



# Towards a Wellbeing Framework and the Draft Programme for Government

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'This is about a new conversation, a new conversation to shape our shared future'

THE NI EXECUTIVE OFFICE

In Northern Ireland there is now broad consensus that a new, whole-of-government approach to policy making is both desirable and possible. The *Draft Programme for Government Framework (2016-2020)* is a significant step in this direction.

The Carnegie Roundtable on Measuring Wellbeing in Northern Ireland, a partnership between the Carnegie UK Trust and Queens University Belfast, was convened in 2014 to explore how the NI Executive could better understand social progress and its role in improving wellbeing. Since their first meeting, Roundtable members from the main political parties, the senior civil service, local government, academia, the third sector and civil society have been prominent in an unfolding conversation across government and society on setting the wellbeing of citizens and communities as the collective purpose, and heart, of government.

2009

Stiglitz-Sen-Fitoussi Commission reports on measuring social progress and recommends governments set up Roundtables to explore wellbeing frameworks to guide policy making.

2010

CUKT sets up the first national Roundtable on Measuring Social Progress in Scotland, in collaboration with the Sustainable Development Commission for Scotland.

2011

Queens University Belfast hold a seminar on the sustainable economy, exploring what it means for Northern Ireland.

**Table 1: Rationale for wellbeing frameworks in cities and regions (CUKT/OECD forthcoming)**

<b>Making Sense</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Wellbeing is a multi-dimensional concept that takes into account the local context</li> <li>- A framework for gathering and organising available data.</li> </ul>
<b>Informing Policy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Understanding what matters to citizens</li> <li>- Understanding the dimensions of wellbeing and how they might interact</li> <li>- Understanding how wellbeing is distributed within a city or region and flagging up differences between areas</li> <li>- Creating dialogue between government departments, overcoming silos and promoting joined up policy making</li> <li>- Developing plans which focus on making a difference (outcomes)</li> <li>- Measuring performance in terms of policy and programmes' impact on people (outcomes)</li> <li>- Promoting dialogue about plans and targets that have not been achieved.</li> </ul>
<b>Involving Citizens</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Focusing on people and communities, in addition to Gross Domestic Product</li> <li>- Promoting dialogue with citizens, and providing a mechanism for citizens to engage with policy making and government</li> <li>- Supporting the view that wellbeing is a shared responsibility, which lies with communities and individuals as well as the government.</li> </ul>

The key recommendation of the Carnegie Roundtable was that a wellbeing framework (comprising a statement of the purpose of government, and a set of outcomes and indicators) form the backbone of the new programme for government.

**The Roundtable therefore supports and endorses the draft Programme for Government and welcomes the steps taken to build a more joined-up and outcome focused system of governance.**

In taking this step, the NI Executive joins a small but growing number of countries and regions which are using wellbeing frameworks as a means to support systems change across public services. Innovators include Scotland, Finland and Estonia as well as regions in Italy and Mexico and cities such as Somerville and Santa Monica in the US and Guelph in Canada (Carnegie UK Trust/OECD, forthcoming).



Martyn Evans presenting the Roundtable report to Rolf Alter, OECD in 2015

**2012**

CUKT launch findings of international research into wellbeing frameworks  
**Shifting the Dial with IPPR North.**

**Sept 2013**

CUKT and Queens University Belfast host a **joint seminar on Wellbeing Frameworks**, securing the support of then Finance Minister, Simon Hamilton MLA and Chair of the Finance Committee Daithi Mackay MLA. The event is 'standing room only'.

# Building a vision for Northern Ireland based on wellbeing

*'The new Programme for Government will be different, and represents a first for Northern Ireland. We have listened to the contributions from the Carnegie UK Trust and its roundtables on wellbeing... by choosing to focus on outcomes, we direct attention onto things that define whether we are progressing as a society. It points us towards actions that will reduce poverty, address inequality, boost the economic and enliven our cultural heartbeat.'*

ARLENE FOSTER MLA, FIRST MINISTER, SPEAKING IN THE NI ASSEMBLY DEBATE ON THE DRAFT PROGRAMME FOR GOVERNMENT, MAY 2016

The Carnegie Roundtable's first recommendation was to put wellbeing at the heart of government. Experience from other wellbeing frameworks is that providing an overarching purpose for government can help to provide a coherent, unified narrative that drives improvements in outcomes for people.

