

Consultation Response Form

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Question 1: The Strategy sets out the areas we will prioritise in planning for our ageing society and why. Have we prioritised the right areas?

Comments:

We support the prioritised areas however we would like to see some changes to 'Improving local services and environments'.

We welcome the focus on services and environments, however we feel there are simple changes that could be made to the section to reflect the importance of our natural environment. Access to good quality green spaces and infrastructure as close to homes as possible is vital for health and wellbeing – for health protection factors such as air quality and flood mitigation, and also for health improvement factors such as increased levels of physical activity and enhanced mental health benefits. This importance has been accentuated in recent times during the pandemic and people are placing a great deal of importance on their green surroundings, therefore we would like to see the natural environment mentioned more explicitly throughout the section.

Please see some minor changes to your text below. We have highlighted these changes in yellow:

Paragraph 1 of 'Improving local services and environments' section:

*Housing, transport systems and the **natural and** built environment fundamentally affect how well we live and age. Getting these crucial elements of our society right can be the defining factor in how successful we are in achieving our vision of an age friendly Wales. Regardless, of background, health or income status, our homes, **buses, trains public transport, local places and spaces and access to** community **services** can influence how well we live and how well we cope with any challenging circumstances as we age.*

Open spaces and buildings sub-section:

Although we agree with the sentiment of the first paragraph, it only focusses on Action on Disability' which does not wholly represent the importance of open spaces and buildings for all older people - not all older people have a disability.

*To support our rights based approach, the **natural and** built environment must be conducive and safe for walking for older people and public buildings must be fully accessible to all.*

Bullet point two:

Improving green spaces **and other green infrastructure** so that local residents can benefit from the health and well-being benefits associated with increased exposure to natural environments and improved access to local green spaces (Van den Berg, M. et al, 2015). **Supporting Local Authorities to follow Green Infrastructure Guidance.**

Going forward:

1. Ensuring our **natural and** built environment is safe and age friendly
3. Re-invigorating our town centres

Through our Transforming Towns agenda we want to create town centres that provide jobs, homes, leisure and services, but that also look great, feel safe and are easily accessible and vibrant **whilst also supporting actions on the climate and nature emergency**. Town centres in Wales should instill a sense of pride and celebrate their individual heritage. We want to create an experience, to make towns places where people want to be.

Transport:

It is imperative that we create an age friendly transport system that is accessible to all older people. Public transport services support the economic, social, cultural **and environmental** development of local communities and can allow older people to realise their human right to independence, participation, care and self fulfilment.

Question 2: Are there any issues that are not reflected in the Strategy that you think should be considered when planning for an ageing society?**Comments:**

As stated above, we are pleased to see recognition of the environment in the strategy, however we do feel that some enhancements could be made throughout the document to be more explicit on the importance of the natural environment to all society. We are facing a climate and nature emergency and all strategy and policy should ensure that environmental considerations in communities sits alongside economic, social and cultural considerations as they are all intertwined and co-dependant.

The natural environment provides us with the things we need to live and thrive: the air we breathe, the water we drink and the food we eat. It provides the raw materials and energy for our homes and industries and can protect us against environmental hazards, such as flooding, poor air quality, and the impacts of climate change. This vital natural infrastructure surrounds us twenty-four-seven and provides us with places and spaces for interactions which enrich our lives. Places for healthy living, working, learning, and playing are all enhanced by access to good quality natural environments. Outdoor places and spaces provide opportunity for participation in physical activity and connecting with our natural environment provides mental health benefits. Natural resources make us healthier and our lives more enriched.

Question 3: Have we identified the key policies and mechanisms that can deliver real change in the lives of older people today and future generations?

Comments:

We would like to see inclusion of the Environment Act (Wales) Act, 2016. The Act aims to build greater resilience into our ecosystems, setting out Wales' approach to planning and managing natural resources at a national and local level with a general purpose linked to the statutory principles of the sustainable management of natural resources (SMNR) defined within the Act. Inclusion of the Environment Act will ensure consideration of local [Area Statements](#) (produced by Natural Resources Wales (NRW)) in local development, planning and day-to-day activities that are driven through this Strategy.

Recognition of Planning Policy Wales 11 will also enhance endorsements made by this strategy.

