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Welsh Government
Consultation – summary of response

Proposal to revoke the Local Government (Performance Indicators) (Wales) Order 2012

July 2016

Mae'r ddogfen yma hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.
This document is also available in Welsh.

Overview

This document provides a summary of the responses to the consultation that sought views on the proposal to revoke the Local Government (Performance Indicators) (Wales) Order 2012.

Action required

None – for information.

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Additional copies

This summary report and copies of all the consultation responses are published in electronic form only and can be accessed from the Welsh Government's website at:

<http://gov.wales/consultations/?lang=en&status=closed>

Related Documents

The Local Government (Performance Indicators) (Wales) Order 2012

Proposal to revoke the Local Government (Performance Indicators) (Wales) Order 2012

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Proposal to revoke the Local Government (Performance Indicators) (Wales) Order 2012

Introduction

The overall intention of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 (the Measure) is to create a statutory regime which integrates long term community planning and shorter term local service improvement. Under section 8 of the Measure, the Welsh Ministers may specify performance indicators and standards by which Welsh local authorities' performance may be measured. The current set of statutory performance indicators are specified in the Local Government (Performance Indicators) (Wales) Order 2012 (the Order). The Order does not contain any standards. These statutory indicators are known as the National Strategic Indicators (NSIs) and are published by StatsWales in a statistical release.

Proposal

The consultation focused on the proposal to revoke the Local Government (Performance Indicators) (Wales) Order 2012.

Engagement

Views were invited as part of a 12-week consultation period which began on 15 March 2016 and ended on 6 June 2016. The consultation paper and related documents were published on the consultation pages of the Welsh Government's website. Respondents were able to submit their views and comments on paper or online, and in either Welsh or English.

Summary of Responses

In total, the consultation received 17 responses from a range of stakeholders. All respondents were invited to request anonymity. Six respondents decided to utilise this option and therefore their identity has been anonymised throughout this document.

Responses were received from the following categories of organisations and individuals.

Respondent Category	Number
Local Authorities	9
Representative Organisations/Bodies	1
Professional Bodies	4
Political Groups	1
Individuals	2

A full list of respondents is attached at Annex A. Individual responses are available on request.

Overview of Responses

This document sets out the result of the consultation and is intended to be a summary of the responses received. It does not aim to capture every point raised by respondents, but to highlight the key points.

Thirteen of the respondents agreed the Order should be revoked. Two of these were qualified, four respondents disagreed with the proposal to revoke the Order and nine of the respondents thought there could be consequences / implications if the Order were to be revoked. The main points raised were as follows.

Comments supporting revocation included:

- The NSIs should be revoked as data is already available from other sources creating duplication.
- There has been too much emphasis on collecting data that frequently do not reveal much and are sometimes collected in different ways, making it difficult to draw comparisons.
- There are a number of performance indicators in the NSI data set that have become less relevant to the aims and objectives of service areas. If the measures were set outside statute, this would allow for changes to be made more easily so that measures can reflect the changing priorities of government and local authorities.
- A new national local government suite of performance indicators should be developed set within the context of local government's contribution to the Well-being indicators and goals.
- The revocation of the NSIs would provide local government with greater freedom and flexibility to develop a performance measurement framework that is as outcome focused as possible.

Comments from respondents who disagreed with or had concerns in relation to the proposal included the following.

- Three respondents commented the alternative measure for the number of visits to public libraries is through the non-statutory Welsh Public Library Standards (WPLS). Revoking this NSI and not replacing it could increase the risk to the future of this statutory service.

Response: Although the WPLS are non-statutory, policy officials consider them to be sufficiently robust and embedded in practice to be used as an alternative to the NSI indicator.

- There is no alternative statutory collection in connection to the number of calendar days taken to deliver a Disabled Facilities Grants. Removing the current NSI without an alternative will result in a significant lack on monitoring of the provision of housing adaptations for disabled people.

Response: A range of data on disabled facilities grants is available as part of the annual stats release *Assistance for Housing Improvement by Local Authorities*. It would be for local authorities to decide how to use these data in reporting their own performance.

- It is unclear as to what would replace the NSIs in underpinning well-being indicators so that local authorities can demonstrate their contribution to the well-being goals.

- Currently the NSIs provide a consistent basis for authorities to discuss and compare performance and provides continuity to track performance over time. As there is currently no proposal to replace the NSI set, it would be sensible for local government to continue to collect national indicators until such a time as it becomes clear as to what local government will need to report on to underpin the national well-being goals.
- The NSIs should not be replaced with the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 indicators as councils cannot be held directly accountable for these and are not solely responsible for the delivery of the outcomes for these indicators.

Response: The Well-being of Future Generations Indicators form part of a distinct and overarching national outcomes framework. The indicators themselves are not intended to be used by local authorities to measure or manage how they perform and the consultation did not propose these indicators as a replacement for the NSIs. It is for local government in consultation with the Welsh Government to develop arrangements which provide for authorities to meet their statutory responsibilities under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 to demonstrate their progress in meeting their well-being objectives. In addition, further discussions are planned with local government on how future performance reporting arrangements are developed as part of wider local government reform.

- Three respondents commented on the timing of the consultation as NSIs had been included in draft corporate or improvement plans for 2016-17.
- The removal of the NSIs will impact local government's own performance measurement framework – the Public Accountability Measures (PAMs).
- Uncertainty around collecting the data for NSIs and PAMs for 2016-17.

Response: Whilst discontinuing the NSI data set will result in 2015-16 being the last year for which a statistical release is published, the indicators are largely duplicated by, overlap with or have been superseded by performance data requirements set out in other legislation or performance frameworks. Local authorities will continue, through the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009, to have a duty to publish an assessment of their individual performance by reference to self-imposed performance indicators. This draws upon local government's own performance measurement framework – the Public Accountability Measures (PAMs). We understand that authorities have collectively agreed to continue to collect NSIs for 2016-17 for their own performance frameworks as part of their PAMs. Revoking the Order would not affect this.

- An implied message from the proposed revocation is that national performance indicators are of little importance, and there is a danger of this being replicated at a local level.
- There will be no reliable and consistent basis for evaluating local government's contribution.
- It would be better to significantly reduce and revise the NSIs rather than revoke.

Response: The proposal to revoke the Order is an opportunity to remove or simplify current reporting arrangements, reducing the burden of compliance and allowing local authorities to focus on working more effectively rather than reporting on what they are doing. It also allows the collection of indicators to be more responsive to changing needs. Officials are confident that sufficient data and mechanisms remain available to ensure a robust performance framework can be put in place to monitor local authority performance in the short and medium terms whilst the longer term approach to

performance measurement, reporting and improvement is developed and implemented as part of wider local government reforms.

The consultation also gave respondents the opportunity to provide additional comments. A small number of respondents provided additional comments but no new points were raised.

Next steps

The consultation identified there is support for the proposal. Therefore the Welsh Government will proceed with revoking the Order.

The NSI data-set for 2015-16 will be the last to be collected and the Welsh Government will not require NSI data to be collected for 2016-17 onwards.

As a consequence, the annual *National Strategic Indicators* Statistical Release for 2015-16, scheduled for publication in September 2016, will be the final release of its kind. It will contain less detail compared to 2014-15 and users will be directed to the complete dataset published on the StatsWales website, as in previous years.

We would like to thank everyone who has taken the time to respond to the consultation. Your views were important in informing the decision on whether to revoke the Order and we are grateful for your contributions.

List of Respondents

Responses were received from the following organisations.

South Wales East Liberal Democrats

Sir Andrew James Brennan

Cardiff City Council

Vale of Glamorgan Council

Society of the Chief Librarians

Wales Audit Office

Tai Pawb

Pembrokeshire County Council

Denbighshire County Council

Welsh Local Government Association

Newport City Council

Anonymous x 6