The Roundtable therefore welcomes the inclusion of wellbeing in the purpose statement within the draft Programme for Government. The draft Programme for Government does not, however, use this as a focal point in its own narrative. To be successful, the purpose statement will need to be explained and expanded upon.

The Roundtable uses wellbeing in the sense that the OECD and the Stiglitz-Sen-Fitoussi Commission use the word, that is:

*'a description of social progress in terms of improvements in quality of life, material conditions and sustainability'*

(OECD, HOW'S LIFE?)

Societal wellbeing is therefore a multi-dimensional concept, embracing the economic, social and environmental domains that people need to thrive. It is far more than the accrual of individual levels of happiness or life satisfaction. Economic outcomes are contained within the model but understood within this broad, beyond-GDP, approach as **inclusive growth**, where gaps between the rich and the poor – not only in terms of income, but also in other dimensions that matter for people – are less pronounced.

Clear articulation of commitments to equalities groups within this narrative would also reassure interest groups concerned about a lack of specificity in the draft programme for government.

**The Roundtable would welcome greater elaboration of the purpose for government contained within the draft Programme for Government.**

**Feb 2014**

CUKT and Queens University Belfast publish 'Towards a Wellbeing Framework: A new conversation for new times' and announce the establishment of the Carnegie Roundtable for Measuring Wellbeing in Northern Ireland.

# The importance of open government and accountability

*'Wellbeing is linked to enhanced levels of political agency, autonomy and embedding a culture of democratic deliberation. It's about people's sense of control over their own futures; it's about achieving outcomes that people want, rather than those the government believe they want. It's about harnessing collective wisdom and creativity; and it's about closing the gap between citizens and politicians.'*

NI OPEN GOVERNMENT NETWORK RESPONSE TO THE DRAFT PROGRAMME FOR GOVERNMENT

When considering the use of a wellbeing framework to improve governance in Northern Ireland, issues of openness and accountability were at the forefront of the Roundtable's discussions. The recent OECD public governance review similarly made several recommendations with regard to open government. The Roundtable has made suggestions to strengthen the inclusion of democratic wellbeing in the draft Programme for Government (see page 11).

Over and above the content of the framework itself, there are three aspects of openness that the new Programme for Government will have the opportunity to influence.

Firstly, the Executive has embarked on an open consultation about the outcomes it seeks for the people of Northern Ireland. This work is essential if the frameworks is to be seen as robust and representative of the views of the people. But consulting is not in and of itself enough to build trust, the NI Executive must be willing to act on that feedback. **The Roundtable recommends that the final set of outcomes, measures and indicators must be seen to be genuinely reflective of the views of the people of Northern Ireland.**

This includes providing information on the analysis of the views of the respondents with a careful

Mar 2014

Carnegie Roundtable on Measuring Wellbeing opens call for evidence on wellbeing and conducts focus groups with the public.

Jan 2014

Carnegie Roundtable on Measuring Wellbeing holds study trip to Scotland and meets with Deputy First Minister John Swinney MSP.

What we measure affects what we do; and if our measurements are flawed, decisions may be distorted.

Joseph Stiglitz, Amartya Sen and Jean-Paul Fitoussi, 2009

explanation of where views have, and have not, been incorporated. The Roundtable appreciates that not all feedback will be acted upon, but the public deserves a clear explanation of why such decisions were taken.

Secondly, the draft Programme for Government includes very little information on how the measurement of social progress will be communicated to stakeholders and citizens. To be successful, the wellbeing framework must be an active tool, reported on regularly and in an accessible way. Again, there are international examples of how to do this effectively which the NI Executive can learn from, not least the OECD Better Life Index. NILGA also note the importance of public engagement in their response to the draft Programme for Government:

*'An open and accountable performance framework can only increase public understanding of and confidence in how Northern Ireland is governed.'*

NILGA RESPONSE TO THE DRAFT PROGRAMME FOR GOVERNMENT, JULY 2016

The Roundtable reiterates its recommendation that the NI Executive invest in communicating the wellbeing framework and trend data to the public by a range of techniques including data visualisation, live dashboards, social and traditional media.

Thirdly, the Roundtable were aware that for the wellbeing framework to be successful, it would have to be embedded within existing structures for scrutiny and accountability. In particular, there is a challenge in linking outcomes to budgets. For the framework to be truly successful in improving outcomes for people, it must be linked to identifiable change in policy and practice. Similarly, the process of audit and scrutiny of public services must become more user focused, here again the experience from Scotland of implementing a duty of user focus in the scrutiny of public services may be useful.

**The Roundtable reiterates its recommendation that the NI Executive should lay an annual report before the Northern Ireland Executive for debate on the progress made by the Programme for Government, timed to coincide with the Budget Bill.**



Carnegie Associate John Woods discussing outcomes with delegates June 2015

Mar 2015

Carnegie Roundtable on Measuring Wellbeing reports its findings **Towards a Wellbeing Framework.**

Mar 2016

CUKT and Queens University Belfast publish **'Towards a Wellbeing Framework: One year on'.**

May 2016

NI Executive publishes **draft Programme for Government** and consultation opened.

# Developing outcomes within programmes and services

*"The business community wants to see the new Executive work collectively, with a single vision and focus on a small number of strategic outcomes to improve the lives of all our citizens. Working in partnership with other key stakeholders, including the business community, will be critical to delivering these outcomes."*

DAVID GAVANAGH, CHAIR OF CBI NI AND MEMBER OF THE CARNEGIE ROUNDTABLE

Implementing a wellbeing framework goes far further than the creation of a measurable dashboard of indicators. As a unifying approach, all aspects of public services (including local government, third sector and private providers) will be expected to be able to articulate their contribution to the Outcomes.

There is a balance to be struck between top-down and bottom-up approaches. In setting the purpose and outcomes it seeks, the NI Executive is signalling its direction of travel. It can therefore realistically expect others to seek the same outcomes.

Outside of those programmes and services it provides directly, it must be prepared to allow for different measures and indicators to be used to evidence progress towards the outcomes. Outcome based approaches thrive when partners are able to develop their own methods to understanding the impact that they have. However, the development of models of evaluation that would support an outcomes based programme for government is in its infancy. In recent discussions, the Roundtable members discussed the need for an iterative approach and support for those working within the civil service and in partner organisations to understand their contribution to outcomes.

There is at present limited information about how the framework in the draft Programme for Government

will impact upon the relationship between the NI Executive and local government. As NI Local Government Association notes in its response to the draft Programme for Government:

*'Councils are working with their community planning partnerships to develop local sets of outcomes and indicators, and it is vital that all participants – central and local – are facilitated by district councils to ensure that each local area is involved in informing and in contributing to achieving the agreed Northern Ireland outcomes, the necessary action plans, performance framework and local priorities which will form part of the overall 'jigsaw' of strategy for the foreseeable future.'*

For third sector and private sector providers of public services, experience from Scotland and Wales, both further forward on this agenda, suggests that there are thorny issues of commissioning for outcomes to be addressed. The NI Confederation for Health and Social Care has similarly recommended a simplified and effective commissioning model focused on outcomes in its recent manifesto.

**The NI Executive should provide guidance on how it expects outcomes to be used by local government and the third sector.**

# From outcomes to actions

*'People want more and better jobs, investment in our health services, investment in our schools and support for those most in need in society. At a time of increased pressure on public finances, we need to be more creative, more holistic, if we are to make a real positive difference for society. We must not be wedded to the old ways of Government, and we are committed to a new, better and more innovative approach.'*

MARTIN MCGUINNESS MLA, DEPUTY FIRST MINISTER SPEAKING AT THE JUNE 2016 MEETING OF THE CARNEGIE ROUNDTABLE

International experience shows that wellbeing frameworks can have positive impacts on policy and practice (Carnegie UK Trust/OECD, forthcoming). In particular, they support preventative and joined-up policy making, both key recommendations of the OECD review of governance in Northern Ireland. The NI Executive has stated its intention of ending the practice of silo-based working that limits the overall impact government can have on outcomes for people.

The Roundtable is keen to see how this direction of travel will develop through the action plans that implement the programme for government when published later in the year. Experience from Virginia Performs highlights the importance of using outcomes, measures and indicators as the start of a conversation, not the end. Virginians refer to this as

*Trust in government is a key component of wellbeing and the OECD recognises it as one of the top challenges facing governments. Engaging with citizens about what is important to their wellbeing could be key to renewing democratic engagement and rebuilding trust in institutions in Northern Ireland.*

*Rolf Alter, Director of Public Governance and Territorial Development at the OECD, speaking in June 2015*

'the pursuit of why?'. The wellbeing framework is just the beginning, Northern Ireland now needs an open conversation about the causes, consequences and policy solutions that can improve wellbeing.

**July 2016**

Carnegie Roundtable reconvenes to consider draft Programme for Government.

**July 2016**

OECD reports on its first sub-national Governance Review that endorses recommendations of the Carnegie Roundtable.

# Summary of detailed response to the draft Programme for Government

*The Carnegie UK Trust response to the Programme for Government, informed by the Roundtable discussion in July 2016, provided an opportunity to restate a number of key conclusions from the original Roundtable report.*

1. The Roundtable supports and endorses the draft Programme for Government and welcomes the steps taken to build a more joined-up and outcome focused system of governance.
2. We would welcome greater elaboration of the purpose for government contained within the draft Programme for Government.
3. The final set of outcomes, measures and indicators must be seen to be genuinely reflective of the views of the people of Northern Ireland.
4. The Roundtable reiterates its recommendation that the NI Executive invest in communicating the wellbeing framework and trend data to the public by a range of techniques including data visualisation, live dashboards, social and traditional media.
5. The Roundtable reiterates its recommendation that the NI Executive should lay an annual report before the Northern Ireland Executive for debate on the progress made by the Programme for Government, timed to coincide with the Budget Bill.
6. The NI Executive should provide guidance on how it expects outcomes to be used by local government and the third sector.



Members of the Roundtable at the launch in 2015

## Suggestions on specific outcomes

The Carnegie Roundtable took its lead from international examples of wellbeing frameworks in recommending a small number of key outcomes be identified in the Programme for Government.

The draft Programme for Government identifies 14 strategic outcomes which are aspirational in tone and designed to set a direction of travel that will last more than one Assembly term.

We have benchmarked these with Nussbaum's Capabilities, the OECD Better Life Index and Scotland's National Performance Framework to identify where the draft Programme for Government outcomes could be strengthened.

We identified a number of areas where changes to the language could improve the strength of the outcome. These are offered as suggestions to the NI Executive as it further develops the framework.

**OUTCOME 2**

Original	<b>We live and work sustainably – protecting the environment</b>
Proposed	<i>We produce and consume within planetary boundaries</i>
Comment	The language of this outcome could be strengthened reflecting contemporary narratives on sustainability.

**OUTCOME 4**

Original	<b>We enjoy long, healthy, active lives</b>
Proposed	<i>We enjoy long, healthy and active lives with positive mental health throughout</i>
Comment	Mental health is an issue of paramount importance in our society, notably in the context of emergence from conflict.

**OUTCOME 7**

Original	<b>We have a safe community where we respect the law, and each other</b>
Proposed	<i>We have a safe community where we respect each other and the law</i>
Comment	Respect for the law flows from and follows respect for other citizens and their property.

**OUTCOME 8**

Original	<b>We care for others and we help those in need</b>
Proposed	<i>We live in strong, resilient and caring communities where people can actively contribute and build solidarity with a common purpose</i>
Comment	Need to reinforce and strengthen the context for care, extending to building community resourcefulness and active participation. Civic engagement and community capital are funder priority.

**OUTCOME 9**

Original	<b>We are a shared society that respects diversity</b>
Proposed	<i>We are a shared society that celebrates diversity</i>
Comment	The Roundtable discussed the importance of framing wellbeing outcomes within a post-conflict society. This minor change is designed to support that notion.

**OUTCOME 12**

Original	<b>We have high quality public services</b>
Proposed	<i>We have high quality, values led public services</i>
Comment	The transformation of public services is not exclusively a technocratic agenda but also one that should address values, ethics and a commitment to equality.

**OUTCOME 14**

Original	<b>We give our children and young people the best start in life</b>
Proposed	<i>We listen to our children and young people and enable their best start in life</i>
Comment	The Outcome should acknowledge children's agency and capacity for advocacy as reflected in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

## Suggestions on Specific Indicators and Measures

The draft programme for government includes 42 indicators each with a corresponding measurement (and in one case 2 measures). We have benchmarked these against the recommendations from the Stiglitz, Sen and Fitoussi report and international best practices based on Carnegie UK Trust's research on Shifting the Dial and current work with the OECD on measuring regional wellbeing.

Based on our review of international evidence from existing frameworks, we suggest the following changes to the indicators and measures in the draft Programme for Government.

### NEW POVERTY MEASURES

Indicator	Reduce poverty
Measure	<i>Percentage of children in low income</i> <i>Reduce the gender pay gap</i>
Comment	While regional variations are included, the measures and indicators would be strengthened by inclusion of specific reference to children and gender.

### NEW HOUSING INDICATOR AND MEASURES

Indicator	Improve satisfaction with our homes
New Measure	<i>% fairly or satisfied with their accommodation</i>
Comment	OECD and other international wellbeing frameworks include housing as a key component of wellbeing. Given the importance of housing to wellbeing, and the availability of indicators and measures relating to improving housing, we suggest this additional indicator.

### NEW SAFETY INDICATOR AND MEASURES

Indicator	Improve feeling of safety in the community
New Measure	<i>% of population who feel fairly/very safe walking alone after dark.</i>
Comment	One of the biggest impacts of crime on people's wellbeing appears to be through the feeling of vulnerability that it causes. Most international examples of wellbeing frameworks include subjective as well as objective measures of safety.

### NEW HEALTH INDICATOR AND MEASURES

Indicator	Improve satisfaction with health
New Measure	<i>% of population who report that their health is good or fairly good.</i>
Comment	Good health is one of the most important aspects of personal wellbeing. The draft PFG includes a number of health related indicators. These are all objective measures of health however, with no subjective measure included. Most wellbeing frameworks include a subjective assessment of health to aid understanding of the health of the general population.

## NEW SOCIAL CONNECTIONS INDICATORS AND MEASURES

New Indicator	Increase the number of people who have a personal support network
New Measure	<i>% of population who report having a spouse, family member or friend that they can rely on if they had a serious problem</i>
New Indicator	Improve strength of our community
New Measure	<i>% of the population that agree or strongly agree that they feel they belong to their neighbourhood</i>
Comment	The draft PFG includes a new indicator and measure on self-efficacy. This is to be welcomed in terms of the inclusion of subjective data around a person's resilience. There is a strong connection between a sense of personal agency and wellbeing. However, we do have some concerns that this focuses on individual wellbeing without taking into account social and community aspects that influence resilience. To balance this, we would welcome new indicators and measures on social connections.

## NEW DEMOCRATIC INDICATORS AND MEASURES

New Indicator	Confidence in Assembly & Executive
New Measure	<i>% of population who report that they have confidence in the Assembly and Executive</i>
New Indicator	Engagement with government in Northern Ireland
New Measures	<i>% of population who voted in last Assembly elections</i> <i>% of population who voted in last local government elections</i>
New Indicator	Political literacy
New Measure	<i>Develop a new measure that assesses the level of political literacy of citizens.</i>
Comment	<p>The Stiglitz, Sen and Fitoussi report recommended that substantial efforts should be devoted to developing and implementing robust, reliable measures of political voice that can be shown to predict life satisfaction.</p> <p>The draft PFG includes a number of indicators and measurements that relate to democratic wellbeing. In general this exceeds the attention given to this in other wellbeing frameworks. This is due to the inclusion of a number of measures of tolerance and respect related to living in a post-conflict society.</p> <p>This focus is welcome. However, it has led to a gap in terms of other areas of democratic wellbeing that are commonly included in wellbeing frameworks. We make a number of suggestions on how this could be captured in the Programme for Government.</p>

## NEW ENVIRONMENTAL INDICATORS AND MEASURES

New Indicator	Improve our natural capital
New Measure	<i>Natural Capital Index</i>
Comment	<p>Environmental sustainability, as a counterpoint to economic growth, is a key aspect of wellbeing. UK-wide and international experience suggests that the measures in the draft PFG are necessary but not sufficient.</p> <p>Sustainability assessment requires a well-identified dashboard of indicators. The distinctive feature of the components of this dashboard should be that they are interpretable as variations of some underlying 'stocks'. For example the Scottish Government has recently incorporated a measure of Natural Capital into the Scottish National Performance Framework. A similar approach could be taken in Northern Ireland.</p>

## REPLACEMENT OF EDUCATION MEASURE

Indicator 13	Improve the quality of education
Proposed measure	<i>% of parents satisfied with quality of child's education</i>
Comment	One of the key recommendations of the Roundtable's report was that the wellbeing framework must be outcome-focused. In general, it does appear to be so however we felt that this measure was of process rather than outcome. We suggest a measure that would better reflect user confidence.

## REPLACEMENT OF JUSTICE MEASURE

Indicator 38	Increase the effectiveness of the justice system
Measure	<i>Proportion of criminal justice cases processed within guideline time limits</i>
Proposed measure	<i>Public confidence in criminal justice agencies</i>
Comment	Again, we are suggesting a measure that would better reflect public confidence, rather than process measurements.

### FURTHER INFORMATION:

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