Reference could also be made to the Public Health (Wales) Act 2017. The imminent duty on public bodies to undertake a Health Impact Assessment in specified circumstances. We are aware that the regulations are still to be produced, however a HIA should be seen as good practice in designing any project or programme and can be used to engage with broader stakeholders.

Question 4: Does the content amount to a sufficiently ambitious response to the major public policy issue of our ageing society?

Comments:

As stated above, our society is facing an array of challenges and we must approach these in a holistic and systematic way so that challenges are made explicit across our priorities and strategy and policy are joined up.

Question 5: Will the Strategy help to maximise the potential of the growing numbers of older people in our communities?

Comments:

This Strategy will go some way to focussing actions, however, as stated above, it is vital that an array of strategy and policy work together for all of society. One strategy alone will not meet the needs of a single section of society.

Question 6: Do you agree with our ambition to work towards an age friendly Wales? If so, please state what you, as an individual or organisation, are doing to help us to create an age friendly Wales.

Comments:

Yes, we agree with the ambition and will fully support the Strategy. Helping people live healthier and more fulfilled lives is a cornerstone of our work, and forms part of our Well Being Objectives.

NRW has statutory obligations under the Equality Act 2010. As an employer and a service provider we consider all of the protected characteristics in our work and carry out Equality Impact Assessments across all of our work. We also have Strategic Equality Plans and an Equality and Diversity Forum

We strive to make our sites as accessible, inclusive and welcoming as they can be so that everyone can have the opportunity to get out and enjoy the great outdoors. [By All Reasonable Means: Least Restrictive Access to the Outdoors](#) has been developed [with the Sensory Trust](#) to help ensure that access to the countryside and open spaces is equally available to people of all ages, circumstances and backgrounds. For more information see: [Natural Resources Wales / Improving access for all](#)

Question 7: How has Covid-19 changed your ability to do things that matter to you, or the way you deliver services to older people?

Comments:

As with all sectors, NRW has not been immune to the impacts of the pandemic.

The sites that we manage have seen closures through lockdown. These sites will of course have been used by a many people, and the closures will have caused some anxiety and inconvenience. We have however been keen to engage with communities and communicate in line with Government guidelines and the stay at home and stay local messages.

The [Green Recovery Task Group](#) has been formed to identify priorities for action for the Welsh Government's Recovery Plan from Covid-19.

NRW is also committed to an organisational renewal programme as we emerge from the pandemic on future working. We are utilising the changes that have occurred to refresh and reshape our ways of working and subsequently our delivery on the ground in providing an outstanding service to our customers and partners. We will work with partners and communities to lead in supporting a green and just recovery.

Question 8: How can we involve older people in the re building our communities following the pandemic?

Comments:

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Welsh Government review of engagement
Questions for older people

Question 9: Are you a member of a 50+ group or forum? If yes, how successful do you think the forum is influencing local and national policy decisions?
Comments:

Question 10: Does the 50+ forum benefit your local area in other ways? (Eg. by reducing social isolation or building community resilience?)
Comments:

Question 11: How do you think local and national government can better engage with older people?
Comments:

Questions for local authorities

Question 12: Does a 50+ Forum still operate in your area? If yes, how successful is it in involving older people in local decision making?

Comments:

Question 13: Does your 50+ forum benefit your local area in other ways? (Eg. by reducing social isolation or building community resilience?)

Comments:

Question 14: If a 50+ forum is not active in your local area, how do you engage with older people?

Comments:

Question 15: We would like to know your views on the effects that the *Strategy for an Ageing Society* for would have on the Welsh language, specifically on opportunities for people to use Welsh and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than English.

What effects do you think there would be? How could positive effects be increased, or negative effects be mitigated?

Comments:

Question 16: Please also explain how you believe the proposed policy *Strategy for an Ageing Society* could be formulated or changed so as to have positive effects or increased positive effects on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language, and no adverse effects on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language.

Comments:

Question 17: We have asked a number of specific questions. If you have any related issues which we have not specifically addressed, please use this space to report them:

Comments:

Responses to consultations are likely to be made public, on the internet or in a report. If you would prefer your response to remain anonymous, please tick here: