

By email

22/09/17

Advice from the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales: Powys PSB

Dear Powys Public Services Board and supporting officers,

Thank you for seeking my advice on how you might take steps to meet your draft well-being objectives. I understand you have set a vision as a Public Services Board for the 'Powys we want by 2040' with four draft objectives, which currently are:

- **People in Powys will enjoy a stable and thriving economy . . .** In 2040, Powys is a place of opportunity and ambition where prosperity is built from high quality education and skills, where innovators and entrepreneurs can achieve unlimited success.
- **People in Powys enjoy a sustainable and productive environment . . .** The Powys of 2040 is recognised as a county that harnesses its natural resources to best effect whilst delivering economic and well-being benefits to residents and visitors alike.
- **People in Powys will be healthy, socially motivated and responsible . . .** In 2040, Powys is a county where residents enjoy good health and a good quality of life, where there is equality for all and opportunities for people to achieve what they want.
- **People in Powys will be connected to resilient communities and a vibrant culture . . .** The Powys of 2040 is a county founded on strong and resilient communities who innovate and create local solutions. Powys has also built on its reputation as a county offering a culturally diverse range of activities and events to suit all tastes.

I understand that you have also been working on themes arising from your well-being assessment to consider what steps may help you to meet your objectives, which include:

- Resilient communities.
- Employment and skills.
- Business and entrepreneurs.
- Transport and community links.
- Early intervention and prevention.
- Environment and adventure tourism.

My team have found regular conversations with your supporting officers very helpful in giving them an understanding of how you work together as a PSB; the method you have taken to well-being planning and your

intentions to deliver the objectives and take steps in a different way. As they will have discussed with you, I was keen that my advice would be useful to you and the context within which you work, so I hope you have also found these regular touch-points helpful and that they have given you some guidance along the way.

I also wanted my response to your well-being assessment to be 'feed-forward', rather than 'feedback', helping you to consider how to approach continuous assessment and well-being planning. I have recently published ['Well-being in Wales: Planning today for a better tomorrow'](#), which highlights key findings and recommendations for PSBs on the key areas of change needed to make better decisions for future generations. I am drawing on these reports in providing my advice to you.

As you know, in setting draft objectives and taking steps to meet them, PSBs must use the five ways of working to challenge business as usual and maximise their contribution to each of the seven national well-being goals. My advice is intended to help you consider how you might do this effectively and how you could demonstrate through your well-being plan that you have used the five ways of working to shape your steps.

Therefore, my advice is both about adopting different ways of working and specific to the draft objectives you have identified from your assessments to focus on, plus seeking to connect you with others who may be able to help. As my team have explained, the purpose of this advice is not to give you my opinion on your well-being objectives or your draft plan. These are determined and owned by you, as a collective PSB.

Adopting different ways of working to take steps to meet your draft objectives:

As general advice in publishing your well-being plan, I would like to understand what each draft objective and step you are setting means for Powys and how this is different to what you have done before. I know you have undertaken a lot of work to understand the connectivity between your vision and the current corporate plans of your organisations and I hope this has helped you to understand each other's professions and priorities. However, being part of a PSB is about taking collective steps to well-being and looking for new ways of doing things that improve the social, cultural, economic and environmental well-being of Powys. So, it is important that as you seek to take steps together, you challenge current thinking and approaches. In general, corporate plans have demonstrated what an organisation is going to do about an issue, but not how. Planning in this way has inevitably been in silos, without applying the five ways of working.

Achieving the ambitions of this Act is about the 'what' and the 'how' i.e. what are you doing to contribute to our shared vision of the seven national well-being goals? The goals acknowledge that sustainable development connects the environment in which we live, the economy in which we work, the society in which we enjoy and the cultures in which we share, to people and their quality of life, so what are you going to do differently together? And, how you are applying the sustainable development principle to shape your actions for Powys?

As such, setting objectives and steps is not business as usual. In the past, we have drawn out themes and priorities and written plans that show what we are doing anyway. To adapt your ways of working requires a fundamentally different approach and you need to give yourselves the time and space as a PSB to question whether current approaches to public service delivery are fit for the future and explore key pressures and tensions in delivery for each of your objectives. Alongside this you will also need to demonstrate how each of the public bodies represented at your PSB are taking all reasonable steps in the exercising of their functions to meet the PSB's objectives. I appreciate that during the first phases of implementation of the Act this may be challenging as the objectives of individual public bodies have been set. So, whilst I am sympathetic to the needs of PSBs and public bodies to have time to work towards alignment I will want to see that the work of the PSB is not seen as something separate to the priorities of its member bodies.

