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Welsh Government
Consultation – summary of response

A Framework for Regional Investment in Wales

October 2020

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

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 In response to the UK referendum vote to leave the EU in June 2016, the Welsh Government has since¹ been preparing for new arrangements for Regional Investment.
- 1.2 As part of this, the Welsh Government in February 2020 launched a public consultation – A Framework for Regional Investment in Wales – which set out its thinking on the future of regional investment outside the EU, and was developed and informed by close working with stakeholders.
- 1.3 The proposed framework aimed to support growth and inclusiveness, with the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, the delivery of outcomes, and greater decision-making and prioritisation to the regions, at the heart of the plans. The framework also proposed four broad investment priority areas covering:
 - Productive and competitive businesses
 - Reducing the factors that lead to income inequality
 - Supporting the transition to a zero-carbon economy
 - Healthier, fairer, more sustainable communities
- 1.4 The consultation ran from 28th February and was extended, in light of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, to 10th June 2020. There were various strands of engagement planned for the consultation which had to be reviewed and adapted due to the restrictions imposed by COVID-19. Throughout this period, the communication and engagement measures included:
 - A formal consultation document and response form requesting respondents' views on the specific questions raised in the consultation. The consultation document and response form was open to all respondents and was designed by Welsh Government
 - A supporting Easy Read / Youth Friendly version of the consultation, with questionnaire
 - An email and postal address to which digital and paper submissions could be sent
 - Four webinar sessions held for stakeholders in North, South east, South west and Mid Wales. These were hosted online, with the support of a communications company, via the video platform 'Zoom'
 - A Citizen Survey and supporting video, designed with the support of a communications company, to be approachable to non-specialists

¹ <https://gov.wales/regional-investment-wales-after-brexit>

- A separate, short survey, designed and delivered by Children in Wales, to gain the views of young people.
 - Social media and online promotion via Twitter, Facebook, e-newsletters of the consultation in general and Citizens' Survey in particular
- 1.5 Strategic Research and Insight Ltd (SRI) were awarded the contract in April 2020 to independently analyse and report on the responses to the consultation.

General overview of the consultation responses

- 1.6 In general, responses tended to elicit comments from respondents which were broadly supportive of the proposals. The open nature of the consultation form meant many provided additional information, added caveats or raised issues for further consideration. These were varied and, in many cases, were specific to the respondent and/or the organisation that they represented.
- 1.7 Some themes were prevalent across multiple questions, reflecting the relative importance respondents placed on these subjects. These overarching themes included the COVID-19 pandemic, which occurred during the consultation period. The societal and economic effects of COVID-19 on Wales, learning lessons from the adaptations that organisations have made in response to the pandemic and taking into account potential long-term implications of COVID-19 on the proposals were considerations raised in most questions.
- 1.8 Other cross-cutting issues included the need to integrate any changes in the context of the current policy landscape and with regard to existing structures, as well as to learn from and use the experience of existing bodies and programmes and the need to share best practice.
- 1.9 The need for flexibility was highlighted repeatedly throughout the consultation responses. Areas included introducing repayable finance with the opportunity for alternative finance options, applying horizontal themes only where they are in the scope, and using monitoring and evaluation that is proportional to the scale of each project.
- 1.10 Another cross-cutting issue was the need for inclusivity, meaning good communication of national level priorities with communities and broadening the diversity of organisations and stakeholders involved as partners in the framework (e.g. by making administrative processes more accessible).
- 1.11 There were areas where respondents felt they wanted more detailed information. Some wanted clearer definitions of terminology used in the consultation document, while others asked how specific scenarios would fit in with the proposed changes. There were also some who pointed out that aspects of the proposals depended on ongoing processes like the formation of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund or the Brexit negotiations, many of which are surrounded by uncertainty.
- 1.12 From Chapter 4 onwards the key themes from the different forms of consultation response are discussed in detail.

2. Methodology

- 2.1 The consultation response form consisted of 13 open-ended questions about various aspects of the proposals for the new Framework for Regional Investment, and included a 'further comments' question at the end to capture any additional considerations which respondents might have.
- 2.2 The consultation response form could be completed by individuals as well as on behalf of organisations. In total, 112 responses were received. Upon analysing the data, one response was identified as a 'test' response and was removed from the dataset, alongside three responses which were blank, and three responses which were duplicated. After removal, this resulted in 105 valid responses received to the open consultation questionnaire.
- 2.3 In addition, 29 'submissions' were received by email or post. Many of these submissions did not follow the format of the consultation questionnaire, although the submissions covered the questions and topic raised in the consultation document. As a result, these submissions are analysed separately from the 'questionnaire' responses.
- 2.4 Three responses were received to the 'Easy Read / Youth Friendly' version of the consultation questionnaire. A Citizen's Survey was developed to engage with and provide an additional means of consultation with citizens across Wales and gathered 285 responses. In addition, a separate survey for young people was designed and distributed by Children in Wales, which received 42 responses. Due to the differences in the questionnaires, these responses have been analysed separately in the below chapters.
- 2.5 All open-ended responses received, regardless of format of submission, have been read and classified thematically using a standardised coding frame. The main themes raised are summarised in chapters 4 to 12 and more detail on the methodology and coding frame can be found in Appendix 1.

Scope of the work

- 2.6 The report is ordered by the questions in the consultation response form and are summarised in terms of the key themes which arose from the responses under each question. In the interests of report length, not all themes have been discussed in the summary. The less frequently occurring themes in the responses from the online response form can be seen in the tables of codes provided in Appendix 1, which sets out the full range of themes and the frequency with which they occurred.
- 2.7 While coding frames indicate respondents' key concerns and the strength of feeling about certain issues, the number of responses is not the only factor to take into consideration for decision-makers. It is important to note that the frequency of key themes cannot be used to interpret the balance of views in the same way that a closed question can. It should also be noted that where a proportion of respondents have commented in support of particular parts of a proposal, it does not follow that those not making these comments oppose that part of the proposals.

- 2.8 The summary is loosely ordered by the most frequently occurring themes and are evidenced with quotations. Quotations serve to elaborate on and illustrate key themes, but do not necessarily represent all comments.
- 2.9 Submissions tended to be lengthy, were sometimes highly technical, and often raised points which were unique or highly specific. As there were only 29 submissions, occasionally points raised within individual submissions are discussed in the commentary, either for completeness or because they raised topics not found elsewhere in the consultation responses.

3. Open consultation response form

Introduction

- 3.1 The Welsh Government produced a public consultation document to set out proposals on the future of regional investment. These proposals were informed by the Regional Investment for Wales Steering Group (RIWSG), chaired by Huw Irranca-Davies MS and comprising stakeholders from the public, HE/FE, private, and third sectors. The work of the RIWSG was supported by four sub-groups set up to look at issues around policy, delivery, monitoring and evaluation, and international and cross-border working in more detail. The Welsh Government also produced a corresponding consultation questionnaire, as well as an easy read / youth friendly version. All materials were available in both English and Welsh, and were published on the Welsh Government website.
- 3.2 The summary of the responses to the online response form and at the end of each table in Appendix 1 displays a 'base' figure, which represents the number of respondents who gave comments to that specific consultation question. Not all respondents answered every question, and so the percentages shown are of the number responding to that question, rather than of the total number of respondents overall.
- 3.3 As the questions on the response form were open-ended, many respondents included information which was unique to their response and / or could not be coded thematically, such as background information about their organisation's expertise. Where this occurred, responses were coded and grouped under 'other'. The proportion of 'other' responses is displayed at the bottom of each table in Appendix 1 and due to the unique nature of 'other' comments may have higher values than some of the key themes.

Demographics

- 3.4 Two questions were included at the end of the consultation questionnaire to determine postcode and the name of organisations responding. Submissions also tended to include the name of the organisation and postcode. From this, SRI produced the categories outlined in Tables 1 and 2 denoting the type of respondent, as well as geographical location.
- 3.5 Not all organisations supplied their names, so a small number of these respondents are of unknown background. Postcodes have been used to produce an indication of the location of those responding for the purpose of analysing geographical differences in the content of responses. However, it should be noted that some organisations operate across and have multiple locations within Wales and the location given for the response may be a headquarters location. Please note that because two organisations provided both a consultation response form and a submission with the same information, these organisations have only been counted once in Tables 1 and 2 below.

Table 1: Response by sector

Type of response	Count	%
Third sector	25	19%
Local Authorities	22	17%
Unions and representative bodies	16	12%
Other public sector	15	11%
Educational institutions	15	11%
Skills /Enterprise / Economic development organisations	13	10%
Private companies	11	8%
Individual	10	8%
Unknown	5	4%

Table 2: Response by location

Location	Count	%
South east	59	45%
South west	26	20%
Mid	20	15%
North	19	14%
Outside Wales	7	5%
Unknown	1	1%

Easy Read Version

- 3.6 Three respondents chose to engage with the consultation using the Welsh Government's Easy Read/ Youth Friendly version. One of these responses was from an organisation, but the other two did not indicate their response type.

4. The proposed model (Q1)

Q1. What are your views on the proposed model where: Strategic, pan-Wales initiatives are co-ordinated at national level, and designated regional bodies design and deliver their own programmes of investment aligned with national-level policy?

Online response form

- 4.1 The first question asked respondents for their views on the proposed model where strategic, pan-Wales initiatives are co-ordinated at national level, and designated regional bodies design and deliver their own programmes of investment aligned with national-level policy.
- 4.2 In general, responses to the model were positive or supportive of the proposals, with many respondents stating explicitly that they agreed with the general nature of the proposals. Some of these comments highlighted particular aspects of the proposal with which they agreed, including the importance of ensuring the ability to intervene and co-ordinate at a national level. However, many of these comments were caveated with considerations, which respondents felt that the Welsh Government needed to take into account, particularly around the capacity and ability to deliver investment activities at regional level. Naturally, some responses were focussed on considerations relating to national-level policy, while others gave comments and suggestions relating to the delivery of regional investment. Others commented on the relationship between the two levels of administration and how this would fit within the context of current policies and structures. Few stated that they disagreed with the proposals outright, with only a small proportion stating that they were against national level co-ordination.
- 4.3 The following summary explores responses to this question by the key themes. Quotes are provided to give greater insight into the themes but are not necessarily representative of all responses coded under each theme. All percentages are a proportion of the number of respondents who answered each question.

Generally support pan-Wales initiatives

- 4.4 The most frequent theme among the responses was explicit support specifically for pan-Wales initiatives and agreement with co-ordination at the national level. These respondents felt that there needed to be an overview of needs across Wales, and that this approach could reduce duplication and ensure a consistent approach across different regions.

“[...] some investment programmes are best retained at national level to benefit from economies of scale or to take advantage of technical expertise.” (Skills/Enterprise agency/Economic development organisation)

“This approach will also support effective integration with other relevant national policies and frameworks such as regional growth deals and the Welsh Government’s Prosperity for All series; the National Strategy, Low Carbon Wales and the Economic Plan.” (Third sector)

Regional bodies' capacity/ability to deliver investment activities

- 4.5 A similar proportion of respondents expressed concern over aspects of regional delivery and added comments suggesting the Welsh Government put in place strong partnership working arrangements to ensure wider representation. Almost a fifth (19%) felt that regional bodies currently do not have the capacity or ability to deliver investment activities effectively. Among these concerns were questions over the make-up of future regional bodies, including negative perceptions that they would be dominated by existing joint committees or local authority agendas. Consequently, cross-sector representation within regional bodies and the inclusion of specialists from the private, community and third sectors to assist delivery were common suggestions among those with these concerns.

“Having witnessed many a project that is designed with no or limited consideration given to its sustainability post grant, it does concern me that regional bodies do not have the business background and experience to deliver their own programmes of investment. What I would like to see is a core team of qualified experienced economic development specialists from private sector be part of the design - core team selection to be transparent and selected from a pool of private sector experienced people and not simply the usual suspects.” (Individual)

“If the [existing] joint committees currently leading the growth deals are to become the designated regional bodies, as appears to be suggested earlier in the text, they may fall short of the agility and flexibility required. These bodies move very slowly and are dominated by the local authority leader agendas who hold the decision-making powers, with other members from industry and education only given observer status. That would not be an acceptable model.” (Educational Institution)

“Many regional bodies are primarily made up of Local Authorities in the key decision making roles and, whereas LAs are important players, there are some areas where they are not the most appropriate, independent and expert bodies to undertake this function.” (Educational Institution)

Interaction with existing arrangements and strategies

- 4.6 Some questioned how the proposed model would complement existing arrangements and strategies, such as growth deals and regional partnership boards. Among other comments were suggestions that new bodies could potentially risk duplicating existing arrangements.

“At this stage it would be beneficial for a visual aid for the integration of the proposal alongside the existing strategies, including Flood & Coastal Erosion Risk Management.” (Local Authority)

“An important consideration is the impact and work of the City and Growth Deals and it will be essential that any regionally led initiatives are cognisant of the projects being led and supported by City Deals.” (Private company)

“[...] we are concerned that the regional strategic partnership landscape is already complex and densely populated between Regional Collaborative Committees, Regional Partnership Boards, Public Services Boards, Skills Partnerships Boards etc - as pointed out in the WAO report on the Well-being of Future Generations work. Creating yet another structure seems against the common refrain of wanting fewer meetings, less bureaucracy and better use of time and resources. We are also still waiting on the publication of the WLGA review of strategic partnerships - the findings of this should be reviewed and considered before proposing any more change in regional arrangements. Given that the Framework goes to lengths to outline how it will deliver against the Well-being of Future Generations Act it is odd that there is minimal mention of involving /using existing Public Services Boards, making use of existing Assessments and informing the next iteration as a shared resource.”
(Other public sector)

Clarity: proposals require more detail

- 4.7 While not disagreeing with the proposed model, 12% of respondents wanted clarity about specific aspects of the model and how it would work in practice. For example, several respondents wanted a clearer definition of what constitutes a ‘region’ in the context of the consultation, and how Corporate Joint Committees (CJCs) would work with existing established bodies.

“There is a lack of clarity on the genesis and ownership of the regional economic frameworks, and those of the local priorities. A results-based accountability model is appropriate but there are several versions of these, and clarity on this (sic) model adopted is required.” (Educational Institution)

“We assume that the proposed Corporate Joint Committees (CJC) will work in collaboration with already established groups such as e.g. regional skills partnerships and Public Services Boards. We would welcome clarity on how these partnerships will operate in terms of planning economic priorities at national, regional, and local levels.” (Educational Institution)

“There needs to be some clarity as [to] the layers of Pan-Wales, regional and local and how these are administered to prevent duplication of effort and loss of efficiency. What will constitute a pan-Wales infrastructure project for example? How will regional differences and urban /rural factors be taken into account? For example, with the current distribution of transport infrastructure, is the N Wales Metro concept a regional or pan-Wales project?” (Local Authority)

General agreement with the relationship between national and regional levels

- 4.8 In terms of the proposed relationship between national and regional levels suggested within the pan-Wales approach, just over 10% of respondents gave specific comments expressing general support with the balance between national and regional responsibilities. However, a similar proportion felt that that pan-Wales initiatives should be informed by a bottom-up approach and should

guarantee regional and community input or co-design into national level decision making.

“We agree that some strategic pan-Wales initiatives should be coordinated at a national level, but it is crucial that the selection and design of pan-Wales initiatives is not solely top down and involves active engagement and co-design with both regional and local stakeholders to avoid duplication. For instance, the document mentions broad areas that would fall into the strategic category (including business support and employability). Both of these have some element of national delivery at present (e.g. Business Wales and ReAct/WBL programmes), but both also already have very successful local authority-led delivery which we strongly argue should also be sustained.” (Local Authority)

Regions need to work together/share best practice

- 4.9 The potential for the model to cause duplication came up repeatedly in the responses, with some respondents suggesting that ensuring regions work together and share best practice would address this, and others highlighting the importance of clearly aligning national and regional objectives to complement one another.

“Although regional bodies will be focusing on what is best for that region, the design may not align with the vision of Wales as a whole. We should encourage regions to work together and share best practice.” (Individual)

“It is essential that regionally designed programmes are aligned to national level policy and do not duplicate each other but instead complement and recognise the regional dynamics and differences across Wales.” (Private company)

Submissions

- 4.10 In general, the responses received in the submissions were supportive of the model, although this support was usually caveated. Several submissions focussed their agreement on the need for co-ordination at the national level and the necessity of an overarching pan-Wales strategy as a support and guide to local activity.

“We feel that a strategic pan-Wales initiative should be coordinated at national level, sharing lessons and managing risk.” (Educational Institution)

- 4.11 One submission expressed support for a top-down model as a reaction against what they perceived as an ideological tendency towards regional working.

“[W]e would caution against what, at times, appears to be an ideological aversion to nationally co-ordinated activity in favour of a focus on regional activity...We would contend that with respect to ensuring that national policies and priorities are being adhered to and effectively implemented at a regional level, there should in fact be an element of “top down” checking up on the regions. This will be particularly pressing in the early

years of any new system where the regional administrative bodies have yet to demonstrate their ability to deliver.” (Union/Representative body)

- 4.12 Other submissions supported the need for local delivery and decision-making. In general, decentralisation, as proposed in the consultation, was seen as important to create a process that identifies, understands and addresses specific needs at sub-national levels, usually defined in terms of regional and local concerns. There was less discussion of community-level needs.

“Whilst the management and co-ordination of delivery can be streamlined into a regional or national investment approach – the delivery itself should be locally led.” (Skills/Enterprise agency/Economic development organisation)

- 4.13 Some responses discussed the level(s) in the model where they felt responsibility (e.g. decision-making, accountability) should lie, including the need for national, regional, and local responsibilities to be defined. There was some suggestion of a need to ensure that regionalisation was more than just an added layer of Welsh Government control.

“Decentralisation of funding and decision-making to regions necessitates more than an added layer of Welsh Government capacity in the regions. Transition from national coordination by Welsh Government to regional design by Welsh Government (via Regional Economic Frameworks) is not devolution - it is the regionalisation of Welsh Government control.” (Educational Institution)

“[W]e believe that individual regions should be allowed to agree the appropriate arrangements for administering and managing Regional Investment funding within their individual areas, reflecting their unique circumstances and maximize synergy with other strategic programs such as the Growth Deals. It is not for the Welsh Government to determine how the regions should operate.” (Local Authority)

- 4.14 Some respondents welcomed the commitment to work with a variety of stakeholders during the transition to the proposed model, seeing it as necessary to ensure its suitability at the regional and local levels. One submission suggested that the trade unions should represent the voice of the workforce in designing the changes as well as in social partnerships that should help deliver the model, despite the Social Partnerships Bill being delayed as a result of COVID-19. Other responses also suggested the importance of partnership and collaborative working. Some respondents said that existing structures, organisations and working relationships should be respected and nurtured in order to retain existing strengths while another suggestion was that it would be helpful to build capacity to help deliver the new model. One example of this was the need to encourage cross-local and cross-regional working.

“An overarching pan-Wales strategy is vital. This, however, needs to be the outcome of thorough collaboration and engagement across sectors and stakeholders and reflect the views and aspirations of different interests and the different regions of Wales.” (Local Authority)

- 4.15 Other suggestions for success included the need to fund the development of capacity, capability and infrastructure to support the model, the sharing of best practice and the need for timescales to be more realistic than in the past.
- 4.16 Some respondents suggested the need for replacement funding arrangements to respect the devolved nature of certain policy areas. Another suggestion was that the transition away from European funding is an opportunity for the Welsh Government to demand the powers necessary to redevelop local and regional economies (e.g. to provide State Aid including the ability to take shareholdings, control public procurement, secure comprehensive public ownership and require sectoral collective bargaining and union recognition).
- 4.17 Finally, as in the questionnaire, some submissions requested more information. These included the need for more information on: CJsCs; the relationships between the national, regional and local and community tiers; examples of how the Framework might work; indication of how the fund might be divided up across the various scales; and the mechanisms for deciding this.

5. Community-led investments (Q2)

Q2. Do you support our proposals for some investments to be led by the community in which the activity takes place?

Online response form

- 5.1 After initially being asked about national and regional level delivery, respondents were asked for their views on the proposals for some investments to be led by the community in which the activity takes place.
- 5.2 In general, comments were supportive of the principle of community-led investment, with respondents giving examples of where such investments had been successful in the past. Respondents tended to feel that local people were best placed to understand the unique needs of their community, but also that they would need adequate communication about how initiatives fit into wider objectives and priorities as well as training and support to effectively deliver them.

Need for good communication with communities

- 5.3 In order to make community-led investment successful, respondents commonly felt that there needed to be a good level of communication with communities. This meant informing community organisations about how their investments fit within national and regional contexts, with a clear remit of responsibilities. Good communication also meant to some the requirement to work collaboratively with communities to co-produce initiatives in order to secure feelings of community ownership.

“[...] this does require key stakeholder and community representatives to be well informed and be able to make reasonable decisions with an understanding of the context of the funding. For example, many environmental changes delivered via projects and programmes may only make sense as part of a larger plan for change and it would not be helpful for this to be compromised by a multitude of local approaches.” (Third sector)

“Communities would need to recognise the overarching objectives at a regional level and how their particular investment complements and contributes to those objectives albeit in a broad sense.” (Educational Institution)

“Starting with the agreed national outcomes, you could easily engage in a ‘theory of change’ exercise in communities that reverse engineers those outcomes to develop agreed and participatory activities on the ground that have real local buy in.” (Private company)

Need for more information

- 5.4 While broadly supported in principle, some respondents asked for greater clarity or detail about specific parts of the proposals. In particular, several respondents wanted clearer criteria for what constitutes a ‘community’, with some highlighting the existence of ‘communities of interest’ as well as traditional geographical communities. Others wanted to know whether being ‘led by’ the community meant

that small community organisations would be direct recipients of funding or merely consultees. Other questions were raised on how cross-border activities would work in practice, how bids would be evaluated, and whether there would be ring-fencing for particular types of communities or investments.

“Diverse communities who might want to bid – the rules defining what constitutes a community need to be clarified, and also if there will be any ring-fencing for particular communities, business, academia and councils. If the bids are highly heterogeneous how will success criteria be established? What would the framework mentioned in the consultation look like? Cross border activities are mentioned - who will be eligible, how far across the border? This needs clarification.” (Educational Institution)

“Community led also may not adhere to regional boundaries. As an example, I am working with a group of organisations and communities at the moment in the Upper Neath Valley, Upper Rhondda Fawr Valley and South Powys to exploit the economic opportunities that potentially arise from their place in “Waterfall Country”. This area crosses 3 local authority boundaries, 3 Health Board areas and 2 Police Authority areas. It will cross 2 or possibly 3 Regional Investment areas.” (Individual)

Continue 'LEADER' approach/LEADER approach works well/LAGs are experienced/effective

- 5.5 The perceived benefits of continuing or expanding the EU’s LEADER programme approach to community development was also a common theme, with some comments suggesting Local Action Groups (LAGs) be involved in delivery due to their experience and representation from different interest groups.

“There is considerable overlap and complementarity between what is currently being delivered as LEADER and the CLLD elements described in the consultation. If the rural limitations were to be removed and remit broadened, the Local Action Groups (LAGs) could be well placed to deliver the community led elements of this strategy. Strong, long-standing relationships with the relevant stakeholders and beneficiaries with positive track-record of delivering community led projects.” (Local Authority)

“Local Action Groups (LAGs) have been delivering the LEADER programme for years and have built up a wealth of experience. The LAGs have an equal mix of representation from the public private and voluntary sectors, with a diverse range of skills, expertise and local knowledge between them. However, all project applications within LEADER also need evidence of community consultation to support the need of the project, therefore consultation is undertaken in the heart of the community.” (Local Authority)

Adequate support/training/resources required

- 5.6 Linked to communication, respondents also highlighted that community groups will need adequate support, training and resources provided to them. This was particularly in cases where specialist knowledge or expertise would be required,

or among communities which are economically disadvantaged or physically unable to lead without support.

“Community led projects can often depend on the skills and experience of a few key people in an area so getting the training, advice and guidance offer right will be important at the national level filtering down to local level. This is particularly the case in the marine environment as the logistics are often very complex and therefore more ambitious community led initiatives are likely to need logistical support from other bodies.”
(Other public sector)

Local people/community organisations know what is best for their area

- 5.7 Respondents generally responded positively to the principle of community-led investment. The most frequently occurring theme in the data was that local people and local community organisations know what is best for their area, and that communities have unique challenges which they are best placed to identify and can address when provided with funding.

“Community-led activity has obvious advantages in that there is clear vested interest in the success of the investment but this should not be at the expense of competency to deliver. Communities are also best placed to know exactly what type of interventions would make real and sustainable impacts locally.”
(Educational Institution)

“Communities are well placed to understand where funding is most needed, and which interventions are likely to have greatest impact. Community led investments will also increase local ownership, involvement and engagement with the funding scheme, which has been absent from the EU Structural Funding model.” (Other public sector)

Requires sufficient oversight

- 5.8 In addition to support, training and resources provided both prior to and during delivery, it was felt that sufficient oversight at the national level was needed. This was not only for the communication of national and regional level aims and objectives, but auditing community led projects against these objectives and making them subject to robust monitoring and evaluation.

Community capacity/ability to deliver investment activities

- 5.9 Support and oversight were often felt to be needed due to a concern over a lack of ability or capacity for certain communities to deliver investment activities effectively. Some suggested that there needed to be specialists from private, community and third sectors involved to assist delivery.

“Absolutely, but under good professional Mentorship (by tradespeople, not HR executives/managers.)” (Individual)

- 5.10 There was a suggestion that, while the Welsh Higher Education (HE) Sector has a pan-Wales remit, the work they also do to support and develop local communities through their civic mission is important to local capacity building.

Such outreach is underpinned by research, development and innovation which, as stated elsewhere, has in the past been heavily reliant on European funding.

Submissions

- 5.11 There was consistent support for community-led development across the submissions. This included a detailed, co-authored proposal for a community-led development approach. Support for community-led development included suggestions that it is often sustainable, provides vital social infrastructure, allows the development of appropriate outcomes and collaborative measures from bottom-up, empowers residents to support development of their communities, and delivers relevant impacts. Social business was also seen as having a role to play. It was also suggested that community-led development has an important function in the post-COVID-19 recovery of the Welsh economy.

“We agree with the proposal that some investments should be led by the community in which they take place. Such an approach will also allow Wales to be more flexible and dynamic in the economic recovery from COVID-19. We were pleased to see the consultation document reference the role of social businesses delivering activities in partnership with local communities. Social business empowers communities to come together to address issues that matter to them.” (Third Sector)

- 5.12 While some felt that community-led development can help address inequalities (including economic inequalities), there were also concerns that spatial variation in socio-economic characteristics mean that the success of community-development will differ between areas.

“We do think that the general statement that community led local development can be a mechanism for delivering the four priorities is reasonable but we believe that there needs to be a recognition that it is more likely to deliver some elements of the framework than others and this will differ by spatial geography. So, while we agree that this approach can and should be utilised in all urban, rural, coastal and post-industrial areas it won't work in the same way in all those types of areas and also can't work everywhere...” (Skills/Enterprise agency/Economic development organisation)

- 5.13 Other comments referred to the need to operate in an appropriate spatial area and within an appropriate spatial strategy. The commitment to projects which engage local communities in determining how investment is targeted was welcomed but concerns were expressed that the approach won't be implemented in all communities; won't work in the same way in different areas; and that the healthier, fairer and more sustainable communities priority is more likely to be substantially delivered at the local level than the other three priorities.

- 5.14 While some felt that community-led development is vital for ensuring that funds are accessible to a wider range of stakeholders, others suggested that it needs to be easier for communities to access funds. To be accessible, community-led projects should also avoid technical “strategy-speak”.

5.15 Some focussed on the need for community-led development to be guided at a higher level, while others highlighted the need for it to be locally-led. There was an indication of some tensions between community-led development and democratic governance with a concern raised that community-led development should not undermine local and regional accountability (e.g. elected local authorities and community councils). This was contrasted by a suggestion that, in order to allow community-led development to thrive, public-sector culture would need to become less risk averse.

“We support the Welsh Government’s proposal for some investments to be led by the community in which the activity takes place. It needs to be joined-up at a local and national level, and incorporate an enabling partner.” (Educational Institution)

“For this aspect of work to flourish there will need to be a greater degree of trust shown in community led work.” (Skills/Enterprise agency/Economic development organisation)

5.16 The need for capacity building was highlighted, including suggestions that peer learning and empowerment of local actors needs to be built in, that regional bodies need to be able to prove they have capacity and expertise to deliver community-led development, and that ring-fenced funding to help local authorities deliver interventions will make differences in deprived and vulnerable communities.

5.17 There were requests for more detail on community-led development as well as clarification on roles and scales. Concerns were also expressed that, while the words “community” and “local” are used frequently in the proposals, defining these words is problematic and this needs consideration.

“‘Local’ and ‘community’ level are used interchangeably in the document and the glossary suggests that ‘local level’ should be read to mean ‘local authority or community level’. It’s therefore unclear what precisely is meant by ‘led by the community’ in this context. The paper refers to the CJsCs as the local delivery mechanisms but - as set out in the Local Government and Elections Bill – these bodies are intended to be regional bodies that bring together local authorities. Our concern here is to seek to understand whether ‘led by the community’ should be interpreted as taking place at a level lower than the CJsCs and subsequently how trade unions would be able to set about working in social partnership with any such local structures.” (Union/Representative body)

Easy Read Version

5.18 All three respondents to the Easy Read questionnaire answered ‘yes’ when asked whether they felt the way of working at the national, regional and community level was a good idea, as well to the question of whether some investment decisions should happen in the community where the activity takes place.

Employment

- 5.19 In these responses one respondent focused on employment in these responses, feeling that engagement would be crucial in understanding barriers to employment in Wales and creating solutions. Another was concerned with employment opportunities for disabled people and supported the idea of locally based integrated programmes to increase employment and skills opportunities for people with learning disabilities, but felt that regional investment needed to consider how disabled people can benefit from and participate in decisions on local co-produced programmes that improve access to public services, employment and social activities.

Community politics

- 5.20 One agreed with the approach but was concerned about community level politics and the potential for a small number of individuals or groups to control decision-making processes and disenfranchise others from taking part, giving examples of where this had happened in the past.

6. Repayable finance (Q3)

Q3. Do you agree that we should continue to increase our use of repayable finance where this is viable and, where it is not, that models of combined support that maximise the repayable element should be developed?

Online response form

- 6.1 To support economic development, the consultation proposed a delivery model administered at a national level which seeks to use repayable finance where market failures are identified. Respondents were asked for their views on increasing the use of repayable finance where viable, as well as using combined support maximising the repayable element where unviable.
- 6.2 While respondents tended to agree with increasing the use of repayable finance, this agreement was more heavily caveated than in other areas of the consultation. Respondents were cautious about an over-reliance on repayable finance, stating their support for combined support models over a model where repayable finance is the only option. Respondents highlighted instances where they thought repayable finance wouldn't be appropriate due to the type of initiative or type of funding recipient, and felt that repayable finance needed to be implemented flexibly, potentially among a range of financial support in light of the economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 6.3 Nevertheless, while there were specific areas respondents felt repayable finance would be inappropriate or made recommendations on its implementation, few disagreed outright with the use of repayable finance. Those who disagreed did so because they disagreed with the potential increase of debt to the people of Wales, because of the uncertainty due to Brexit and the COVID-19 pandemic, or because their organisation benefited from the use of grant funding.

Combining repayable finance with grants

- 6.4 Around a quarter (24%) of the comments felt that there should be a flexible range of financing options available, utilising a combined support model including repayable finance as well as grants and other financial options.

“Looking at a Welsh example, the repayable finance has been very successful for the tourism industry over the last few years as it gives the applicant more ownership of what they are applying for. Tourism grants that operated on repayment finance delivered a 70/30 split between loan and grant so that anyone applying (and able to prove the viability of their business) would get 100% of the money needed which allows greater investment and growth.” (Other public sector)

“A tiered element of repayable finance would seem to be appropriate – projects receiving full repayable funding; along with a projects receiving combination of repayable finance and grant, depending on circumstances and co-investment.” (Local Authority)

“A range of funding options is needed, allowing the mix and match of public and private sources, including public grants, farm support

schemes, planning gain, carbon funding, corporate social responsibility funds.” (Third sector)

Not always appropriate/also need alternative finance

6.5 There were a range of situations where repayable finance was not seen as appropriate, or where meeting specific objectives was felt to justify alternative finance options, for example for social and economic capacity building. In particular, alternatives were felt to be needed by organisations without security.

“Repayable finance properly administered can work. However, it does not work where inward investment clients, with competing location options, present themselves. [...] I find it both alarming and disappointing that this document fails to mention inward investment at all.” (Private companies)

“Repayable finance, in part or in whole, is an excellent tool where applied appropriately, particularly when supporting a surplus generating project/body. However, finance is also needed to support the needs of social and economic capacity building actions for which repayable finance will not be appropriate.” (Other public sector)

“Repayable finance should be the first option, but it should not be the only option. There are situations where this is not appropriate and where other forms of finance are valid:

- Repayable finance combined with grant support.... where repayable finance places too heavy a burden on the organisation
- Grant support with various types of matched funding.... where the matched funding comes from the business internal resources or from external funders
- Grant support.... where no other form of funding will deliver the required result

The support employed will be determined by the long-term potential of the initiative, by the organisation size and by the sector. The criteria will have to be clear and consistent, reflecting project needs and anchorage dynamics.” (Skills/Enterprise agency/Economic development organisation)

Consider changes arising due to COVID-19

6.6 Again, COVID-19 was a common concern among respondents, with many feeling that potential economic uncertainty would require flexibility in funding arrangements, including a greater use of grant funding, and that taking on debt via repayable finance would be unattractive to organisations during a period of economic uncertainty.

“[...]in the wake of COVID-19 in particular fully repayable models of investment may not be viable, especially for very small and micro-enterprises. Particular consideration should be given to funding for new start enterprises in light of an anticipated increase in necessity-based entrepreneurship potentially arising from a situation of unemployment. Entrepreneurs in this category will find it hard to attract finance and would

benefit from a cash injection to stimulate start up and improve sustainability.” (Individual)

“Repayable finance will not be a viable option for all businesses, especially as they strive to recover from the pandemic. We know from our communities that small and micro-enterprises are likely to be particularly hard hit in the wake of COVID-19.” (Other public sector)

“In relation to business support, the landscape is likely to be even more nuanced post-COVID. As such, a full and flexible range of financial investment options should be retained. In some instances, this may require non-repayable finance, whereas in others an equity share, profit share, or low interest loan model may be appropriate. The support should be flexible enough to be able to respond to all these circumstances.” (Local Authority)

Consider intangible/indirect/long-term benefits

- 6.7 Respondents flagged that some benefits of projects are intangible, long-term or difficult to measure and should be valued beyond their ability to repay. These included investments which improve community health, the environment or aim at long-term viability – particularly in light of the economic effects of COVID-19.

“There are many measures that need to be put in place to help sustain communities and improve people’s quality of life – thereby supporting them to become economically active. These services need to be funded on an ongoing basis.” (Local Authority)

“We would like to see a differentiation made between investments into business development and those into environmental or community infrastructure actions. The proposals outlined within the framework, whilst stated to be underpinned by the Well-being of Future Generations Act appear to prioritise economic growth and the private sector across Wales with far less priority or emphasis on improving community, natural and environmental resource. Environmental schemes create lasting and tangible outcomes to the health of people and communities, they support complex and often threatened ecosystems whose value is more than merely economic while community resilience investments can create generational change. These investments are not appropriate for repayable-finance models.” (Local Authority)

“Depends on what is being funded. If it is a commercial enterprise generating financial income, then Yes, they should be able to afford to repay finance. However, many projects will deliver benefits which cannot be measured in a strict financial way, even if indirect benefits (e.g. better health) can be measured. Not too much of the available funds should be allocated via repayable finance. We suspect most of the projects to deliver your objectives will provide intangible benefits.” (Third sector)

Grants should remain available/third sector relies on grants

- 6.8 Where respondents suggested that repayable finance was unviable or unsuitable, there was support for maintaining the use of grant funding instead, rather than using a combined model. Some of these respondents highlighted third sector reliance on grant funding.

“This could be problematic for third sector organisations who rely on grant-based funding primarily. In principle, this could be a measure of viability, but it would still be an issue if the options for grant based funding are diminished by too great an emphasis on repayable finance in the programme.” (Third sector)

“Grants, not loans. I disagree with the debt model.” (Individual)

“Activity may not be economic nor commercial in its nature and therefore the generation of funds with which to repay finance may not be possible. Consideration should be given to the number of not-for-profit organisations who have engaged in the delivery of Structural funds. It is unlikely that many of these organisations would be in a position to engage on such terms. Grant funding coupled with the use of match funding or funding packages which bring together co-investment from other existing investment schemes would be more viable than repayable finance.” (Educational Institution)

Unviable for small/micro organisations

- 6.9 A particular concern was the appropriateness of the repayable finance model for small or micro organisations or small community projects. Some respondents felt that the proposals needed to make specific provisions designed for SMEs.

“If eligibility is dependent on business viability (like it is currently for tourism) then a lot of SMEs /businesses managed for outcomes beyond pure economics may be overlooked. We would also support consideration of funding to enable sectors in transitioning to meet regulatory compliance (e.g. dairy).” (Other public sector)

“It is also important to remember that a high percentage of businesses in rural Powys are small, micro businesses, and support for this area is key to the economy of Powys.” (Local Authority)

“[...] any further move toward greater proportions of repayable finance in Wales must be complemented by sufficient provision for, and access to, other forms of finance to permit repayments in pre-revenue situations – particularly for micro businesses. At present it could be argued that Wales does not host a sufficient equity investor base or a broad enough loan provision to allow businesses choice and access to enough sources of alternative finance.” (Educational Institution)

Need for more information

- 6.10 Around 10% of comments to this question wanted more details about the repayable finance proposals with some suggesting that it was difficult to comment on the proposals without having more information. This included questions about

what finance options are currently available, the circumstances in which finance should and should not be repayable. There were also comments highlighting that third sector organisations are less familiar with repayable finance and thus will require more communication about how this will work in practice.

“Again, this question cannot be posed in isolation or without contextualising what investment, for what purpose, on what basis and with what expectations. Without an overarching investment framework that provides the scope, parameters and backdrop for this – it is impossible to answer. Invoking a debt instrument with a company possessing unique Intellectual Property, market leadership and a strong EBITDA and full security – as per CCR’s investment in CSC Foundry Ltd - is very different to acting on a policy ambition to support start-ups with much higher risk profiles, or a University-led skills and entrepreneurship programme which requires seed funding and catalytic support.” (Skills/Enterprise agency/Economic development organisation)

“In its report, the PAC [Public Accounts Committee] recommended greater clarity for businesses in relation to the types of finance offered; and for Welsh Government officials to strengthen guidance for when finance should be repayable or non-repayable.” (Other public sector)

“Clear guidance on the way in which models of combined support are developed will be needed, to identify when repayable finance is viable and when the alternative approach can be used.” (Other public sector)

Only Development Bank of Wales or similar national body should deliver

6.11 Almost 10% of respondents gave comments which supported the administering of repayable finance through the Development Bank of Wales (or similar national body), or expressed confidence in the Development Bank of Wales. A similar proportion, however, argued that repayable finance should be implemented and managed at the local level, or suggested that funds should be used as local loan guarantees, rather than direct capital, to build up local financing. Others suggested establishing local community funds and using this community funding in parallel with repayable finance.

Submissions

6.12 Within the submissions there were a variety of comments around repayable finance models, but most of the comments on this topic were each made by only one respondent. Suggestions included:

- It’s good that the document recognises that the repayable finance model may not be viable in all cases and that grant or other co-investment may also be necessary
- Repayable finance needs to adopt a best practice model using lessons learned from European funding programmes
- The repayable finance model needs to be extended

- The repayable finance model should be administered at the national level but in-keeping with the four priority areas and take account of the strategic direction(s) being taken by each of the regions in Wales
- The repayable element should not always be maximised when designing combined support packages
- The repayable finance model has a role within a suite of financial levers that should be made available to Welsh Government and its regional and local apparatus through a democratising approach.

6.13 Other comments, again each comment made by only one respondent, within one submission each, included:

- Flexible finance and innovation vouchers may help
- The role of state aid needs discussing
- There is a strong case for 100% grant-funded investment rather than repayable finance, to support early growth firms
- Support for the aim of maximising the sustainability of regional investment resources and, where investments are intended to support profit generation, these are repayable
- There are other fiscal levers and incentives to balance returns and that should be considered beyond repayable finance.

Easy Read Version

6.14 Among the three easy read responses, the continuation of grant funding and various public fundraising activities was seen as necessary for social business models, foundational economy services and health and social care charities.

7. The transition period (Q4)

Q4. What are your views on our plans for the transition period?

Online response form

- 7.1 The fourth question of the consultation focussed on the transition from the current European funding to a new outcomes and place-based regional investment model. Welsh Government proposals here were that future investments be used to maintain transitional projects prioritised at national level and through the Regional Economic Frameworks being developed by the Chief Regional Officer teams for each region. They also proposed that investments during this transition period provide capability and capacity at the local, regional and national level to begin the transition in 2021. Respondents were asked for their feedback on the plans for this transition period.
- 7.2 Most respondents had concerns and anxieties about the transition process. The strongest theme was the potential impact that COVID-19 will have both on the success and the shape of the transition to the new model. The other themes were dominated by concerns and anxieties raised by the uncertainties being brought about by the changes in funding, including fears that the transition process and the outcomes of the transition process, will negatively impact on good existing practice.

COVID-19 may be a potential barrier to success

- 7.3 The most common concerns raised among the respondents were related to COVID-19, with more than a quarter of responses commenting that COVID-19 was likely to have an impact on the transition period or pose a barrier to seamless transition. Some commented that the plans for the transition were made pre-pandemic and would consequently need to be updated to reflect the potential for delivery on projects being pushed back to 2021-3 or beyond. Others felt that the transition period would need to form part of a COVID-19 recovery programme.

“It is considered that the approach to “hit the ground running” in 2021 is laudable however it may be considered as too ambitious as the actual guidance and/or processes for the transition period have yet to be provided, and may require additional support and development during the current COVID-19 pandemic.” (Local Authority)

“[...] the COVID-19 outbreak will change the timescales. Many Welsh Government, UK Government and Local Authority resources have been redeployed to combat its effects. This is unlikely to change for some time so a start date of 2021 seems unrealistic, therefore there will need to be rapid progress made once things return to normal to prevent any gaps in provision. This may be balanced out somewhat by EU Funded Operations pushing some delivery back into 2021-23 due to the current lockdown.” (Local Authority)

Avoid gap in funding during transition

- 7.4 Around a quarter of respondents made comments about the importance of avoiding any delays, disruption or gaps from European funding. This included suggestions that continuation funding be made available to bridge gaps between the two funding programmes.

“With the current European Structural Investment Fund (ESIF) programmes ending in December 2020, and the current COVID-19 pandemic having significant impact on the local economy, there is a real need to ensure that there is no gap between the current ESIF programmes and any future investment programmes.” (Local Authority)

“[...]successful projects currently funded using ESF monies should be given continuation funding to continue to deliver against the outputs and outcomes, and avoid a blunt break in activity that would lead to significant gaps in service to the community and individuals.” (Local Authority)

Potential for loss of capacity/staff/expertise/partnerships

- 7.5 Consequences of gaps in funding were seen to be the potential for a loss of capacity, staff, expertise or partnerships, as well as difficulties in re-establishing connections after the transition period if they were to be lost.

“Where there have been gaps in funding in the past we have seen the loss of staff and the expertise they hold; and when the funding has been secured once more, it has taken a long time before performance matches previous levels. Also, we should avoid a break in international and other collaborations which could be lost, or at the very least lose momentum, if there is a break in activities.” (Educational Institution)

“It is important to ensure that there is no gap, so that where projects warrant continuation, albeit in a new and refreshed form to meet new national and regional priorities, the talent within existing delivery is not lost.” (Skills/Enterprise agency/Economic development organisation)

This affects universities in particular/can't commit to retaining projects

- 7.6 Comments here not only discussed potential consequences arising from gaps in provision, but also that expertise loss could occur in advance from a lack of clarity on transition arrangements. This was highlighted in particular by educational institutions, who said that universities can't commit to retaining projects requiring funding in future years, and that educational institutions need to help shape the transitional arrangements by sharing their own European funding exit strategies.

“Many existing projects through ESF and ERDF will undoubtedly continue into 2021/22 with some even going to 2023. The funding objectives, policy and application structure of the new funding however, need to be in place well before these dates. This will allow organisations and institutions time to get together, identify projects and obtain approval prior to existing funding ending. This is the only way to ensure a smooth transition period.” (Educational Institution)

“This should work like a bridging/continuity fund to keep the operations going until the new framework is fully operational and those projects could apply for further funding to ensure sustainability. As an example, CPE (ERDF 81400) started in December 2018 for 3 years. The group of researchers hired to operate the capital investment need to remain employed to continue R&D activities otherwise all the capital investment will be idle, and the expertise developed will disperse and be lost.” (Educational Institution)

A lack of clarity on future funding e.g. key announcements still to be made about UK Shared Prosperity Fund

- 7.7 Nearly one in ten comments expressed anxiety about a lack of detail – most frequently a lack of clarity of information or guarantees provided by the UK Government on the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. Some were sceptical that this funding would be forthcoming. Others said generally that the section was not as detailed as they would expect and wanted clarity on what the national and regional priorities and transitional projects would be.

“The failure of the UK Government to publish its consultation on the Shared Prosperity Fund, originally due by the end of 2018, is a matter of increasing concern as there is no clear proposal on how replacements for European funds will operate.” (Educational Institution)

“There is still a lack of clarity about the Shared Prosperity Fund and how this is going to work in practice, and this is not likely to be resolved until the COVID-19 crisis is over. This presents a significant risk to the proposed transition arrangements.” (Third sector)

Review viability of commitments during the transition; Make the most of European funding/expertise while available

- 7.8 There were a series of suggestions made by small numbers of respondents for making the arrangements for the transition successful. These included reviewing what projects are viable during the transition and whether they fit within national or regional outcomes, as well as what projects should be encouraged to instigate their sustainability phases. The same proportion wanted to make the most of the remaining European funding and expertise by mapping out what will be available during the transition period.

European funding is already allocated; Funding will run out at different times at different areas; Things need to be in place in advance of 2021

- 7.9 There were some more operational concerns about the transition period. Some pointed out that the transition period would need new and additional stop-gaps given that European funding had already been allocated, that funding would run out at different times in different areas, and that the application structure and CJsCs would need to be in place ahead of 2021 to be effective, and wouldn't provide a seamless transition if only in place after this point.

Other concerns with the proposals

- 7.10 Other concerns were raised of the proposals including respondents saying that they didn't believe the proposals will be a reality, that continuing funding too often conflicts with providing value for money, or that the Welsh Government has a poor track record on transitional arrangements.

Submissions

- 7.11 Across the submissions, discussion of the transition period was dominated by concerns about replacement European funding, specifically, the move to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. Acknowledgment of the importance of European funding to Wales underlay strong concerns over a lack of both certainty and clarity over the Shared Prosperity Fund, which will be crucial to the Welsh economy.
- 7.12 The need to ensure a smooth transition to the new funding model was strongly stated, alongside fears that a poor transition could mean gains that have been made with European funding are lost. Some felt that spending of Shared Prosperity Fund money should align with the European funding agenda while another strong theme was the value of the funding that Wales would receive in replacement funding. It was felt that Wales should receive at least as much funding via the Shared Prosperity Fund as it received through European funding and that the Welsh Government must pursue a commitment to this from UK Government as well as maximising the Welsh share of the Shared Prosperity Fund. This was especially as Wales was by far the largest UK beneficiary of European funding. Several responses agreed that the Barnett Formula should not be used to distribute funds from the Shared Prosperity Fund, instead saying that this should be done on the basis of need.

“Wales, in particular, benefitted from EU Structural Funds (ESF) and therefore regards the replacement Shared Prosperity Fund as crucial to the future of the Welsh economy, especially as we re-align the economy after both leaving the EU and the long-lasting effects of COVID-19 on the economy and the environment sector specifically.” (Third Sector)

“Any transition period will need to take account of the schemes currently funded by Europe, ensuring that projects are completed. Any transition period will be dependent on the development of the Shared Prosperity Fund proposed by the UK Government. This remains unclear but it has been recognised that there should not be any reduction in funding.” (Local Authority)

- 7.13 Some felt that it was important for replacement funds to be devolved to the Welsh Government from the Shared Prosperity Fund, just as European funding is administered by Welsh Government. If this did not happen, it would undermine devolution. One response said that they supported devolution of funds to the Welsh Government as long as it committed to empower regions and local areas to lead activity.
- 7.14 Recommendations for a smooth transition also included the suggestion that it is better to develop and improve what is already in place, rather than have disruptive major changes. However, others suggested that a more disruptive transition

might be good. They felt that transition is not about continuity, but should be a period of culture change, scrutiny and challenge and that this opportunity should be used to design an approach that suits Wales, building on the successes of the past but also thinking about what can be done differently. There were some concerns that impact of COVID-19 might affect the transition.

“A transition period should not merely address continuity and build further capacity – it must be a period of culture change, scrutiny, challenge and genuine movement towards new ways of working. This is not simply about replacing European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF), but a unique, generational opportunity to create a programme of investment that is designed and delivered in Wales, for Wales to deliver regional prosperity and well-being.” (Educational Institution)

“The transition period will need re-consideration as a result of COVID-19. However, it is important that the funding is available as soon as possible in 2021 to support the recovery intervention.” (Skills/Enterprise agency/Economic development organisation)

- 7.15 Other concerns, each only expressed in one submission, included: a welcome for the shift to place-based economic policy, the need to include timescales, and support for the proposal that investments provide capability and capacity at the local, regional and national level to “hit the ground running” in 2021.

Easy Read Version

- 7.16 When considering the transition period, two of the respondents requested a focus on supporting existing programmes which target deprived and minority communities, including those which support disabled people and address racism in the workplace.

8. Horizontal themes and the Welsh Language (Q5, Q6)

Q5. How best can we integrate the horizontal themes of equality, sustainable development, gender mainstreaming and the Welsh Language into investments delivered at national, regional and local levels?

Online response form

- 8.1 Question 5 asked respondents for their views on how best to integrate horizontal themes of equality, sustainable development, gender mainstreaming and the Welsh language into the investments delivered at national, regional and local levels.
- 8.2 There were a range of responses to question 5, with themes including the importance of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) 2015 Act, the need to ensure that themes must be achievable and with ownership of themes encouraged at the local level. The breadth of themes demonstrates a variety of challenges to the integration of the horizontal themes into investments.

Well-being of Future Generations Act already makes these necessary

- 8.3 Around 3 in 10 believed that the Well-being of Future Generations Act already makes the integration of the horizontal themes necessary, with some calling for greater enforcement of the Act. Because of their inclusion in the Act, some respondents felt that public bodies were well versed in integrating the themes already, and a smaller proportion (10%) highlighted other programmes where these themes already formed part of delivery, including post-16 education programmes and ERDF.

“Integration can be best achieved by ensuring that the Well-being of Future Generations Act, and in particular, the SD [Sustainable Development] principle, is built into the development and consideration of all investment proposals from the outset, at the local, regional and national level. Embedding these ways of working as a matter of course, and not as a “tick box exercise” is vitally important to ensuring horizontal integration.” (Other public sector)

“It should be recognised that integrating these themes is now an everyday requirement for public bodies as we adhere to the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. One argument to streamline the new administrative process would be to dispense with the cross-cutting themes model totally and rely on the respective LAs/Regions to take projects forward having regard for the Well-being of Future Generations Act.” (Local Authority)

“The existence and employment of the goals and principles contained within the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) 2015 Act reference these themes and it is to be expected that statistical evidence outlining the measures employed and results achieved thus far should inform both the achievement of these principles as well as the proposed action to

build on current progress made.” (Skills/Enterprise agency/Economic development organisation)

Shouldn't just be a tick-box exercise/make them part of delivery

- 8.4 Around a quarter were concerned that the inclusion of horizontal themes could be a 'box ticking exercise' and suggested that the themes should form part of delivery. Similarly, around a fifth felt that they should be incorporated into contracts and made necessary in order to receive funding, and 15% suggested monitoring and evaluating the investments against the themes.

“Ensure they are included in applications and decision-making criteria for approvals of projects, and monitor throughout duration of project. Investments to report on impact across each theme so data can be collated and promoted at all levels” (Unknown)

Recognise that not all of these themes will be in scope

- 8.5 The concern that the horizontal themes could become a 'box ticking exercise' were also related to comments that not all of the themes will be in scope for all investments, and that this needed to be recognised in the framework. Among these responses were comments that the themes must be achievable, especially among smaller organisations and should take into account local needs and circumstances.

“[...]it is also important that these themes are applied only where appropriate and that projects are assessed on a case by case basis with regard to which horizontal themes are appropriate. Otherwise there is a very real danger that it becomes a box-ticking exercise with irrelevant or unrealistic targets being placed upon organisations or projects. Taking into account the proposal to engage at local /community /SME level, this issue will become even more apparent as smaller, inexperienced applicants and organisations may not have the overarching policies and procedures to comply with rigid horizontal themes. They may also be discouraged from engaging at all by the complexities associated here. The horizontal themes should be linked to actual deliverables of the investment and some kind of impact assessment or statement made on which areas the investment will focus on and which it will not.” (Educational Institution)

“It is important that the horizontal themes are integrated at a proportionate and realistic level to the activities being undertaken, and also that this adds value to the project and does not just become a tick box exercise to meet the themes. Projects should be designed and delivered to meet local needs and should not deviate away from these to fit the programme.” (Local Authority)

Themes should be locally led/supported by local approaches

- 8.6 In order to integrate these themes at a local level, 17% of the responses given suggested that the themes should be locally-led or supported by local approaches. Some felt that it was crucial to embed the themes at every level

through communication and co-ordination between the different levels of delivery, as well as wider education on the themes to increase buy-in.

“The new framework should have the ability to build local variations that reflect local needs and demands in terms of the themes listed, led and informed by local community-based organisations.” (Other public sector)

“There is a strong argument that creating “horizontal themes” will lead to these themes being treated as distinct elements of work rather than being embedded in all activities being delivered under the national, regional and local investment frameworks. If the idea of horizontal themes is retained, then every effort must be taken to ensure that they are embedded into delivery models. It is proposed in the document that these themes are co-ordinated at a national level. Whilst this undoubtedly offers some opportunities for sharing information, resources, learning and so on, there is the very real danger that the “co-ordination role” slips into becoming a prescriptive “one size fits no-one” delivery model. Local delivery partnerships are best placed to achieve the cultural and behavioural changes that are necessary if the horizontal themes are going to have a real and lasting impact” (Third sector)

Share/seek/learn from best practice

- 8.7 In addition to comments which mentioned the ERDF as an example of how organisations were experienced in integrating the horizontal themes, some suggested European funding could be a source of best practice, as could looking to the approaches of other countries and existing organisational policies and guidance.

“We suggest liaison with counterparts in Scotland and Ireland to discover the approaches of these countries in order to share best practice.” (Third sector)

“Collaborating Centre on Investment for Health and Well-being has published a guide for cross sector investment ‘Investment for health and well-being’ (World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe, 2017). This can support horizontal integration of sustainable development for investments at national, regional and local levels. The guide provides a summary of evidence-based public health policies and interventions that drive sustainable development, mapped to each of the four key themes of ‘Prosperity for All: the national strategy’” (Other public sector)

“[...] a number of good practice examples have been generated through EU funded projects in the Neath Port Talbot area.” (Local Authority)

- 8.8 Additionally, some felt that, for the new system, certain themes should have greater prominence or importance attached to them, most notably sustainable development and climate change more generally, the Welsh language, or that there should be flexibility to add additional themes, such as those identified as relevant among local communities. Suggestions for additional themes were unique but included green infrastructure and innovation. Other respondents felt

that economic factors such as growth, GDP and tourism should be prioritised over the horizontal themes.

Submissions

- 8.9 Horizontal themes were more often discussed in general rather than in terms of integrating them into investment. Support was generally given to the themes although this support was often caveated.

“The emphasis on the key horizontal themes such as sustainable development, equality and the Welsh Language have been important factors in delivering successful outcomes in the current programmes and this should continue to be developed into the new Framework.” (Local Authority)

- 8.10 One caveat was that the horizontal themes should be co-ordinated at the national level as this is more likely to result in a more consistent and thorough approach with some submissions suggesting that it is the Well-being of Future Generations Act, as well as other policy and legislation that should drive and integrate these horizontal themes. One response said that their organisation would welcome a discussion over the autonomy of regions to discuss new horizontal themes at a regional level.

“Themes and strategic leadership should be set nationally, with appropriate and limited additional measures set regionally only where deemed necessary. To introduce additional themes, and potentially competing narratives with additional metrics at a regional level, will require specialist resources to deliver on expectations and reporting.” (Educational Institution)

- 8.11 As came up in comments on the consultation response form, another caveat was that it is important to ensure that integration of the horizontal themes is not just a “tick-box” exercise, as was felt could be the case in existing projects under European funding.

“We need to be mindful that these are not treated as ‘tick-box’ exercises in future funding schemes, as sometimes feels the case in existing SF projects. Nor that they are shoe-horned into projects in a very prescriptive way, or ruled out of scope because of a lack of ‘fit’ with original business case...” (Educational Institution)

- 8.12 Several of the submissions welcomed the focus on equality, and the importance of building diversity, gender equality and economic equality were all mentioned. Of the submissions that discussed economic equality, one suggested the need to address relative income poverty by targeting support on cohorts identified in the socio-economic analysis as needing their income levels raised. It was felt that this required the use of a low-level geographical indicator. Another suggested that benefits need to be equitable across Wales, both geographically and socially. With regards to gender equality, it was suggested that there should be a regular consultative arrangement between officials responsible for co-ordination of

horizontal themes and Wales TUC's Equality Committee with reference to gender and equality themes.

- 8.13 There was a suggestion that, while the focus on inequality is welcomed, the Welsh Government has limited power to address this and that reducing poverty (the target of Welsh Government policy) is not the same as reducing inequality. There was also a concern that the Framework does not give voice to, or consider, certain excluded sections of the population (e.g. BAME groups).
- 8.14 One suggestion was that horizontal themes should be more explicitly linked to outcome targets. This relates to another proposal that there should be Welsh language targets. Other thoughts included that the Framework should maximise the benefit for public good from investments of public funds by tying these to national aims and the question as to whether the horizontal themes should also be research priorities. Some suggested that there does need to be a proportionate emphasis on horizontal themes.

“There does need to be a balanced approach on the emphasis and reporting on the horizontal themes. ESF projects have previously placed a disproportionate focus on this.” (Local Authority)

- 8.15 Suggestions for additional horizontal themes were put forward, these being innovation or knowledge exchange and consideration of the role of non-STEM subjects.

“Consideration should be given to the role of Arts and Humanities, Social Sciences research in terms of these themes. Moving away from a single focus on STEM to a holistic, interdisciplinary approach to meeting socioeconomic challenges should be a goal.” (Educational Institution)

Q6. How best can we increase the use of the Welsh language through our proposals for regional investment, and ensure it is treated no less favourably than the English language?

Online response form

- 8.16 Question 6 asked respondents how best to increase the use of the Welsh language through the proposals for regional investment and ensure that it is treated no less favourably than the English language.
- 8.17 While a small number said that increasing the use of Welsh was not a priority (as it was already covered by existing legislation), most felt that it was and offered suggestions as to how to achieve this. While the most common response was that this is already covered by existing legislation and that enforcement of this should be sufficient to increase the use of Welsh, others made specific suggestions including embedding Welsh into practice, and increasing the capacity to speak Welsh through increasing opportunities both to learn and use Welsh. Some challenges to increasing the use of Welsh were identified.

Covered by existing legislation

- 8.18 Most commonly, respondents pointed out that the requirement for promoting the Welsh language was already included in existing legislation, including the Welsh Language Measure and Well-being of Future Generations Act. Some suggested that enforcing this legislation might be enough to increase the use of the Welsh language, rather than creating new requirements. Some said they were accustomed to ensuring there was parity between Welsh and English in their day-to-day working because of the existing requirements.

“Existing legislation in Wales, in particular the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act, provides the necessary framework to ensure that the horizontal themes are integrated into future investments as all public bodies are already required to take account of them when developing and designing services and interventions.” (Local Authority)

“As with other Wales schemes, the Welsh Language Act will need to be followed, including actions such as bilingual signage and engagement activities that encompass the use of the Welsh language.” (Other public sector)

Incorporate into contracts

- 8.19 Around a quarter wanted evidence of Welsh language use and equal treatment as a pre-requisite for funding, suggesting that contracts should include stipulations on increasing the use of the Welsh language.

“All projects/operations should set out as part of their design as well as their delivery how they will ensure that investments /interventions increase the use of the Welsh language and ensure that it is treated no less favourably than the English language.” (Other public sector)

“All Procurement and tender activities should ensure that businesses /private sector comply with the Welsh Language Standards and ensure

any investment includes opportunities to increase /improve the Welsh Language.” (Local Authority)

Equal treatment/parity between languages

- 8.20 Some respondents made general comments that parity between English and Welsh should be ensured, but more specific suggestions on how to achieve this included access to information, business plans, guidance, websites, applications, and reporting and monitoring processes through the medium of Welsh. One example outlined the role of Further Education (FE) and HE institutions, supported by European funding (e.g. Horizon 2020 and Erasmus+), in training and developing people as well as in research and innovation which was stated in other responses as an important part of the Welsh economy. One suggestion was that replacement funding should not only ensure these FE/HE functions continue but should do so as part of a coherent strategy to develop the Welsh language within the economy in order to ensure equity.

“[...]fully support efforts to ensure that the Welsh language is treated no less favourably than the English language in the delivery of regional investment programmes.” (Local Authority)

Increase opportunities to learn Welsh/training

- 8.21 Some respondents felt that funding was most effective when spent on encouraging opportunities to learn the Welsh language.

“Increase awareness, usage and promote from localities by improving education for adults, youths and younger age groups in Welsh Language itself ensuring it is provided free of charge to encourage greater uptake.” (Individual)

Funding areas or industries with high proportions of Welsh speakers

- 8.22 It was pointed out that Welsh language usage tended to be higher in certain areas and sectors, for example rural communities and agricultural industries. Increasing funding to these areas and sectors was proposed, for example creating new rural Wales development programmes or taking learning from the Arfor fund.

“Lessons can be learnt from programmes such as Arfor. It is a pity that this programme has again become a grant programme rather than a developmental initiative that allows for investment in appropriate initiatives. Rural Wales is the heartland of the Welsh language and the absence of a rural development programme which has potential to support and develop the language risks exposing the language to even more strain.” (Individual)

“According to the 2011 census, the highest percentage of Welsh speakers in any field of work is in agriculture. There are areas in west, mid and north Wales where about one third of the local population are employed in the sector, and where over 90% of the agricultural workforce is Welsh speaking. The Farmers’ Union of Wales statistics indicate that £60 of every £100 produced on-farm is spent within 7 miles of the farm, therefore economic prosperity or blows to the agriculture sector are

bound to be reflected in the wider community. The new funding framework will need to ensure at least equivalent levels of support as in the past to ensure that these sectors continue to thrive.” (Other public sector)

Invest in language technologies/digital resources

8.23 Some suggested increasing the use of technology, including simultaneous translation or more efficient translation services to encourage the use of the Welsh language. Others suggested encouraging digital materials to reduce the cost element of providing bilingual materials and funding innovations in these emerging technologies.

Challenging for certain industries/SMEs/community groups

8.24 There was acknowledgement that providing fully bilingual materials could be expensive, and that this could be a particular burden on smaller organisations as well as community groups where English was not their first language.

Submissions

8.25 Several submissions suggested the need to embed the Welsh language into processes and procedures in order to increase its use. Some of these echoed comments made in response to the consultation response form. Specific suggestions included:

- Welsh language standards should form the basis of any proposal for regional investment with each proposal identifying a Welsh Language champion to ensure the language is treated no less favourably than the English language
- Successful applications for funding under the new Framework should align with Welsh Government targets for Welsh speakers and well-being goals including Goal 6 of the Well-being of Future Generations Act (e.g. the need to commit to increasing the visibility of the language through bilingual signage; bilingual social media posts; and investment in Welsh language training for staff)
- Set explicit targets at a regional level for development of the language as part of any proposed investments. These must be justified to an appropriate national body
- Ensure that Welsh language requirements apply to all those in receipt of aid via the framework including the third sector and private enterprise
- Integrate encouragement of uptake of Welsh into funding calls /have targeted Welsh heritage funding calls to increase the use of the Welsh language
- Increase the use of the Welsh language through proposals for regional investment and ensure it is treated no less favourably than English
- Link projects to the sustainability of Welsh culture
- Build provisions into the framework which ensure that the development and use of the Welsh Language is a key element of projects and initiatives

- It is not enough to ask all schemes to comply with the requirement to treat both languages equally, Welsh Government should ensure that every scheme proactively contributes to securing the future of the language especially within its heartlands
- All information relating to the Framework should be bilingual.

8.26 The need to build capacity in the Welsh language was another theme evident across the submissions, with one response suggesting the need for long-term planning over the availability of resources to support the use of the Welsh language. Another suggested that increasing capacity will require investment and that this investment should be tied to explicit and agreed outcomes.

8.27 Skills development was another area seen as important in building capacity with the suggestion of the need for more resources and incentives to promote the benefits of Welsh and develop Welsh language skills among the population. This was particularly discussed in relation to business where language was seen as both an important choice and something which can add value to a business. Links between business and the education sector should be made in order to increase the use of Welsh in business.

“Having a diverse workforce in terms of gender, age, disability and language contributes to business ability to understand, and better meet the needs of customers. The Welsh language is an important aspect of this. Businesses benefit from using the Welsh language as it can be a unique selling point attracting customers and has a positive commercial value. It is important that as the Welsh Government focuses on ensuring that there will be a million Welsh speakers in Wales by 2030 that we maximise the benefits of bilingual skills on our future economy. Businesses and organisations should be encouraged to engage with our schools, colleges and universities, focusing on the benefits of Welsh language skills and ensuring the demand for those skills are met.” (Local Authority)

“[We are] fully supportive of the use of the Welsh language and a number of our members use it on a daily basis. Where there is value to be added to a business operation through use of the Welsh language or there is a desire from the owner /land manager to conduct business through the Welsh language then this should be encouraged and supported. People who do not wish to do this should not be treated negatively. The Welsh language can be a positive marketing tool for Wales with far-reaching benefits if addressed correctly.” (Union/Representative body)

8.28 One response observed that a lack of Welsh language versions of software commonly used in business was a barrier to Welsh language being used in the workplace and that there is a need for robustly translated Welsh language versions of these. At the same time, it would be helpful if Welsh translations of technical terms associated with the digital world were regularly used and embedded in workplaces.

8.29 Several submissions said that agriculture in particular has an important role to play in promoting Welsh culture, heritage and language. This was based on

research which shows that agriculture, which is an integral part of rural communities, particularly in North Wales, has a higher proportion of Welsh speakers than any other employment sector. This led to agriculture being seen as a harbour of Welsh language and culture, meaning that investment in agriculture and rural communities would help promote Welsh language. This echoes comments made in response to the consultation response form.

“Agriculture has the highest proportion of Welsh speakers of any sector. Farming is the bedrock of rural communities across Wales which have been shaped by farming activity spanning hundreds of years. Farmers continue to maintain these traditions, preserving rural culture and sense of place. Welsh farmers are key promoters and protectors of our culture, heritage and the Welsh language.” (Union/Representative body)

8.30 Other comments included: the need to conduct research to identify institutions that are barriers to the uptake of the Welsh language, the existence of wide differences across Wales in the dynamic between supply and demand for the use of Welsh and the need to devolve Welsh language promotion to local communities.

Easy Read Version

8.31 Respondents to the Easy Read questionnaire supported the horizontal themes. Partnership working was seen by one respondent as a potential way to address inequalities, and the regional investment model was seen as an opportunity to involve disabled people in designing inclusive services. Another felt that the horizontal themes would be increasingly important due to climate change.

8.32 Two of the respondents felt that increasing the use of the Welsh language should not be prioritised, either because they felt that the climate crisis was a greater priority or that it could create barriers to employment for those from ‘other cultures’. However, the third respondent suggested using support agencies like Learning Disability Wales to produce materials for learning Welsh and improving opportunities for disabled people to learn Welsh.

9. Cross-border and international working (Q7)

Q7. What are your views on the proposed delivery model for the strengthening of partnerships, co-operation and trade across borders, within the UK and with international partners?

Online response form

9.1 The consultation document outlines a proposed delivery model for the strengthening of partnerships, co-operation and trade across borders, both within the UK and with international partners. Question 7 asked respondents for their views on the proposed model.

9.2 When asked for views on the proposed strengthening of partnerships, co-operation and trade via the proposed delivery model, respondents frequently prefaced their responses by emphasising how important they believed cross-border co-operation to be. There was little explicit opposition to the proposed model or to the principle of strengthening co-operation generally.

“We strongly support cross border partnership development, having been involved in 4 Interreg B projects, acting as Lead Partner for one. The benefits are wide and, whilst not always predictable, often long lasting.”
(Other public sector)

Existing international partnerships need to be maintained

9.3 In particular, respondents were keen to maintain existing international relationships, where possible, outside of the European Union. These respondents often gave example of particular relationships which had been beneficial and to which they suggested access should be continued. These including Erasmus+, Horizon 2020, INTERREG and relationships established through the LEADER programme.

“Maintaining relationships and creating opportunities with ocean energy in Europe can only be good to ensure Wales does not fall behind in the European marine renewable energy industry.” (Private company)

“There has been some significant positive work already done in utilising EU funds (Erasmus+) and it would be detrimental to the partnership built and Wales as a whole, if they do not continue.” (Local Authority)

“We would therefore prioritise international collaborations continuing within any Framework for regional investment. Post Brexit there will be an even stronger need for this, aligned with the WG’s International Strategy. We agree that structures and relationships that enable cooperation must be maintained or developed and that dedicated funding opportunities are required at the earliest possible stages in order to maintain momentum and retain and develop existing and new cross-border and international collaborations.” (Educational institution)

9.4 Several responses highlighted the importance of maintaining international partnerships for the HE sector. These partnerships, including those associated with European funding (e.g. Horizon 2020, Erasmus+), were felt to have

contributed to building the reputation and success of the HE sector in Wales. It was also perceived that maintaining these relationships through the new Framework will be important in order to sustain Welsh universities' contributions to the future prosperity of Wales. This contribution would be both economic and social. For example, some respondents stated that much of the research, development and innovation in Welsh universities is considered to be excellent or world-leading, a reputation that contributes to universities' ability to deliver a return on investment and export earnings. It was also suggested that universities have demonstrated the ability to leverage funding from outside Wales and use it to deliver significant local and national benefit, including a societal contribution through civic mission. UKRI's focus on place-based strategies will further encourage a role for Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in economic development through research, development and innovation, highlighting the need for replacement funding to encourage and promote international collaboration and partnerships that support such activity.

“It will be vital for Welsh institutions going forward that this is confirmed and will form an important part of the framework in terms of strengthening and enhancing existing partnerships. The number of countries expected to apply for association with Horizon Europe from outside the European Union is significant. Many universities and other stakeholder organisations are rightly worried about the UK missing out on initial funding from Horizon Europe or not associating altogether, which would cause huge damage to the Welsh research sector.” (Unions and representative bodies)

More detail on specific proposals required

- 9.5 Around a quarter (23%) wanted more details on the proposals, particularly in terms of co-ordination and management and the degree to which local communities and regions would be able to inform and contribute to national-level co-ordination. Another area was the Agile seed fund; some respondents simply expressed their interest in hearing more details, while one respondent wanted to know whether or not the fund would be allocated to local authorities.

“[We] would wish to see further details on where the focus would be, and would this be led at a national level, with intelligence supplied by local community level expertise. [...] driven by communities, rather than small numbers of administrative based individuals.” (Third Sector)

“Details need to be provided on the links and responsiveness to the local and regional bodies.” (Third Sector)

Only collaborate where advantageous/not just for its own sake

- 9.6 While respondents were generally supportive of maintaining cross-border working, 18% highlighted that there were some instances where collaboration had not been advantageous, and that it should only be pursued where there had been genuine benefits, rather than for its own sake.

“There have been significant use of cross border learning opportunities by Welsh organisations in the past but too often it has been for little substantial benefit: whilst we should not eschew international learning it

should be done with a clear purpose in areas where learning has been identified as a priority because there is specific expertise in other countries.” (Skills/Enterprise agency/Economic development organisation)

Particularly support the Agile seed fund/this is a good idea

9.7 The Agile seed fund was highlighted by almost a fifth (17%) of respondents as a particular element of the proposals which they supported. These comments stated that this seed fund would enable links to be maintained, knowledge to be shared at the smaller project level, research and SMEs to be supported, and for small projects to be able to react to emerging opportunities and develop programmes and collaboration with others. Some made other suggestions about other ways in which the Agile seed fund could be used or managed, including the following:

- Supporting a variety of opportunities across the skills sectors to enhance collaboration.
- Recruiting level 6 (and 7) Engineering students from existing partners and offer bursaries to link them up with regional employers who have skills shortages.
- Supporting additions to some of the Ireland/Wales activities currently funded through the Interreg programme
- Applying a ‘risk base’ to governance – assessing risks and acting based on that assessment.
- ‘Seeding’ a mix of high and low-risk projects

General: Cross-border working important

9.8 A further 16% provided positive comments about international and cross-border working in general, praising the commitment to this approach and stating that this would increase economic opportunity and competitiveness in Wales in the context of Brexit.

Need sharing of best practice

9.9 The proposed model was seen as an opportunity to share best practice (16%), either by learning from best practice from organisations in other countries, or by expanding current cross-border and international ways of working.

“We can also look across borders and internationally for best practice and learn from our European partners.” (Educational Institution)

“The funding would allow partners to identify specific good practice internationally and then conduct learning and research as to how the practice could be related to Wales. From this learning specific business plans for funding the action could then be developed.” (Third sector)

Local communities/regional bodies need to be able to participate

- 9.10 10% of respondents expressed the view that central co-ordination at a national level must be informed by local communities and regional bodies and should ensure their participation. These respondents often felt that cross-border working was primarily a regional issue, and that regions should be able to pursue partnerships which were advantageous to them or had historic precedent, rather than this being co-ordinated nationally. Others believed that local regions needed their own inward investment strategies. Conversely, some responses praised the proposal for co-ordination to be at a national level.

“Local people must have a sense of ownership and responsibility for the delivery of cross border projects, built on their participation in the design, not just the delivery of initiatives.” (Other public sector)

“Memberships should cover all the geographical areas involved. It should be the choice of the local areas as to who sits on the partnership, not WG. We would like to see a more joined up and coordinated approach. E.g., the Chairs and lead officers on the local partnerships being members of the Regional Partnerships and the chairs and lead officers of the Regional Partnership being members of the National Partnerships. This alone will ensure that relevant data, knowledge and Innovative ideas are evidence based and placed in front of the boards at the right time in the right format for the right reasons.” (Local Authority)

“At a county level it would be good to have inward investment strategies in place to attract businesses to locate in Wales but, as this is a highly specialist activity, some regions are unable to perform this function in a meaningful way. Whilst a national strategy is important, there needs to be local input to support businesses once they arrive and integrate them into their communities.” (Skills/Enterprise agency/Economic development organisation)

Ensure all areas have the opportunity for cross-border working

- 9.11 Some respondents stated that there should be a level playing field across the regions, avoiding prioritising affluent areas and ensuring all regions have the opportunity to participate in cross-border working.

Difficulty delivering a step change in cross-border working

- 9.12 A small number of respondents felt that the Welsh Government could find it difficult to deliver a step change in international or cross-border working. Reasons for this tended to be unique, but included concerns about a lack of co-operation between different public bodies with funding, that ongoing uncertainties surrounding the UK's exit from the European Union made the proposals 'aspirational', and because of difficulties in accessing European networks and programmes as a 'third country'.

9.13 Other comments included taking on board the recommendations of the Reid review with respect to research and innovation.²

Submissions

9.14 There was general agreement on the need to focus on encouraging cross-border working within the new framework. The detail of the proposals was welcomed, some saying that the greater detail in the cross-border section (including the Cross-Border and International sub-group working paper) makes it hard to make connections between this and less detailed areas of the framework.

“We welcome and support the reference in the consultation document to encourage cross-border collaboration in Wales and beyond. We believe that working beyond regional boundaries is key to meeting common challenges.” (Local Authority)

“The Welsh Government’s International Strategy refers to the importance of continuing to look outwardly to Europe and beyond, with a key goal to raise Wales’ profile internationally. This commitment needs to be reflected in the structures that are set up and the funding that is allocated. European Funding currently supports much of this collaborative activity, and it will require a proactive choice by Government to maintain and enhance this. We note how well-developed the International Strategy document is, and it is hard to disagree with anything written there.” (Other Public Sector)

9.15 Across the submissions, a variety of opinions on cross-border working were raised. Most focus was on working across Europe, with some on working across the UK and little on working relationships beyond Europe. This is perhaps unsurprising given the consultation is about European replacement funding. It is worth noting that HEIs produced particularly strong arguments on the benefits of cross-border working, reflecting the importance of European relationships to their work.

9.16 Several submissions outlined the benefits of cross-border working for Wales. This included a sense that Wales is competing in a global market-place and international context and it needs to be visible and proactive within this context in order to benefit from global networks (e.g. knowledge sharing, funding and capital investment, skills development, inward movement of skilled workers).

“International reputation is increasingly important as overseas competition intensifies.” (Educational Institution)

“[Cross-border working] helps to develop innovation and ensures that the country benefits from shared good practice as well as placing Wales on

² <https://www.hefcw.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/reid-review-en.pdf>

the map so that we remain a potential option for future investment” (Local Authority)

“Cross-border relationships are important not only in terms of the inward investment in research and development they may help leverage for Wales, but for attracting talented people to live, study and work in Wales with the considerable benefits that this brings for our economy and for our communities.” (Educational Institution)

9.17 While there was a suggestion that cross-border working was best led by appropriate regional bodies, there was more support for a nationally joined-up approach to cross-border initiatives. It was felt that a nationally-led approach would help because of the knowledge and experience which already exists at the national level and which would help negotiate what will be an increasingly complex and challenging environment surrounding cross-border working. Also, a national approach was seen as appropriate given that the remit for cross-border working is both ambitious and broad, cutting across many existing activities at different levels. A national approach would have the necessary oversight to lead this. Another suggestion was that a nationally co-ordinated strategy should include a role for the regions.

“Central co-ordination at the national level is required to drive forward the implementation of cross-border and international activity, however there could be a strong role for the regions in deciding investment priorities.” (Educational Institution)

9.18 Other suggestions included: the need to consider which existing structures are maintained/used and which need re-thinking (particularly mentioned by the HE sector), the need for cross-border working strategies to align with other policy priorities, the difficulties in accessing funds for cross-border working for some sectors (e.g. creative industries) and the need to involve stakeholders in decision-making.

9.19 The importance of cross-border working for research development and innovation was a particularly strong theme. This is particularly important given that responses to other questions outline the importance of research development and innovation to the Welsh economy. This discussion was led by HEIs and related organisations. It was felt that many existing projects and networks that bring value to Wales are international, particularly cross-European. These bring value in terms of funding/investment, involvement in innovation networks, international trading, skills, high-esteem indicators and international citations (international citations can increase the esteem of research under the Research Excellence Framework, leading to higher levels of Quality Research funding into Welsh Universities), and physical infrastructure. The HE sector has strong concerns over the loss of access to European funding and the networks and opportunities that this funding has helped to create. There was an associated concern that there would be significant barriers to accessing USA-sponsored research funding. There was a particular focus on the advantages that Horizon2020 and ERASMUS+ funding has brought and that has been important for HE research and innovation.

“A great number of Wales’ existing partnerships are built upon international and cross-border connections in research and innovation, spanning collaborations with international research organisations and globally influential industry partners...In the absence of such schemes there is a risk that recent gains in promoting access of Welsh firms and Higher Education Institutions to UKRI, EU and other international opportunities, and strengthening the amount of external funding drawn into Wales will be lost.” (Educational Institution)

9.20 Without funding that offers this flexibility, there were concerns of the likely risk that the recent gains in supporting access to UKRI, EU and other international opportunities for HEIs and businesses, and strengthening the amount of external funding drawn into Wales, will be lost.

9.21 Particularly among the HE sector, there was support for an Agile Seed fund which mirrors existing SCoRE funds managed by the Horizon2020 unit. However, while some welcomed the adaptation of this SCoRE model to cover all framework priorities, others warned that this expanded remit across all Framework areas and, with a global rather than European focus, will require a significantly bigger team and ambitious approach to co-ordination.

9.22 Finally, across the submissions, several cross-border partnerships, initiatives and funds were reported by respondents as useful. These included:

- Creative Europe
- ERASMUS/ERASMUS+
- European Enterprise Network
- European Territorial Co-operation programmes
- GW4
- Horizon 2020 EU research & innovation fund
- Interreg programmes
- Ireland Wales programme
- Mersey Dee Alliance
- The Western Gateway
- Vanguard Initiative

Easy Read Version

9.23 All agreed with the proposals for cross border working, with only one providing an additional comment – recommending that festivals and events are used to showcase the diversity of Wales internationally and include the contribution of people with learning disabilities.

10. Strategic objectives across the investment priority areas (Q8)

Q8. What do you think of the proposed strategic objectives across the four investment priority areas? Are there other objectives that should be considered?

Online response form

- 10.1 The consultation document proposed four priority areas for investment, aligning with and adding value to the priorities for Wales identified in existing Welsh Government strategies and the Welsh Government's well-being objectives under the Well-being of Future Generations Act.
- 10.2 These investment priority areas were: productive and competitive businesses; reducing the factors that lead to income inequality; supporting the transition to a zero-carbon economy; and healthier, fairer, and more sustainable communities. Each of these priority areas have strategic objectives designed to maximise the contribution regional investment can make to the well-being goals for Wales.
- 10.3 Respondents were asked for comments on the proposed strategic objectives across the four investment priority areas, and suggestions for other objectives that should be considered.
- 10.4 Comments raising considerations around the existing priority areas were more common than suggestions for additional areas, and tended to request additional content, such as greater detail in the proposals, content addressing issues such as COVID-19 or additional strategic objectives. While additional strategic objectives and priority areas were suggested, and some felt more detail was needed for the priority areas, no respondents disagreed with the proposed priority areas in their entirety.

Review plans in light of COVID-19

- 10.5 The most frequent theme which arose in the comments was the impact of COVID-19 (38%), with suggestions that these strategic objectives needed to be reviewed or updated in light of the societal and economic effects of the pandemic – given the impacts had not begun to clearly emerge at the point of the consultation's publication. This included comments suggesting that the content of the strategic objectives needed to acknowledge the ongoing pandemic, as well as considering specific sectors and areas – such as tourism and rural communities – were more likely to be impacted long-term and would therefore have greater need for support. There were also calls for flexibility in funding to respond to challenges emerging from COVID-19, suggestions to review and learn lessons from the role that communities and local authorities have played in response to the pandemic, and to put a greater focus on localised supply chains.

“Throughout, the document talks of focussing on areas of greatest need. The data on which these judgements are made will need recalibrating as we begin the slow process of re-emerging from COVID-19. Evidence suggests that rural areas, some parts of the south Wales valleys and coastal communities in particular will be hardest hit. For some areas this

is due to reliance on tourism as a key sector, for others due to the high number of self-employed.” (Individual)

“The COVID-19 pandemic has hit the tourism, leisure and hospitality industry particularly hard, and they will need tailored support to help them recover, as many local areas are particularly dependent on income and employment from these sectors. [...] the regional investment programme has a crucial role to play in supporting the economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. Flexibility to help Wales’s economy and communities recover from the inevitable economic impact and unemployment caused by COVID-19 should also be built into the fund, and this should direct priorities in the early years of the programme. [...] Increasingly, as highlighted by the current COVID-19 emergency, Local Authorities in particular are being turned to as a source of reassurance and support in providing help and advice. This is currently not supported in either mainstream or grant regimes and should be reconsidered as a priority, as Local Authority Economic Development sections are well placed to understand local needs and provide contextualised advice and support to business.” (Local Authority)

Greater priority or ambition should be given to climate change

- 10.6 A similar proportion of comments (37%) focussed on the priority area of transitioning to a zero-carbon economy, suggested additional environmental strategic objectives, or raised environmental considerations more broadly – suggesting that there needed to be greater emphasis on objectives related to combatting climate change.

“We would also wish to see more ambition and a more targeted approach to the ‘supporting the transition to a zero-carbon economy’ objective. This is an opportunity for Wales to lead the way and to show ambition and innovation.” (Union/Representative body)

“The inclusion of the objective to “Improve biodiversity and reverse greenhouse gas emission effects” is welcome. A specific objective to contribute to the delivery of tree cover expansion might be appropriate given how central this is to all scenarios to achieve zero net carbon, and how challenging delivery is. Regional funding could play a significant role in delivering the new Wales National Forest.” (Third sector)

- 10.7 In particular, several comments focussed on creating a greener economy, including expanding the emphasis on green jobs and decarbonisation beyond the proposed objective of housing, energy and transport.

“We would encourage that supporting productivity and competitive business should also take in to account a consideration for climate change impacts and could be considered as an additional objective. Key Welsh Government considerations for the future with respect to energy should be achieving net zero, predictability and security and low carbon production.” (Private company)

“Whilst we welcome the inclusion of the strategic objectives 4) Improve biodiversity and reverse greenhouse gas emission effects and 5) Develop

the future skills required by the workforce for decarbonisation, the examples in this consultation focus on housing, energy and transport. [We] believe there is far greater opportunity to deliver for nature as well as climate through widening of that strategic objective, and this is needed if we are to address the climate and nature emergency and ensure resilient ecosystems as set out within the Well-being of Future Generations Act. [...] green jobs should not be confined to narrow subsectors – instead more consideration to greening of employment overall. Energy, transport and housing related jobs need to become green jobs and to encompass green skills and processes.” Third sector

“We suggest the 4 priority areas need to be considered as mutually reinforcing cross cutting requirements, so for example the objectives under “productive and competitive businesses” make some reference to zero carbon transition and healthier, fairer communities.” (Third sector)

Integrate the strategic objectives with existing policy/objectives/strategies

- 10.8 Just under a third of respondents (30%) stressed the importance of integrating the strategic objectives with existing policy, objectives, strategies or schemes, giving examples of the Well-being of Future Generations Act and City and Regional Growth Deals.

“It would be difficult to argue against the strategic objectives but they need to be integrated and considered in the wider myriad of Welsh Government policies, aims, objectives. Typically, strategies and policies are released in isolation from each other and this necessitates siloed working.” (Other public sector)

“We are also surprised at the lack of join-up with the digital agenda and particularly to Wales’ response to the Brown report for Welsh Government, Around the Future of Work, Wales 4.0.” (Educational Institution)

“This framework has to deliver against the 4 pillars of sustainability economic, social, cultural and environmental otherwise aspirations for Welsh language and poverty may not be met. These priorities cannot be met at the expense of the Sustainable Management of Natural Resources. The WG Natural Resources Policy (NRP) draws on evidence from the first State of Natural Resources Report (SoNaRR) and recognises the clear business case for investing in our natural resources as a cost effective approach to bringing prosperity to the whole of Wales and delivering on ‘Prosperity for All - the national strategy’. We would want to see a stronger emphasis on the three national priorities as identified in the NRP for the management of our natural resources[.]” (Other public sector)

“To maximise the effectiveness of the regional investment under the new framework, [we] would like clarity on its complementarity with other post-Brexit national policy objectives, such as the successor schemes to the Common Agricultural Policy and in particular Pillar Two of the Glastir & Rural Development Programme for Wales and the European Maritime & Fisheries Fund. In an ideal world, a more holistic outcome could be

achieved, removing the need for separate schemes in some cases, for example; a Glastir equivalent grant for an upland water course improvement together with a separate regional investment grant for natural flood management measures downstream” (Third sector)

"[...] ensure that the proposed strategic objectives are informed and aligned with the already identified priorities in the Cardiff Capital Region, as part of developing the City Deal, and wider strategies that have already been developed in partnership with key partners and stakeholders in the region e.g. Regional Skills Partnerships.” (Local Authority)

More detailed Strategic objectives

- 10.9 Around a quarter of respondents felt that the proposed strategic objectives lacked detail in some respect, such as in how they would be achieved in practice.

“Clarity over how each Priority Area is weighted is essential in addition to how each Strategic Objective within the priority area is weighted.” (Local Authority)

“...it would be helpful to have clarity on the broader definitions of each strategic priority to inform how specific programmes such as Degree Apprenticeships and GO Wales: Achieve through Work Experience contribute to these.” (Educational Institution)

“There is little insight into how the framework will [incentivise] and allow for businesses to collaborate with one another and with other partners such as universities, yet collaboration is cited frequently as an important area not only in the framework, but in existing Welsh Government strategy such as Prosperity For All. This will need clarifying before plans are finalised” (Union/Representative body)

“The proposed strategic objectives with the exception of the more focussed one on transition to a zero-carbon economy – are vague and imprecise. They are broad sentiments – which would be hard to disagree with, for who doesn’t want more prosperity, equality and a stronger innovation system? However, they lack clarity about why it is so important that we tackle them and how it can be best done through a new system of regional investment. The evidence base informing the objectives is unclear. Where is the data on the particular issues Wales faces? What are the priority economic and industrial sectors? What is the approach to place beyond a broad focus on ‘regions’ and the perspectives on the purpose of economic growth and what we are seeking to achieve for Wales as a country? Rather than broad statements on eradicating poverty and inequality – where is our equivalent of Wales’ Grand Challenges and how developing much more ‘mission-driven’ perspectives as has been done in other parts of the world, can drive a focus on the things that really matter? The words used are fine – but how will they inspire change and make a difference? Will these objectives help move away from conventional thinking that sees departments and silos as being significant in themselves – as opposed to be contributors to

bigger problems and challenges?” (Skills/Enterprise agency/Economic development organisation)

Greater consideration for school, college, university leavers/ Young people not in education, employment or training (NEET)

- 10.10 Educational institutions tended to have highly specific comments surrounding skills, training and the education sector’s importance to the objectives, consideration for school, college and university leavers, and that the objectives should provide a greater role for research; data and research, development and innovation (RD&I). Comments tended to request greater ongoing communication on these topics.

“Skills and education policy are fundamental enablers of many of the strategic objectives, we need to ensure that there is a coordinated approach to skills delivery in meeting these objectives and opportunities. This requires close consultation and engagement with FE, HE and other providers. We welcome that the skills agenda is referenced within the context of this objective although there also needs to be wider consideration to the broader skills base which is required to support a successful economy and society. The current pandemic has shone a light on this area particularly with regards to many of the roles which were traditionally viewed as lower skilled and lower paid now being fundamental to our recovery and fight against the pandemic. Such ‘key worker’ roles within the Foundational Economy are important and there needs to be a recognition of such roles, which also provide career and employment prospects to young people, who are going to face greater challenges with regards to youth unemployment in light of the current economic situation.” (Educational Institution)

“HEFCW’s recent support for HE-FE collaborative innovation and engagement projects has led to clarity through provision mapping and industry collaboration on the skills pipeline L2-7 for local regional industries, which should be further built upon. Ensuring local populations are appropriately skilled, and local industries are anchored by having these skills within their community, is essential to future social and economic prosperity.” (Educational Institution)

Funding should be locally led

- 10.11 A greater emphasis on local community activity in the strategic objectives was mentioned by 14% of respondents. This included suggestions that local communities or local authorities should have the autonomy to decide their greatest needs. A specific suggestion by several respondents was to include locally generated energy as a strategic objective, rather than only as a stated desire in the consultation document.
- 10.12 Other suggestions for additional strategic objectives that were raised by multiple respondents included job quality, mental/physical health, public transport, and rural communities. There were also requests for strategic objectives with an economic focus to be given greater priority over all other objectives.

- 10.13 There were additional unique suggestions for strategic objectives, including greater support for the housing sector, retail sector and support or reference to deprived communities, the circular economy and a commitment to building on brownfield sites, rather than greenfield.

Submissions

General comments

- 10.14 Across the submissions, there was discussion of both the strategic objectives and the four investment priority areas.
- 10.15 There was broad agreement with the priority areas and strategic objectives. Suggestions for improvement included: the need for a new priority on financing infrastructure and connectivity (but this might be constrained by EU rules), the strategic objectives are fairly generic (apart from the zero-carbon objective), strategic objectives don't take into account implications of Brexit for Wales and a strategic objective must be included that seeks to challenge inequality at a level lower than the region.
- 10.16 Reflecting concerns about the transition period, there were concerns about the potential impact of COVID-19 on the priority areas for investment. A common concern was that there would have to be focus on post-COVID-19 economic recovery rather than growth, which would impact on investment in productive and competitive business.

“What has changed significantly since the original publication of the Consultation Document is the Coronavirus Pandemic and its implications for the economy and public health. This will have a profound impact on the Welsh economy and means that the way the Future Prosperity Fund is delivered is even more important to economic recovery and future growth potential. We will need to recover from recession rather than build on growth. It is already clear that more deprived areas are being disproportionately hit by the health and economic effects of the pandemic so the distribution and delivery of this funding will need to reflect this.”
(Local Authority)

“Given the unprecedented economic challenge that we face as a result of COVID-19, we believe that ensuring a clear focus on supporting the economy to cope is key and in light of this it is inevitable that the priorities of the consultation document will have to be reviewed.” [Translated]
(Local Authority)

- 10.17 COVID-19 has highlighted socio-economic and spatial inequalities which need to be addressed in terms of investing in healthier, fairer and more sustainable communities and the factors that lead to income inequality. For example, differential impacts of COVID-19 on certain socio-economic and ethnic groups have highlighted and deepened pre-existing health inequalities in society while the digital divide has led to disparities in the impacts of COVID-19 on connectivity during lockdown. This has a differential impact on the ability to work from home and also to be connected to friends and family.

Productive and competitive business

- 10.18 Individual comments around productive and competitive business included: it needs associated skills development, supply-chain issues should be addressed to correct market failure in privatised public services, the commitment to fair work principles needs more prominence and should be a horizontal theme, and securing a prosperous economy is central to increasing the prosperity of citizens across the country while maintaining the unique environment and cultural qualities of Wales for the future. There was also support for improving wage-levels across industry, which also relates to building healthier, fairer and more sustainable communities.
- 10.19 Specific comments included: "and businesses" needs to be removed from objective 1, the phrase "inclusive growth" needs clarification and consistency in use, the end of objective 4 should be reworded as "...commercial products and services" and strategic objectives don't take into account the fourth industrial revolution in Wales and the impact of digitisation, data and artificial intelligence.
- 10.20 The rest of the comments identified the importance of specific sectors or industries including: agriculture; construction; environmental sector; food sector; HEIs; historic/cultural sector; marine sector; new businesses; private sector; SMEs/micro-businesses; social business; tourism; and TV/film.

Reducing the factors that lead to income inequality

- 10.21 The strongest themes among the submissions around reducing income inequality related to the importance of a focus on skills development and employability. One response suggested the need to integrate skills and employability provision with other support services (e.g. health, social care, housing, youth services, probation and police). Another respondent called for a jobs guarantee scheme.
- 10.22 The importance of including digital infrastructure, services and upskilling in the framework was also suggested. One respondent said that a focus on digital and artificial intelligence skills is needed in the construction sector. Another response highlighted that Wales has a high proportion of digitally disengaged people and is falling behind other places in terms of foundational digital skills among the population. It suggested the need for digital inclusion initiatives to reduce the digital divide, including increasing access to digital services, for work and learning, via upskilling and reducing financial costs where they are prohibitive (e.g. to people on low incomes). COVID-19 has further highlighted the impact of the digital divide on vulnerable members of communities as well as the need for improvements in robust and high-speed regional digital communication.
- 10.23 Specific suggestions were each made by only one respondent and included: the need to reassess the objectives to ensure the impact of regional funding is targeted and maximised; strategic objectives don't take into account the ageing workforce or a potential reduction in levels of migration, particularly amongst lower paid occupations; and the need for clarification on mobility and adaptability in strategic objective 2 (Increase mobility and adaptability of existing workforce).

Supporting the transition to a zero-carbon economy

- 10.24 There was general support for the transition to a zero-carbon economy. While some submissions were technical about the role specific technologies (e.g. wave

power, bioLPG) can play in the decarbonisation agenda, most submissions made more general points.

- 10.25 Some suggested the need for Welsh activity to be positioned within the wider context of national and global policies and strategies. Another suggestion was that, while Welsh activity is nationally and strategically significant, implementation is bound up with regional need and local capacity requiring local activity and implementation. For example, how might small community-based actors and microbusinesses effectively engage with this priority, in order to promote a more spatially distributed network of net-zero carbon initiatives?
- 10.26 Another suggestion was to avoid a focus that is too narrow and which might result in a loss of flexibility to respond to other areas. Or, as another respondent indicated, the decarbonisation agenda needs to be positioned within a broader conception of sustainability, linking to rural and marine economies; to the Sustainable Development Goals and to the European Green Deal.
- 10.27 Skills were also discussed in relation to decarbonisation. Some said that there is a need for skills development to support the transition. While others suggested that the transition provides cross-cutting opportunities to support skills development, CPD, translational research and facilities.

“...many of the solutions to...supporting the transition to a zero-carbon economy will focus on improved skills.” (Union/Representative body)

- 10.28 There was some concern over the need to ensure a just transition to a zero-carbon economy, including supporting those adversely affected by it.

“We propose that there should be an additional objective aiming to support the adaptation of firms and workers adversely affected by the transition to a net-zero carbon economy.” (Educational Institution)

- 10.29 Roles in the decarbonisation agenda were identified for agriculture; biofuel companies; management of building stock; construction sector; marine energy; and social business.

Healthier, fairer and more sustainable communities

- 10.30 One view expressed here was that the idea of healthier and more sustainable communities, and the need for behavioural change and infrastructure to support this, should apply to the whole Framework and not just one priority. Another view was that, in order to help achieve this priority, funding must not be allowed to flow away from areas of need to areas of opportunity unless it is to ensure growth spreads to disadvantaged areas; it was felt that the intention here should be to overcome market failure and spread prosperity equitably across all areas. One submission included a detailed description of holistic approaches using examples of existing practice.
- 10.31 Aside from this, the key consideration reported here, and not covered elsewhere in this report, revolved around rural areas. There was a consensus among several submissions that the rural economy is both diverse and significant to the economic, social and cultural well-being of Wales. For this reason, some felt that the Framework should recognise the particular needs of these rural areas and a

fair proportion of funding should be directed to them, addressing issues that are more pronounced in rural areas than they are elsewhere. There was concern about the dual impacts of Brexit and COVID-19 on the sustainability of rural communities and the agriculture that helps sustain them and it was felt that more needed to be done to address the disproportionate threat of these on rural areas.

“According to the Welsh Government’s own forecasts, a ‘No Deal’ Brexit and trading on WTO terms, will wipe out large sections of Welsh agriculture.” (Individual)

“Previous RDPs have historically been characterised by slow starts and in the context of COVID-19 and real risk of no deal Brexit there are very real concerns about the potential in funding gaps for farm businesses which will not only impact on viability but also...important environmental outcomes.” (Union/Representative body)

Easy Read Version

- 10.32 One detailed Easy Read response suggested – as had been raised in the main consultation questionnaire – that transitioning to a zero-carbon economy should be prioritised above other priority areas for investment, suggesting moving away from a focus on economic growth and instead promoting local supply chains, updating farming practices and joining up thinking on health and food.
- 10.33 Another respondent pointed out that reducing carbon footprint would impact those with learning disabilities disproportionately in accessing education, as transport is a key issue for this group. Here it was suggested that strengthening participation in active travel schemes was necessary, as was digital inclusion for those with learning disabilities.
- 10.34 The third respondent pointed out that priority areas 2 and 4 (reducing the factors that lead to income inequality and healthier, fairer, more sustainable communities) would require long term investment.

11. Monitoring and evaluation, and fair, transparent and consistent rules (Q9, Q10, Q11, Q12)

Q9. Which indicators do you think should be used to measure progress towards achieving the proposed strategic objectives

Online response form

- 11.1 The consultation document outlined the priority areas for investment and four related sets of strategic objectives. Question 9 asked respondents which indicators they thought should be used to measure progress towards achieving these proposed strategic objectives.
- 11.2 The responses to this question varied from lists of very specific suggestions of indicators made by around half the respondents to more general comments on the nature and type of indicators which should be used such as economic, socio-economic, environmental and other indicators.

Non-traditional indicators including health and well-being and sustainability

- 11.3 Many agreed that indicators should measure progress beyond traditional economic indicators and take into account how the Framework tackles inequalities, particularly in deprived areas. Overall, around half of all respondents mentioned the need for socio-economic indicators which reflect quality of life, health and well-being or which are in line with the Well-being of Future Generations Act. Others commented on a requirement to measure progress and impact on community resilience, social value and sustainability. The impact of COVID-19 was also mentioned in relation to indicators with the suggestion that the lack of stability in the current situation should lead to indicators focussed around recovery.

“Indicators should be focussed on wellbeing outcomes and sustainability. Changes in overall GDP is not an effective measure of the impact of regional investment programmes. Measuring SME support in terms of the circular economy, ability to support local communities and reducing the need for excessive travel or over-reliance on extended delivery networks is an example of this. Sustainability and resilience of the transport network, both in terms of moving people and goods, is crucial, as well as access to local services.” (Third sector)

“With respect to the proposed strategic objectives we would therefore support the adoption of indicators that extend beyond business growth and job creation, including domains of the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation relating to household income, education and access to services, as well as measures that align with and reflect the range of the Wellbeing Goals.” (Educational Institution)

“The Welsh Government should consider using a combination of two or more appropriate indicators for each region such as levels of GVA, the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD), the Regional Human

Poverty Index and levels of disposable income. Using a variety of economic and well-being indicators can help to build a better picture of regional inequality and can be used to measure progress more effectively.” (Other public sector)

“It is likely that the traditional indicators of numbers of jobs created, qualifications gained at various levels, enterprises assisted and enterprises created may not be relevant following the COVID-19 crisis. Results indicating a shift towards economic recovery will be of more benefit, and will demonstrate the additionality of this funding.” (Local Authority)

Economic indicators

- 11.4 Although a wider range of indicators was proposed, there was still a sense that traditional economic indicators should be used, where appropriate. These would include GVA, GDP and jobs created although not all agreed that these would be appropriate for all projects. However, others mentioned alternative economic impact indicators such as business growth, start-up monitoring, mergers and acquisitions, wage levels, job retention and so on.
- 11.5 There was a specific point made about tracking skills outcomes as a measure of investment. Although still considered a useful indicator, some respondents noted that any skills indicators should reflect the needs of industry which may involve a focus on the development of skills required rather than on achievement of qualifications which are simpler to measure. Some went on to focus on the impact of COVID-19 on skills suggesting that training, upskilling, retraining and transitioning to other sectors would be important to measure to determine the extent to which learners become more employable and equipped to meet the needs of employers.

“In the context of skills there also needs to be recognition that there is an increasing amount of upskilling and reskilling which occurs in the market place and qualification level alone is not always the most relevant measure to consider, particularly in the context of those seeking to change occupation and sector.” (Educational Institution)

Specific indicators and references

- 11.6 A wide range of specific indicators were suggested covering economic, social, health and well-being, sustainability, environmental and other domains. Some respondents highlighted how these could align with the strategic objectives outlined in the proposals. Many, but not all of these were quantitative measures. Some respondents emphasised the need to use established indicators which could be compared with other areas and aligned with other initiatives although there were also warnings that local and regional context could affect the ability to compare indicators with other areas e.g. comparisons elsewhere within the UK, particularly London.
- 11.7 Some suggested reference materials and resources which they felt should be reviewed including indicators or models which they had adopted themselves, developed in collaboration with others or consider to be exemplars of best practice in other organisations. Others suggested using expertise within

universities and elsewhere within the public and third sectors to help develop a suitable suite of indicators.

“[We] would support the use of Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Timebound targets along with key performance indicators as measures of progress for individual projects. Robust evidence should be provided with sharing of best practice between projects and regions encouraged.” (Private company)

“Existing and widely used indicators should be used wherever possible so that they are clearly understood. In the absence of these, recognised proxy indicators should be accepted. These are particularly important in delivering environmental benefits where it can take years for the benefits to come to realisation.” (Third sector)

- 11.8 Due to the level of detail involved, further information on the specific indicators and references suggested are provided in the Appendix 4.

Outcomes rather than outputs

- 11.9 Almost two-fifths of respondents (38%) indicated that they welcomed adopting a model based on outcome-focussed indicators rather than outputs. Specific reference was made to the Results-Based Accountability Model although some respondents felt an ‘off the shelf’ version would not meet the needs for Wales so a bespoke approach may need to be developed.

- 11.10 A clear focus on demonstrating impact within communities and the effect on inequalities, particularly in deprived areas, was highlighted by respondents as a key requirement of the Framework. Demonstrating social value was considered vital. Around a fifth felt that, depending on the nature of the project and individual objectives, some impacts could be better captured through qualitative methods or soft outcomes including case studies, film and other narrative approaches.

“There should be less emphasis on 'traditional' economic indicators, such as GVA, GDP. Qualitative, outcome focused and 'soft' measures would more beneficial in judging impact and a shift away from 'hitting the target but missing the point' which has long been the failings of many European Investment programmes.” (Other public sector)

“We would like to see equal measures taken to capture the context behind the headline data as this is often missed in measuring progress ‘of’ or ‘against’ targets. Profiles of projects or individuals that capture the journey travelled and the impacts on them, the business or community should be explored.” (Local Authority)

Realistic and flexible indicators

- 11.11 A key theme was the need for realistic indicators that would be straightforward to collect, cost-effective, meaningful and attributable. Examples of previous experience were cited where indicators were unrealistic, too complex or unsuitable and created additional work without real added value to deliverers or

communities. Some warned that the burden of administration could affect the quality of delivery and be off-putting to potential investors and partners.

- 11.12 Respondents also expressed concern that the long-term nature of some investments would affect the ability to determine impact for some outcomes as these could take some time to emerge. Related comments indicated a need to measure project progress towards delivering objectives with the use of baseline indicators and assessing distance travelled.
- 11.13 The consultation proposal that progress measures would be proportionate to the size and nature of the project was also welcomed.
- 11.14 Respondents suggested that building a flexible approach to the indicators used would also be important for any changes which may arise as a result of external developments such as Brexit or the COVID-19 pandemic.

“It is important to consider the viability of data capture which will support a meaningful analysis of each area. It’ll be important to consider such emerging data to develop a more complete picture of impact...There needs to be consideration of past economic indicators and whether these are still useful, for example GDP/GVA, as primary drivers of measuring regional performance.” (Educational Institution)

- 11.15 In a related point, there was mention of the need for flexible measures to fit with the project and context. One frequently raised point was for indicators to take into account the region and local environment whether this be urban, rural or coastal. Many noted the differences in the nature of ‘suitable’ indicators for urban areas in comparison to rural areas, for example. Retaining access to services through community-run delivery would have a significant impact in rural areas but this would be missed if the wrong indicators were used e.g. job creation.

“The required nature of interventions may also vary between rural and urban, for example retaining and sustaining rural businesses is very much an outcome in itself rather than purely focusing on growth and job creation. The same would apply to social enterprises too. Establishing and sustaining volunteer run enterprise will not necessarily lead to job creation however, it can certainly provide essential and basic services in many rural areas.” (Skills/Enterprise/Economic Development organisation)

- 11.16 Some respondents also felt that flexibility should allow for the use of indicators which are important to deliverers to allow them to have evidence to demonstrate impact within their communities and wider stakeholders, including partners.

“Measurement is only useful if applicable and relevant to the subject or community in question, and therefore, it may firstly be worth considering a baseline of national, universal measures taken from those already within the above Act. Secondly, it could then be about allowing regions to have the ability and discretion to add a small selection of their own qualitative and quantitative measures in addition, to more accurately reflect and acknowledge their own key themes and objectives, bespoke to that region. These would and could reflect the variation between rural,

urban and coastal communities, as well as across sectors, important and relevant to those communities. (Third sector)

Reflective learning, shared experience, innovation and collaboration

- 11.17 Ensuring the Framework allows for learning through both success and failure of projects or models and provides scope for sharing this experience both within and across regions was referenced by 16% of respondents. A similar point was made by 10% of respondents who said that allowing for innovation in delivery of projects would require an open approach to trying new methods and learning lessons depending on the outcome. Some also suggested that the Framework should facilitate collaboration and innovative methods of measuring progress through shared outcomes.

“Progress should be charted against base line indicators and not a universal output measure, to allow for local variation, especially in challenging circumstances. It is essential to create an indicator regime which supports collaboration between projects and does not create competition between projects and providers for outcomes from shared clients. A reflective approach should be supported and a culture of learning from setback nurtured in order that lessons are learnt, and experience shared.” (Other public sector)

“Any data should be felt to be generated from a clear purpose and existing delivery that captures a clear narrative about our communities, that can be easily be transferred into both figurative and text measurements, with no penalties for not hitting targets. A more reflective approach on any failures to hit targets should be supported and promoted, and clear learning and support provided, rather than penalties, if measures are to have meaning and support within communities.” (Third sector)

Submissions

- 11.18 There were very few comments addressing question 9 directly, although more comments on measuring progress are outlined in discussion of question 12, as there was some cross-over of responses between these two questions. The comments that were made include:

- There is a need to measure (at various scales) the value of capital deployed to explicitly further achievement of national priority outcomes and also as a percentage of the total annual capital deployed within Wales
- There is a need to measure International Labour Organisation (ILO) unemployment and economic inactivity at various scales, the number of jobs created as direct result of funding at various scales and the number of people in jobs supported by the Framework by Equality Act 2010 characteristic
- There is a need to measure the annual revenue deployed (at various scales) to further the achievement of the national priority outcomes
- There is a need to measure using income profiles

- When measuring strategic objective 3 which correlates to the Country Land and Business Association (CLA's) Rural Powerhouses Objectives 1 and 3, measurement can be undertaken by assessing the speed and coverage of any improvements to connectivity

Easy Read Version

11.19 Suggestions relating to indicators included:

- A regional impact check list that deploys regional and local information to help design inclusive programmes
- Using the Well Being for Future Generation Act's seven wellbeing goals
- Using examples of best practice such as the Improving Lives Programme and Health Equalities Framework
- National, regional and community dashboards showing progress against targets

*Q10: What are your views on the approach
[to fair, transparent and consistent rules] described above?*

Online response form

- 11.20 The consultation document outlined a proposed approach to fair, transparent and consistent rules and question 10 asked respondents about their views on this approach.
- 11.21 Of the 95 responses to this survey, many gave unqualified support to the proposals while just over half gave caveated support. A few expressed unqualified opposition to the proposals. While there was a breadth of comments, a key underlying concern was one of inclusivity and the need to design an easier and fairer system in order to widen access and involve a broader range of stakeholders.

Simplified, less bureaucratic, more proportionate processes

- 11.22 There was strong support for a simplified, less bureaucratic process with 56% of respondents agreeing that this is important. Current European funding rules were often seen as too complex, too expensive and cumbersome, with some saying this had increasingly become the case. The importance of avoiding duplication was also mentioned.

“[We agree] with a simpler investment approach. EU programmes have always been too prescriptive and bureaucratic. The proposals all sound fine in principle, however each successive ESIF programme also promised a simpler, streamlined approach. Instead the complexity of the eligibility rules and administrative requirements only increased.” (Local Authority)

“The current rules are highly complex and may be difficult to apply consistently across different projects even in similar areas of funding. We agree and support simplification and proportionate rules for investment as we have direct experience that high proportions of the funding are spent on justifying and administrating the funding as opposed to delivering the economic benefit that the funding is there to provide.”
(Skills /Enterprise Agency /Economic Development Organisation)

- 11.23 Respondents highlighted that overly complicated systems, which are hard to negotiate, can exclude some potential delivery partners and the need to simplify processes often related to feelings that the process should be accessible to a wider range of organisations (see below).

“However, there is concern that the competing objectives associated with this approach could create overly bureaucratic and complex requirements for delivery partners.” (Local Authority)

- 11.24 Sometimes, support for more proportionate approaches did not elaborate. Where ideas around proportionality were expanded, this included suggestions that rules and processes should be proportionate to the scale of projects, the size and capacity of different organisations, the amount of investment and the level of risk involved. The last point included recommendations for an approach that is less risk averse and which has trust in the existing procedures of organisations. There was also some support for the need to ensure rules are proportionate for evidencing eligibility and outcomes and also for monitoring performance and this to be developed through an ongoing system of co-production and learning involving all stakeholders.

“Funding should not be risk averse. It should be risk managed, but this requires support, confidence and clarity from the top.” (Third Sector)

“More recognition should be given to the fact that public sector funded organisations in Wales do not misappropriate funding and have well established and robust practices, policies and procedures in place to spend money in reasonably efficient ways for the intended purposes.”
(Skills /Enterprise Agency /Economic Development Organisation)

Need fair, clear and transparent rules /processes

- 11.25 Over a fifth (22%) of respondents expressed support for the need for fair, clear and transparent rules and processes from the outset. Elaboration on this included:

- the need for more timely decision-making
- it will lessen the amount of time and money spent on dealing with technicalities and administration rather than on delivery of outputs as happens currently
- it will ensure confidence and support across all stakeholders

- it will help ensure that decision-making is fair and equitable
- it will help overcome some of the current obstacles (e.g. differing intervention rates, differing approaches to evidencing defrayed expenditure, the use of internal/external auditors and interpretation of the current EU Common and fund specific regulations)
- this will broaden access and engage a more diverse set of partners
- this will help achieve fairness for everyone

“The development of new programmes, and equitable, proportional and consistent rules, gives Welsh Government the opportunity to encourage a more diverse collective of delivery partners. Under the current programmes, often those best placed to lead activity are prevented or discouraged from applying. The simplification of rules, with less bureaucracy (and the associated administration), will alleviate this and draw new deliverers, because simply supporting those organisations who are best placed to deal with heavy administration and bureaucracy stifles innovation and assumes one size fits all.” (Third Sector)

11.26 Consistency of rules was another issue with it being pointed out that changes to guidance has been an issue in the past and that rules should not change unless absolutely necessary. If it does become necessary to change the rules, then the changes and the reason for the changes should be communicated clearly to interested parties.

“...previous funding programmes have seen crucial guidance published partway through programme timeframes and sometimes changed within a structural programme period without clear explanation or warning to live projects and programmes. Any new structure must set out clear rules and guidance at the outset and communicate clearly with current and future schemes and interventions if any changes are planned. (Individual)

Need to remain flexible/adjust these rules in light of changing circumstances/be open to review

11.27 In slight contrast to this, there was also support (19%) for the need for the Framework to remain flexible and be open to review with the ability to adjust rules in light of changing circumstances. Some saw this as a contrast to the inflexibility of European funding.

“It will be important, as the consultation states for the approach to provide a consistent set of rules to ensure decisions are taken on a fair and equitable basis, but are also flexible enough to respond appropriately to risk and can take into account regional differences, strengths and needs.” (Individual)

“From our recent experience of grant applications, [we] would stress the importance of a responsive and flexible approach to grant\ loan management with sufficient scope built in to allow adjustment to quickly changing circumstances and opportunities for clearly focused discussion\ reviews of policy and financial ‘landscapes’.” (Third Sector)

Need to make the process /funding accessible to a wider range of organisations

- 11.28 A fifth of responses said that it was necessary to make the process and funding accessible to a wider range of organisations. It was strongly felt that, in the past, processes have only been available to organisations with the expertise, knowledge and capacity to access them. Some organisations, especially those in certain sectors (e.g. small organisations, third sector organisations), have, in the past, found it much harder to access European funding, meaning it has tended to be unevenly distributed. There was a preference for widening accessibility to a wider range of partners.

Using learning in order to move forward

- 11.29 Similarly, just under a fifth (18%) of responses supported the need to encompass learning in order to move forward by developing and improving the Framework. Slightly fewer mentioned that it was important to learn from previous European funding programmes and build on this earlier work. This could be learning from both what worked well and what did not work well. A few respondents discussed the importance of learning by sharing best practice.

The Five Case model

- 11.30 The Five Case model was discussed by 16% of respondents. Three respondents were positive about the Five Case model, with no caveats. Eleven respondents said that there is merit in using the model but with caveats. Concerns included that the model is complex and not suitable in all cases, particularly smaller-scale projects; that it does not complement the proportional approach; that it does not incorporate key elements of the Well-being of Future Generations Act and; that the process is open to being a “fait accompli”.

“The key here is one of proportionality. “The Five Business Case Model is complex and, whilst it might provide an appropriate framework for decision-making at national or regional level, it is unlikely to be practicable for community-led community economic development. We are pleased to see an acknowledgement of this in the proposal document:... to ensure that this is employed in a manner proportionate to risk so that we achieve our goals for creativity and ambition in our investments.” (Third Sector)

- 11.31 Only one respondent said that the model should not be used, based on their understanding of how the Five Case Model was being implemented currently by the Welsh European Funding Office (WEFO). While it is not the case that the Five Case Model is used by WEFO currently, they felt that the Five Case Model could skew investment decision making towards areas of greatest return, thereby accentuating regional differences, contrary to Welsh Government policy objectives.

Flat rates were generally welcomed with some caveats

- 11.32 The use of flat rates was mentioned by 15% of responses. Respondents welcomed the use of flat rates, which simplify funding (e.g. claiming of overheads

which can benefit local authorities) and help to achieve fairness. Some thought that flat rates would particularly benefit the third sector.

“Flat rates have been an excellent example of how to sensibly reduce unnecessary administration and channel greater resource to project delivery and these should be retained.” (Educational Institution)

“Flat rates and simplified costs have been very helpful in reducing the complexity of recent EU structural funds, and continued development and use of these is to be welcomed.” (Skills /Enterprise Agency /Economic Development Organisation)

- 11.33 Some added caveats to their support, particularly that flat rates benefit some more than others.

“Flat rates obviously remove some complexity from funding systems but previous experience in flat rate funded schemes has taught us that organisations often lose out, as flat rates rarely reflect the true cost of an operation. If flat rates are to be used, they should be set at a realistic level and they should take into account differing rates of overheads across different sectors so as not to price certain sectors out of the Framework.” (Educational Institution)

“The use of flat rates /unit costs are useful to reduce admin costs and when looking at larger scale /general schemes with wide uptake but they do inhibit the provision of tailored support to meet individual circumstance.” (Other Public Sector)

“The use of flat rates and unit costs, for example, would be welcomed, however there should be a recognition of differences in sectors and more information is required to answer this question fully.” (Educational Institution)

Other types of funding

- 11.34 A group of responses, each only made within one or two submissions, discussed funding of different types. These included a role for grants, a role for match-funding, a role for advance payments, the usefulness of multi-annual funding cycles, support for devolving funding to regional and local levels, flexible payment methods, systems need to be ready to go from day one, funding needs to be allocated to the best suited delivery partners, funds need to be able to be mobilised quickly, development funding is needed to help organisations work up projects and support for the use of unit costs.

Accountability, auditing and value for money

- 11.35 Another group of responses discussed the need for accountability, and these were mentioned by 12% of respondents. Four respondents said that the Framework and/or associated projects need to be cost effective and provide value for money. Three directly said that projects and investments must be subject to accountability. Two said that there is a need for clear auditing within the process. Two said there is a need for the process to be robust. Two said that investments should be made on sound business cases.

“[We] would support a system that is simple, with traceable and accountable rationale for decisions that support the Well-being goals and other frameworks, plans, reviews and statements that this investment would be key to delivering.” (Third Sector)

“Whilst we welcome the proposal for the Framework to be flexible - dependent upon the level /size of investment- through reducing red tape for small scale projects, we need to ensure strong accountability is maintained through the application, delivery and evaluation stages.” (Local Authority)

Stakeholder engagement

- 11.36 Another strong theme, discussed by 12% of stakeholders, was the need to involve a range of appropriate stakeholder voices. Many of these comments related to the need to widen access to funding under the new Framework. Involving a wider range of stakeholder voices, both in design and delivery of the Framework, can help make the process more democratic. This included comments that all sectors should have a voice in the Framework, with suggestions that small companies and entrepreneurs traditionally haven't had a voice, for example.

“...individual entrepreneurs need a voice - it seems that unless you are in a large business - or toe the line - you are not listened to. I have fought this and still fight it now.” (Individual)

“Years of thoughtful and balanced local democracy around European structural funds has shown us that a plurality of voices is needed to determine appropriate, innovative, effective spend. Decision making must not be dominated by any one sector and the allocation of resources must take place in a transparent way.” (Third Sector)

“It will be desirable to simplify the documentation required and ensure rules are proportionate for evidencing eligibility and outcomes and monitor performance, and for this to be developed through an ongoing system of co-production and learning involving all stakeholders.” (Third Sector)

“There also needs to be an understanding of the needs of the voluntary sector, community interest companies and charities, which would strengthen this proposal especially in harder to reach groups.” (Third Sector)

Need more information

- 11.37 Several responses (11%) said that they needed more information or detail about the Framework. Specific comments, not included elsewhere in this discussion were:

- The consultation does not say whether programme themes will be awarded as a result of an open tendering process or whether other transparent mechanisms will be used

- More detail on the approach in general is needed, with some saying this is needed before they can comment fully
- Will programme themes be awarded as a result of open and transparent processes?
- Clarity needed on how the new strategic body will monitor value for money across all initiatives
- Need clarity on how innovation and risk will be accommodated within any new programme

Alignment with other priorities, strategies and policies

- 11.38 There was also discussion over the need to integrate the Framework with other priorities, strategies and policies, with 11% of respondents saying this. Suggestions included the need for: discussion with the Competition and Markets Authority/BEIS to ensure Framework proposals are consistent with the post-transition State Aid /World Trade Organisation rules, alignment with the Well-being of Future Generations Act, alignment with the Welsh Parliament Public Accounts Committee’s report on 2019-20 accounts, consideration of existing programmes (e.g. LEADER), and the role of regional and local bodies.

Boundaries and cross-region working

- 11.39 There was also discussion by around a tenth of respondents about the need to remove two types of boundaries that exist in European funding, namely, the separation of funding streams and of the separation of the West Wales and the Valleys and East Wales geographical areas. Responses that discussed this supported the removal of these boundaries. It was felt that this would facilitate cross-region working.

Delivering the Framework, governance, COVID-19 and other themes

- 11.40 A group of responses comprised views or concerns that the proposed changes would not happen in practice, for example questions regarding the Welsh Government’s ability to deliver the Framework as proposed.
- 11.41 Some responses suggested the need to understand the specifics of communities, localities and regions in developing and delivering the Framework. There was also discussion of issues surrounding communities including the need to support innovation and change within communities and ensure that community development is genuine rather than a tick-box exercise.

“A system that is also simplified, has a greater degree of flexibility in respect of local needs and issues, and less bureaucracy would also be welcome and supported. This would...clearly acknowledge and demonstrate an understanding in the variances between our rural, urban and coastal communities across Wales, and that a “one size fits all” model, is not applicable, or welcomed.” (Third Sector)

“The promotion of innovation and change within communities needs to also be considered, and this will further engage and support communities across Wales.” (Third Sector)

- 11.42 Another group of responses said that there was a need to ensure that robust and appropriate governance structures are in place to oversee the Framework.
- 11.43 The importance of innovation was discussed by some respondents. Although there was some discussion of innovation in communities (see above), mostly this concerned the need to invest in research, development and innovation.
- 11.44 Some responses were organisations defining a role for themselves, either in designing and/or delivering the new Framework.
- 11.45 There was some support for investing in local businesses and local supply chains which are seen as crucial to developing the Welsh economy.
- 11.46 Another theme was the importance of recognising the impact of COVID-19. There was concern that the pandemic will influence the transition to the new Framework, necessitating a focus on economic recovery as well as the differential impacts of COVID-19. There were also suggestions that there are lessons to be learned from the pandemic, as it has shown that alternative ways of working are possible.

“However, the recent COVID-19 pandemic has shown that we are able to cut right through many of the bureaucratic policies and regulations, almost overnight, to ensure that services meet the frontline needs of communities. These are the lessons we should learn and ensure they are fully embedded into our mindsets and structures from this point forward whilst maintaining good governance and process.” (Private Company)

- 11.47 There was some discussion of the need for the Framework to be output and/or outcome focussed.
- 11.48 Within the responses given here, it is worth highlighting that some challenged the definitions. This included determining what is “fair” in the Framework and a fear that the definition of “a capacity to deliver” used is problematic because it is defined as the capacity of the organisations they work with to be able to deliver programmes. They fear that this leads to domination by local authorities and prevents more dynamic community-based third sector actors from playing a role. Also, those discussing measuring and defining key factors discussed administration costs associated with the proposed model compared with the current model as being a measure of success, as well as the need to monitor the new model for suitability with adjustments made if necessary.

Submissions

- 11.49 There was strong agreement for a more simplified, less bureaucratic and more proportionate approach to investment in the new Framework. Some outlined how this would be an opportunity to learn from and improve on the previous European funding system which they saw as overly complex.

“The management systems to oversee, audit and scrutinise the funding by WEFO have been bureaucratic, complex and admin intensive. Therefore, we would welcome the simplified, proportional and less bureaucratic rules for investments proposed in the document. This was often associated with the need to widen accessibility of funding another

strong theme across the submissions.” (Skills/Enterprise agency/Economic development organisation)

“It’s also been seen as administratively burdensome and bureaucratic; if future funding could learn from this and make it more streamlined and simpler to run, it would make things easier for both the administrators and the partners involved in the projects.” (Third Sector)

- 11.50 Often this was associated with a desire for funding to become more accessible to a wider range of organisations, which was another strong theme across the submissions. Many felt that the previous system was only available for access to certain organisations, particularly those with the experience, knowledge and capacity to understand and negotiate the old systems and that many organisations found European funding inaccessible. A system which distributed funds more fairly across Wales was seen as preferable. The need for a seed funding pot which supports development of grants was also suggested as a way to improve accessibility.

“Delivery approaches should make it as easy as possible for those who qualify to be able to claim funds, regardless of their computer literacy or education. They should use as many parts of existing administrative infrastructure as possible, in order to minimise the skills and training required to access the new funds under a new system.” (Union/Representative body)

“...many found ESF inaccessible and third sector partners have often [been] relegated to being a delivery mechanism rather than a project lead. This can be advantageous to some with lower capacity, but it has often meant less say in the design and management of operations, and results in there never being an opportunity for the charity to develop and become more strategic.” (Third Sector)

“In order to maximise the participation of a strong and diverse population of private sector, third sector and public sector organisations bidding into any new regional investment structure and funding/schemes at national, regional and local levels it would be appropriate that Welsh Government provide a seed funding pot for certain applicants.” (Skills/Enterprise agency/Economic development organisation)

- 11.51 Ideas of fairness also included the need for a flexible, timely, transparent and clear process which is balanced across the economy rather than focussing on particular sectors or employers and guided by eligibility rules which are fit for purpose. Another point raised was the necessity for risk management as opposed to risk avoidance in order to help widen accessibility and increase fairness.
- 11.52 There was strong support for multi-annual funding which would help provide stability and consistency just as the seven-year European funding cycle has done.
- 11.53 On the issue of match-funding, there was support for a less rigid approach to match funding thresholds and recognition of the constraints around match-funding facing organisations delivering Shared Prosperity Funded programmes.

There were also concerns that, following the economic impacts of COVID-19, access to match-funding will become harder.

- 11.54 There was some discussion around changes to boundaries, with support for both the removal of boundaries between funding streams and the separation of Wales into different geographical areas for funding. However, there was some suggestion that funding should still target areas most likely to realise potential.

“With previous funding rounds we have seen separation in Wales into different geographical areas, [we] as a partnership would welcome equal funding rates across Wales for us to work effectively across the region.”
(Skills/Enterprise agency/Economic development organisation)

“...by removing the historical boundaries between capital investment and people support, we believe there is a golden opportunity to increase the impact of physical schemes.” [Translated] (Local Authority)

- 11.55 There was also discussion around the need to integrate the new approach with other policies and strategies at different scales in order to give them a unified strategic direction (e.g. integrating with other funding opportunities, complementary projects with City Deals).
- 11.56 Other suggestions, mentioned only once, included the need for a regional and local approach which would allow flexibility to meet the needs of different areas, a move away from competitive-bidding, the idea that future funding should address short and long-term shocks which are predicted to become more common (e.g. flooding, droughts, viruses), the idea that attention needs to be given to exit strategies of programmes and projects, the need for a funding mechanism that supports a region's long-term planning for stability and growth and the use of funding to set up collaborative funds.

Easy Read Version

- 11.57 Respondents suggested incentivising cross-region and cross-sector partnerships to promote shared learning and to be more flexible and less bureaucratic in assessing applications compared to EU funding.

Q11. Should the capacity to deliver the monitoring and evaluation proposals above be prioritised?

Online response form

- 11.58 The consultation document outlined a proposed approach to evaluating and evidencing delivery towards outcomes and question 11 asked respondents whether they thought the capacity to deliver the monitoring and evaluation proposals should be prioritised.
- 11.59 Although question 11 asked a specific question about whether respondents thought that the capacity to deliver monitoring and evaluation should be prioritised, respondents tended to give broader opinions about the proposals in general. There was, therefore, some cross-over between responses to questions 11 and 12.
- 11.60 Most respondents were supportive of the proposals. Although some gave unqualified support to the proposals, most of those who expressed support caveated this with concerns or suggestions as to how the proposals might be improved. Some suggested that monitoring and evaluation should not be second to delivery. While these suggestions were wide ranging, they often shared a common desire for appropriate and manageable monitoring and evaluation that added value to activity.

Monitoring and evaluation is important for success

- 11.61 Almost two fifths (39%) of respondents felt that robust and appropriate monitoring and evaluation are crucial elements in the success of the new Framework. Suggestions as to why it is important included:
- Ensuring that identified regional needs are met
 - Measuring and ensuring the effectiveness and value of funding/programmes
 - Ensuring high standards of improvement
 - Measuring and evidencing impact
 - Supporting evidence-led policy
 - Identifying good practice and learning that can be incorporated into new proposals
 - Assessing whether projects meet their objectives
 - Improved and comprehensive delivery of outcomes (including in the long-term)
 - Creating an evidence base for future action
 - Informing delivery and support across communities, projects and organisations
 - Addressing the need for accountability
 - Ensuring effective delivery
 - Facilitating shared learning
 - Identifying when programmes are on-track and when changes need to be made

11.62 One respondent said that monitoring and evaluation was crucial given the difficulty of assessing the impact of regional development programmes.

“Robust monitoring and evaluation is crucial for a regional development programme, given the intrinsic difficulty of assessing the impact of such interventions on the desired policy outcomes.” (Other Public Sector)

Monitoring and evaluation needs to be manageable

11.63 Just over a third (35%) of respondents said that it was important to ensure that monitoring and evaluation is manageable. Manageability was discussed in terms of proportionality, costs, bureaucracy, flexibility and the need for simpler, clearer rules.

11.64 Many responses focussed on the need for proportionate monitoring and evaluation, although many of these were just statements of agreement with proportionality in principle. Those that added detail included thoughts that monitoring and evaluation should be in scale to the capacity, size and length of projects, the size of investment and what projects hope to achieve.

“We support the proposals to review the monitoring and evaluation frameworks to be proportionate, which currently we would assert is not uniformly the case.” (Educational Institution)

“Small organisations need a specialist programme to comply with accountability in public funds and ways to easily evaluate proportionately to size and local capacity needs.” (Third Sector)

11.65 The need to reduce bureaucracy around monitoring and evaluation was seen as important in order that the process does not become cumbersome and distract from delivery. Streamlined processes, (e.g. centrally resourced monitoring and evaluation) could be helpful.

“It should not however be a heavily bureaucratic paper driven process. A lot more value could be delivered now within the existing capacity” (Skills /Enterprise Agency /Economic Development Organisation)

“We agree that monitoring and evaluation are essential and an important part of any process, but this needs to be efficient and reduce any bureaucracy which has the potential to stifle innovation and the agility of businesses.” (Private Company)

11.66 Simple and clear rules around monitoring and evaluation were also seen as an important step in ensuring that it does not become burdensome and is consequently more likely to be useful. There was some feeling that guidance is currently lacking which undermines the potential of monitoring and evaluation. One respondent related this back to proportionality by suggesting that rules may need to be different for larger investments and more complex organisations than for smaller ones.

11.67 The need to control the costs of monitoring and evaluation was seen as important in order to ensure that it does not divert excessive resources away from delivery. One respondent suggested that monitoring and evaluation should be flexible and allow the use of pre-existing frameworks and methodologies, where appropriate.

The importance of learning in order to develop monitoring and evaluation

11.68 15% of respondents mentioned the importance of capturing and acting on learning in order to develop the Framework. Broadly, these thoughts can be categorised into learning from both good and bad practice that has happened in the past and the need to use and share examples of current/developing best practice by understanding and sharing both what works and what does not work. There were suggestions of the need to learn from the lessons of international as well as Welsh practice, whether past or current. Another response suggested that existing and successful networks may play a useful role in sharing practice.

“Learning from failure can be very valuable, but only if that learning is shared and acted upon. Too often, such learning, even if captured in final reports, is not made easily accessible to others.” (Skills /Enterprise Agency /Economic Development Organisation)

“Historically the EU monitoring requirements have typically been standard KPI /tick box exercises that can be overly burdensome for smaller scale investments and present a barrier to more innovative solutions and outcomes.” (Other Public Sector)

Monitoring and evaluation needs to be linked to wider policies and priorities

11.69 The need for monitoring and evaluation to relate to wider policies was discussed in 14% of responses. Thoughts included:

- The need for monitoring to be undertaken by people with experience and knowledge of policy and strategy
- The need for monitoring and evaluation which is in line with: Well-being of Future Generations Act (this was commonly stated), National Transport Plan, National Infrastructure Framework and the Active Travel Act
- Indicators and monitoring for goals and objectives around healthier communities are likely to be different from those traditionally used in regeneration programmes
- Evaluation processes should be compliant with the Welsh Government’s Better Business Case approach
- The possibility of developing broad national and regional strategic actions covering the duration of the framework with a mechanism to show what is happening and the difference each action is making on a regular basis
- The need to consider monitoring and evaluation processes as a means of addressing structural racism and achieving equality for BAME groups

Need specialist input into creating/supporting monitoring and evaluation

11.70 The need for specialist input to monitoring and evaluation featured in 13% of responses. Some responses flagged the need to involve subject, policy or monitoring and evaluation specialists in developing and conducting monitoring and evaluation, whether these were individuals or organisations (including the Welsh Government, WEFO, networks, partnerships, and centralised monitoring

and evaluation teams). One respondent suggested that, while this is important, spending on it should be proportionate.

“Whilst we welcome the proposal for expertise to support monitoring, evaluation and learning this should not divert excessive resources away from front line delivery and delivery of outcomes.” (Skills /Enterprise Agency /Economic Development Organisation)

Monitoring and evaluation needs to be supported by capacity building

- 11.71 12% of respondents said that monitoring and evaluation requirements need to be supported by capacity building in order that this can be delivered. For one respondent this built on the suggestion that a lack of capacity to deliver monitoring and evaluation has been a constraint of European funding. For some, there was a need to build new capacity (e.g. skills, staff) to ensure delivery of new monitoring and evaluation processes without this being burdensome. For others, it was important that existing expertise held in WEFO be sustained across the transition in order to sustain capacity for monitoring and evaluation.

“Building skills and capacity in monitoring and evaluation following a common understanding of the framework for how the national wellbeing outcomes indicators should be measured for consistency across projects and regions is essential, to measure overall success and for statistical reasons. At the same time organisations should also know how to best show case the impact projects make on an individual and local basis.” (Third Sector)

“[We are] not sure of the position around current capacity to monitor and evaluate projects, however we would expect WEFO is already well placed to do this questioning whether further resource is needed in this area.” (Unions and Representative Bodies)

- 11.72 One response discussed the importance of building capacity inclusively in order that BAME communities are not disenfranchised by monitoring and evaluation processes.

“...capacity must be developed - through infrastructure, relevant bodies and networks - in co-production with BAME led community organisations and other underrepresented grassroots organisations - in order to ensure BAME groups are able to effectively evidence their impact and value, access regional investment funds and have a say in how investment should look in their places and communities.” (Third Sector)

- 11.73 One respondent suggested that it was crucial that capacity for monitoring and evaluation is not prioritised over delivery.

“In some ways, prioritising capacity to monitor before there is capacity to deliver feels a little like putting the cart before the horse. If possible, investment in monitoring and evaluation should run in parallel with investment in the capacity to deliver at local, regional and national level.” (Third Sector)

Monitoring and evaluation should be secondary to delivery

- 11.74 11% of respondents felt that, while monitoring and evaluation are important, they must not be prioritised over delivery. They explained that establishing and delivering projects is key and monitoring and evaluation should exist to serve the success of these programmes rather than distract from delivery, either because it is too cumbersome or because there is too much attention paid to it.

“It is certainly important to have high standards of monitoring and evaluation, however a balance is needed. The delivery of the intervention should be the priority; the provision should not be adversely affected or compromised by overly complex or time-consuming reporting processes. Evaluation should add value, make connections and help to influence future decisions rather than be fulfilled by a set of forms and audits.”
(Educational Institution)

Monitoring and evaluation should be embedded throughout projects

- 11.75 The view that monitoring should be embedded throughout the project was raised in 11% of responses. Some respondents discussed the need to ensure that monitoring and evaluation occur across the whole life of projects, rather than just at the end or as an afterthought. For some this would allow “live” tracking of projects. Others said that it is important that monitoring and evaluation processes become embedded in standard working practices and in national and regional strategies.

“Evaluation is a process that should be happening right from the start of each approved project and not an afterthought two thirds of the way in.”
(Local Authority)

“Good and robust information is invaluable to inform delivery and support across communities, projects and organisations. However, this information should be the automatic product of existing delivery and collective working, and be a clear consistent component within the routine working practices of those involved in delivery and planning.” (Third Sector)

Need to collect appropriate data

- 11.76 The importance of ensuring that appropriate data is collected was mentioned by 10% of respondents. Suggestions included: a move away from capturing unhelpful or limited data, the need for good, robust and comparable evidence on performance, the need to make captured data accessible, the importance of interpreting data, transferring strategic goals to individual metrics in order to track performance and inform future delivery and the need for a more standardised data system that provides timely, accurate data.

“...there needs to be a move away from capturing data which has limited value. There needs to be a focus on measuring what matters as opposed to measuring activities because they are easier to measure.”
(Educational Institution)

Regional, local and community level monitoring and evaluation

- 11.77 The importance of conducting monitoring and evaluation at regional, local and community levels was recognised by 10% of respondents. In general, this was seen as important in order to generate ownership of the process at an appropriate level and empower people working at these sub-national levels to respond to specific regional and local issues.

“Ownership of monitoring and evaluation is important, and there should be support for this to happen at a local and community level in order to get meaningful engagement and involvement.” (Other Public Sector)

“[effective delivery of monitoring and evaluation]... needs to be driven by the potential users of the system, and not central administrators with no genuine understanding of front line local delivery, who clearly in the past have developed systems that work for them, and not for communities across Wales.” (Third Sector)

- 11.78 One respondent said that regional and local delivery structures should be paired with a central monitoring and evaluation unit for methodological support and also to share ongoing learning about how to improve practice across regions and across Wales. Another said that the Welsh Government should facilitate sharing of lessons learned between regions, areas and local authorities. One respondent said that monitoring and evaluation should not be unnecessarily duplicated at local, regional and national levels.

Need central or national co-ordination /joined-up approach

- 11.79 Some respondents said that they felt there was a need for a joined up approach. Some of these comments related to comments made elsewhere (e.g. the importance of conducting monitoring and evaluation at regional, local and community levels, capacity building). A centralised approach, at either a regional or national level, could provide expertise, remove duplication of effort, allow comparison of projects across multiple regions, and ensure consistency in approach.

“A centrally resourced evaluation process would be welcomed if it reduces the burden on organisations at the project level, and leads to a consistent approach in evaluating outcomes.” (Skills /Enterprise Agency /Economic Development Organisation)

Monitoring and evaluation should be consistent

- 11.80 Another group of respondents said that it is important for monitoring and evaluation to be consistent. Again, many of these comments overlap with comments made in above themes and were about fairness and, more often, compatibility (e.g. across projects or regions).

“Establishing consistent indicators and evaluation would allow projects delivered within multiple regions to be compared and any gaps identified.” (Local Authority)

Clarity needed over guidance as to how monitoring and evaluation is to be conducted

- 11.81 Another theme was the need for greater clarity over how monitoring and evaluation is to be conducted. One respondent said that there is a need for clarification as to how long-term impact will be measured. Another suggested the need for a model based around return on investment. The rest made general comments about the need for more detail.

“If clear guidance on how projects and programmes are to be evaluated and monitored is not forthcoming, it will be very difficult to write an appropriate business plan.” (Local Authority)

Needs input/support from Welsh Government

- 11.82 Some respondents said that monitoring and evaluation processes need input or support from Welsh Government. All respondents felt that there are skills, expertise and experience in the Welsh Government, including WEFO, that should be drawn upon to help deliver monitoring and evaluation under the new Framework.

Support the focus on outcomes rather than outputs

- 11.83 There was some support for the focus on outcomes rather than outputs as outlined in the consultation documentation.

“A focus on outcomes rather than on outputs is a strength of the proposal, and evaluation of the outcomes, such as assessing benefits realisation, is required to gain full benefit from these activities.” (Other Public Sector)

“An outcomes-focussed approach is key to evaluation as opposed an output-based approach, the latter sometimes results in an artificial measure of a project’s success...” (Educational Institution)

Clarity needed over questions, don’t believe this will happen in practice and reflective learning

- 11.84 The remaining responses included the need for more clarity over the question, one of which appeared to be based on a misreading of it; the need for reflective learning; and a belief that the proposals would not be implemented (one of these being because they felt that the model would not work in practice).

Submissions

- 11.85 Monitoring and evaluation were seen as a priority by many of the submissions. Due to overlap in the comments relating to this topic in question 11 and 12, the detail of these comments is discussed under question 12.

Easy Read Version

- 11.86 Suggestions from respondents were to include young people in participatory monitoring and evaluation to increase their engagement and add value, as well as for Easy Read documents to support engagement activities.

Q12. Do you agree with the proposal outlined for development of monitoring and evaluation at the regional and local level?

Online response form

- 11.87 Question 12 followed up question 11 by asking respondents if they agreed with the proposal outlined for development of monitoring and evaluation at the regional and local level.
- 11.88 As explained in the discussion of question 11, there was some overlap of responses to questions 11 and 12 with responses to question 11 often including general comments on the proposals for monitoring and evaluation.
- 11.89 There was general agreement with the proposals on the development of monitoring and evaluation although many respondents raised questions and issues for consideration. As before, while these suggestions were wide ranging, they often shared a common desire for appropriate and manageable monitoring and evaluation that added value to activity.

Sharing good practice and learning from experience

- 11.90 Nearly a third of respondents highlighted a need to ensure that mechanisms are in place to facilitate ongoing sharing of good practice as well as lessons learned when delivery models do not work as expected. Respondents suggested that experiences should be shared within and between regions so that they could impact on current and future interventions. There were queries on how sharing experiences might work in practice. Some mentioned existing networks which could be used as a starting point to share learning. Similarly, there were calls to incorporate knowledge and experience from previous funding programmes in developing the framework.

“The sharing of best practice is a valuable resource for supporting project delivery. There are a number of groups already established across Wales, whether this be through ESF or ERDF networks, or longer term groups such as the WLGA Regeneration Officers Group that provide an opportunity for sharing best practice and lessons learned. There is an opportunity to build upon these networks, or create new models based on these existing networks.” (Local Authority)

“If we used evaluation to inform practice whilst a programme is live, it will have greater impact. Audit recommendations also need to be shared across regions to develop best practice. The culture needs to change so projects are less risk and criticism adverse and not afraid to test innovative methods.” (Other public sector)

“The new model should also learn from and react to the outcome of evaluations from similar previous funding programmes.” (Local Authority)

Alignment, consistency and the quality of data

- 11.91 Many respondents also noted that the local and regional level monitoring and evaluation (M&E) model must be aligned with the national level reporting in order to monitor the outcomes and impacts of the overall framework. Respondents also

highlighted the need for alignment with existing initiatives, strategies, policies and legislation.

- 11.92 Some respondents specifically mentioned the need for consistency and the gathering of high quality evidence using data-linking and local baseline information, where possible. Some commented that clear guidance, suitable systems and expertise will be required to ensure that appropriate and comparable data can be gathered.

“There will be a need for evaluation at regional and local levels, but a national level overall evaluation is required to ensure consistency across evaluation processes and provide a strategic overview.” (Other public sector)

“To a broad extent, but there needs to be strong links with the existing regional structures and national policies.” (Other public sector)

“We have concerns about the delegation of monitoring and evaluation of investment outputs; taken together, it is a complex area which requires a high level of expertise and consistency. There is a need to capture data on an enhanced intelligent database and, particularly, if the monitoring and subsequent evaluation is to be delegated. If this is to be done in a consistent manner, the appropriate 'user friendly' systems need to be in place and fully functional and operated with a high level of guidance and support.” (Skills /Enterprise Agency /Economic Development Organisation)

- 11.93 Some respondents also referred to the use of consistent indicators to monitor progress at a national level and for comparison between regions, while allowing some flexibility at a local level. Some raised the point that, although consistency is important that a 'one size fits all' approach to indicators, monitoring and evaluation would not reflect the objectives and planned outcomes of individual delivery programmes. They suggested that variation in the approach will be needed to reflect the circumstances in rural, urban and coastal areas or in different sectors.

“A consistent set of indicators across interventions and geographies should be developed where appropriate but variances should be permitted to allow for contextual variances e.g. rural /urban.” (Other public sector)

“Broadly we welcome the proposed approach to evaluating and evidencing outcomes. We particularly welcome the proposal to ensure a comparable set of indicators across interventions and geographic areas. This will help ensure that where projects are delivering similar activities, that they are measured in the same way.” (Third sector)

Proportionate and appropriate evaluation, avoiding bureaucracy

- 11.94 As mentioned elsewhere, respondents welcomed the proposals for a proportionate approach to monitoring and evaluation but highlighted concerns about the potential for unnecessary bureaucracy and duplication. There were

concerns that multiple levels of evaluation, as well as evaluation required by other organisations or programmes, could lead to different requirements that would not be proportionate. Some noted the need for a simplified and more efficient approach to monitoring and evaluation, focussed on demonstrating outcomes and impact, to avoid the potential for the costs and complexity to get in the way of project delivery.

- 11.95 While accepting the need for a simplified approach to monitoring and evaluation, other respondents expressed concerns about ensuring that independent and objective scrutiny was maintained. Similar comments raised the issue of accountability for public money. However, respondents recognised the need for balance in the arrangements.
- 11.96 Several respondents felt that robust M&E should be embedded within projects from the outset and undertaken with the purpose of improving project delivery and learning in mind. It should be ongoing rather than only conducted at the mid and end points of the project.

“We would not wish to see all the structures and procedures developed by WEFO replicated on a regional scale. The new funding framework should provide an opportunity to learn from experience and develop new systems that enable investment in strong project management and more proportionate and appropriate levels of scrutiny. The current WEFO MVT process, for example, has resulted in some institutions withdrawing from operations as the benefits of the activity are outweighed by the prescriptive and narrow approach to monitoring. The costs associated with monitoring and evaluation should continue to be part of the funding package but external independent evaluation should not be mandatory but one of a range of options available to programmes. There should be a greater scope to embed staff with evaluation roles and the appropriate skills and expertise, within project teams. We would also advocate a more ‘portal’ and less paper-based approach to save time and resources. Evaluation must become more focussed on quality and impacts if an outcomes approach is preferred.” (Educational Institution)

“There needs to be a balance between effective monitoring and evaluation which can inform planning and delivery at a local /regional level and not creating a M&E structure so large that it impacts on the amount of money to deliver frontline services and projects. Each level of M&E also needs to be clearly defined and not duplicate or overlap.” (Local Authority)

More information on how local and regional evaluation will work in practice

- 11.97 Further details were called for on the governance, mechanisms and arrangements of how local and regional M&E will be delivered, particularly how the relationships between the national, regional and local level will work in practice. Some asked for further clarity regarding the approach which will be taken on governance, oversight, support and guidance. Other comments queried how the national level impact would be measured through a decentralised model of M&E.

“A strong national function is still needed to build capacity, develop partnership and oversee the whole system to ensure that it operates well.” (Other public sector)

“We welcome the stated intention that substantive elements of monitoring and evaluation will occur at a local level, although it is not wholly clear how that will be achieved.” (Third sector)

“Each region having its own evaluation & monitoring team is a good approach in principle but would be massively open to interpretation. The important aspect is that the teams work with delivery organisations to help achieve the outputs in a constructive and collaborative way. There are many questions on how this will work in practice, some of the most salient being:

- Who would decide these regional evaluation & monitoring teams?
- Who will appoint the teams?
- Will they be WG/local authority/seconded staff or external appointments?” (Local Authority)

New skills and expertise in monitoring and evaluation required

11.98 Respondents raised the issue of the capacity for delivering M&E at regional and local level, particularly reflecting on the skills and expertise that would be required. Some noted the need for further clarity on where teams would be situated and the likely arrangements before the capacity need could be fully explored.

11.99 Another group of responses suggested the need for capacity building to develop these skills including the use of new and different non-traditional indicators which will be needed to demonstrate impact, consistency and the achievement of high quality evaluation standards. Although some respondents suggested a need for upskilling local and regional teams, others noted that the specialist M&E skills required currently exist in the private and education sector through the provision of independent evaluation.

“However it needs to be recognised that the nature of indicators and accompanying monitoring for the goal and objectives around Healthier communities are likely to be different from those traditionally used in regeneration programmes. Therefore the development of new skills in this area with national support to regions and localities will be vital to get meaningful measurement done in this area.” (Skills /Enterprise Agency /Economic Development Organisation)

“The amount of monitoring and evaluation capacity that will be needed at the regional level will be dependent on what level of responsibility is devolved to regions. If activities continue to be nationally managed but with a stronger regional dimension, then there may not be such a great need to develop such capacity and it would be more appropriate to look at how the existing capacity at national level can be enhanced and made to work better with regional partners.” (Skills /Enterprise Agency /Economic Development Organisation)

Alignment with the Well-being of Future Generations Act

- 11.100 Some respondents specifically noted agreement with the proposal to align M&E with the principles of the Well-being of Future Generations Act. A few went on to query how this might be achieved or offered suggestions, particularly regarding indicators which will also need to fit with project and programme requirements to demonstrate local and regional impact.

“WFG should be the starting point and end point re monitoring and evaluating for this programme. Picking up the other specifics of Environment Act/Section 6 and other legislation along the way. But all policy and programmes in Wales should be about maximising contribution across all 7 well-being goals in an integrated way.” (Other public sector)

“The system currently proposed does not go far enough. A Welsh Government, purpose designed, results based accountability system - constructed around the WBFGA - should be developed. The selected priority areas for investment should be mapped against the most appropriate goals within the Act. It’s unrealistic to expect this funding alone to impact on every goal but the Welsh Government budget and associated activities overall should have this aim.” (Third sector)

“[We agree that] indicators should be aligned to wellbeing goals of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act. Although the Wellbeing Indicators are high level and may not be appropriate as outcome measures for specific initiatives, the common set of indicators could be aligned to the Wellbeing Indicators, to demonstrate how they will contribute to achieving the seven wellbeing goals. Monitoring and evaluation proposals should continue to prioritise social and economic determinants that support health and well-being, in line with the Well-being of Future Generations Act and other Welsh Government health in all policies legislation.” (Other public sector)

Co-production, co-design and demonstrating impact at local and regional level

- 11.101 As mentioned in earlier questions, some respondents emphasised the need for meaningful local stakeholder involvement and representation in the development and design of M&E, not least because of their experience and local knowledge. Some felt that it is highly important to engage with local beneficiaries and communities to ensure that the indicators and processes used for M&E reflect the outcomes that projects aim to achieve and ultimately monitor the impact they have in local communities.

“It is important that consideration of both the direct and long-term impact of the framework proposal; and, the impact on different groups, whether intended or unintended, is built into the methodology.” (Local Authority)

“We would question how appropriate it would be to only have a common set of indicators to assess all programmes funded under the framework, if this is not to be supported with additional indicators at the regional and programme level. While some common, high-level outcomes measures

would be an important part of the monitoring and evaluation structures for the new framework, we do not believe that this replaces the need for outcome indicators that are more directly linked to the aims of regional plans and individual projects.” (Third sector)

“A co-productive approach should be embedded in systems including working with beneficiaries and communities rather than simply a desk top exercise by those distant from delivery.” (Other public sector)

“At a local level, investment will be needed in areas such as co-production, asset-based approaches to community economic development, measuring social value, and so on. Co-production must be embedded at every stage of the process. This means that people who are the intended beneficiaries of a particular service must be able to contribute to the evaluation and suggest changes/improvements.” (Third sector)

Supporting innovation

- 11.102 A few respondents also mentioned their agreement with the proposals for innovation in M&E but sought further clarity and detail on what this might entail. Some made specific suggestions for innovative methods, particularly qualitative methods and joint evaluation arrangements. One noted the need to build in an allowance for risk and failure for innovative approaches to delivery within the context of the long-term aim of continuous improvement.

“[We] would like to see more innovation in methods of evaluation to allow for inbuilt identification and adoption of best practice as well as approaches that are not working. Suggestions included blogs, shorter reviews and filmed submissions.” (Other public sector)

Submissions

- 11.103 Across the submissions, there was general support of the need for robust and appropriate monitoring and evaluation. Many submissions saw monitoring and evaluation as vital, with suggestions that evaluation must become more relevant, timely and embedded throughout the project and programme life cycle to ensure activities are focussed on quality and impacts. There was a suggestion that monitoring and evaluation are required at a scale (e.g. regional, local, community) and of a type that is appropriate and aligns with geographical areas over which impacts and outcomes are experienced and expected.
- 11.104 Some felt that this is an opportunity to learn from the shortcomings / perceived weaknesses of monitoring under European funding while an alternative suggestion was for a pragmatic approach where indicators developed under previous funding arrangements should be adopted where they align with new objectives and can then be reviewed and modified in time. There was also a suggestion that it is important that monitoring and evaluation are not too demanding or onerous.

“Evaluation must become more relevant, timely and embedded throughout the project and programme life-cycle, to ensure activities are focussed on quality and impacts.” (Educational Institution)

“...monitoring and evaluation should be a priority but not to the extent they become a burden to the process creating more complicated systems and barriers for those who have to administer these.” (Union/Representative body)

- 11.105 Some discussed monitoring and evaluation in terms of the need for accountability of organisations involved in delivering the Framework. Comments included the need for an emphasis on deliverables against themes, the need to be subject to appropriate review in line with international best practice on auditing monitoring and evaluation and the need for a proportionate approach to audit and compliance with a degree of trust in existing systems to be incorporated into the fund.
- 11.106 The development of targets was discussed, with the suggestion being made that new targets must be developed collaboratively; this reflected wider concerns across all the submissions about broadening access and engaging more stakeholders in both the process and being able to access funding. It was also pointed out that care needs to be taken in designing targets as the targets that are selected can end up driving behaviour. Related to this were suggestions that targets and measures should be holistic, considering more than just economic performance to encourage impacts on, for example, physical and mental health, well-being, social networks, quality of life.
- 11.107 Linked suggestions included the need to move beyond just quantitative measures and, where economic activity and unemployment are considered, they need a more nuanced classification of the labour force than that traditionally used. It was also suggested that more imaginative approaches are needed and could be developed with HEI expertise. It was also suggested that measures and indicators need to integrate with other policy and strategy. The suggestion that the measures should align to the Well-being of Future Generations indicators related to the need for more holistic measures. Another suggestion was that planning agreements should include outcome targets which are tied to national priorities and commitment to fair work and the horizontal themes.
- 11.108 Some responses concentrated on the need to build capacity to conduct quality and appropriate evaluation. This included the argument that the infrastructure and knowledge to monitor and evaluate should be a priority for framework to be a success. Capacity can be built with training and funding.

“The role of evaluation and monitoring must be to provide accountability and to inform in-project innovation. As such it is necessary that there is capacity for this work at delivery body level, at the level that investment decisions are taken and at the level where priorities are set. Funding must be available to support such capacity at each of these levels.” (Local Authority)

- 11.109 Within the submissions, there was strong support for the focus on outcomes rather than outputs, with some seeing this as crucial. Some said that it was more important to focus on outcomes rather than outputs and inputs. Other suggestions

included the need to consider blended outcomes and the move away from an audit-based focus on inputs to a risk-based approach reviewing progress towards outcomes.

11.110 There was some suggestion that more detail and clarity about evaluation, indicators and measures is needed. Specific suggestions included the need to understand how this culture shift in evaluation can be delivered as well as the feeling that changes should be informed by sharing best practice for example from OECD work.

“We therefore welcome increased consistency and efficiency in monitoring, with sharing of best practice, not just from within and across Wales but from international partners including being informed by EU and OECD. Indeed, this will be inevitable if Wales wishes to and is permitted to continue in trans-national programmes as described earlier in this response.” (Educational Institution)

11.111 A group of comments were made about data that would be helpful to development of the Framework which included:

- Data and evidence to support regional development policies are lacking and there is a need to invest in data services
- Development of framework would benefit from analysis of spending and impacts of current/past regional investment programmes
- The need for national baseline measures

11.112 Other comments included: programme budgets need to follow a more pragmatic private sector approach with no penalties for underspend so that unspent monies may be reallocated rather than spent unnecessarily, support for a challenge-based approach; support for results-based accountability; a consistent set of indicators does not mean an identical set of indicators everywhere; indicators should fit with project activities rather than programme having to fit the project and the use of non-mandatory case-level indicators in current programme is good /avoid mandatory targets. It was also suggested that, as well as having a role in delivery, monitoring and evaluation also plays a role in policy development and in quantifying beneficial investments and outcomes which might be swept aside.

Easy Read Version

11.113 One respondent to the Easy Read questionnaire repeated their call for more inclusive processes, suggesting working with organisations who are experienced in facilitating consultations with disabled people to ensure their active voice in the design of monitoring and evaluation systems.

12. Further comments (Q13)

Q13. We have asked a number of specific questions. If you have any related issues which we have not specifically addressed, please use this consultation to address them.

Online response form

- 12.1 The final question in the consultation document enabled respondents to raise any related issues that they felt had not been addressed within the consultation.
- 12.2 While this question offered the chance to raise related issues that hadn't been covered elsewhere in the consultation, respondents tended to reiterate or develop points made in response to, or asked about, in other consultation questions rather than address alternative subjects. It is possible that respondents were re-emphasising points they felt were important. This suggestion might be supported by the fact that one of the strongest themes was respondents discussing the needs of, and challenges facing, specific sectors of the economy, organisations and types of business. Alternatively, it may have been that they were taking the chance to discuss topics they felt their earlier answers had missed. Whatever the reason, responses to question 13 were wide ranging, highlighting a range of interests and concerns.

Discussion of specific sectors /organisations /types of business

- 12.3 The largest theme, in terms of numbers of responses (30%), was from those that chose to highlight specific sectors of the economy, organisations or types of business. There were some questions raised as to how funding will be allocated between sectors and organisations (e.g. whether funding for particular sectors will be ring-fenced). However, it was more often the case that respondents highlighted perceived needs or roles of particular sectors, organisations or types of business during the transition, usually those with which they were involved. This was demonstrated by the variety of sectors mentioned which included: HEI, RD&I, public sector, SMEs, business sector, local authorities, industry, primary sector, marine sector, rural business, specific areas of expertise, freelancers, small organisations, arts and creative industries, not-for-profit organisations, third sector, start-ups, environmental sector and the cultural and heritage sector. This can be related to the more direct positioning of their organisations that some respondents made (see below) and suggests anxieties about future uncertainty and the potential impacts of the changes to their sector, organisation or type of business.

Integrate with other policies /strategies

- 12.4 Another strong theme, reflecting comments made in response to other questions, was the need to integrate the Framework within other pre-existing policies and strategies. Most commonly, this included support for alignment of the Framework with the Well-being of Future Generations Act particularly in relation to addressing inequalities. A few felt that this has not yet been sufficiently achieved.

“While we broadly welcome the proposals, we are concerned at what appears to be an unduly narrow focus on the role of the proposed framework in responding to the challenges and opportunities which will

be faced by the businesses and communities of Wales in the years ahead. This narrow focus appears inconsistent with the statement that “the framework has the Well-being of Future Generations Act” at its heart (p11). The framework reasonably refers to “aligning with other policies for capitalising on growth and tackling poverty”, but, in reflecting the Future Generations Act, the framework should also recognise the importance for our businesses and communities of responding to environmental challenges, not least those presented by the climate emergency. Businesses that are resilient to the challenges of climate change will be the ones most able to grasp opportunities for growth.” (Other Public Sector)

- 12.5 Other respondents discussed the need for the Framework to address resilience to the climate crisis by aligning with the Welsh Government’s Climate Change Adaptation Plan, expressing surprise that it had not done so. Other suggestions were alignment with Spatial Plans, City Deals, Growth Deals, EU Rural Development Plan, Prosperity for All and Gender Equality Review recommendations.

COVID-19

- 12.6 As has been seen throughout this report another key theme was COVID-19, which 28% of respondents discussed here. General concerns revolved around the impacts of COVID-19 on the economy and the need to identify how best to support recovery. This might require a flexible approach and the re-evaluation of investment priorities which were decided prior to the pandemic. Some saw the need to drive change and new ways of working and one response saw the potential to embed green recovery and growth to create both a resilient ecosystem and resilient economy. Another response identified the opportunity for creating a more socially and environmentally driven economy. The need to address specific impacts of COVID-19 on towns and cities was raised as was the potential necessity to increase the value of the Shared Prosperity Fund.

“Will the UK 2070 Commission be forced to revise its proposal to triple the shared prosperity fund in light of the UK Government’s massive financial commitment to combating COVID-19.” (Local Authority)

“The COVID-19 impact on the economy and the continual changes we are seeing - must be reflected in the proposed new framework. Many of the assumptions in the document will need to fundamentally shift and change as a result. We must take this as an opportunity to focus on the right things and not the quick fix, easy things.” (Skills /Enterprise Agencies /Economic Development Organisations)

Administrative structures, governance and decision-making

- 12.7 Over a quarter (27%) of respondents raised points around administrative structures, governance and decision making. Concerns included: the structures seem top-down and there is a need to ensure autonomy at the sub-national level (e.g. regional, local and community capability and capacity building), the importance of clarity over the role and function of different levels of governance and the need for a more simple and less bureaucratic approach. One response

said that the Framework tries to engage with and satisfy everyone but was not clear on whether this was a good or bad thing.

“Although the document states things like – empowering regions to develop their own distinctive strengths and opportunities – it still seems to convey the overall retention of power from a top down approach. There are statements like – some investment decisions being possible locally, whereas others will be retained centrally. The question is the actual proportion of local to national decision making.” (Local Authority)

- 12.8 Two responses reported that the choice of delivery mechanism will impact success, suggesting the need to consider how CJs work in relation to other delivery mechanisms. Three responses stated the need to avoid duplication. Two responses pointed out that new projects need time to achieve success and should be afforded this time. One response said that approval processes need to be made more efficient.

Learning in order to move forward

- 12.9 A quarter of responses could be themed as expressing the importance of learning in order to develop better processes and procedures and improve the Framework. Some felt that the new Framework was an opportunity for change and that learning was an important part of directing this change. Four responses focussed on the importance of sharing good practice. The majority said that it was important to learn from the past, particularly from European funding. Lessons could be learned both from what worked well and what could be improved. Sometimes this was a general comment but some responses gave specific examples, including discontinuing activity that can be seen to have no impact on productivity; learning from successes and failures at addressing gender inequalities in order that the Framework may better tackle these (e.g. Gender Equality Review findings) and learning from the successes and failures of past and current partnership activity (e.g. Community Partnerships, Public Service Boards and Well-being partnerships).

Accessibility for /inclusion of a wide range of stakeholders

- 12.10 A fifth of responses discussed the importance of involving a wider range of stakeholders in the Framework than had been involved in the past. As discussed in response to other questions, this concerned both involving a wider range of voices in designing and delivering the Framework, particularly by making funding accessible to a wider range of stakeholders (e.g. smaller organisations). By widening those participating in co-production of the Framework and in who can access funds, it will be possible to involve more organisations in the Framework than has traditionally been the case. This might include more use of community organisations.

“Surely the emphasis should be upon empowering communities to think and take action for themselves, and not to have done to by some structural monolith of a regional body or local authority. If you set overarching outcomes, let the communities across Wales be involved in designing activities in their area that deliver the outputs that lead to the desired outcomes. Having some responsibility in the design and delivery

of activities will rapidly grow local capacity. You have the proof of this before you, in terms of how communities respond when given a challenge, in the widespread informal volunteering networks that have sprung up in response to the COVID-19 lock down.” (Private Company)

Partnership working

- 12.11 Close to a fifth (18%) of responses included comments which referred to partnership working in some way or another. Partnership working was seen as key to successful delivery of the Framework. There was a suggestion that strategic partnerships, some of which having failed in the past, must have both capacity to act and be held accountable for their approach. Another suggestion was that it must be ensured that partnerships are genuine in order that the process of co-production works. Examples of current partnerships which worked were given in some cases, including the role of Local Authorities.

“It is crucial that that this framework provides a facilitative role for partners who are well-placed to deliver benefit, secure additional investment, and bring about positive sustainable change.” (Union/Representative body)

- 12.12 Two responses highlighted the need for joined-up government working and two highlighted the role of CJsCs in relation to this. Concern was expressed that funding for partnership activity such as Community Councils has been reduced. The need for cross-sector working and the encouragement of an environment of co-operation rather than competition were also highlighted.

Build on existing relationships /partnerships /work /projects /processes

- 12.13 15% of responses talked about the need to build on existing relationships, partnerships, work, projects and processes. In effect, these were fears about the transition to the new Framework which shared a concern that pre-existing good practice should not be thrown away and there was no need to “reinvent the wheel”.

“We do not have the resources to waste destroying established relationships, networks and expertise that have built up in Wales. We should be proud of our experience and not sacrifice home grown knowledge on the altar of chasing the new or believing that good practice elsewhere transplants into a Welsh context.” (Other Public Sector)

“The document does state briefly that we should be supporting what already works. Need to ensure that this imperative is carried through and promoted. There has been a tradition of asking for projects/schemes that are new and innovative to tackle certain issues, when projects that have been funded for a period and are working well cannot bid to deliver more of the same. So it’s a request to make sure that ‘Tried & Tested’ is supported as well as ‘New & Innovative’.” (Local Authority)

Funding-related comments

- 12.14 A group of comments related to funding. These included: a more flexible approach to procurement and resourcing to allow for a wide range of interventions and implementation strategies, the need for a proportional and risk-based approach, agreement with multi-annual funding to allow programmes to succeed,

the need to move away from 3-year funding periods where the first year is “lost” due to administrative practices, and the inclusion of smaller pots of funding for SMEs, small organisations and freelancers.

“We agree with the statement regarding ‘multi annual funding’ - although there has been a considerable period of investment, when looking at the detail, many programmes are for example 3 years and do not give sufficient time to make the level of change required. There should be a shift to much longer programmes that allow the resources, capacity building and time necessary to make significant change, particularly in areas of multiple poverty.” (Local Authority)

“We would welcome the inclusion of smaller ‘pots’ for SMEs, small organisations and freelancers. These could be administered through a combination of existing public bodies who already manage and distribute funding like the Arts Council of Wales, Sports Wales, Heritage Lottery Fund etc.” (Other Public Sector)

- 12.15 There was also discussion of the need to accept that positive change needs resourcing and costs money and also for the need to fund the transition. One respondent said that the Framework should consider not allowing contractor-led ‘design and build’ projects under public funding to avoid value engineering decisions degrading quality and scope of scheme outputs. It was also suggested that there is a need to ensure intervention rates for grant against match funding are relatively high (e.g. at least 70%). Another respondent suggested that public service infrastructure improvements should be prioritised in rural areas, and schemes for SMEs producing site-specific and community-engaged outputs should be supported and promoted at an international level.

Need more detail /clarity

- 12.16 15% of responses suggested a need for more detail or clarity around areas of the Framework. This included:
- how CJsCs (identified as a key delivery mechanism) will sit alongside other potential delivery mechanisms,
 - the process by which capacity within communities can be rebuilt,
 - proportionality of the investment and its impact on the local community and economy,
 - how funding will be allocated to different sectors and regions,
 - how the Framework will align with European funding programmes (e.g. Horizon 2020),
 - how the Welsh Government will manage the replacement funding (specifically match-funding structures),
 - how proposals replace the socio-economic aspects of the Rural Development Plan (including LEADER),
 - the purpose of regional investment and what it hopes to achieve
 - what evidence has emerged from activities encouraged by Prosperity for All which “matures” in 2021.

Concerns about the UK Shared Prosperity Fund

12.17 The transition to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund was mentioned in 14% of responses. In general, respondents echoed concerns made elsewhere in the consultation. European funding has been vital to Wales, which is the largest UK beneficiary of these funds. So far, the lack of detail around the UK Shared Prosperity Fund is concerning as there have been no guarantees as to the value of funds that Wales will get which it is felt is unacceptable. There was some feeling that the UK Government might try and circumvent the devolved administrations and deal with the regions directly. Although one local authority indicated it would be willing for Westminster Government to deal with the regions directly, most felt that this would undermine devolution. Two responses said that the Barnett formula should not be used to allocate funds across the UK.

“There has been speculation about the UK Government wanting to have greater control over the fund, potentially dealing directly with local authorities...We would therefore like to draw your attention to the final section of this response, giving our view that [we] would prefer the funds to be allocated to the region direct from the UK Government, to link in more closely with the North Wales Growth Deal and the regional priorities identified by the North Wales Economic Ambition Board (NWEAB), and additionally through the WG Regional Economic Framework, which is being co-created and the actions within co-defined with all the region's partners.” (Local Authority)

“We agree that Wales should not lose out financially from the loss of the ESIF. The UK Government must respect the devolution settlements in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, and engage the devolved administrations to ensure the fund works across the UK. The distribution of these funds should be based on an assessment of need, not on the Barnett formula.” (Other Public Sector)

Support for work at the community level

12.18 11% of responses supported work at the community-level whether in general, or in response to a particular issue such as climate change. Some reported the need for funding to test and develop community approaches and the capacity to deliver them. The LEADER approach was an example of a successful community-led development project mentioned by two respondents.

“We would also like to see seed funds/innovation funds/experimental funds for testing ideas in communities, as has happened with the LEADER approach in the Rural Development Programme – with no financial penalty if they fail.” (Local Authority)

“As a community based organisation that works well in partnership with organisations across the public, third, and private sectors through existing forums such as Public Service Boards, and our Local Action Groups whom we administer, we would not wish to see further duplication and additional layers of bureaucracy. We wish to see local communities via existing local partnerships, continue to work and evolve their relationships with regional and national bodies via newly promoted mechanisms resulting from the consultation, to aid the direction and

support of information to inform genuine investment in communities of need such as our rural and coastal areas, where outcomes are sustainable, based on need, and driven by people.” (Third Sector)

Queries about the nature of the consultation process

- 12.19 Varying uncertainty over the consultation process itself was expressed by 11% of responses. Three respondents felt that some of the questions could have been phrased more effectively or with more context (e.g. that there was a missed opportunity within the consultation to ask where respondents felt that investment in Wales had failed previously and why, and that the question about repayable finance could not be considered without knowing more on the nature of a proposal). One felt that consultations which allow for effective co-design and collaborative design elements are more effective than fixed-period consultations. There was some concern of the need to ensure that the consultation data is used effectively. One organisation was concerned that they had not been involved in stakeholder meetings that preceded the regional consultation events.

Positioning organisation /information about the responding organisation

- 12.20 A group of responses (11%) either positioned their organisations as having a role to play within the development and delivery of the framework and/or contained information about their organisation. The positioning of organisations as having a role to play is discussed further in the submissions (below).
- 12.21 Comments that related to the specificity of places were made in 11% of responses. Six of these included comments which related to the unique challenges faced by rural areas. These included: public service infrastructure improvements should be prioritised in rural areas, the demographic benefits of research and innovation (led by HEIs) are crucial to rural areas, rural and urban communities need to be better connected in order to deliver on the Well-being of Future Generations Act, the new Framework should build on decades of experience of organisations working across rural Wales, fears that the lack of consideration of Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) role in delivering vital areas of rural socio-economic economic development (e.g. diversification, advice, guidance, training, SME supply chain investment funds) is not being considered in the Framework but must be adequately funded, rural areas and businesses tend to be overlooked by economic funding because (a) primary production businesses could only apply for CAP and when they diversified were encouraged to do so under one businesses operation and (b) rural areas are full of SMEs that find it difficult to complete for funding in previous economic schemes where jobs created /safeguarded has been the central criterion for an application, the need to ensure local rural areas are well represented and commitment shown to them within the Framework. Other responses discussed the need to understand local issues in order that they can be addressed, as well as the importance of regional economic development and place-based economic policy.

“We welcome the recognition (page 11) that the framework needs to align “with other policies for capitalising on growth and tackling poverty”, and in particular the NDF. Reflecting the Economic Action Plan, the consultation document (p13) recognises the importance of supporting “the shift to a place-based economic policy”, and this is a shift which we

particularly welcome. It is important to recognise the spatial distinctiveness of places in developing policy.” (Union/Representative body)

Addressing inequalities

12.22 10% of responses included some mention of the need to address inequalities. In general, these concerns were that inequality is both socio-economic and spatial: there is variation in every type of indicator and measurement across the population, between places and between people in specific places. It is necessary to address these inequalities by understanding the differences between people and places and then addressing them appropriately, and in collaboration with those who are disadvantaged. This relates to the previous theme regarding the specificity of places. Some pointed out that COVID-19 has both exacerbated and illuminated some of these differences.

“[We believe] that the health and well-being of disadvantaged communities in Wales should continue to be prioritised, in order to reduce health inequalities. An integrated approach to regional investment will ensure that the determinants of health and well-being are considered holistically. There is also a need to consider the needs of specific population groups who have poorer health and well-being outcomes, or who may not receive funding and support through other routes. Although the situation is evolving, evidence to date shows that the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is affecting disadvantaged communities the most and is likely to lead to an increase in health inequalities. It is therefore more important than ever that any future investments are used for reducing inequity.” (Other Public Sector)

“In informing the details of the development of a framework for regional investment and underpinning systems, officials should a) refer to the few reports by organisations such as EYST Wales and Show Racism the Red Card Wales that reflect on experiences of people of colour living in Wales and ethnic minority communities in Wales; b) undertake effective engagement with communities of colour and ethnic minority communities in Wales in order to co-produce a framework with racial equality running through its heart; c) discontinue, or at least thoroughly evaluate the benefit of using policies and systems that have done little to change the picture and experience of racial inequality in Wales – such as reviews focussed on individual experiences rather than systemic causes of inequality, monitoring that assesses the presence of rather than the effectiveness of equalities action plans and EIA’s on a longitudinal basis, and d) the lack of accountability for the effectiveness of local compacts that should require public services to optimise the reach and assets available in the community in regards to planning, decision-taking and the delivery of local solutions.” (Third Sector)

Environment

- 12.23 Comments relating to the environment were made within 10% of responses. Some pointed out that failing to tackle climate change is not an option and the long-term health of the Welsh population relies on a healthy environment. Another suggestion was the necessity for the Framework to align with the Well-being of Future Generations Act and recognise the importance to both businesses and communities of responding to environmental challenges, particularly the climate emergency. Some also mentioned the need for the Framework to align with the Climate Change Adaptation Plan. Another suggestion was that it should be acknowledged that a greener society will have costs associated with the transition which should be funded as should a sustainable green economic recovery from COVID-19. A related comment suggested the need for capacity building and dialogue with the environmental voluntary sector to help realise the potential of regional investment funds on climate and nature. Another response said that public funding should not be used to prop up environmentally damaging enterprises, including environmentally damaging farming practices. There was also a call for greater detail about how the environmental challenges represented by climate emergency can be addressed through local investment, with the feeling that the proposed Framework is missing the opportunity to fully engage with supporting communities and businesses in taking action against the challenges presented by climate change.

Broader framework with more holistic approaches

- 12.24 Some suggestion that the Framework is too narrow and should consider more holistic approaches featured in 10% of responses. These mostly suggested the need not just to focus on economic drivers and outcomes but on broader ones such as health, well-being, sustainability, resilience, arts, culture and the environment. This would also help alignment with the Well-being of Future Generations Act. Many of these are discussed in detail elsewhere in this section.

Skills development /education /training /employability

- 12.25 Another set of responses talked about the need for skills development, education, training and employability to be priorities. These respondents felt it was important that replacement funding supports skills development to meet the needs of the economy in a variety of ways. This involves both upskilling and reskilling the workforce and potential workforce. Apprenticeships could play a key role here. Concerns were also raised that the replacement funding will not continue to support high-level training (e.g. professional managers, Post-Doctoral researchers, technical staff and training for business) that was supported by European funding. It was also pointed out that, in order to reskill, people should be able to access funding to support study in qualifications at levels below their current highest qualification. The role of the Further and Higher Education sectors were both highlighted.

“Currently, participants with higher level qualifications than the level they wish to study are considered ineligible. More flexibility needs to be given to maximise skills diversification, change of career path/industry decisions and to provide necessary management training once a person is considered an expert in their field (e.g. a PHD Computer Programme

graduate wishing to study a Level 3 Leadership & Management qualification). There should be a greater importance on sustained impact, rather than measuring on quantitative targets alone.” (Educational Institution)

- 12.26 One suggestion was that locally-led labour market interventions could focus on employability and support for young people NEET or at risk of becoming so. While this has been a successful part of European funding, it was felt that they could be more strongly incorporated into the new Framework. Another response highlighted a role for the arts to support education

“[U]sing the arts to support education, incubating talent for the new knowledge economy, is an investment in future prosperity – the dominant global companies of the future are increasingly in the fields of communications, information, entertainment, science and technology. These all require high degrees of creative imagination and entrepreneurial vision – qualities that arts and culture are ideally placed to nurture and promote.” (Other Public Sector)

Cross-border working and international issues

- 12.27 Of those discussing cross-border working and international issues, suggestions included the need to maintain existing cross-border (particularly European working) relationships, echoing discussions made in detail elsewhere in this report, the need to align with international policy and the importance of promoting outputs internationally.

Evaluation

- 12.28 Among those responses discussing evaluation, most made points about the importance of robust, fair and honest evaluation with appropriate measures and indicators and insights from evaluation which are acted on.

Infrastructure

- 12.29 A group of responses included reference to the importance of infrastructure. Comments included: at national level, the National Development Framework (NDF) will facilitate an integrated approach including attention to infrastructure, the need to consider infrastructure adaptation in light of climate change and rising sea levels, and the Framework should be a key vehicle to help address deficiencies in infrastructure which constrain community and business growth in many parts of Wales.

Welsh context (broad)

- 12.30 Another theme was broad discussion of the Welsh context. One response said that Wales needs to become a more productive nation. The other two responses suggested the need to have confidence in acting in a way that is appropriate for, and unique to, Wales.

“We should be proud of our experience and not sacrifice home grown knowledge on the altar of chasing the new or believing that good practice elsewhere transplants into a Welsh context.” (Other Public Sector)

Environmental sustainability

- 12.31 Some responses made comments about the importance of environmental sustainability including the need for a sustainable green economic recovery after COVID-19; the need for sustainability to be at the heart of planning and decision-making; and support for local authorities and other public bodies to transition to low carbon, local, community-owned, and sustainable food, energy and transport.

Food chains /supply chains

- 12.32 Support for investing in food chains and supply chains was mentioned in some responses, where these were seen as crucial to the local and national economies.

Procurement

- 12.33 With regards to procurement, one response said that it was necessary to consider more flexible approaches to procurement and project resourcing to allow for a wide range of interventions and implementation strategies, particularly at a regional and local level. Another response was interested in how Sell2Wales will be adapted to minimise the loss of awareness of opportunities after leaving the EU when there will be no obligation to advertise opportunities via OJEU.

Submissions

- 12.34 In terms of data that could be coded to question 13, several submissions included detailed reasons as to why the organisations which they represented would be good partners to help develop and/or deliver the new Framework. This included HEIs, local authorities, particular parts of the energy sector, industry bodies, trade union bodies and existing partnerships. This desire to play a role was often about having the capacity, knowledge and experience to make a useful and positive contribution to the process. It sometimes also seemed to relate to the desire to maintain pre-existing structures and partnerships which are working well in Wales and not reinvent these and also sometimes to anxieties about the uncertainty that transition to a new model of funding brings for organisational sustainability. These anxieties emerged elsewhere in the data as well.

“We feel Welsh Government should consider an approach that recognises the existing governance maturity of delivery bodies. For example, Local Authorities have been key delivery bodies for European investment projects and continue to have a vital role to play in the new framework.” (Local Authority)

- 12.35 Discussion of their potential as development/delivery partners was particularly prevalent across HEI responses, pointing to their role in local economic development as well as the expertise in their organisations.

“Universities are significant and vital partners in projects crucial to economic development in Wales.” (Educational Institution)

“This response is primarily from the perspective of a Higher Education Institution, which acknowledges we are a vital member of a wider community; one that engages with and includes businesses, public,

voluntary and charitable bodies, networks, interest groups and individuals.” (Educational Institution)

“We have a breadth of expertise across the university able to advise on approaches to economic development, economic geographies and analysis, governance, decision-making, public policy, entrepreneurship and more.” (Educational Institution)

12.36 Reflecting other views across the consultation, there was also a suggestion that it was important to learn lessons from the response to COVID-19.

“I strongly recommend that serious consideration is given to the lessons learnt from the response to the COVID-19, what worked well and areas that could have been handled better. What has been impressive is how communities have quickly developed organic systems to provide much needed support to help those who needed it most. These have usually involved local leadership from: a mix of volunteers, local businesses, third sector organisations and local authority personnel working together and problem solving to deliver what was required in a matter of days in a flexible and collaborative way. A real example of focusing on outcomes!” (Third sector)

Easy Read Version

12.37 Final comments praised the Easy Read version of the consultation and stated that the Welsh Government needed to consider ‘racial inequality, extra support and meaningful skills-based qualifications’.

13. Citizens' Survey

Introduction

- 13.1 As part of the initial communications plan for the consultation, an external communications organisation Spencer David, were contracted to co-ordinate and conduct several promotional and stakeholder engagement activities across Wales. However, face-to-face engagement became unfeasible due to COVID-19 restrictions, and as a result, alternative methods of engagement with the public were agreed with Welsh Government.
- 13.2 One of the agreed new methods was an online survey, intended to engage with, and provide an additional means of consultation with citizens across Wales. The online survey was a simplified version of the consultation questionnaire which aimed to improve accessibility to a non-specialist audience. The survey was promoted through Facebook and Twitter, as part of the drive to publicise and encourage engagement with the consultation. Responses to the social media channels have also been reviewed and can be found in the appendices.
- 13.3 The survey was created, hosted, and promoted by Spencer David, with the analysis of results conducted by SRI. 297 records were received by SRI. Timestamp data attached to the data in combination with the response revealed that 12 records were duplicated. These were removed from the dataset to prevent skewing, meaning 285 responses were received in total.

Demographics

- 13.4 The demographic breakdown of respondents is shown in the Tables 16 and 17 below.

Table 3: Response by age

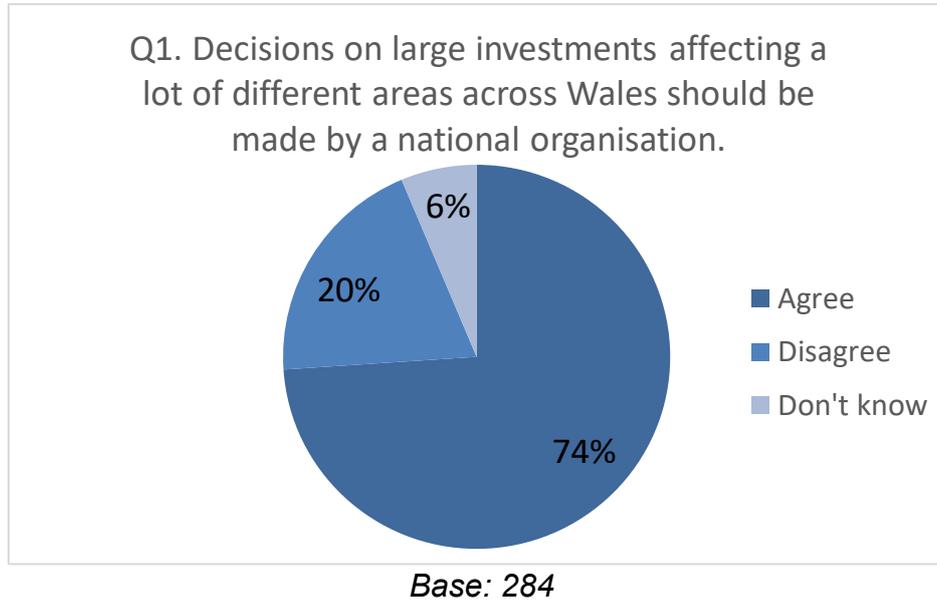
Age	Count	%
16 - 25	5	2%
26 - 35	29	10%
36 - 45	46	16%
46 - 55	73	26%
56 - 65	80	28%
66+ over	52	18%

Table 4: Response by gender

Gender	Count	%
Male	125	44%
Female	157	55%
No response	3	1%

Key findings

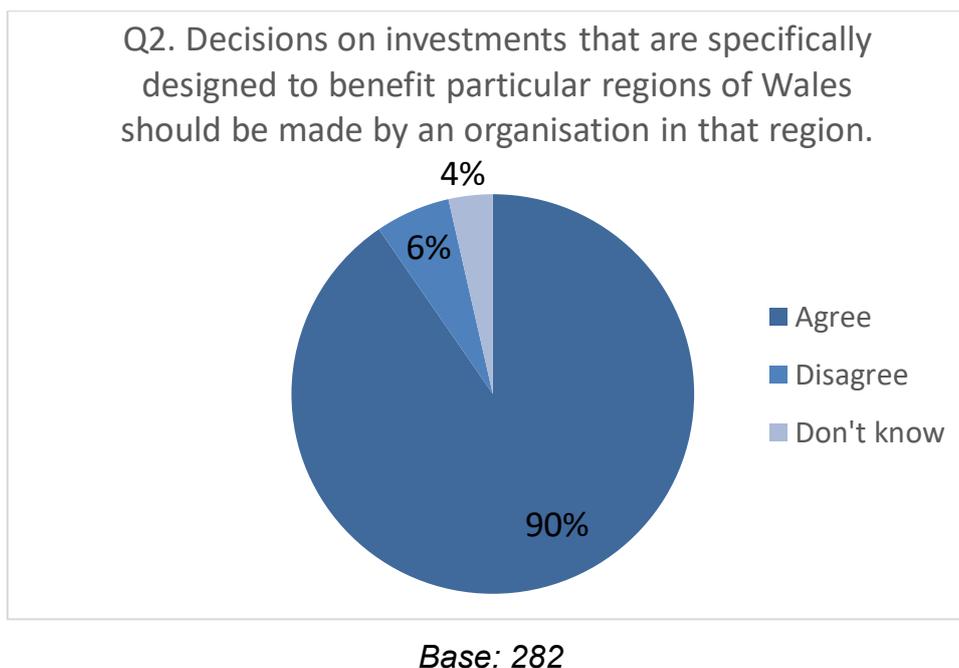
Figure 1: Views on decisions on large investments



Around-three quarters agreed that decisions on large investments should be made by a national organisation

- 13.5 Respondents were asked whether they agreed or disagreed that decisions on large investments affecting a lot of different areas across Wales should be made by a national organisation. 74% agreed with this statement, 20% disagreed and 6% said that they didn't know.

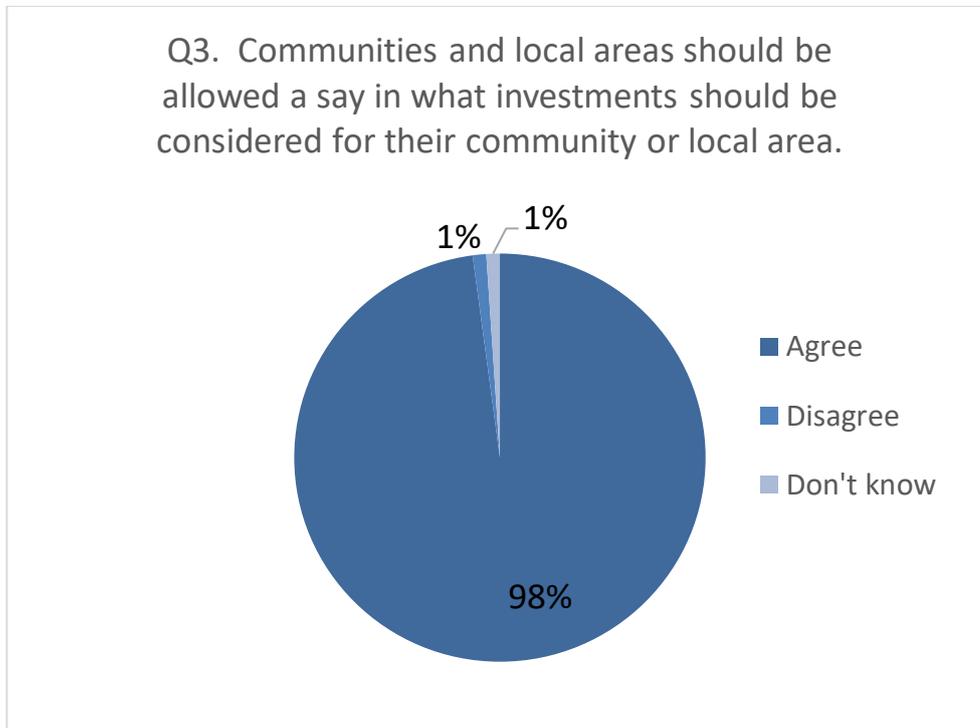
Figure 2: Views on decisions on regional investments



Most felt that decisions should be made by a local organisation

13.6 Respondents were asked whether decisions on investments that are specifically designed to benefit particular regions of Wales (i.e. North, Mid, South West and South East Wales) should be made by an organisation in that region. The majority (90%) agreed, whilst only a few disagreed (6%) or said they didn't know (4%).

Figure 3: Views on community-led investments

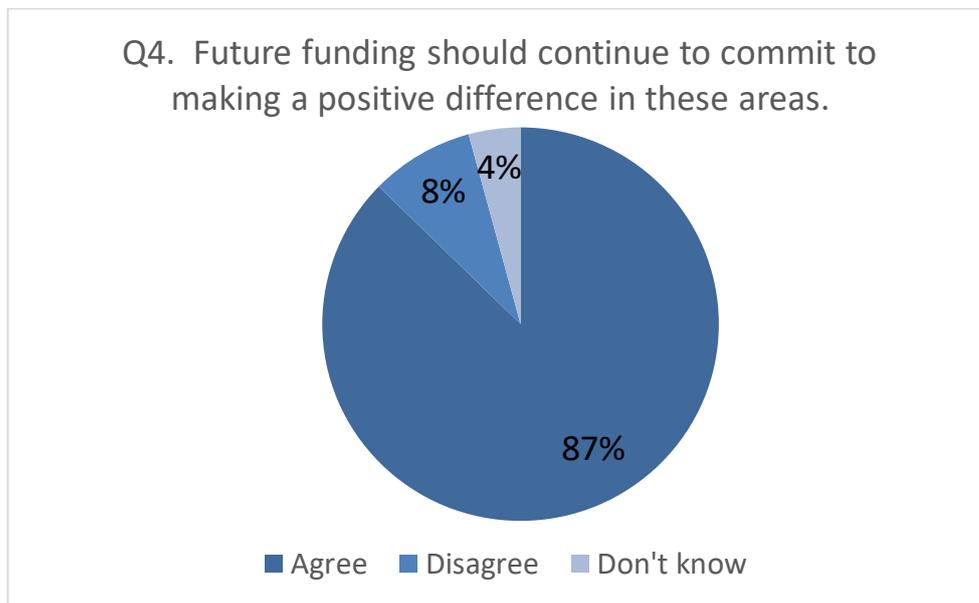


Base: 283

Almost all agreed that communities should be allowed a say in investments

13.7 Almost all (98%) agreed that communities should be allowed a say in what investments should be considered for their community or local area. Only 1% disagreed and only 1% said they don't know, as shown in the Figure 3 above.

Figure 4: “EU funding has helped Wales take positive steps forward in areas including ensuring that equality and human rights, sustainable development practices, and citizens’ interests are reflected in policy and in practice.” Views on funding making a positive difference.

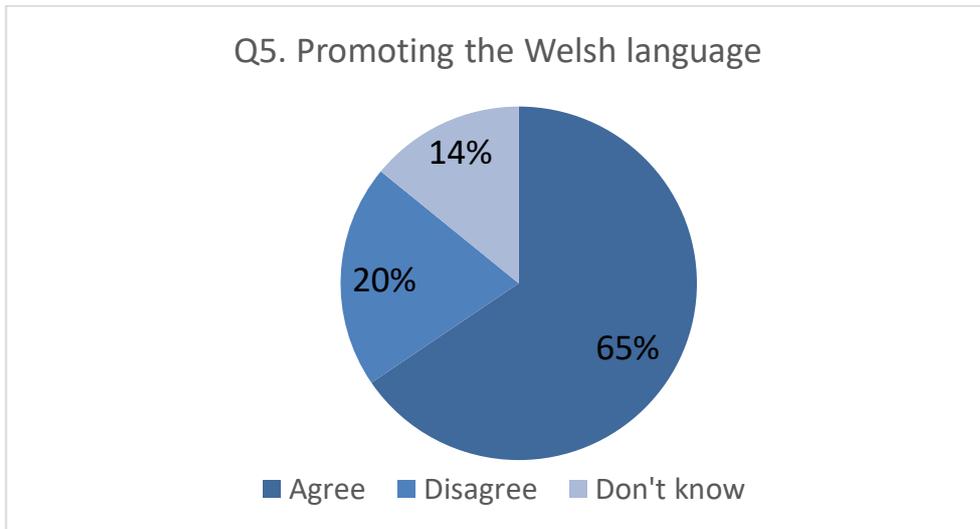


Base: 284

Most agreed that funding should commit to making a positive difference

- 13.8 At question four, respondents were presented with the statement noted in Figure 4 about how EU funding has affected Wales to date.
- 13.9 Respondents were then asked whether future funding should continue to commit to making a positive difference in these areas. Most (87%) agreed, whilst only 8% disagreed and 4% said they don't know.

Figure 5: “The Welsh Government and many other organisations run programmes of support for the Welsh Language and Welsh culture and has made use of EU funding to do this”. Views on promoting the Welsh language.

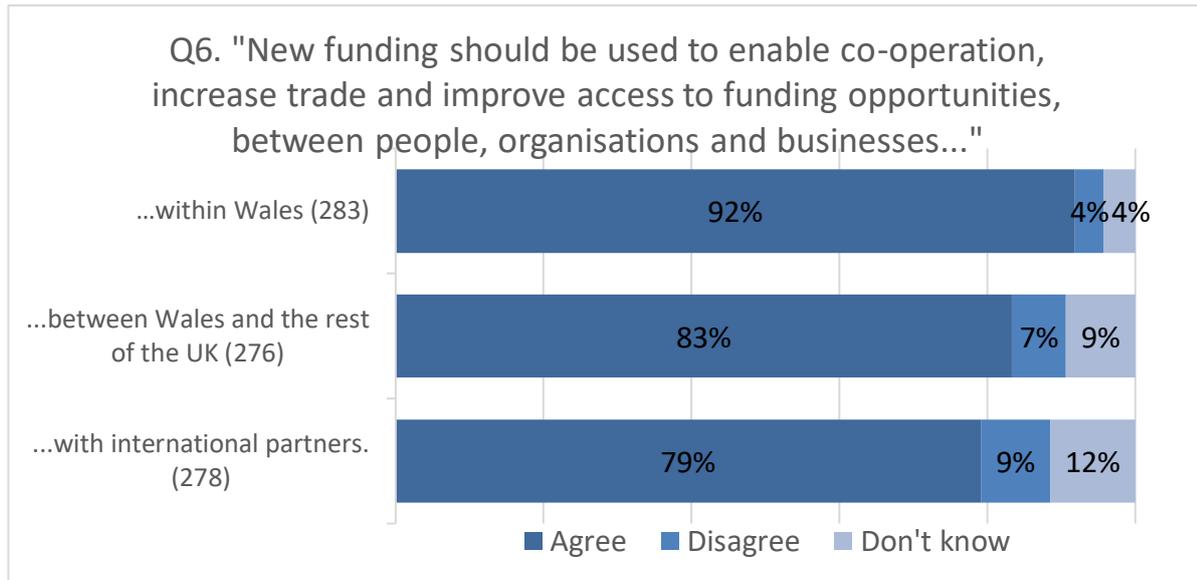


Base: 284

Around two-thirds felt that future funding should promote the Welsh language

- 13.10 At question five, respondents were once again presented with a statement, noted in Figure 5 above, relating to how EU funding has affected the Welsh language.
- 13.11 Respondents were then asked whether future funding should continue to be used to promote and grow the use of the Welsh language. Around two-thirds (65%) agreed, whilst 20% disagreed and 14% said they don't know.

Figure 6: Views on co-operation, trade and access to funding

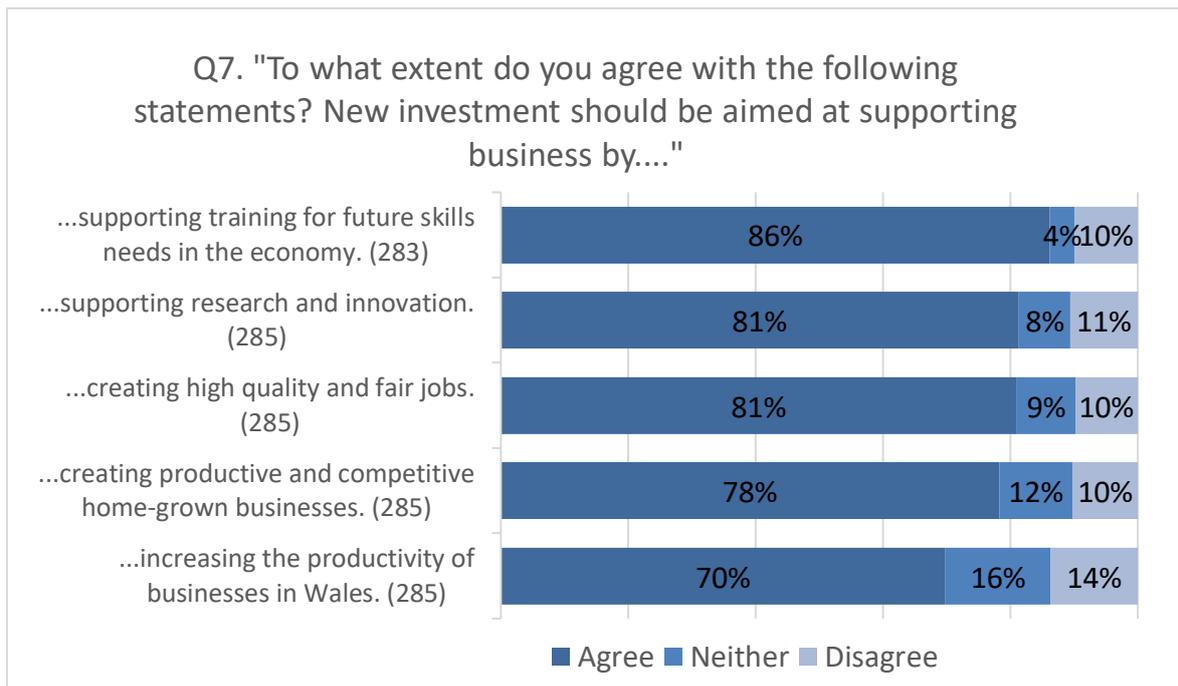


Base: Number of respondents shown in brackets

Funding to enable co-operation and trade within Wales received the highest level of support

- 13.12 Respondents were asked whether new funding should be used to enable co-operation, increase trade and improve access to funding opportunities, between people, organisations and businesses '*within Wales*', '*between Wales and the rest of the UK*', and '*with international partners*'. Most respondents agreed that funding should be used for each of these links/partnerships.
- 13.13 92% agreed that new funding should enable co-operation and trade within Wales, whilst 4% disagreed and the same proportion said they don't know.
- 13.14 83% agreed that new funding should enable co-operation and trade between Wales and the rest of the UK, whilst 7% disagreed and 9% said they don't know.
- 13.15 79% agreed that new funding should enable co-operation and trade with international partners, whilst 9% disagreed and 12% said they don't know.

Figure 7: Views on various types of investment



Base: Number of respondents shown in brackets

Helping business by supporting training for future skills needs received the highest level of support

- 13.16 Respondents were presented with a series of statements and were asked to what extent they agreed that new investments should be aimed at supporting business, by a range of different factors.
- 13.17 The statement which received the highest level of agreement was that new investments should be aimed at supporting business by ‘*supporting training for future skills needs in the economy*’. 86% agreed with this, whilst 10% disagreed and 4% were neutral.
- 13.18 Levels of agreement were very similar for some of the statements. For example, the statements which said that investments should support business by ‘*supporting research and innovation*’ (81%), or by ‘*creating high quality and fair jobs*’ (81%), or by ‘*creating productive and competitive homegrown businesses*’ (78%).
- 13.19 The statement that attracted the lowest levels of agreement was to support business by ‘*increasing the productivity of businesses in Wales*’. 70% agreed with this statement, whilst 14% disagreed and 16% were neutral.

Table 5: Indicators of success in supporting businesses

Q8. What factors could be used to best indicate successful investment in this area? For example, an increase in the level of business productivity, the number of and size of businesses etc.	%
Employment/reduction in unemployment/benefits claims	20%
Number of businesses	15%
Local business/economy focus	11%
Productivity	11%
Pay e.g. Higher wages (general)	11%
Job quality e.g. job permanence, progression	10%
Skills/qualifications/apprenticeships/vocational learning	10%
Small business/SME focus	9%
Number of jobs/Job creation	8%
Individual well-being/Happiness index	7%
Improving the local area/local focus/keeping things local/local accessibility	7%
Employee number growth/size of business	6%
Business/job sustainability (general/non-environmental)	6%
Environmental sustainability (general)	6%
Clean environment/reduction in carbon emissions/pollution	4%
Reduction in poverty/inequality	4%
Jobs/training/opportunities for young people	4%
Number of start-ups/entrepreneurs/entrepreneurial skills	3%
Health/fitness	3%
Variety of business types	3%
Profit/profitability	3%
Living wage	3%
GDP	2%
Export levels	2%
Local/low commute job creation	2%
Renewable energy	2%
Digital connectivity	2%
Other	52%

Base: All respondents who gave comments (232)

13.20 As a follow-up to question seven, respondents were asked at question eight what factors could be used to best indicate successful investment in supporting businesses. This was a free-text box meaning respondents were free to include any suggestions they thought suitable. The responses have been grouped into themes and are shown in Table 5 above. The themes which received five or more responses are shown. 232 respondents answered this question, whilst 53 did not.

New investments should support good quality jobs

13.21 The most common theme (20% of respondents) was that new investments should aim to support employment, or similarly, reduce unemployment or the number of those claiming out of work benefits.

“Decrease of number of people claiming income support.” (Male, 46-55)

13.22 The responses that fell under this theme often also fell under some of the other most common themes. For example, some of those who mentioned employment also said that employment should be well paid, or specifically, should meet the Living Wage. Similarly, those who mentioned employment sometimes also mentioned job quality. Pay was the fifth most common theme (11%) and job quality was the sixth most common theme (10%). Many of the most common themes focused on supporting jobs.

“More people in fulfilling work and less on benefits.” (Female, 56-65)

“Number of people [...] employed, wage level, not minimum wage but quality roles.” (Male, 46-55)

“The number of people employed with salaries above the minimum real living wage level with good working conditions, equal pay and equal rights.” (Male, 66+)

New investments should aim to increase the number of businesses

13.23 The second most common theme (15% of respondents) was about increasing the number of new businesses.

“Increase in number of new businesses.” (Male, 46-55)

13.24 Many of these responses focused not only on the number of new businesses, but also on increasing the size of current businesses and increasing the number of start-ups. These are also represented as separate themes (as noted in the table). Some responses mentioned increasing the size of businesses, whilst a few mentioned increasing the number of start-ups.

“Number and size of businesses; number of start-ups and in what areas.” (Female, 66+)

“The increase in businesses and the growth of current ones.” (Male, 36-45)

The importance of supporting local economies

13.25 The third most common theme (11% of respondents) was about supporting local economies. Once again, many of these responses also mentioned increasing employment or the number of businesses.

13.26 However, responses under this theme also focused on the employment of local people and increasing the number of local businesses. By ‘local’, respondents used terms such as ‘small businesses’, ‘independent businesses’, or ‘family-owned businesses’. The main point of many of these responses was to increase and retain wealth within communities.

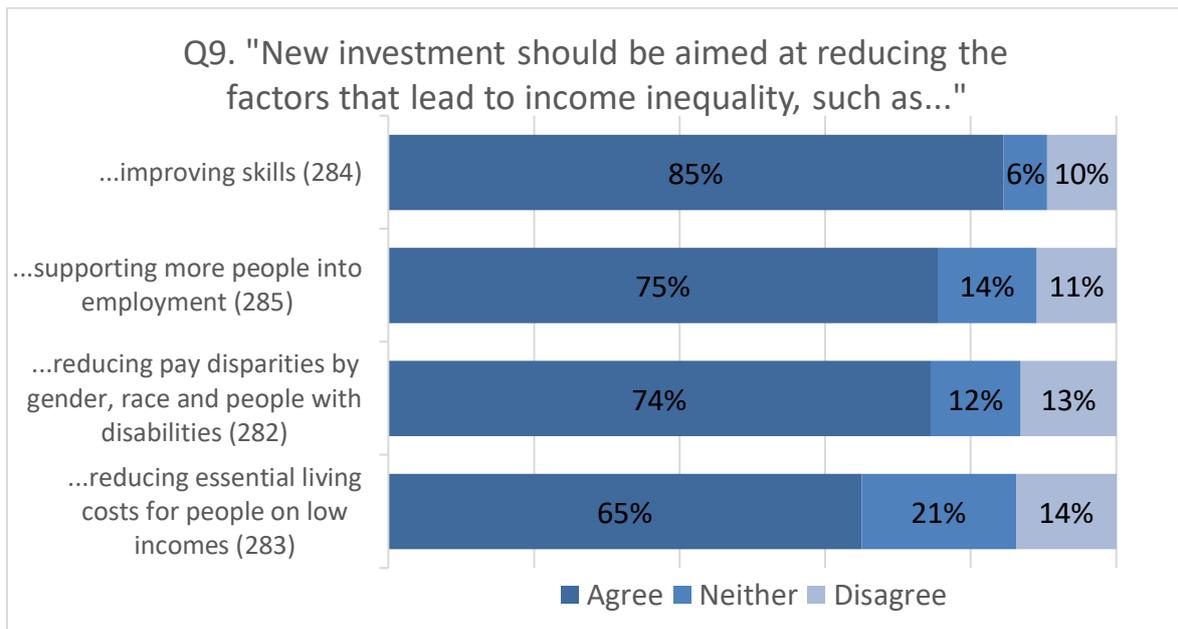
“Number of people employed by local businesses, number [...] of local businesses.” (Female, 26-35)

“Increase in the number of local community owned businesses, increase in the number of small family businesses. Increase in the wealth of people.” (Female, 66+)

“Increased employment of local people. Increased investment in local community. Understanding of local needs. Working in sympathy with local environment.” (Male, 56-65)

“More locally [...] owned small to medium size co-operative type businesses such as [...] slaughterhouses, dairy product processors etc.” (Male, 66+)

Figure 8: Views on investment to target income inequality



Base: Number of respondents shown in brackets

Most felt that new investments should aim to improve skills

- 13.27 Respondents were provided with a series of statements about factors that can lead to reducing income inequality and were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with each of these statements.
- 13.28 The statement that received the highest level of agreement was to reduce income inequality by focusing investments on ‘improving skills’. 85% felt that new investments should be aimed at this, whereas 6% were neutral and 10% disagreed.
- 13.29 ‘Supporting more people into employment’ and ‘reducing pay disparities by gender, race and people with disabilities’ received similar levels of agreement (75% and 74% respectively), whilst 14% and 12% were neutral, and 11% and 13% disagreed.
- 13.30 ‘Reducing essential living costs for people on low incomes’ received the lowest level of agreement of the four factors. Nevertheless, around two thirds (65%) agreed that new investments should focus on this, whilst 21% were neutral and 14% disagreed.

Table 6: Views on factors to indicate success in addressing income inequality

Q10. What factors could be used to best indicate successful investment in this area? For example, lower unemployment, higher skills levels etc.	%
Employment/reduction in unemployment/benefits claims	36%
Skills/qualifications/apprenticeships/vocational learning	35%
Pay e.g. higher wages (general)	15%
Job quality e.g. job permanence, fewer gig economy jobs	12%
Reduction in poverty/inequality	11%
Individual well-being/Happiness index	7%
Gender equality e.g. reduction in gender pay gap, more women in business and at management levels	5%
Health/fitness	5%
Number of jobs/job creation	5%
Living wage	4%
Improving the local area/local focus/keeping things local/local accessibility	4%
Ethnicity e.g. reduction in pay gap by ethnicity, more BAME people in business and at management levels	4%
Increased quality of life	4%
Small business/SME focus	4%
Reduction in living costs/increased standard of living	3%
Number of start-ups/entrepreneurs/entrepreneurial skills	3%
Local business/economy focus/regional economies	2%
Other	44%

Base: All respondents who gave comments (226)

13.31 As a follow-up to question nine, respondents were asked at question ten what factors could be used to best indicate successful investment in reducing income inequality. Again these were ‘free-text’ and the responses have been grouped into themes shown in Table 6 above. The themes which received five or more responses are shown. 226 respondents answered this question, whilst 59 did not.

Investment in well paid, quality jobs to address income inequality

13.32 The most common theme seen in question eight was also the most common theme in question 10. Just over a third of those who commented (36%) said that income inequality could be addressed through greater employment, or similarly, a reduction in unemployment or those claiming out of work benefits. Once again, these responses often referenced pay and job quality, both of which are separate themes in themselves. The themes of ‘pay’ and ‘job quality’ were the third and fourth most common themes respectively, with 15% mentioning pay in their response and 12% mentioning job quality.

“More employment with better paid jobs.” (Male, 36-45)

“Lower unemployment certainly, also increase in higher value jobs (full time, more pay, better career opportunities, more competitive internationally.” (Female, 66+)

Investment in skills, qualifications and training

13.33 The second most common theme (35%) came from those who said that income inequality could be addressed through an investment in skills, qualifications, apprenticeships, or vocational training. Once again, these responses also focused on jobs, with some also saying that investments in skills or qualifications would result in a higher skilled workforce and quality jobs.

“Higher skills' levels could lead to better paid jobs. Wales' problem is that there is not sufficient well-paid employment. It's not the number of jobs per se that's the issue.” (Male, 66+)

“Higher skills base, lower unemployment and above minimum wage.” (Female, 56-65)

13.34 Some also focused on developing the skills and qualifications of young people.

“More young people opting for higher education and/or apprenticeships.” (Female, 66+)

“New and innovative skills development programs for young adults at risk of disengagement.” (Female, 26-35)

Poverty and inequality was mentioned by some

13.35 11% of respondents referenced a reduction in poverty in their response. Many of these suggested that one of the aims of investments should be to reduce the number of people in poverty.

“Fewer households in poverty, less homeless.” (Female, 56-65)

13.36 Once again, some of these responses also referred to jobs. Wealth inequality, well paid work, and greater equality in terms of pay were also mentioned.

“Lower unemployment, number of employees receiving living wage or higher, number of people living below poverty line/struggling to cover basic living costs.” (Female, 26-35)

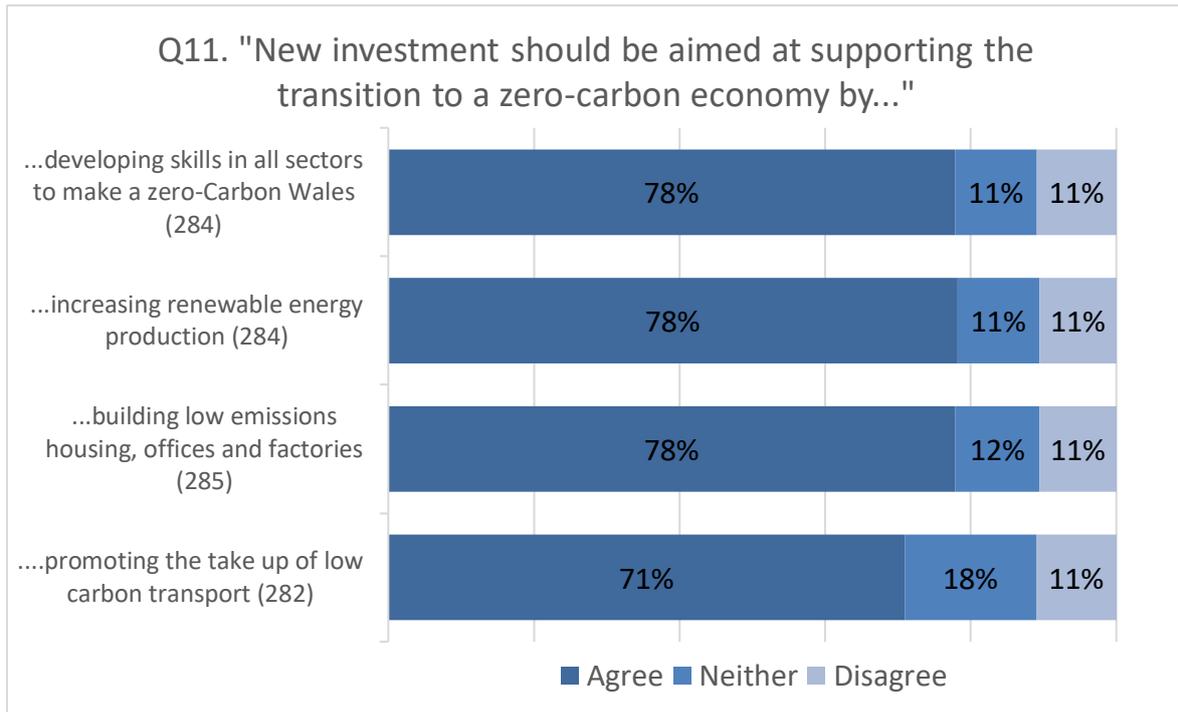
“Less inequality in pay, for people working equal hours and equally as hard. Better pay for lower skilled jobs. These jobs are unpleasant, long hours and hard work. They take as much if not more effort...not everyone is lucky to be born with a talent, but if they work hard, they deserve a reasonably good life, not to be working hard and still be below the poverty line. The working poor situation is the real problem in Britain.” (Female, 36-45)

13.37 The use of foodbanks and child poverty were also referenced in a few responses.

“Lower child poverty and food bank use.” (Female, 56-65)

“People being able to support themselves and their families because they earn a living wage. Reduced poverty. Reduced reliance on state support. Ability to make choices. Reduced reliability on food banks.” (Female, 56-65)

Figure 9: Views on supporting the transition to a zero-carbon economy



Base: Number of respondents shown in brackets

High levels of support for supporting the transition to a zero-carbon economy

- 13.38 Respondents were asked whether they agreed or disagreed that new investments should be aimed at supporting the transition to a zero-carbon economy through a range of different factors.
- 13.39 Responses were similar for three of the four factors. 78% of respondents agreed that new investments should support the transition to a zero-carbon economy by *developing skills in all sectors to make a zero-Carbon Wales*, by *increasing renewable energy production*, and by *building low emissions housing, offices and factories*.
- 13.40 Whilst fewer respondents agreed that new investments should *promote the take up of low carbon transport*, levels of agreement with this were still high. 71% agreed, 11% disagreed and 18% were neutral.

Table 7: Views factors to indicate success to transition to a zero-carbon economy

Q12. What factors could be used to best indicate successful investment in this area? For example, increase in use of electric vehicles, increases in energy efficiency in homes and businesses etc.	%
Clean environment/Reduction in carbon emission or pollution/carbon emission targets/zero-carbon Wales	23%
Energy efficiency - Domestic	20%
Encourage use of/subsidise electric vehicles/improve infrastructure	19%
Renewable energy/reduction in non-renewables	17%
Improve public transport	17%
Energy efficiency - Business	9%
Encourage active travel e.g. cycle paths/people feeling safe to cycle	8%
Improving the local area/local focus/keeping things local/local accessibility	7%
Short supply chains e.g. locally produced food	6%
Greener public transport e.g. electric buses	5%
Increase growth of green industries e.g. electric vehicles, jobs in renewable sector	4%
Economic development/better develop business/focus on making business successful in local communities	4%
Energy efficiency – non-specific	3%
General agreement e.g. agree with examples listed	3%
Increase skills in green industries e.g. electric vehicles	3%
Encourage working from home/decrease commuting to work/other suggestions to reduce pollution by changing work habits e.g. stagger start times	2%
Carbon tax/relief for zero carbon companies	2%
Other	27%

Base: All respondents who gave comments (230)

13.41 As a follow-up to question eleven, respondents were asked at question twelve what factors could be used to best indicate successful investment in supporting the transition to a zero-carbon economy. The responses have been grouped into themes and are shown in Table 7 above. The themes which received five or more responses are shown. 230 respondents answered this question, whilst 55 did not.

Some mentioned a clean environment or a reduction in emissions

13.42 The most common theme (23% of respondents) was that new investments should aim to support this transition by focusing on a clean environment/a reduction in emissions. Some respondents made simple statements such as ‘zero emissions’, ‘reduce carbon footprint’, or similar.

“National carbon footprint reduced.” (Female, 46-55)

“Net zero emissions.” (Male, 26-35)

13.43 However, many respondents provided more detail in their response. Many of the responses which fell under this theme also fell under the fourth most common theme (17% of respondents), ‘renewable energy/reduction in non-renewables’.

“% of energy demand met by renewables.” (Female, 46-55)

“Number of communities and households provided with grants for affordable green energy e.g. solar and wind/water turbine.” (Female, 56-65)

- 13.44 Once again, some of these responses were also linked to jobs. A few respondents said there needed to be a greater focus on the number of people employed within the renewable energy sector, or a greater focus on developing the skills of the workforce in this field.

“Proportion of workforce employed in renewable energy sector, proportion of energy generated from renewables in Wales.” (Male, 46-55)

- 13.45 Many of the responses which fell under this theme also fell under the second most common theme, energy efficiency – domestic (20%), and the sixth most common theme, energy efficiency – business (9%).

“The lead needs to come from local government, planning rules must be amended and updated to ensure all new builds, residential or commercial are constructed so they are zero carbon, incentives made available to make older buildings carbon neutral.” (Male, 56-65)

“Buildings that are zero carbon in use and in construction. Skills in low carbon living and reduction [...] in fossil fuel vehicles.” (Female, 66+)

“Increase in energy efficient homes and more businesses reducing emissions.” (Male, 66+)

Encouraging the use of electric vehicles was also a common theme

- 13.46 The third most common theme (19% of respondents) was that new investments should aim to encourage the use of electric vehicles, whilst also dissuading people from using vehicles that run on fossil fuels.

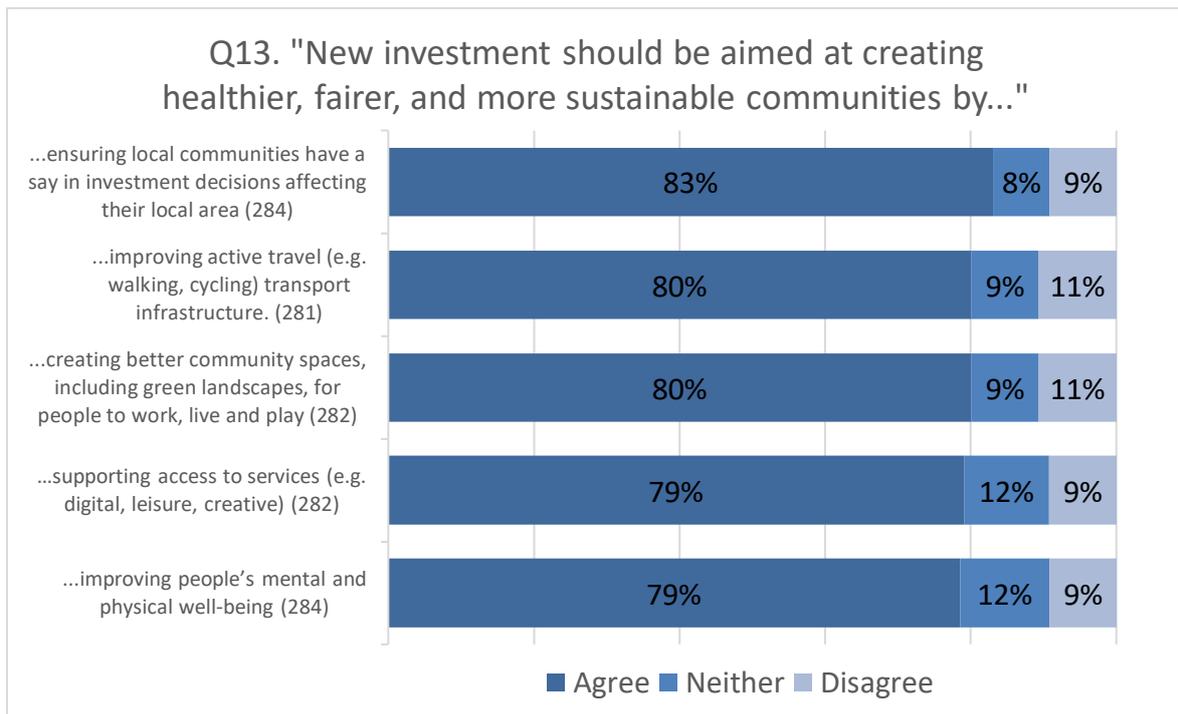
“A reduction in our carbon emissions, an increase in the number of electric vehicles, a reduction in the number of diesel /petrol vehicles, an increase in energy efficiency in homes and businesses.” [Translated] (Female, 36-45)

- 13.47 Of those who provided more detail, some said that there needs to be greater investment in infrastructure if electric vehicles are to become commonplace. A few said there needs to be a significant investment in charging points, including in rural areas.

“Absolutely promote electric car development AND use, and get the infrastructure in to rapidly recharge those vehicles, at LEAST one public charge point in every village.” (Female, 56-65)

“One is increased use of electric vehicles and so there needs to be improved provision of charging stations in rural and remote areas.” (Female, 66+)

Figure 10: Views on factors leading to healthier, fairer and more sustainable communities



Base: 281-284 (numbers in brackets)

Creating healthier, fairer and more sustainable communities

- 13.48 Respondents were provided with a series of statements about factors that can lead to creating healthier, fairer and more sustainable communities, and asked whether they agreed or disagreed with each of these statements.
- 13.49 Levels of agreement with each of the five statements (or approaches to creating better communities), were almost identical. Levels of support ranged from 83% to 79%, and disagreement only from 9% to 11%. Around one in ten were neutral.
- 13.50 The approach that received the highest level of support, was to create healthier, fairer and more sustainable communities by ‘ensuring local communities have a say in investments’, with 83% agreeing with this approach.

Table 8: Views on indicators to measure progress towards healthier, fairer and more sustainable communities

Q14. What factors could be used to best indicate successful investment in this area? For example, development of new community assets and spaces, better integrated connectivity etc.	%
Community well-being	20%
Improving the local area/local focus/keeping things local/local accessibility	19%
Health/fitness	17%
Access to green spaces	14%
Improve cycle/walking routes	14%
Individual well-being/Happiness index	12%
Local business/economy focus	8%
Clean environment/reduction in carbon emissions/pollution	8%
Improved public transport (e.g. more regular, cheaper)	8%
Public consultation	7%
Equestrian paths	5%
Well-being of future generations	4%
Digital connectivity	4%
Short/local supply chains	4%
Jobs/training/opportunities for young people	3%
Number of jobs/job creation	2%
Generally agree with examples provided	2%
Other	51%

Base: All respondents who gave comments (225)

13.51 As a follow-up to question 13, respondents were asked what factors could be used to best indicate successful investment in creating healthier, fairer, and more sustainable communities. The responses have been grouped into themes and are shown in Table 8. The themes which received five or more responses are shown. 225 respondents answered this question, whilst 60 did not.

Community well-being was most commonly mentioned

13.52 The most common theme (20% of respondents) focused on community well-being. These responses often mentioned the use of assets which will enhance the well-being of a community, such as community hubs or libraries.

“Free community assets. Use of schools as hubs for communities providing activities and resources.” (Female, 26-35)

“Reopen libraries, reopen community centres, reopen youth clubs. Councils have killed the communities of Wales and it’s (sic) community spirit.” (Male, 46-55)

13.53 Many also mentioned the development of community groups, and in particular, community groups that take on the management or ownership of local assets.

“More community groups leading on projects.” (Female, 36-45)

“Community involvement and ownership.” (Male, 36-45)

“Number/% of community facilities run by the community itself.” (Male, 56-65)

13.54 Although this is a broad theme, the main point made by many respondents was to encourage initiatives that bring communities together.

“Initiatives that involve localities coming together for mutual benefit.” (Female, 56-65)

“More involvement by more people within the community.” (Female, 46-55)

Some said that investments should improve local areas

13.55 The second most common theme (19% of respondents) – *‘improving the local area/local focus...’* was broad, however, the responses often fell under two sub-themes. One of which was that investments should aim to improve communities by way of reducing crime, reducing antipathy between groups of people within communities, or improving community well-being in general.

“Increase in harmonious community relationships, reduction in racism, homophobia, hate crime, domestic violence...” (Male, 56-65)

“Happier communities. Lower crime rates. More opportunities. Healthier population.” (Female, 56-65)

“Community resilience, well-being, obesity rates, engagement in [...] community activities, community cohesion.” (Female, 16-25)

13.56 The other sub-theme that many of the responses discussed was the extent to which communities have a say in decisions which affect them.

“...a small community is central in deciding what is needed in it and not a county wide decision.” (Female, 66+)

“Co-producing these developments so they fit the community so will be used and appropriate for that area.” (Female, 46-55)

“Degree of fit to individual areas.” (Male, 36-45)

Improving health and fitness was also mentioned by some

13.57 The third most common theme (17% of respondents) was that new investments should focus on health and fitness.

“Better health, longer life expectancy, better mental well-being, better environment.” (Male, 46-55)

“Health and [...] well-being monitored.” (Male, 26-35)

13.58 Many of these responses also fell under the most common theme of 'community well-being' and the sixth most common theme (12%) of 'Individual well-being/Happiness index'.

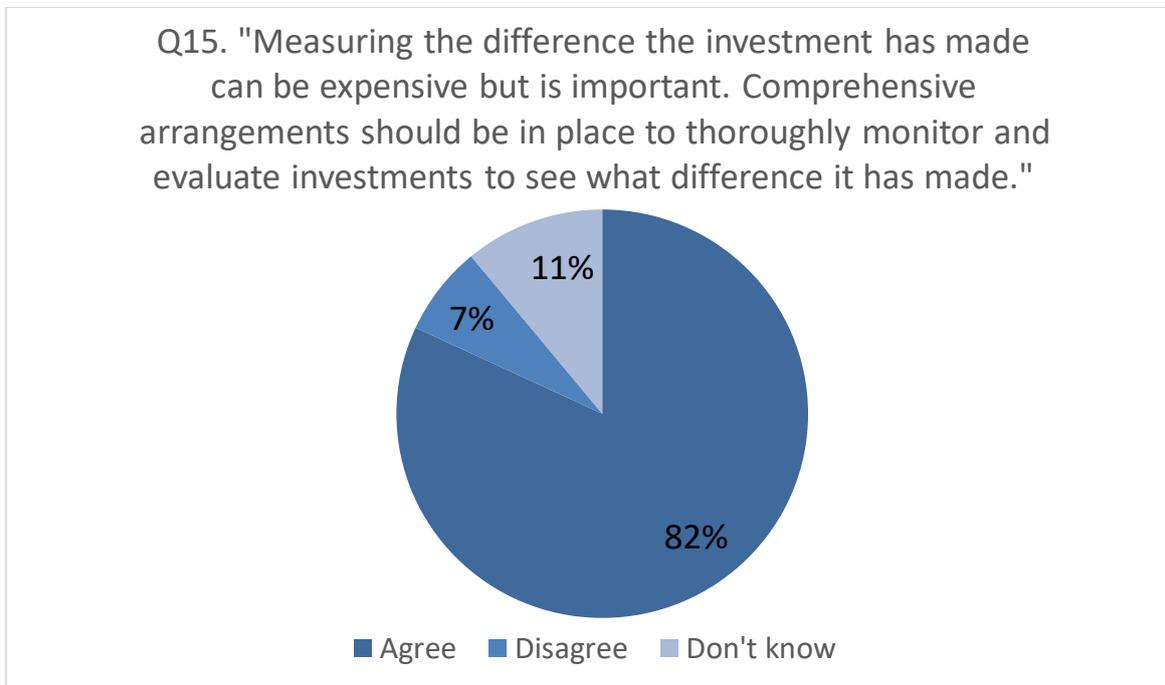
"Happier communities. Lower crime rates. More opportunities. Healthier population." (Female, 56-65)

13.59 As well as physical health, mental health and well-being was also frequently mentioned.

"Mental [...] well-being self-help groups and engagement, improved physical activity and diet..." (Female, 66+)

"No. of people using health care facilities due to poor mental health, poor physical fitness or poor diet." (Female, 46-55)

Figure 11: Views on monitoring and evaluation



Base: 282

General agreement with the need for comprehensive monitoring and evaluation

13.60 Respondents were given a statement at question 15 and were asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with this statement:

"Measuring the difference the investment has made, whether it has achieved what it set out to do and measuring the impact of that investment on the economy and society, can be expensive but is important to learn what works and to do better next time.

Comprehensive arrangements should be put in place to deliver thorough monitoring and evaluation of investments to see what difference the investment has made, who has benefited and how."

13.61 Most respondents (82%) agreed to some degree with this, whilst only a few (7%) disagreed and 11% said they don't know.

Table 9: Final comments

Q16. Is there anything else we need to think about?	%
Delivery of initiatives should be as local as possible/prioritise local level/focus on local communities/one size does not fit all with communities	12%
Improving the environment/biodiversity needs greater focus/carbon footprint/recycling centres/prioritise grants here	10%
Avoid expensive bureaucratic processes/heavy governance or management	10%
Communication/community engagement/co-production/democratic engagement e.g. People's Assembly	9%
Monitoring and evaluation - other consideration e.g. monitoring and evaluation not necessary	7%
More emphasis on/measure impacts to health and well-being	6%
Reducing inequality/unfairness e.g. regional/urban vs. rural/invest in areas most deprived	6%
Monitoring and evaluation important/investments need sufficient oversight/must be robust/transparent	5%
Consider competency/ability of those receiving funding/deciding who receives funding	5%
Rural communities/countryside/farming communities /national parks	5%
Horses/Horse riding/equestrians	5%
Comment/criticism of consultation e.g. availability in Welsh/question choice	4%
Encourage local/self-sufficient food production in Wales	4%
Proposals should be more radical/need to produce something completely new and different from the EU/create a new system/abandon EU bureaucracy/learn from EU funding model	4%
Monitoring and evaluation should be proportional	4%
Tourism/visitor experience	4%
Arts/cultural industries/Welsh heritage	4%
Disability/equalities/minority groups/underrepresented groups e.g. access within the community	3%
Infrastructure e.g. North-South railway	3%
Circular economy/buy local/insular Wales focus	3%
Improve public transport	3%
Green growth/recovery e.g. grants for green energy production	3%
Other	67%

Base: All respondents who gave comments (200)

13.62 Respondents were provided with an opportunity to provide any final comments. This was a 'free-text' response, the responses have been grouped into themes and are shown in Table 9 above. The responses were wide ranging, and as a result, the responses have been coded into broad themes. 200 respondents answered this question, whilst 85 did not.

Focusing on local areas was the most common final comment

13.63 The most common theme (12% of respondents) comes from responses which mentioned local communities. Some of these responses discussed the need for local delivery and management of projects.

“Projects are often run by large organisations such as councils and colleges. This causes a waste of funding due to layers of bureaucracy. Projects would work better if opened up to smaller organisations with specific local experience.” (Female, 46-55)

“Total involvement of the community who must be represented by ordinary people who [...] volunteer to support their local community.” (Male, 56-65)

“Monitoring and evaluation should be carried out at least in collaboration with community organisations, who are trusted by their community and who know best how to engage with them. These organisations should be consulted at an early stage to input into what parameters are being measured and how.” (Female, 36-45)

13.64 Another common theme within these responses was that investments must be relevant to an area and that one size does not fit all.

“Thinking about your question regarding large amounts of funding being controlled on a national level - yes this is necessary but different regions might respond differently often due to those involved. I'm thinking particularly of the Communities First project that was incredibly successful in some communities and failed in others. The decision to focus on employment - Communities for Work - has had far less positive impact on the well-being of my community. One size does not fit all and the differences in individual communities needs to be taken into account. We need people who belong to these communities to be instrumental in rolling out [...] asset-based projects in order for the communities to embrace and benefit from these projects.” (Female, 56-65)

One in ten mentioned the environment

13.65 The next most common theme (10% of respondents) came from responses which mentioned the environment. These responses mentioned the importance of taking the environment into consideration when allocating funding.

“Welsh funding must focus on sustainability and resilience in a fragile and rapidly changing world.” (Female, 36-45)

“The carbon footprint of all activities needs to be reduced and there needs to be more Wales-wide recycling facilities developed.” (Female, 56-65)

“A just and green recovery is absolutely essential to avoid the next crisis caused by climate chaos. This decade needs to see a drastic reduction in carbon emissions and all investment should be aimed at this dramatic change.” (Female, 46-55)

A similar proportion warned against unnecessary bureaucracy

13.66 One in ten respondents (10%) also mentioned the importance of avoiding heavy or expensive bureaucracy or governance. Many of these responses discussed bureaucracy and governance in the context of monitoring and evaluation.

“There is the threat that the monitoring and evaluation could be so bureaucratic that the cost of administrating it would [...] outweigh the benefit. There has to be an App solution of organisations simply uploading their stats on a quarterly basis and Social Accounting impact indicators showing social goals reached. But not a complicated WEFO online system but a [...] user-friendly system that community champions can navigate.” (Male, 46-55)

“Bureaucracy can stifle innovation and can lead to reduced engagement of communities. It is important to track investment and learn, but it is important to not pass on a burdensome process.” (Female, 46-55)

“...evidencing of targets have been prohibitively cumbersome.” (Female, 46-55)

“Reduction in bureaucracy and red tape would be helpful. All the avoidance of duplication in duplicated paperwork.” (Female, 56-65)

14. Children in Wales Survey

Introduction

- 14.1 The charity Children in Wales created their own version of the Citizens' Survey which they had adapted for young people. This version was promoted by Children in Wales through Twitter updates and through their contacts database to Youth Forums across Wales. They ran the survey between 1st of June and 10th June 2020.
- 14.2 The survey received 42 responses, and these responses alongside Children in Wales' own analysis of the responses were presented to Welsh Government. SRI has reviewed both the response data and analysis and has adapted Children in Wales' analysis below.

Demographics

- 14.3 The demographic breakdown of respondents is shown in the tables below.

Table 10: Response by age

Age	Count	%
<16	9	21%
16-18	20	48%
19-25	5	12%
26+	7	17%
Unknown	1	2%

Table 11: Response by gender

Gender	Count	%
Male	5	12%
Female	36	85%
No response	1	3%

Key findings

Table 12: Best things in your community

Q1. List what you think are the 3 best things in your community?	%
Walking paths and landmarks – countryside, mountains, coastal rivers and woods, green spaces and public areas	50%
Community and its people or friends	40%
Recreational, leisure and social spaces including leisure centres, sporting facilities or areas – example: skate parks /multi-use games areas, cinemas and pubs	38%
Community centres and groups including young farmers /family groups /children’s groups /youth groups	31%
Shops	26%
Parks and playgrounds /play areas	26%
Schools and libraries	21%
Leadership	7%
Public transport	5%
Safety and low crime levels	5%
Nothing good /negative responses /not sure	10%

Base: All respondents (42)

14.4 The first question asked respondents to list the three best things in their community. This was an open text question. Key quotes from the responses included:

- Different age groups, meeting once a week for people to talk about what’s gone on in the community and a social leader that makes note of any problems that needs to be changed
- Easy transport in reach for everyone
- Welsh primary schools
- Nothing else is around here, the youth club is trouble
- There are no good things where I live
- A community that if asked is always willing to participate, when you engage at their level
- We had space to meet and play before Lockdown
- Local services and facilities highlighted
- My hometown and the local area is rotten. I can’t think of one good thing.
- Open, supportive atmosphere Small, local shops making it unique
- Artistic scene, football and political activism.
- Local Area Co-ordinator knowledge of the community local shops

Table 13: Gaps in community services and assets

Q2. List what you think are the 3 things that are missing from your community that could make it better?	%
Youth groups including young people's meeting groups and safe meeting places, out of school groups and social groups, specialised support groups - covered areas to hang out – drop in open door policies	55%
Recreational, leisure and social spaces including leisure centres, sporting facilities, pools outdoor and indoors, fitness classes, gyms, bowling, ice-skating, BMX /blade and skate parks and outdoor activities, entertainment centres and cinemas and restaurants	52%
More events and activities children's clubs – Lego club, more public events on for families and children, more parent and baby groups on in the week and community get togethers	26%
Indoor and outdoor play areas and parks	14%
Further learning opportunities, training, courses and development including apprenticeship and internship opportunities and job opportunities	12%
Supported living for young care leavers, housing for care leavers	12%
Mental health support services and lack of funding	10%
Environmental – more bins, less dog mess, no glass or rubbish in road, less cars on roads	10%
Information sharing, diverse representation on youth boards and equality, diversity and poverty	10%
Police patrols and security	10%
Shops and retail and services i.e. banks	10%
Transport – train from north to south	10%
Unsure /don't know	2%

Base: All respondents (42)

14.5 This was an open text question. Key quotes from the responses included:

- Hospitals. Arts funding. Libraries
- Connectivity, community space and resources.
- access to digital equipment/access to internet for low income families
- Kindness, honesty, inclusivity.
- Clubs for certain ages activities for all to do Parties or celebrations on important dates
- Better access to community centres having community centre sharing information better
- Mwy o digwyddiadau l ddigwydd yn y pentref Cael siop leol (More local events and a local shop)
- Cheap indoor play areas
- Open to the public for free sports facilities
- Quality information given to the people in the area

- Safe Places where teens can meet up and spend time
- Gangs
- Equality - People who do not rise above others based on their social status. Better sense of security
- Supported living availability for care leavers, housing for care leavers,
- Drop-in youth centres.
- Meeting place for teenagers - i.e. not a park or a club - something different would be useful
- Youth groups that support kids who are shy. The youth club here are all the naughty kids swearing and drinking.
- Help and support for kids who feel scared and upset. There isn't anyone to talk to here.
- Skaters parks that aren't mangled, there are so many phenomenal skaters, blades and BMXers in my area but they are not allowed to skate round anywhere but the parks however the parks are unridable. We have a youth forum however there is no Diversity including hidden universities and little to no effort of recruiting from a more diverse background. My area has a number of young people in poverty but no one representing them! Fix our Youth Forum, please! A Public Service Board that has a young person/persons championing the voices of other children and young people in my area.
- More public events on for families and children. More Parent and baby groups on in the week.
- More mental health support available sooner. (Long waiting lists)
- Decent cost-effective supermarket
- Community get together
- Banks
- Youth club, hanging out with my friends and seeing family

Table 14: Decision-making on community spending

Q3. Who should decide on how money is spent in your community in the future?	%
Community groups and organisations	69%
Local Council	55%
Youth groups	55%
Statutory Youth Councils	31%
Welsh Government	24%
Regional organisations	12%
Other - The people who make up our community, we should all have a say	2%
UK Government	0%

Base: All respondents (42)

Table 15: Decision-making on spending in Wales

Q4. Who should decide how money is spent across Wales in the future?	%
Welsh Government	76%
Local Council	38%
Community groups and organisations	29%
Statutory Youth Councils	21%
Youth Groups	21%
Regional organisations	17%
UK Government	5%
Other - Everyone in Wales who is affected by the spending of money	2%

Base: All respondents (42)

Table 16: Priorities for community investment

Q5. Choose your top 3 priorities that you think are the most important areas to invest in for your community?	%
Mental health and physical well-being	62%
Reducing poverty	24%
Education	24%
Public Health and National Health Services	21%
Playgrounds and playing fields	21%
Youth centres	21%
Jobs and training	19%
Equality and Human Rights	17%
Recreational activities	17%
Sustainable development and climate change	14%
Trade and business	10%
Outreach and community services	10%
Public transport	10%
Community spaces	10%
Welsh language and culture	7%
Digital connectivity, mobile phone signal and broadband	5%
Research and innovation	2%
Other - Housing for care leavers and supported living options for care leavers	2%

Base: All respondents (42)

Table 17: Priorities for investment across Wales

Q6. Choose your top 3 priorities that you think are the most important areas to invest in for Wales?	%
Mental health and physical well-being	52%
Reducing poverty	36%
Education	33%
Equality and Human Rights	29%
Public Health and National Health Services	26%
Jobs and training	24%
Sustainable development and climate change	14%
Youth centres	14%
Welsh language and culture	12%
Outreach and community services	12%
Playgrounds and playing fields	12%
Recreational activities	12%
Trade and business	10%
Public transport	7%
Research and innovation	2%
Digital connectivity, mobile phone signal and broadband	2%
Other - the inclusion of skilled and talented young people in Senedd to advocate on the behalf of other YP	2%
Community spaces	0%

Base: All respondents (42)

Appendix 1: Tables of codes

Development of the coding frame included a process of verification of themes by the researchers. This thematic analysis helps to quantify written submissions systematically by indicating the frequency with which different themes have been raised within the responses. Each individual response may raise a number of themes, and so the total number of coded comments will be higher than the number of respondents to each question.

Table 18: Views on the proposed delivery model

Q1. What are your views on the proposed model where: Strategic, pan-Wales initiatives are co-ordinated at national level, and designated regional bodies design and deliver their own programmes of investment aligned with national-level policy?	%
Generally support pan-Wales initiatives/co-ordination at a national level	20%
Concern that regional bodies don't have the capacity/ability to deliver investment activities effectively/existing joint committees aren't agile enough/need to include cross-sector of regional bodies/specialists from private/community/third sectors	19%
Proposals need to complement/have more detail on how they will complement existing arrangements and strategies e.g. City and Growth deals, regional partnership boards, etc./new bodies risk duplication	19%
General agreement with the relationship between national and regional levels/balance between national & regional responsibilities	12%
Clarity: proposals require more detail	12%
Bureaucracy should be minimised/model should be simple	8%
Need regional & community input into pan-Wales initiatives/co-design	8%
Regions need to work together/share best practice	8%
Concerns about accountability/democracy/oversight	8%
Review plans in light of COVID-19	8%
There should be focus on areas outside of the South East/Cardiff	7%
Concerns about alignment between national and regional objectives	7%
Some initiatives will not fit regional boundaries/will require both regional and national co-ordination	7%
Generally agree with the creation of regional bodies	5%
National co-ordination important/can reduce duplication of services	5%
Concern about organisations/middlemen capturing funds from regional bodies	3%
Investment funding needs to be highlighted/audited against aims and objectives	3%
Disagree with national level co-ordination	2%
Should have been done earlier	2%
Clarity: criticism of consultation language/terminology	2%
Other	25%

Base: All respondents to the online consultation form who gave comments (100)

Table 19: Support for community-led investments

Q2. Do you support our proposals for some investments to be led by the community in which the activity takes place?	%
Need good communication with communities	32%
Continue 'LEADER' approach/LEADER approach works well/LAGs are experienced/effective	18%
Need more information e.g. what constitutes a community	18%
Adequate support/training/resources required	17%
Local people/community organisations know what is best for their area	16%
Concern that communities don't have the ability to deliver investment activities effectively/need specialists from private/community/third sectors	14%
Build on existing examples of best practice/partnerships/from EU funded initiatives/existing structures	14%
Learn from/replicate/build on/continue CLLD	13%
Important to help recover from COVID-19/local support networks effective at combatting COVID-19	13%
Requires sufficient oversight	11%
Align with national and regional interventions	11%
Should be simple/light touch/avoid bureaucracy	9%
Community groups need to be representative/reflect diversity	8%
Ringfence community funding/funding for specific community initiatives e.g. climate related initiatives	7%
Need sufficient funding to make community initiatives successful/majority of funding should be at the community level/must not be tokenistic	7%
Equalities considerations e.g. encourage minority group participation	7%
Concerns about accountability	6%
Local authorities have an important role in managing community initiatives/need additional resources and funding to manage them e.g. in case projects fall through	6%
Prioritise building community capacity/aim for sustainable communities	6%
Suitable for small scale investment	4%
Need to provide value for money	4%
Consider role of HEIs in community collaboration and support	4%
Limit investment funds to community energy or other environmental applications	3%
Consider using/strengthen the role of Regional Engagement Teams	3%
Other comments about the role of third sector in community collaboration and support	2%
Wind energy initiatives could be community led with enough investment	2%
Regional Economic Frameworks should become recovery plans from COVID-19 / Brexit	2%
Other	41%

Base: All respondents to the online consultation form who gave comments (104)

Table 20: Agreement with proposals on repayable finance

Q3. Do you agree that we should continue to increase our use of repayable finance where this is viable and, where it is not, that models of combined support that maximise the repayable element should be developed?	%
Using combined support models	24%
Not always appropriate/also need alternative finance	24%
Consider changes arising due to COVID-19	24%
Consider intangible/indirect/long-term benefits	17%
Grants should remain available/third sector relies on grants	15%
Unviable for small/micro organisations	13%
Implement flexibly/gradually/consider local circumstances	13%
Need more information	9%
Only Development Bank of Wales or similar national body should deliver	9%
Repayable finance should be implemented/managed at a local level	8%
Moving away from grant dependence should be prioritised	6%
Repayable finance won't fix market failure	5%
Inappropriate for early stages of development	5%
Promote start-ups/prioritise funding and supporting entrepreneurs	4%
Repayable finance not suitable for skills interventions	4%
Examples where this has been/could be successful	4%
Risks stifling RD&I transfer/capacity building	4%
Equalities: concern about inequalities arising lack of grants to address market failure/there should be non-repayable options for interventions focussed on tackling inequalities/repayable finance must be accessible to BAME communities and monitored for this	4%
Risks benefitting regions where there is greatest capacity for payback	3%
Needs specific investment package for supporting innovation and risk/funding for high-risk investments which can be written off if unsuccessful	3%
Will need adequate business support to support the change	3%
Should be simple/easy to access/not bureaucratic/avoid stifling entrepreneurialism	3%
Other suggestions for a funding: supplement/mix with private funding, provide wide range of funding options to choose from (non-specific)	3%
Local authorities have too much debt already	2%
Unsure/undecided/don't know	2%
Development Bank of Wales not more competitive than commercial banks	2%
Major infrastructure should be paid for by Westminster	1%
Finance schemes should prioritise Welsh speakers/areas with high density of Welsh speakers	1%
Examples where this has not been successful	1%
Other	39%

Base: All respondents to the online consultation form who gave comments (95)

Table 21: Views on the proposals for the transition period

Q4. What are your views on our plans for the transition period?	%
COVID-19 may be a potential barrier to success	26%
Avoid gap in funding during transition	24%
Clarity: Need more information e.g. key announcements still to be made about UK Shared Prosperity Fund	19%
Potential for loss of capacity/staff/expertise/partnerships	19%
Seamless transition period important/necessary	16%
Existing commitments should be prioritised/safeguarded	14%
Hitting the ground running in 2021 too ambitious/unrealistic	13%
Need greater engagement during transition period	10%
Need guarantees/clarity on the UK SPF	8%
Review viability of commitments during the transition	5%
Make the most of European funding/expertise while available	5%
Use the skills and assets of LEADER staff/LAGs/PSBs	5%
Build on learning from EU funding schemes	4%
European funding is already allocated	4%
Things need to be in place in advance of 2021	4%
Focus during transition should be on capacity/capability building	4%
Need greater involvement of the private/third sectors during transition	4%
Maintain/emphasise/prioritise environmental projects	4%
Create new and improved systems during the transition period	3%
Plans formulated while Brexit is still being negotiated	3%
Other criticisms of the proposals	3%
This affects universities in particular/can't commit to retaining projects	3%
Increase relationship with Europe/align with EU priorities	2%
Funding will run out at different times at different areas	2%
Some regions are less prepared for the transition	2%
Other	28%

Base: All respondents to the online consultation form who gave comments (95)

Table 22: Views on integrating the horizontal themes

Q5. How best can we integrate the horizontal themes of equality, sustainable development, gender mainstreaming and the Welsh Language into investments delivered at national, regional and local levels?	%
Well-being of Future Generations Act already makes these necessary	30%
Shouldn't just be a tick-box exercise/make them part of delivery	25%
Incorporate horizontal themes into contracts/make them necessary for funding	20%
Share/seek/learn from best practice	17%
Themes should be locally led/supported by local approaches	17%
Monitor/evaluate investments against these themes	15%
Embed/involvement at every level	13%
Recognise that not all of these themes will be in scope	11%
Identify/provide information on organisations/resources to help investments meet these themes	11%
Greater consideration of marginalised/under-represented groups	11%
Themes already included in existing frameworks/programmes	10%
Themes must be achievable	7%
Sustainable development/climate change should take a more prominent role	5%
Greater consideration/support for the Welsh language	5%
Consider including additional horizontal themes	4%
Not important/should not be given priority over everything else/other important factors e.g. growth/GDP/tourism	4%
Consistent approach should be taken across Wales	4%
West Wales and the Valleys should continue to be prioritised	3%
Target interventions based on need /some areas will need greater support than others	3%
Unsure what these mean	1%
Other	33%

Base: All respondents to the online consultation form who gave comments (92)

Table 23: Views on the use of the Welsh language

Q6. How best can we increase the use of the Welsh language through our proposals for regional investment, and ensure it is treated no less favourably than the English language?	%
Covered by existing legislation	32%
Incorporate into contracts	24%
Equal treatment/parity between languages	23%
Increase opportunities to learn Welsh/training	19%
Target support (financial/practical) for particular sectors	16%
Funding areas or industries with high proportions of Welsh speakers	15%
Don't add onerous requirements	10%
Monitoring and evaluation	10%
Learn from/Share best practice from current programmes	9%
Should be dealt with on a regional basis/local solutions	9%
Invest in language technologies/digital resources	8%
Align with Cymraeg 2050	8%
Encourage/provide greater funding to initiatives which promote Welsh culture and heritage	7%
Challenging for certain industries/SMEs/community groups	4%
Work with universities/Consider Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol	4%
Not important/should not be a priority	2%
Proposals lack clarity/not enough information in proposals	2%
Other	19%

Base: All respondents to the online consultation form who gave comments (91)

Table 24: Views on cross-border and international working

Q7. What are your views on the proposed delivery model for the strengthening of partnerships, co-operation and trade across borders, within the UK and with international partners?	%
Existing international partnerships need to be maintained	30%
Clarity: proposals require more detail	23%
Only collaborate where advantageous/not just for its own sake	18%
Particularly support the agile seed fund/this is a good idea	17%
General: Cross-border working important/good	16%
Need sharing of best practice	16%
Wales should still be eligible for European programmes e.g. Erasmus+	10%
Local communities/regional bodies need to be able to participate	10%
Prioritise programmes which promote Welsh culture/heritage/language	9%
Particularly support the co-ordination at a national level	8%
Other suggestions around the agile seed fund	8%
Avoid bureaucracy/use technology to lessen administrative burden	7%
Plans should be reviewed in light of COVID-19 pandemic	7%
Ensure all areas have the opportunity for cross-border working	7%
LEADER has worked well/had success/should be learned from	6%
EU programmes like Erasmus+, Horizon 2020, INTERREG have been beneficial	6%
Aligning with England/potential differences in funding and delivery structures may impede co-operation	6%
Border communities	5%
Need flexibility to work with countries outside the EU	5%
Don't believe it will happen in practice	5%
Prioritise circular economy/local supply chains	3%
Centralise/co-invest with the UK government/other home nations	3%
Earmark funds for international working/embed into projects	3%
Examples of specific international projects/partnerships which have worked well	3%
Need to provide value for money	2%
Change/simplify procurement and supply chain framework	2%
Concerns about timeline e.g. needs to be established in advance	2%
Need to increase awareness of future international funding opportunities	1%
Other	28%

Base: All respondents to the online consultation form who gave comments (92)

Table 25: Views on the strategic objectives

Q8. What do you think of the proposed strategic objectives across the four investment priority areas? Are there other objectives that should be considered?	%
Review plans in light of COVID-19	38%
Greater priority or ambition should be given to climate change	37%
Integrate the strategic objectives with existing policy/objectives/strategies	30%
Proposals lack detail	23%
Skills/training/education sector key to the objectives	19%
Funding should be locally led	14%
Greater role/clarity for research/data/research and innovation	13%
Greater support/recognition of micro businesses/SMEs	11%
Greater broadband connectivity/IT access/role for technology	11%
Greater consideration for school, college, university leavers/NEETs	10%
Job quality	8%
Welcome specific references within the strategic objectives	8%
Mental/physical health	6%
Community owned assets e.g. renewable energy	6%
Economy/economic factors should not be at the expense of other factors	6%
Greater consideration/focus on public transport	6%
Greater emphasis on rural communities	6%
Other, unique suggestions for strategic objectives	6%
Objectives are not ambitious enough (in general/non-specific)	5%
Focus on decarbonisation/zero carbon economy is too narrow	4%
Greater role for social enterprises	4%
Equalities: Greater consideration of gender, BAME and disability gaps	4%
Use strategic objectives flexibly	4%
General: criticism of objectives e.g. they are incompatible with one another	3%
Need clearer communication of objectives	2%
Greater consideration for Welsh language	2%
Greater consideration of flood risks/communities at risk of flood risks	2%
Recognise challenges businesses will face in adapting to climate change	2%
Greater recognition of tourism	2%
Learn from existing schemes	2%
High street/town centre regeneration	2%
Place-based approach should be founded on opportunity as well as need	2%
Greater reference to the foundational economy	2%
Other	23%

Base: All respondents to the online consultation form who gave comments (93)

Table 26: Views on the indicators which should be used to measure progress

Q9: Which indicators do you think should be used to measure progress towards achieving the proposed strategic objectives	%
Health and well-being indicators /quality of life/in line with the Well-being of Future Generations Act	52%
Specific indicators suggested/references	49%
Outcomes-focussed measures rather than outputs /processes	38%
Indicators of sustainability: community/resilience/environmental/social capital	37%
Realistic indicators that can be captured and reported /attributed /simple /clear	35%
Less emphasis on 'traditional economic indicators'/ more non-economic	34%
Project specific or appropriate /flexible indicators/measures	32%
Place-based/location /region-based /local variation (rural/urban/coastal)	32%
Soft outcomes /context /qualitative measures	23%
Business profile/economic indicators other than traditional job creation/GVA/GDP	21%
Reflective approach, sharing learning, experiences and best practice	16%
Traditional economic measures e.g. GDP/GVA/jobs created	15%
Measures of progress towards delivering objectives including baselines	15%
Recognise long term nature of some outcomes/indicators /innovations	14%
COVID-19 impact on suitable indicators – recovery rather than growth focussed	14%
Indicators which allow for collaboration, networking and co-operation	14%
Targets linked to deprivation/WIMD/access to services/inequalities	11%
Allow for innovation	10%
Skills indicators to reflect industry needs for training, upskilling, retraining and transition (not necessarily qualifications)	10%
Measure against set goals /KPIs /targets	9%
Proportionate to the project /scale of investment	9%
Existing indicators, metrics and evidence	9%
Community-led indicators	9%
More detail needed on proposals	5%
Alignment to existing initiatives/policies/strategies	5%
Quantitative measures (non-specific)	4%
Within timeline	4%
Case studies	4%
Engage with academic and sector experts on suitable outcomes	4%
Open/transparent	3%
Monitor equality of impact in communities including protected characteristics	3%
Academic metrics	3%
Accountability	2%
Welsh language indicators	2%
The correct indicators are needed or this can impact on project quality	2%
Other	18%

Base: All respondents to the online consultation form who gave comments (91)

Table 27: Views on the approach to fair, transparent and consistent rules

Q10: What are your views on the approach [to fair, transparent and consistent rules] described above?	%
Simplified, less bureaucratic, more proportionate process	56%
Need fair, clear and transparent rules /processes	22%
Need to make the process /funding accessible to a wider range of organisations	20%
Need to remain flexible/adjust these rules in light of changing circumstances/be open to review	20%
Learning in order to move forward	18%
Five case model	16%
Flat rates	15%
Other funding types /allocation of funding	12%
Need for accountability	12%
Need to involve a range of /appropriate stakeholder voices	12%
Need more information	11%
Need to align/integrate with other priorities /strategies /groups /bodies	11%
The removal of existing boundaries (geographical and funding)	11%
Concerns that the proposals may not happen in practice	9%
Understanding geographical specificity	8%
Need the right governance in place	7%
Communities /community-driven projects and supporting communities	6%
Innovation	6%
Defining a role for own organisation /sector	5%
Support local business/local supply chains	5%
COVID-19: impacts and lessons	4%
Needs to be output /outcome focussed	4%
Challenging definitions used in the Framework	2%
Measuring and defining key factors	2%
Move away from paper-based systems and infrastructure needed to support this	2%
Opportunity to think about more holistic approaches	2%
Role for CJs	2%
Third sector /volunteer enterprise	2%
Other	8%

Base: All respondents to the online consultation form who gave comments (95)

Table 28: Capacity to deliver monitoring and evaluation

Q11: Should the capacity to deliver the monitoring and evaluation proposals above be prioritised?	%
Monitoring and evaluation is important for success	39%
Monitoring and evaluation needs to be manageable	35%
The importance of learning in order to develop monitoring and evaluation	17%
Monitoring and evaluation needs to be linked to wider policies and priorities	14%
Need specialist input into creating/supporting monitoring and evaluation	13%
Monitoring and evaluation needs to be supported by capacity building	12%
Monitoring and evaluation should be secondary to delivery	11%
Monitoring and evaluation should be embedded throughout projects	11%
Need to collect appropriate data	10%
Regional, local and community level monitoring and evaluation	10%
Need central or national co-ordination /joined-up approach	8%
Monitoring and evaluation should be consistent	7%
Clarity needed over guidance as to how monitoring and evaluation is to be conducted	6%
Needs input/support from Welsh Government	6%
Support the focus on outcomes rather than outputs	4%
Clarity needed over question	2%
Don't believe this will happen in practice	2%
Reflective learning needs to be a part of monitoring and evaluation	2%
Other	8%

Base: All respondents who gave comments (84)

Table 29: Views on proposals for development of monitoring and evaluation

Q12: Do you agree with the proposal outlined for development of monitoring and evaluation at the regional and local level?	%
General support for proposals with some caveats	66%
Sharing of good practice positive /sharing between regions/learning from experience/queries on process /how will lessons impact future interventions	30%
Regional/local monitoring and evaluation should be aligned/aligned with national evaluation/structures for consistency	29%
Concerned about administrative burden/bureaucracy/simple process needed /avoid duplication	26%
General unqualified support/general agreement with the proposals	19%
M&E should be proportionate to project /appropriate to scale at individual project level /clarity needed on how this will work/M&E on a risk basis	19%
Queries on how local and regional evaluation will work in practice	15%
New skills and expertise in evaluation needed at local/regional level	14%
No strong indication of positive or negative view	13%
M&E should be ongoing to allow for improvement to project delivery	13%
Alignment with Well-being of Future Generations Act and further clarity on what this might mean	13%
Evaluation needs to demonstrate and reflect outcomes/impact in communities, including unintended outcomes	11%
More detail needed on how M&E arrangements will work (general)	11%
Appropriate level of robust scrutiny and governance needed	10%
Co-production and co-design at local and regional level	10%
Quality of evaluation - standards and consistency including	9%
Allow for innovative methods of delivery and evaluation allowing for risk and failure; joint evaluation arrangements	8%
Monitoring and evaluation should be secondary to delivery	6%
Facilitation of collaboration including joint indicators/arrangements/evaluation	6%
Accountability and transparency for public expenditure	6%
Specific reference to examples or offers of support	6%
External/independent evaluation needed	5%
Variation for rural, urban and coastal context	4%
Use of consistent indicators and data where possible	4%
General disagreement without further detail	3%
Concerns about cost of evaluation and value for money including the need to reduce costs and ensure part of the funding package	3%
Other	9%

Base: All respondents to the online consultation form who gave comments (96)

Table 30: Further comments

Q13: We have asked a number of specific questions. If you have any related issues which we have not specifically addressed, please use this consultation to address them.	%
Discussion of specific sectors of the economy/organisations /types of business	30%
Integrate with other policies /strategies	30%
COVID-19	28%
Administrative structures, governance and decision-making	27%
Learning in order to move forward	25%
Accessibility for /inclusion of a wide range of stakeholders	20%
Partnership working	18%
Build on existing relationships /partnerships /work /projects /processes etc.	15%
Funding related comments	15%
Need more detail /clarity	15%
Transition to UKPSF	14%
Support for work at the community level	11%
Concerns about the consultation process	11%
Positioning organisation /information about the responding organisation	11%
Specificity of places	11%
Addressing inequalities	10%
Environment	10%
Framework too narrow /holistic approaches	10%
Skills development /education /training /employability	8%
Cross-border working and international issues	7%
Evaluation	6%
Infrastructure	4%
Welsh context (broad)	4%
Environmental sustainability	3%
Food chains /supply chains	3%
Procurement	3%
Other	15%

Base: All respondents to the online consultation form who gave comments (71)

Appendix 2: Webinar questions

Regional webinars

Due to restrictions on movement and in-person meetings because of the COVID-19 pandemic, four on-line engagement events were held during May 2020. These regional webinars were conducted using an on-line video platform.

Webinars were held for North Wales, Mid Wales, South west Wales and South east Wales. The purpose of the webinars was to inform attendees about the consultation and “[provide] everyone with the opportunity to determine what approaches will work best to achieve growth and inclusiveness across all parts of Wales.”

Each webinar began with a presentation from Rachel Garside-Jones, Deputy Director for Regional Policy and Investment, Welsh Government. This was accompanied by regional updates from the Welsh Government’s Chief Regional Officer and a representative from the region’s City/Growth deal.

The webinars ended with a question and answer session in which the presenters responded to questions that had been sent either in advance or submitted during the presentation.

The numbers of registrants and participants to each of the webinar sessions were:

Table 31: Webinar registrations and participants

	Registrations	Participants
North Wales (Monday May 11)	120	98
Mid Wales (Tuesday May 12)	103	93
South west Wales (Wednesday May 13)	138	103
South east Wales (Thursday May 14)	166	137

Each webinar was attended by two members of the SRI team.

Summary of webinar questions

In total, 115 questions were submitted across the 4 webinars. The distribution of the number of questions submitted across the webinars is shown in Table 32.

Table 32: Distribution of questions submitted to webinars

	Submitted in advance	Submitted during the webinar	Total
North Wales	14	12	26
Mid Wales	14	16	30
South west Wales	13	23	36
South east Wales	13	10	23
Total	54	61	115

All questions, whether submitted in advance or during the webinars, were collated. They were then analysed using thematic coding. Each question was coded into topics which it addressed. Individual questions were often coded into more than one topic.

Initial coding resulted in 59 topics. In order to allow better understanding of the data, these 59 topics were further coded into 30 broad themes. Table 33 shows the number of questions which discussed each broad theme.

Table 33: Number of questions, by broad theme

Broad theme	Number of questions
Specific sectors / business type (e.g. research, development and innovation, employee-owned business, leisure, retail, SMEs)	27
Integrated approaches	16
The impact of COVID-19	15
Democratic participation (e.g. widen access, ensure a voice for all)	13
Sustainability of existing projects	13
Community-level working (e.g. community-led development, community banks)	12
Capacity building (e.g. cross-border working, capacity in Wales)	11
Specific economic areas (rural areas, town centres)	10
Environmental issues (e.g. climate emergency, green infrastructure, zero-carbon economy)	9
Clarification questions (e.g. clarification of Framework detail, clarification of consultation remit)	8
The importance of economic and non-economic focuses	8
Decision-making (e.g. local voice in decision-making, decision making needs to align with needs)	5
Framework timescales	5
Energy	4
Health and wellbeing as an important focus (e.g. holistic approaches, need to involve social care stakeholders)	4
Placemaking	4
Role for existing entities (e.g. Regional Skills Partnerships, PSBs)	4
Administration of the Framework	3
Education	3
Local-level issues	3
Performance measures / indicators	3
Defining regions	2
Funding arrangements	2
Making Wales stand out	2
Comments unrelated to the consultation	2
Welsh language	2
Arts and Culture	1
Build on what exists	1
Ensuring regional equality	1
The negative impact of in and out migration in rural areas	1

Appendix 3: Social media

Welsh Government advertised the consultation via Facebook and Twitter, using the hashtag #yoursaywales and linking to the citizens survey and response form. While Twitter posts received retweets and likes on twitter, written engagement with the campaign from members of the public occurred on two promotional posts on Facebook. While there were a large number of comments, many of these were multiple responses from a small number of commenters. All comments were read by SRI for content relating to the consultation that may not have been captured by the formal consultation response formats.

A high proportion of the engagement was not directly relevant to the consultation. These tended to be remarks directed at other commenters, statements in support of or in opposition to the EU, and negative comments relating to the UK Government, Welsh Government or UK political parties.

Comments about the EU which did have a bearing on the consultation related to certain terminology used in the consultation. Some respondents disliked references to – or what were perceived to be positive statements about – ‘EU funding’, remarking that this was comprised of money coming from UK contributions and was therefore the UK’s money. A small number made other comments about funding, such as that Wales should attempt to move away from dependency on the Westminster government for funding.

Some commenters expressed doubt that UK SPF funding would be forthcoming or believed that the UK Government would renege on the Shared Prosperity Fund.

Other areas suggested as priorities for investment included:

- Cycling infrastructure
- Public transport – with some commenting that this should be prioritized over cycling
- Improved road networks, including the M4 relief road
- Equal investments across Wales, ensuring there is not too great a focus on the South east
- Recovery for businesses and communities in light of the COVID-19 pandemic

Appendix 4: List of indicators (Q9)

Which indicators do you think should be used to measure progress towards achieving the proposed strategic objectives?

Specific indicators which were referenced in response to question 9 in the main consultation questionnaire have been categorised into four themes:

- economic indicators
- socio-economic indicators
- environmental indicators, and
- indicators which fall under an 'other' category

Under each of these four themes, indicators have been split between those where the respondent made general reference to an indicator, those where the respondent made reference to an indicator against a particular area or strategic objective, and those where the respondent made reference to a specific model, approach, document, or other point of reference.

Economic indicators

Apprentice recruitment and achievement/ number of apprenticeships created

Businesses started/ saved from insolvency/ supported

Business growth, micro to SME/ Number of business moving from one size bracket to another

Levels of disposable income (to be used for each region)

Net exports

Employability indicators which reflect the client base, particularly specific or targeted groups

Number of people in work/ employed

Economic growth in terms of GDP

GVA (to be used for each region)

Average household income

Inward investment

Jobs created/ safeguarded/ supported

High value job creation

Indigenous company growth/ Number of businesses with HQ in Wales

M&A activity

Productivity

Return on investment e.g. how projects have support sectors/captured funding/created jobs

Start-up beyond 2 years

Skills indicators - needs of economy e.g. what is required and achievable in the current workforce

Types of businesses created and supported

Jobs developed with training provided on the job

Tracking growth/succession plans

Number of unemployed/ economically inactive people getting into work/ Reduction in those who are economically inactive

Economic indicators - reference to specific priority areas/ strategic objectives

GVA growth [set out against the priority area 'Productive and competitive businesses']

Increase in FTE gross weekly earning (£) [set out against the priority area 'Healthier, fairer, and more sustainable communities']

Increase in Inward investment (£) [set out against the priority area 'Productive and competitive businesses']

Increase in GVA (per worker) [set out against the priority area 'Healthier, fairer, and more sustainable communities']

Increase in FTE Gross weekly earnings (£) [set out against the priority area 'Reducing the factors that lead to income inequality']

Jobs growth in key sectors (e.g. managerial/ professional/ advanced manufacturing) [set out against the priority area 'Productive and competitive businesses']

New business registrations in priority sectors (e.g. Digital, Knowledge intensive businesses) [set out against the priority area 'Productive and competitive businesses']

Reduction in claimant count (JSA etc.) [set out against the priority area 'Reducing the factors that lead to income inequality']

Reduction in claimant count (JSA etc.) [set out against the priority area 'Healthier, fairer, and more sustainable communities']

Economic indicators - specific references

LEADER approach

Targeted Regeneration Investment Programme indicators

Socio-economic indicators

Access to services

Access to high quality broadband

Culture-led regeneration, such as festivals/events; image branding exercises; volunteering and social capital; health and wellbeing; pride in local place

Essential skills (communications, report-writing and time-keeping, presentations

Higher level skills attainment / increase in basic skills

Inequalities focus to measures/indicators e.g. sustainable wages and opportunities

Investment in networks e.g. local community networks such as food banks or groups easing community tensions, collaboration to win contracts, social support

Investment in BAME communities/ number of BAME led businesses

Job quality for BAME communities

National Wellbeing indicators

Number of appropriate and relevant qualifications achieved by a 'client' in order to access work

People trained or retrained

Proportion of young people staying in communities or returning after education

Quality of life indicators

Targets for funding investment in communities of colour

The number of people supported into volunteering or work placement

Wellbeing index

Socio-economic indicators - reference to specific priority areas/ strategic objectives

Access to superfast broadband (%) [set out against the priority area 'Healthier, fairer, and more sustainable communities']

Housing stock increase in mixed tenure and affordable housing (number/ %) [set out against the priority area 'Healthier, fairer, and more sustainable communities']

Increase qualifications/ training opportunities (number of new courses/ numbers of individuals taking up opportunities) [set out against the priority area 'Supporting the transition to a zero carbon economy']

Investment in city living schemes (£) [set out against the priority area 'Healthier, fairer, and more sustainable communities']

National Wellbeing indicators (first two strategic objectives)

Qualification levels (% increase in higher level qualifications) [set out against the priority area 'Productive and competitive businesses']

Qualifications (increase in qualifications attained) [set out against the priority area 'Reducing the factors that lead to income inequality']

Wellbeing and equality measures that are included as part of National Indicators e.g. life expectancy, crime, long term health conditions. [set out against the priority area 'Healthier, fairer, and more sustainable communities']

WIMD deprivation - index should guide what measures are prioritised in specific areas of Wales [For healthier, fairer and more sustainable communities]

Socio-economic - specific references

Consult and involve BAME coalitions and networks such as Race Alliance Wales
Domains of the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation/ WIMD to be used for each region

Indicators/ measures aligned to the Well-being Future Generations Act (46 nationally agreed indicators)/Well-being goals

Measures of National Well-being Dashboard

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/wellbeing/articles/measuresofnationalwellbeingdashboard/2018-04-25>

Quality of jobs definition - Fair Work Commission

Regional Human Poverty Index

Results-Based Accountability model

Environmental indicators

Carbon reduction

Habitat restored

Renewable energy generated / Growing the renewable energy sector

Trees planted

Environmental indicators - reference to specific priority areas/ strategic objectives

% of Wales' electricity consumption coming from renewables [set out against the priority area 'Supporting the transition to a zero carbon economy']

Investment in electric vehicular transport (£) [set out against the priority area 'Supporting the transition to a zero carbon economy']

Investment in renewable energy research (£) [set out against the priority area 'Supporting the transition to a zero carbon economy']

Investments meeting BREEAM standards / Carbon assessment (BREEAM) [set out against the priority area 'Supporting the transition to a zero carbon economy']

Sustainability (objective 3)

Turnover generated by businesses within the 'Low Carbon/Renewable Energy' sector (£) [set out against the priority area 'Supporting the transition to a zero carbon economy']

Environmental indicators - specific references

Doughnut Economics/ The Welsh Doughnut/ Welsh Anti-Poverty Coalition
Green Net National Product
Measurement against the Natural Resources Management approach and reporting via NRW and the Employability Plan
Natural capital accounting, as being developed by the ONS
Treasury Green Book guidance on embedding natural capital into public policy appraisal

Other indicators

Academic output / Academic metrics, such as citations and conference presentations
Aesthetic improvements to town centres
Allow for innovation to be captured
Benchmarking against regional, National and Internationally successful projects
Commercialisation of research
Impact on Welsh-speaking workers (language, employability and salary)
Long-term case studies
Long-term indicators e.g. job retention/ skill development
Measure the impact that universities' civic mission work has in their communities
New products, processes or services launched into market
Patents registered
Public realm improvements
Research and innovation (measures to determine high quality research with long term impact)

Other indicators - reference to specific priority areas/ strategic objectives

Use and value of social infrastructure (objective 3)

Other indicators - specific references

Adapted European Regional Development Fund benchmarks
Aligned with other targets e.g. City and regional growth deals (danger of contradictory metrics if not aligned)
Consider 'Welsh language and the economy: a review of evidence and methods' Feb 20
Consult and involve Third Sector Support Wales (TSSW)
Measure against Area Statements
Metrics from the Global Impact Investing Network (GIIN)

Most Significant Change

SMART techniques

Social Value Cymru (Mantell Gwynedd)

Theory of change model

United Nations Sustainable Development goals

Upcoming report exploring how Local Authorities and national Governments can go beyond simple metrics (commissioned by RTPI, with support from Welsh Government, Scottish Government and UK Government)

Welsh Language progress indicators (Cymraeg 2050)