laud the Wales Future Generation's Act. Yet it does not seem to be implemented in its country of origin!. People believe this is now a pressing issue.

**For all our Future Generations
Yours sincerely**

Margaret Minhinnick Director, Sustainable Wales.

Additional notes

Responses. Sustainable Wales, like others, have drafted responses and suggestions to The Porthcawl Regeneration Plan (eg. Requesting a low carbon development at Salt Lake, offering some ideas and to the LDP, the RLDP, Appropriation of land at Sandy Bay and had 3 minutes to speak at the Scrutiny committee call in etc asking for real community involvement.) Also conveying some of the general concerns we hear in the community, regarding too many houses or worries regarding car parking. Some of our responses are available here... <https://www.sustainablewales.org.uk/porthcawlregen>
We feel our efforts are of little consequence. Replies are not forthcoming.

Subsequently with the help of other groups we formed '**Better Porthcawl**' 2022 – a developing partnership of local groups. The group are non-party, guided by good practice elsewhere, wishing to involve representatives from the community. This would include Borough Council Officers and Councillors, and also when required 'experts' (Natural Resources Wales etc), in constructive dialogue over the Regeneration of Porthcawl.

Advocating Co-Production.

As a group of residents with a 'lived' experience of Porthcawl we wish to work in partnership with politicians, officers and experts within the County Borough of Bridgend to share the vision, ideas, design and delivery of the areas of land outlined in the Regeneration of Porthcawl Place-Making Plan.

We believe that if Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) fully involved the community in the shaping of the town and surrounds it will result in a regeneration plan for the future with better outcomes and wide community support.

We want planning to work for everyone. Not done 'for us', but 'with us', in a co-production process.

https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2021-02/planning-policy-wales-edition-11_0.pdf

PLANNING POLICY WALES EDITION 11/FEB 2021

P 16. 2.16 *“Positive planning occurs at a level where detailed knowledge of how places ‘work’ is available and provides a valuable decision-making resource. It is crucial when, in developing plans, planning authorities engage with people in their own communities,*

*facilitating a collective, participatory process which focuses on achieving sustainable places. This requires engagement which goes beyond the statutory minimum for consultation set out in planning legislation and in accordance with the involvement principle set out in the **Well-being of Future Generations Act.***

BCBC have an obligation to ensure that the development is in line with the “**Wellbeing of Future Generations Act 2015**” (WFGA). Of particular relevance to this development are the goals:

- a resilient Wales - creating and not destroying habitats
- a more equal Wales - proportion of truly affordable homes
- **a more cohesive Wales** - allowing people easy access to greenspace and easy reach of facilities needed.
- a globally responsible Wales - low carbon houses - both in design and in occupancy

Indeed, also the principles and ways of working outlined in the WFGA which include **collaboration, and involvement.**

“Public bodies need to make sure that when making their decisions they take into account the impact they could have on people living their lives in Wales in the future.”

The Wellbeing of Future Generations Act provides for better decision-making by ensuring that public bodies.

1. take account of the long-term
2. help to prevent problems occurring or getting worse
3. take an integrated approach
4. take a **collaborative approach**, and
5. consider and **involve people** of all ages and diversity.

The Five Ways of Working defined by the Act, that are supposed to ensure long-term planning include the requirement for public bodies to involve and collaborate...

The Gunning Principles

Sedley defined that a consultation is only legitimate when **these four principles** are met:

1. proposals are still at a formative stage

A final decision has not yet been made, or predetermined, by the decision makers

2. there is sufficient information to give ‘intelligent consideration’

The information provided must relate to the consultation and must be available, accessible, and easily interpretable for consultees to provide an informed response

3. there is adequate time for consideration and response

There must be sufficient opportunity for consultees to participate in the consultation. There is no set timeframe for consultation,¹ despite the widely accepted twelve-week consultation period, as the length of time given for consultee to respond can vary depending on the subject and extent of impact of the consultation

4. ‘conscientious consideration’ must be given to the consultation responses before a decision is made

Decision-makers should be able to provide evidence that they took consultation responses into account.