



Comisiynydd
**Cenedlaethau'r
Dyfodol**
Cymru

**Future
Generations**
Commissioner
for Wales

Developing Priorities for the Future Generations Commissioner

2017 - 2023

"What Wales is doing today, we hope the world will do tomorrow – action more than words is the hope for our future generations," United Nations

futuregenerations.wales

Developing Priorities for the Future Generations Commissioner

1. Overview

The Future Generations Commissioner for Wales has a duty to:

- a) promote the sustainable development principle, in particular to -
 - act as a guardian of the ability of future generations to meet their needs, and
 - encourage public bodies to take greater account of the long-term impact of the things that they do, and
- (b) for that purpose to monitor and assess the extent to which well-being objectives set by public bodies are being met

In order to fulfil the duties and powers of the Commissioner, I have begun the process of defining the purpose of the Office of the Future Generations Commissioner, which are to:

- (i) Highlight the big issues, challenges and opportunities facing future generations
- (ii) Support and challenge public bodies to think about the long term impact of the things they do
- (iii) Work with others to drive the changes needed
- (iv) Walk the talk – be the change we want to see in others

These are further detailed in our [Strategic Plan](#) and I would welcome your views on these areas.

(See Appendices for full details of the legislation and the duties and powers of the Commissioner as outlined in Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015)

In order to have a real impact that leads to long-lasting change, I am developing a strategic approach which will focus the work of my team and make the most of my limited resources. I will be identifying priority areas for action to focus my support for public bodies and to identify key opportunities to drive real changes to improve the well-being of future generations in Wales.

I will be taking your views into account as part of my on-going conversation to inform these areas for action. Once these are agreed I will be developing a clear programme of work on how we address these issues, in collaboration with public bodies and wider stakeholders, which will be published with my annual report in summer 2017. My office is planning a number of ways in which you can share your views on my Strategic Plan and on this paper futuregenerations.wales, see Section 1.2 for further details).

1.1 Identifying the priority areas for action of my Office

In line with the principles of the Act I have designed a process based on involving others which will help me define the areas on which I will focus my support and advice to the public bodies. I identify some of the critical long-term challenges facing our future generations, analysing these challenges and finding opportunities to tackle them in collaboration with public bodies and wider stakeholders.

These areas for action are those that my Office will proactively pursue in terms of highlighting the issue and the potential solutions at national and local levels and in doing this both the five ways of working and the inter-relationship with all the well-being goals will be taken into account. Whilst by definition these issues will be amongst the most significant issues facing Wales these **areas should not limit the issues that public bodies will need to consider as part of their duties under this Act.**

I began a conversation with public bodies, interest groups and individuals upon taking up post in February 2016 and the views collected in that intensive period of engagement have informed my process for setting priorities going forward. This next phase will help me:

- 1) To identify the broad challenges and issues affecting future generations in Wales
- 2) To identify the opportunities to address these challenges and issues, and the possible areas for action

Once identified, the work of my office will be focused on these areas for action which can include offering support and challenging others to take action at national or local levels, the five ways of working – collaboration, involvement, integration, prevention, and looking to the long-term, and all of the well-being goals – will be embedded throughout the process.

1.2 The involvement process

I have chosen to involve and engage through an extended conversation rather than a conventional consultation process. To do this we are collaborating with individuals, experts and partners to pilot innovative tools including *Sensemaker* - a digital application which allows people to tell us what's important to them and to analyse their responses in a way that will help us understand people's priorities and to fill any gaps in our understanding. You can access [Sensemaker](#) here to share your views on the key issues facing future generations.

My Office is also organizing a series of workshops across Wales during March where you will have a chance to discuss the issues in more detail. Full details are available on my [website](#).

This process builds on my early engagement with public bodies, stakeholders and the public. Since I took up my post I have been listening to a wide-range of people, including meeting with the 44 public bodies covered by the Act, hosting a series of public engagement events across the country, and holding workshops with people who have specialist knowledge of the big challenges facing Wales. Based on these conversations, I produced a report - "[Talking Future Generations](#)" - setting out my findings in order to feed back to those who took part and to continue the conversation.

I have also been looking closely at the existing evidence, future trends and a wide variety of reports to understand the big challenges facing Wales over the long-term. In particular, I have considered:

- a) The Wales We Want national conversation in 2015 which highlighted the key concerns from communities across Wales, and helped to shape the well-being goals and the five ways of working identified in the Act
- b) The findings in the Welsh Government's 2012 publication *Understanding Wales' Future* which provided a 'stock-take' of Wales' assets set against the backdrop of global trends that will drive future change. (An updated version of this document is expected to be made public as a *Future Trends* report in May 2017, as required under the Act)
- c) The UN's Sustainable Development goals to ensure synergy between efforts to work towards these global goals and achieving the well-being of future generations here in Wales

- d) Existing resources, data and trends analysis for Wales where available, including from 'StatsWales', Office of National Statistics, and Census data, as well as a wide range of publicly available sources
- e) The "Global Risks Report 2017" from the World Economic Forum which confirms many of the key trends and issues identified by my team

I also held a workshop with a range of experts in November 2016 to discuss the big challenges that were emerging and how I could categorise them. Through this series of collaborative processes an initial long list of issues has been honed down to four broad challenges facing Wales over the long-term, and within which I am proposing to develop areas for action.

The following 4 broad challenge areas have been identified so far:

- **Climate change** - focusing on reducing emissions and tackling impacts
- **Economic change** - shifting to an economy that is fit for the future
- **Population change** - tackling the challenges and opportunities of an ageing population, the changing composition of our communities, and the importance of early years and adverse childhood experiences
- **Citizen disengagement** - championing public participation and involvement in decision making

Under each of the challenges my team have collated issues which have been raised through the early stage of the conversation and research based on widely available future trends and projections, **the list is in no way exhaustive and is part of the conversation itself.**

1.3 Purpose of this document

This paper is part of the next phase of the conversation and outlines some factual analysis of the challenges facing Wales, the issues that cause them and the problems that future generations may experience as a result, i.e. the consequences of each of the challenges. I have tried to address the following:

- What is the specific nature of the challenge we face, based on existing and available evidence on its causes?
- What are the likely consequences of these challenges on future generations in Wales, based on available data and projected future trends?

It will work with the *Sensemaker* survey available [here](#), which will collect your views on what is important to you, your views on the causes and consequences of the challenges facing Wales listed in this document, your supporting evidence where available, and an indication of the areas that you think we should prioritise. If you wanted to discuss any detail, please contact kate.hamilton@futuregenerations.wales

I am therefore asking you to help me in identifying the challenges and issues that will most affect future generations in Wales, and inviting you to tell us:

- 1) How far you agree with the emerging 4 broad challenge areas facing Wales
- 2) How far you agree that the issues that we have identified are:
 - a) those that contribute most to the overall challenges for Wales
 - b) those that will have most impact on future generations in Wales
- 3) Whether we have missed any key issues that relate to these challenge areas

4) Which issues you think are the most important ones, and why

I would also be glad of any additional evidence (stories, statistics, or other forms of evidence including your own experience) about the challenge areas, issues under these challenge areas and impact of these issues in Wales, and, where possible, any examples of good practice in tackling them.

1.4 Next steps

The first phase of the conversation will take place between February and April 2017. The next phase will analyse the feedback and comments on your suggested priority issues to:

- Identify a smaller number of the key issues for my office to focus on in respect of each challenge
- Subject these to rigorous analysis of data trends and evidence of what works in order to identify the opportunities for taking action on these issues
- Based on this research identify our priority areas for action, through which I will have the best opportunity to drive effectively change in Wales

These priority areas for action will be those where there are real opportunities for my office to make a difference in addressing the 4 broad challenges facing future generations in Wales. These priority areas will be at the heart of my seven-year strategic plan and annual plans, and the work programme for my Office.

The agreed priority areas for action will be published alongside my annual report in summer 2017.

CHALLENGE AREAS

2. Climate Change - focussing on reducing emissions and tackling impacts

2.1 Overview

Climate change is a global challenge, with widespread impacts and growing recognition of its causes. "The Global Risk Report 2017" highlighted the failure to mitigate and adapt to climate change as one of the key risks that will increase the impact and the likelihood of climate change. Each one of the past 16 years has been amongst the warmest on record; there are more floods and droughts across the world; and projections suggest that business as usual will take us towards a planet that is 4-6°C warmer, with potentially devastating impacts on our livelihoods, biodiversity, economy, health, ability to get food, water and energy, and much more. Managing our natural resources sustainably and conserving and protecting our wildlife, biodiversity and the natural environment are critical to improving well-being, and the impacts of climate change will therefore be a key challenge to tackle. The Paris Agreement which came into force in November 2016, signed by all 197 nations, is a significant step forwards and seeks to keep global warming to below 2°C. Currently 125 countries including the UK (and therefore Wales) have adopted the agreement at a national level. The UK has committed to reducing its greenhouse gas emissions by at least 80% by 2050 (from 1990 levels). Under the Environment (Wales) Act 2016, Wales is also committed to reducing its emissions by at least 80% by 2050, with interim targets to be set for 2020, 2030 and 2040. Wales' current climate change strategy sets an interim target of 40% reduction by 2020 along with 3% annual reduction on areas of devolved competence. Whilst we are meeting the latter we appear to be far from achieving the former, the most recent Welsh Government report (2015) showed that we have only achieved 11.9% reduction to date. In this context climate change has to be seen as one of the primary challenges facing future generations in Wales, especially as global projections suggest climate change could cut the value of world's financial assets by £1.7trillion.

2.2 Key factors contributing to climate change in Wales:

- **Greenhouse gases (GHG) emissions:** Wales is responsible for 9% of the UK's total net GHG emissions (or 7.2% taking into account that some energy produced in Wales is not used here). Whilst emissions fell some 12% between 1990 and 2013, during 2012 and 2013 there was a 10% increase in emissions, mostly due to increases in iron and steel production and power stations shifting from natural gas to coal. Key contributors to Welsh emissions include:
 - **Energy supply** contributes 42%, which is generated from a number of sources in Wales, of which only 10% (2013) of electricity generation comes from renewables, the lowest percentage across UK. Some of this total energy generated in Wales is exported to other UK nations
 - **Business and industrial processes** contribute around 24%, mainly related to heavy industries such as iron and steel, business sector heating, and manufacturing processes
 - **Agricultural emissions** contribute 12%, largely due to livestock, fertiliser and fuel use
 - **Transport** contributes 11%, from road, rail, air and water. This figure is dominated by road transport emissions (93%) of which 56% are from cars alone
 - **Households** contribute 8%, most of which (97%) arises from the fuel used for heating and cooking
 - **Waste management** and the **public sector** (through their estates and operations) add another 3% to Welsh emissions

- **Consumption behaviour** – if everyone in the world were to consume the same as the average Welsh citizen, just over 2.5 planets would be required to shoulder the total environmental burden. This is due to our diet and the goods and services we consume as well as meeting our household energy use, transport and construction needs
- **Increasing population** – more people, both globally and in Wales, is likely to mean more emissions, even if we get better at reducing emissions per person, especially with more frequent travel and increase in resource based consumerism due to changing lifestyles

2.3 Likely consequences of climate change facing future generations

- **Impact on weather patterns** – increases in global temperatures are likely to cause more unpredictable and extreme weather events, including increases in rainfall intensity and more frequent high river flows, leading to a higher risk of surface water and river flooding
- **Impact on biodiversity** – wildlife populations globally have already declined by 58% since 1970 and this is likely to reach 67% by 2020. In Wales there are specific threats to soils, freshwater resources, marine ecosystems, wildlife and habitats,
- **Impact on key resources, including:**
 - **Energy** – the security and affordability of our energy supply will be affected by climate change. Fuel poverty in Wales is already high with 23% of households spending over 10% of their income on energy bill, and the combination of lack of affordability and inefficiency of homes will be significant for vulnerable households, where it is already causing around 2,300 excess winter deaths in Wales & England in 2014/15
 - **Food** – global supply chains for food, which we increasingly rely on, could be severely damaged as climate change impacts on water security, agricultural production and economic resources in other parts of the world
 - **Water** – water quality is likely to be affected by flooding. Changes in water temperature is also likely to reduce fish species in some catchments. Although Wales currently has a comfortable water surplus, climate change is expected to restrict the supply of water whilst population growth will increase demand
- **Impact on housing** - around 11% (approx. 165,000 properties) of Wales' building stock is located in river or coastal floodplains, with 53,000 of those properties in places facing a significant chance of river or coastal flooding,. Annual damage to properties is expected to cost an average of £200 million per annum
- **Impact on migration** – there is widespread evidence that climate change may drive up migration from other severely affected parts of the world. UNHCR has warned that climate change could cause the displacement of as many as 250 million people by 2050.
- **Impact on farming and land use** – 84% of Wales' land is agricultural. The productivity of farming may be dramatically altered under different climatic conditions, particularly considering that some 80% of this land is already designated as 'less favourable', i.e. experiencing poor land, cultivation and climatic conditions. Climate change could also damage ancient woodlands, hedgerows and other natural assets
- **Impact on infrastructure and key services** – our infrastructure including transport and utility services could be damaged both by flooding, which poses the greatest long-term risk, and by heat, water scarcity and slope instability caused by severe weather. Flooding already accounts for significant losses in services which rely on physical infrastructure such as roads, rail and energy supply,
- **Impact on health** – it is estimated that heat-related deaths in Wales will increase to between 3.1 and 14.3 per 100,000 in 2050. Projected climate changes could lead to worsening respiratory problems as a result of reduced air quality in urban and rural areas and due to its

effect on the seasonal allergy disorders. Increase in traffic level as a result of infrastructure that is not adapted to climate change impacts can lead to noise pollution, which is already affecting the homes of more than 200,000 people in Wales who are exposed to levels of road traffic noise exceeding World Health Organisation night noise guidelines. The World Health Organisation describe climate change as '*among the greatest health risks of the 21st century*', with an increasing impact on for example disease control and clean water supplies

- **Impacts on businesses** - flooding and extreme weather events can damage assets and disrupt business operations, particularly where there is limited capacity to adjust to climate change and the damage it may cause as a result of flooding, among others. According to CCRA, by 2050 annual damage to non-residential properties in Wales is likely to increase by between 29% and 96%
- **Impact on investments** - climate change may also affect where and how much businesses invest in the long term. The insurance industry is already facing a steady rise in the cost of business claims for weather damage and if this makes insurance more expensive or limited in scope this could be damaging, particularly to the small businesses which make up a substantial part of the Welsh business sector

3. Economic change – shifting to an economy that is fit for the future

3.1 Overview

An economy that is fit for the future is one that is innovative and productive in building a low carbon society. It recognises the limits of the global environment and therefore uses resources proportionately and works to reduce and mitigate climate change. It also supports the development of a skilled and well-educated population, generating real wealth and providing decent work through which everyone can take advantage of that wealth. This is not an economy that can be meaningfully measured by economic growth alone, and many have long argued it is incompatible with economic growth at all. The need for new thinking about economic development is being widely recognised, including by global institutions such as World Bank, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and World Economic Forum who are working towards *Inclusive growth*. Alternative measures such as the Social Progress Index (which “*measures social progress not wealth*”) or Measures of Well-being (which monitors “*how the UK as a whole is doing these days*”) or even the Happiness Index (which “*measures what matters*”) may have much more to tell us about whether or not we are moving towards an economy that delivers well-being for future generations. But making progress against these kinds of measures requires some dramatic shifts in thinking about economic strategy and prosperity in Wales.

At the same time globalisation and technological innovation are continually moving the economic goalposts and Wales faces considerable challenges in keeping up with, let alone getting ahead of, these changes. Wales has long-standing high levels of poverty, deprivation and inequality: economic business as usual has failed to deliver well-being for significant parts of the population, the legacy of Wales’ industrial past is still visible by its impact on our natural environment and biodiversity, as well as on our health, and we are at risk of getting even further left behind by economic ‘progress’ in the way that it is currently happening. Our future prosperity depends on cultivating the right skills, infrastructures (natural and built), and industries to adapt and thrive under changing and somewhat unpredictable future conditions.

3.2 Key factors contributing to the economic challenge for Wales:

- **Short term economic decision-making** – economic decisions are driven by electoral cycles and short term policy agendas, so are often inconsistent with long-term goals
- **Low value added** - Wales has the lowest GVA (Gross Value Added) of all UK regions at £18,002 per capita (71% of UK average)
- **Low earnings** - the employment rate is 71.3%, lower than 8 other regions and countries in UK (excluding Northern Ireland, North East and West Midlands) with weekly earnings the second lowest in the UK
- **Low productivity** – economic productivity, which measures how well we are using our resources including labour force, for every unit of products or services that we produce, is 31% lower in Wales than in London (& lowest compared to all other English regions). One factor in this productivity gap is the low level of qualifications amongst workers in Wales
- **Inadequate investments** – insufficient or inadequate infrastructure such as for electricity generation, transmission and distribution, water, telecommunications and transport can lead to congestion, power cuts, and lack of access to roads and resources,
- **Workforce utilisation** – many jobs in Wales are low skilled and low waged, but a high proportion of these jobs are held by workers who are over-qualified, suggesting that the skills

available are not being used adequately and are therefore not contributing to productivity and economic performance as much as they could be,

- **Lack of decent work** - a high proportion of jobs in Wales, particularly in sectors such as in care, retail and hospitality sector, do not offer good pay, secure contracts or decent benefits such as childcare and flexible hours. Lack of decent work remains by far the most important factor in Wales's relatively high levels of poverty
- **Low educational attainment** – this contributes to a lack of readiness to work, particularly in decent and future jobs. On current trends, between 2015-2020 up to 70,000 (44.6%) of school leavers in Wales will not have five good GCSEs,
- **Funding Cuts** – funding cuts and austerity measures are affecting many public services. Cuts also affect public sector jobs, and Wales is particularly vulnerable to this due to a relatively high concentration (higher than UK average at 26.7%) of public sector jobs. The implications of Brexit are as yet unclear but could be significant as Wales currently receives more from EU funding (£520 million) than it contributes (£442 million)
- **Recession** – recession has affected Wales' trading partners both within and beyond the EU, and exports have fallen by around £300m as a result. The fall in commodity prices and increases in prices for feed and fertilizer has hit our rural economy in particular, particularly the dairy sector
- **Globalisation** – the movement of heavy industries out of Wales, due to competition with other parts of the world, has endangered jobs which we have traditionally relied on and decimated many people's livelihoods
- **Welfare reform** - UK welfare reforms have hit Wales hard, particularly amongst those who are disabled who have lost some £165 per working-age adult. This is particularly problematic because of Wales's high rate of disability (24% of the working-age population report a disability, compared with 20% in England. Overall, half of all workless, working-age adults in Wales are disabled.)
- **Rising living costs** - people's ability to afford the goods and services needed for an 'adequate' standard of living has declined. Wage growth has been slow, changes to tax credits and benefits have affected household incomes, and the cost of essentials has risen by 28% since 2008 – faster than general inflation. The high cost of childcare is also a significant barrier to work
- **Taxation** - primary levers for reducing poverty, such as tax and benefits, are not devolved meaning that policies better at addressing local needs or demands cannot be employed
- **Poverty policies** – these have not been sufficient or effective, which can partly be attributed to the lack of a sufficiently strong evidence base which includes disaggregated data to better identify and target groups of people
- **Technological disruptions** –increasing digitisation of industry and automation of work will increase pressure on the availability of jobs, particularly for those in low skilled and manufacturing roles. There are predictions that 35% of UK jobs may be at risk in the next 10-20 years as a result of automation

3.3 Likely consequences of the economic challenge facing future generations

- **Impact on income** - poverty in Wales is higher than UK average, and rates have stayed more or less the same for the past 12 years. 23% of people in Wales are struggling to make ends meet and there are growing levels of worklessness, underemployment, and people in work experiencing poverty,. Without a change in the way the economy works this is not likely to improve
- **Impact on affordability of products and services** - 23% of households in Wales, about 291,000 households, live in fuel poverty. Most of these (261,000) are households that include a child, older person, or someone who is disabled or has a long term illness. Growing numbers of people are accessing food and fuel banks and Age Cymru found that a third of retired households are cutting back on areas of spending, such as food, heating, social activities or consumer goods. Rural communities already face challenges with access to services and will be further affected by cuts to services, especially those on low incomes, older residents, and families that rely most on local services
- **Impact on health** - people who experience poverty or live in deprived areas have fewer years of life free from illness or disability and are likely to die sooner, . According to Public Health Wales obesity is more prevalent in areas where people experience poverty, and more adults die as a result of smoking and alcohol misuse in these areas compared to the least deprived areas. Unemployment, especially long term unemployment, is also a contributing factor towards mental health conditions in adults (24%), smoking (43%), physical inactivity (60%). Even more worryingly it increases mortality rate by 20-25% in the 10 years following the loss of a job
- **Impact on children** – 29% of children live in poverty. Children in low-income households have poorer mental and physical health, and achieve worse school results than those in better-off families, increasing the risk of staying in poverty across generations. They are also at greater risk of multiple Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) which can lead to greater likelihood of health-harming behaviours during their lives, and affecting the life chances of the next generation
- **Growing skills gap** – there is likely to be an increase in the skills gap as professional and managerial jobs grow and semi and unskilled jobs reduce, leading to intense competition for jobs. For children and young people growing up in poverty they will be most affected as they are at risk of achieving poor educational results, have lower skills and aspirations, and are also more likely to be low paid, unemployed and welfare dependent in adulthood
- **Cost of providing services** – Wales' high levels of poverty and social need mean we are spending £3.6 billion every year to provide services that deal with the social consequences through the health, education, social care and criminal justice systems. This means £1 in every £5 of spending on public services is poverty-related
- **Impact on equalities** – , ., children, lone parent families, women, disabled people, people from non-white ethnicities, asylum seekers and refugees are all at a greater risk of poverty than the rest of the population. Therefore, a failure to address the drivers of poverty will continue to have an un-equalising effect on Welsh society
- **Impact on culture** – cuts are affecting non-statutory services such as culture and leisure facilities the most,,, creating a barrier to cultural participation with children in deprived communities missing out the most,. At a time when the creative industries sector is rapidly expanding this could have a detrimental impact on the future growth of the sector and damage potential employment opportunities for young people in these industries

4. Population change - tackling the challenges and opportunities of an ageing population, the changing composition of our communities, and the importance of early years and adverse childhood experiences

4.1 Overview

Global population is expected to reach 9 billion by 2050. Wales' population is not just likely to increase, but will become an increasingly ageing population. Whilst longer lives are something to be celebrated - we now have over 25,000 people aged 90 or more, compared to 700 in 1911. An ageing population will also mean an increase in age-related health issues. Wales' population will also see a decreasing ratio between the number of workers to number of pensioners, and changes in the make-up of society resulting from: migration, internationally and from rest of the UK, bringing a mix of benefits and pressures across society; changes in the ethnicity of our communities, which whilst remains predominantly white and Christian, in the last decade has become more ethnically diverse; and our changing lifestyles which has seen a growth in number of households (7.4%) in the last decade, mainly due to more 1-person households. There has also been a decline in the number of people speaking Welsh, especially in previously Welsh speaking areas of Wales.

Looking to the long-term we need to pay particular attention to the early years, giving new generations in Wales the best possible start in life regardless of where they start out, breaking cycles of deprivation and disadvantage where they persist and reducing the prevalence of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) which have such lifelong and even inter-generational consequences.

4.2 Key factors that contribute to population change

- **Increasing population** - Wales' population will increase from 3.1 million to 3.3 million by 2033. A third of people will be 65+ years old – almost twice as many as today - whilst what we currently think of as working age (16-64) will decrease by 5% between 2014 and 2039,. Over the past decade population growth has been highest in Cardiff (12%), Pembrokeshire (8%), Bridgend (8%) and Monmouthshire (7%). Increased fertility rates and migration have contributed to an increasing population, and improvements in medical advancements have increased life expectancy
- **Welsh identity and language** - although nearly two thirds of the population expressed their national identity as Welsh, with more young people (under 20 years) describing themselves as Welsh there is a decline in the proportion of people able to speak Welsh, from 21% in 2001 to 19% in 2011. The Welsh Language Commissioner's report (2016) points out that this meant a drop from 53 to only 39 communities in Wales where over 70% of the population were Welsh speakers, over that 10-year period
- **Unhealthier population** – while we are living longer, much of the population is not living a healthier life, with almost two thirds (58%) of adults and 25% of children overweight or obese. Obesity is associated with multiple health risks, increasing the risk of type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, high blood pressure, some cancers, osteoarthritis and depression,,
- **Household size** – household sizes are getting smaller as more people live in single-person or lone parent households, which is leading to an increase in the number of households and is projected to increase by 15% by 2036
- **Rural and urban split** - the most recent population estimates indicated that around 33% of the Welsh population were located in rural authorities, 14% lived in semi-rural authorities, 30% were in the valleys and 23% were concentrated in the urban authorities, with rural seeing

a decrease in 0-15years and working age people (as in other parts of Wales), and a more significant rise in those aged 65 years and over

- **Lower educational attainment** – with plentiful but low skilled employment available in the past in the coal, metal and manufacturing industries, educational attainment was generally low. However, this trend is continuing in the younger generation, especially in those from poorer communities who perform 32-34% worse than those in less deprived areas. This educational under-achievement is visible in children as young as three-years-old

4.3 Likely consequences of population change facing future generations

- **Increased incidences of ill-health** – an ageing population means an increase in age-related conditions, such as dementia and cancer. Prevalent behaviours such as alcohol consumption, sedentary lifestyles, and smoking, along with rising obesity will result in an increased prevalence of a range of chronic and potentially life-limiting conditions
- **Changing demand for health, care services and wider public services** – an ageing and less healthy population is likely to increase demand on public services, whilst other changes such as a more diverse population, doing different types of work and with different living arrangements will change the pattern of those demands. Continuing cuts in services are likely to make the situation worse
- **Deepening inequalities** – health inequalities are already quite extreme with differences of up to 20 years in healthy life expectancy between neighbouring communities in some parts of the country. These are likely to be exacerbated under an ageing population scenario
- **Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)**– a combination of low educational attainment causing worklessness, unemployment, and stress-related illness, along with increasingly unhealthy lifestyles, could increase the likelihood of ACEs amongst children and young people in Wales, leading to health-harming and anti-social behaviours, poor school performance and a greater risk of being involved in crime – and less likelihood of being a productive member of society
- **Impact on workforce** – an increase in the older population could lead to older people staying longer in the workforce, but at the same time older workers experience healthcare needs which compromise their ability to work . The availability of decent jobs will be critical, especially for young people, women, and others trying to enter the workforce as rising economic pressures on households mean all adult members have to work in order to earn a livelihood
- **Housing** – the availability and affordability of housing will be squeezed by a growing population and the lifestyle shift towards smaller family and household units, while an increase in house building to meet demands will likely reduce access to and availability of green spaces, which may bring added environmental dangers (such as more exposure to impacts of climate change)
- **Impact on resources** – an increasing population will increase demands on resources such as food, water and energy, and meeting this demand will increase emission levels and deplete resources, particularly if our current consumptive behaviours continue

5. Citizen disengagement - championing public participation and involvement in decision-making

5.1 Overview

For a thriving and cohesive society citizens must be empowered and feel engaged in shaping the decisions that affect them and their communities. This requires both much less extreme inequalities and the presence of strong and effective civic institutions that citizens trust. In their report 'Making a Good Society', the Commission of Inquiry into the Future of Civil Society in the UK and Ireland highlighted that *"the conditions for a healthy civil society include high levels of social trust and equality, as well as legal protection for independence and a collaborative relationship with the state."* More broadly, civic engagement is essential to social justice, giving voice to communities and third sector organisations, including those who are poorer and more marginalised. In Wales, the increasing wealth gap and persistent health inequalities have fuelled a sense of disillusionment with politicians and public bodies, particularly in areas of deprivation. The Brexit vote expressed a powerful desire for change. At the same time a strong theme emerging from The Wales We Want national conversation was the need for *'greater engagement in the democratic process, a stronger citizen voice and active participation in decision making'* as a fundamental basis for the well-being of future generations.

5.2 Key factors that contribute to citizen disengagement

- **Sense of disconnect from decision-makers** – The Wales We Want exercise revealed that communities feel frustrated after repeated experiences of being consulted ineffectively or too late, or in a way that could not influence the decisions taken. This was found to be stronger the further away people were from Cardiff
- **Persistent gap between rich and poor** – in Wales the poorest 10% have about 1.5% of total income, whilst the richest 10% have 20-30 times more. Globally Oxfam reports that eight billionaire men own the same wealth as the 3.6 billion people who make up the poorest half of the world's population. This creates a profound sense of unfairness
- **Generational and geographical divides** – differences in opinion between older and younger generations and between different areas of Wales were highlighted by the patterns of voting in the Brexit referendum, contributing to a sense of a disunited society in which normal party positions no longer really capture citizens' actual concerns. Trust in government is also low in young people - only 15% of 18-24 year olds in the UK trusted the Government to put the needs of the nation first, compared to 22% of 35-44 year olds
- **Fraud and corruption within public, private and third sectors** – corruption and financial scandals such as that around MPs' expenses lead many to question the ethics of senior leaders and executives and heightens a sense of disillusionment with those in positions of responsibility
- **Forces beyond our control** – loss of faith in 'the system' caused by lack of voice in shaping services at local, regional or national levels is exacerbated by growing fear of forces seemingly beyond citizens' control: immigration, the erosion of societal values and the pace of technological change. A recent 2016 IPSOS MORI survey revealed that over 75% of UK population feel that the world is changing too fast and is increasingly becoming a more dangerous place to live
- **Changes in the world of work** – low-skill or manufacturing jobs may be made obsolete by technological advances in many industries, adding to a sense of unfairness to employees who are unable to find decent jobs in the digital age without the right training and up-skilling

- **Lack of accessible public space** - access to green and community spaces is unevenly distributed across society with poorer social groups generally having lower access, meaning they miss out on associated benefits such as opportunities for physical activity, social contact and integration, children's play, and better air quality. Support and advice centres are also unevenly distributed, particularly affecting rural communities
- **Education** – young people educated to degree level are more likely to register to vote (78.5%) compared to those with no qualifications (63.3%) in England & Wales
- **Increasing impact of aggressive social media campaigns / fake news** – the last year saw a significant rise in aggressive use of social media for campaigns, such as during the EU referendum, and more recently 'fake news' is also seeing a worrying increase to a point where according to the Edelman survey a *“majority of people believe blunt, outspoken, spontaneous straight-talkers over rehearsed and diplomatic communicators...and that trust has been so corroded that we now trust leaked information much more than traditional news sources; and algorithms over human editors”*

5.3 Likely consequences of citizen disengagement to future generations

- **Apathy** – apathy towards public institutions will further undermine engagement in the democratic process, making getting citizens voices heard and active participation in decision making even less likely
- **Lack of trust in civic institutions** – the Edelman Trust Barometer 2017 revealed the largest-ever drop in trust across the institutions of government, business, media and NGOs in UK during Dec 23 – Jan 9th 2017, with trust in media falling steeply at 43%, trust levels in government dropping 41% . Over 50% surveyed believed *“the current overall system has failed them, that it is unfair and offers little hope for the future”*
- **Low voter turnout** – disillusionment and lack of engagement with our institutions may drive continued low voter turnout for Assembly elections: this has sat at less than 50% across Wales over the last few electoral cycles
- **Erosion of national identity and community spirit** - Wales is proud of its heritage and culture with citizens increasingly defining themselves as Welsh rather than British. Welsh citizens' express passionate values over selfish ones to a greater degree than most of the UK. This sense of pride with their place also came through clearly from the national conversation on the Wales We Want. However, this community spirit appears to be eroding with increasing negative attitudes towards migration, leading to rise in discrimination, driven by a number of factors including perceived competition for resources, jobs and services as well as housing pressures
- **Lack of capacity to handle the impact of austerity policies** – in the context of cuts in government spending and growing disapproval of welfare spending and migration there is all the more need for strong civic organisations who can be the voice of their communities, and especially for those in poorer communities and those in more marginalised societies.
- **Persistent inequalities** – if citizens are unwilling or unable to engage meaningfully in public decision-making there is less chance of breaking cycles of inequality, deprivation and poverty both because deep understanding of the causes and opportunities for change may be lacking, and because collaboration between public bodies and communities will be compromised
- **Tensions between communities** – as the aftermath of the Brexit referendum showed, tensions between communities and expressions of attitudes such as racism can quickly escalate in the kind of climate of aggressive and divisive public debate which may be more likely where citizens do not otherwise feel heard

6. SenseMaker and Draft Strategic Plan

Thank you for your interest. If you haven't already, please give me your feedback and tell me what is important to you through our SenseMaker survey available [here](#). All this work is also helping us design our strategic plan. You can access the draft version [here](#).

Appendix 1. Overview of the Well-being of Future Generations Act

The [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#) came into effect in April 2016, and places a duty on 44 devolved public bodies in Wales 'to carry out sustainable development', which means:

“the process of improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales by taking action, in accordance with the sustainable development principle (see section 5), aimed at achieving the well-being goals (see section 4)”.

1.1 Sustainable Development principles and five ways of working:

Taking action in accordance with the [Sustainable Development principles](#) means, as per Section 5 of the legislation:

“that the body must act in a manner which seeks to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”

In order to act in that manner, a public body must take account of the following things—

- a) the importance of balancing short term needs with the need to safeguard the ability to **meet long-term needs**, especially where things done to meet short term needs may have a detrimental long-term effect;
- b) the need to take an **integrated approach**, by considering how:
 - (i) the body's well-being objectives may impact upon each of the well-being goals
 - (ii) the body's well-being objectives impact upon each other or upon other public bodies' objectives, in particular where steps taken by the body may contribute to meeting one objective but may be detrimental to meeting another
- c) the importance of **involving other persons** with an interest in achieving the well-being goals and of ensuring those persons reflect the diversity of the population of
 - (i) Wales (where the body exercises functions in relation to the whole of Wales),
 - or (ii) the part of Wales in relation to which the body exercises functions
- (d) how acting in **collaboration with any other person** (or how different parts of the body acting together) could assist the body to meet its well-being objectives, or assist another body to meet its objectives
- (e) how deploying resources to **prevent problems occurring** or getting worse may contribute to meeting the body's well-being objectives, or another body's objectives

1.2 The Well-being goals

The well-being goals are defined as follows:

Goal	Description of the goal
A prosperous Wales.	An innovative, productive and low carbon society which recognises the limits of the global environment and therefore uses resources efficiently and proportionately (including acting on climate change); and which develops a skilled and well-educated population in an economy which generates wealth and provides employment opportunities, allowing people to take advantage of the wealth generated through securing decent work.
A resilient Wales.	A nation which maintains and enhances a biodiverse natural environment with healthy functioning ecosystems that support social, economic and ecological resilience and the capacity to adapt to change (for example climate change).
A healthier Wales.	A society in which people's physical and mental well-being is maximised and in which choices and behaviours that benefit future health are understood.
A more equal Wales.	A society that enables people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances (including their socio economic background and circumstances).
A Wales of cohesive communities.	Attractive, viable, safe and well-connected communities.
A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language.	A society that promotes and protects culture, heritage and the Welsh language, and which encourages people to participate in the arts, and sports and recreation.
A globally responsible Wales.	A nation which, when doing anything to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, takes account of whether doing such a thing may make a positive contribution to global well-being.

Appendix 2: Role of Future Generations Commissioner for Wales

The legislation clearly sets out the powers and duties of the Commissioner, along with the functions that the Commissioner can undertake to fulfil these duties.

2.1 Duties and Power of the Commissioner

As per Part 3 of the legislation, the general duty of the Commissioner is to:

- (a) promote the sustainable development principle, in particular to
 - (i) act as a guardian of the ability of future generations to meet their needs
 - (ii) encourage public bodies to take greater account of the long-term impact of the things that they do
- (b) for that purpose to monitor and assess the extent to which well-being objectives set by public bodies are being met

In carrying out this duty, the Commissioner can **provide advice or assistance** to the public bodies, the Auditor General for Wales, the public service bodies, and any other persons who are considered to be taking action to contribute towards achievement of the well-being goals; **encourage best practice** amongst public bodies to meet their well-being objectives; **promote awareness; undertake research** on among others, on *"anything related to any of those things that impacts upon the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales (or any part of Wales)."*

The Commissioner can also **"conduct a review** into the extent to which a public body is safeguarding the ability of future generations to meet their needs by taking account of the long term impact of things the body does."

The Commissioner must also, every 5 years (a year before the general election) prepare and publish a **Future Generations Report**, which is a report containing the Commissioner's assessment of the improvements public bodies should make in order to set and meet well-being objectives in accordance with the sustainable development principle. *"The Commissioner's report must include, in particular, an assessment of how public bodies should:*

- (a) better safeguard the ability of future generations to meet their needs, and*
- (b) take greater account of the long-term impact of the things that they do."*

The Commissioner's remit is very wide and the Commissioner's actions must be based on sound evidence to give effective advice and, when needed, to challenge public bodies on how well they are meeting their well-being objectives and plans.