You have already shown strong leadership and direction as a PSB, in setting aside a meeting to debate and digest the findings of your well-being assessment earlier in the year. I am encouraging all PSBs to take a similar approach and now set aside meetings or create PSB sessions to debate each one of their draft objectives, look at the five ways of working below and have an honest discussion about the tensions between policy issues and current practice within your organisations in relation to each objective. This should then drive your discussions on how you can take new approaches together in the steps you will take to meet your objectives and maximise contribution to the seven national well-being goals. You will need to demonstrate how you have used the five ways of working to challenge current thinking and what this will mean specifically for Powys in your published well-being plan. I will also want to see how the steps you propose to take in respect of each of your objectives meets your duty to maximise your contribution to each of the well-being goals.

I would advise that you will need to demonstrate how your PSB has considered the following in relation to each of your objectives:

- **Long-term:** It is pleasing to see that you have set a vision for 2040 for Powys and begun to think about the future generations of the area. What do you understand about the long-term trends, opportunities, risks and likely scenarios for this issue? What are they and have you explored their impact on your steps? Are there current gaps in your data or understanding? What fore-sighting or future trends information do you need to understand this issue better? What capacity, confidence and expertise do you need to fill gaps in knowledge? To inform the action you take, you will need to adequately map and consider the future trends for each of your objectives. My office is working with others to build capacity in this area and, as your support team are aware, Welsh Government have been adding to the 'Future Trends' report resources, which you should make most use of by accessing through Objective Connect or by contacting David Thomas. [The Oxford Martin 'Now for the long-term'](#) report shows global and national future trends that we all need to react to in carrying out sustainable development.
- **Prevention:** In considering this issue, do you have an understanding of what you are trying to prevent? What are the root causes of the issue and when would be the best point to intervene? Are you clear on

whether it is primary prevention i.e. seeking to prevent something before it has even occurred; secondary prevention i.e. preventing something from getting worse; or tertiary prevention i.e. softening the impact of something that has ongoing effects; that is needed? This is the difference between encouraging someone to wear a bicycle helmet (primary prevention of head-injury); putting someone in the recovery position if they have fallen from their bike (secondary prevention of the injury worsening) and counselling after the accident (tertiary prevention to help ongoing injuries from worsening).

Many PSBs haven't used their assessments to fully understand both the current situation and the scale and nature of the response required. At the moment, it is not clear how services and resourcing will change in Powys to be more preventative. I appreciate you might not know the full picture yet, but I want to see all PSBs exploring how they break cycles and dig deeper into data to see the implicit messages in the data to better understand the causes and effects of key issues and trends to inform your steps.

- **Collaboration:** It is important that the people who sit around the PSB table can bring the best range of insights, constructive challenge, data and solutions to the PSB. Have you got the right people around the table, at the right level to make decisions around this issue? Who else might you need to be collaborating with to better understand this? As recommended in my report on the Well-being Assessments, now is a timely opportunity to review the invited membership of the PSB and consider who are the 'unusual' suspects that you may need to work with to take steps to meet this objective?

In delivering the steps, how might your organisations collaborate? You will need to demonstrate how your PSB is considering the steps that need to be taken together and across organisational boundaries in order to effectively meet your objectives. This could include co-locating staff, breaking down traditional structures, arranging job-swaps and secondments and, importantly, pooling resources. I will want to see how you have considered these benefits and how the steps you will take move you towards achieving this collaboration.

- **Integration:** For each objective, how are you going to move away from just doing something that meets the objective, and instead, demonstrate that you are taking steps which maximise your contribution to each of the goals? Instead of looking at this issue in a traditional and general sense, have you looked at the definition for each of the goals to widen your understanding of well-being for this issue and the opportunities which might exist for meeting these goals through each of your objectives? How well do you understand the contribution your organisation makes at the moment to this objective? And do you understand how different is the contribution you will need to make going forward for this objective?

The work you have done to understand the 'golden thread' between current corporate plans and the draft objectives has helped you to make a start here. How can you plot what's going on elsewhere in your organisations, the strategies and plans at a regional or a national level, to connect with others on achieving this objective? Your draft plan includes links between the different individual organisation's well-being objectives, but have you yet acknowledged the barriers or tensions that have arisen and what

steps can you (or others) take to remove them? Who else is needed around the PSB table to help you interconnect decision-making and improve well-being for this issue?

- **Involvement:** I know you have tried to continuously involve people in the development of your well-being objectives over the last few months and I am glad to hear this is planned to continue. I want to see a demonstrated focus on this for all PSBs that goes beyond the usual consultation and ad-hoc engagement. How are you taking steps to understand the lived experiences of people in your area and how is this shaping your actions? How are you actively seeking better ways of involving people in decision-making? How can you collaborate with members of the community in meeting these steps? As with the Social Care Wales Board, what options are there for involving people with lived experience on Boards and partnership groups?

This advice should be taken by all PSBs, but I appreciate every PSB has taken a different approach to drafting their well-being objectives and will be going about delivering their well-being plan in the context that is right for them. Your support officers have worked hard to help you achieve this level of progress in drafting your objectives and steps, but it is your leadership that is required to adopt a new way of working.

As such, one of my recommendations within the 'Well-being in Wales' report suggests that we need to move away from seeing PSBs as formal, local authority-led committee meeting, with members having built relationships and having a better understanding of each other's motivations. As I hear you've already discovered, how and where meetings are held and how the PSB is supported can all shift mindsets and allow for healthier challenge to 'business as usual'.

This leadership needs to be permeating at every level of your organisation. You should feel that the well-being plan of the PSB helps you to integrate your work and challenge current practices within your departments. In order to truly own this plan and ensure the steps you take are understood and undertaken by the member bodies of the PSB, you may want to consider closer working arrangements, a multi-agency virtual team with a senior leader or more formal secondments and co-location. There are several resources that may be of use, such as [Designing Multi-Agency Partnerships and Leading Culture Change](#).

Advice on how you might take steps to meet your draft objectives:

Setting your vision has already drawn on a number of sources of evidence and your own professional knowledge. This advice is intended to give you ideas, information and contacts that might help to demonstrate how you have considered the steps you will take in the context of Powys. As well as your four draft objectives, my advice will make reference to the six topics of focus you have identified, including resilient communities; employment and skills; business and entrepreneurs; transport and community links; early intervention and prevention; environment and adventure tourism. I want to emphasise that your draft objectives and the topics you've identified are all inter-connected and you should continue to build on this in developing and delivering your steps to meet these objectives.

- **People in Powys will enjoy a stable and thriving economy . . . In 2040, Powys is a place of opportunity and ambition where prosperity is built from high quality education and skills, where innovators and entrepreneurs can achieve unlimited success.**

I can see from your Phase 2 engagement materials that you have started to consider how this vision translates into practice for Powys. For each of your draft objectives, it is important you demonstrate how the objectives and steps maximise your contribution to the seven well-being goals. You have already identified in your vision that having a good digital infrastructure, making the most of the county's natural resources, capitalising on the assets of the area to encourage business and tourism, investing in skills and seeing people's health improve as a result, are all components of a stable and thriving economy for Powys. Who might you need to involve to maximise your contribution as a PSB to each of the goals? What opportunities are there to collaborate with other private and public sector providers? As your assessment identifies, how can you prevent younger people leaving Powys for greater opportunities elsewhere?

It is good to hear that you used future scenarios in the original discussion you had to set a vision for 2040. I would advise you to continue to think about the long-term impact of your action in setting steps to meet your draft objectives. The future of employment and how we see 'work' is changing, with jobs that exist now being unheard of when I left school. I have no doubt that it will be the same for our children; the [Future of Work report](#) predicts that 65 percent of the children who are now starting school will find themselves working jobs as adults that don't even exist yet. [And, according to McKinsey](#), technology could automate 45 percent of the tasks people are currently paid to do. Your well-being assessment identified that the majority of the population in Powys are employed in the public sector – how have you considered the impact of many of these roles being replaced by automation? What action can you take now, as public service providers, to encourage learning and jobs in the foundational economy, around local care, retail and food industries, which are jobs less likely to be automated in future and good for the local economy? A [recent report by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation](#) highlights the value of the social economy in creating jobs, strengthening skills and employability. How have you considered these long term trends in setting your steps and enabling people to adapt their skills for future earning? Whilst I have not yet seen the steps you are proposing to take in respect of meeting this objective, the outcomes and measures you have shared appear to be fairly traditional in their approach and so I would advise you to consider whether they are reflective of the long term trends I have advised you should identify and consider.

In thinking about the long-term skills required, who do you need to collaborate with to create the high-quality education and skills set out in your vision? How can this maximise your contribution to the seven goals? For example, schools are often at the heart of a cohesive community and the right package of skills can lead to a much more equal society. How can you work with schools and the NPTC Group of colleges to explore what this means in the context of Powys? Given that micro businesses and the self-employed make up a large proportion of people's work in Powys, how are you involving them in understanding the issue? Your well-being assessment identifies a feeling that young people are not being equipped with the right skills to enter employment, so how

might you encourage local businesses to use their social responsibilities and enable better learning for younger and older people?

The skills we will need in the future will clearly be different to what we need now – as you suggest, work / life balance will become more important. As this recent [World Economic Forum blog](#) quotes: "I believe in a future where the point of education is not to prepare you for another useless job, but for a life well lived." What life skills might your children need to make it in Powys in the future? The [Future of Work report](#) suggests project-based work is likely to become more widespread, with skills like creativity, connectivity, communication and problem-solving being far more important than specific knowledge. This seems even more likely in Powys than in other areas, with your identified high numbers of people in small businesses or self-employment.

Your assessment rightly identified that taking steps to meet this objective have to be integrated. Considering how this objective is realised from place to place is important in this respect, to understand what steps you might need to take where. For instance, what might this mean for flexible childcare in particular communities? How are opportunities being held back by digital infrastructure? The lack of mobile phone signal and reliable internet speeds has been repeatedly identified in your well-being assessment, and currently, this is exacerbated by poor physical transportation links. Most people in Powys use their personal vehicles, which will be impacting on air quality, their physical health and their time. As more employment will become reliant on digital connectivity, how can the PSB influence private sector providers to improve the digital infrastructure of the county? How can you collaborate with businesses to provide a financial case for change?

I would advise that, as public service leaders, you consider what actions you can take or influence to meet this objective. Your well-being assessment identifies a large number of micro-businesses operating in Powys and you have identified business and entrepreneurs as a key topic, so how can your organisational policies seek to help sustainable local businesses? The well-being assessment touches upon the 'red tape' affecting business growth in the area. I would advise you to show bravery and challenge where steps can be taken to address barriers in this regard. How can you integrate your support for these businesses, as they have called out for in your well-being assessment and how are your plans to do this linked with policy and service delivery opportunities at a national and regional level? Alongside this you should consider how your procurement procedures be the maximum of what you can do to contribute to a globally responsible Powys? [Forum for the Future](#) have published reports on this and my office are working with [Value Wales](#) to pilot new approaches to procurement in the context of the Act.

Linking to your other objectives and aiming for 'equality for all', you will also need to identify specific considerations you have taken to maximising your contribution to a more equal Wales. This should be considered as part of your duties to the Equality Act and your strategic equality objectives. For instance, less [than 1% of apprenticeships in Wales are taken up by disabled people](#) and, there remains an average [disability pay gap of 13.7%](#) across Great Britain. The [Equalities and Human Rights Commission in Wales](#) have several research reports highlighting the wider issue around disability, ethnicity and gender pay gaps.

How can your organisations seek to grow the Welsh language in the area? Alun Davies AM [announced funding for growing bilingual small businesses](#) recently to increase visibility of Welsh in our communities. In seeking to enable entrepreneurship and growth, how about introducing initiatives that stipulate people set up sustainable enterprises that maximise their contribution to the seven goals?

Other PSBs drafting similar objectives and steps include Ceredigion; Cardiff; Monmouthshire; and Caerphilly.

- **People in Powys enjoy a sustainable and productive environment . . . The Powys of 2040 is recognised as a county that harnesses its natural resources to best effect whilst delivering economic and well-being benefits to residents and visitors alike.**

As an area celebrated for its green space, mountains, rivers and lakes, Powys has a fantastic natural environment and your vision rightly recognises it is an important asset. You have identified the need to celebrate the national park and create opportunities for people to enjoy the outdoors. I am also encouraged to see you are considering the potential of the environment to bring you economic benefits through technologies, use of natural materials and tourism. But there is an absence currently of a demonstrated consideration of the long-term impacts of extreme weather events that will pose particular risks for your area. The seven national well-being goals provide you with a framework to consider what action you can take to mitigate, manage or resolve these risks over the short, medium and long-term.

In setting your vision for 2040, and the steps you will take to reach there, I urge you to consider the long-term effects of climate change on the county. Your well-being assessment identified over 6,000 homes and large parts of infrastructure at risk of flooding and threats to the resilience of your environment. Homes in Newtown were affected by extreme rainfall in 2012 and well-being assessments show how flooding affects people's well-being long after the event. Expected annual damage [to residential properties is estimated to be £22 million](#), therefore, understanding how different weather events impact on communities is crucial to prevention. As I said in my feedback to your well-being assessment, digging deeper into the issue based on place is important in working out the steps you might take. For instance, involving farmers in their land use in upland areas and involving businesses in how they might be protected in Newtown and other areas in future. [One example of investment in flood defences is the Lower Swansea Vale](#), a £6.7m project which provides protection to 284 businesses and industrial premises employing more than 10,000 people.

Many of the people in Powys rely on their environment for income, basic needs and recreation; and resources, like timber, are used by people across Wales. In the future, extreme weather is likely to cause droughts in the summer, meaning a shortage of water, declining bio-diversity and having a knock-on effect for agriculture. As over 70% of your land is farmed, how are you considering the potential economic effect of a changing climate on farming? If you are seeking to use your natural resources for economic benefit, how have you considered the long-term impact of extreme weather events on these resources? How can you use scenarios to imagine what preventative action you could take to protect agriculture, water supplies and transportation in the event of

extreme weather? [Zero Carbon Britain's recent 'Making it Happen'](#) report sets out what responsibilities we all have to future generations to acting on climate change now.

For every step you take as a PSB, you need to consider your own actions as Leaders, Chief Executives and senior officers of organisations. I am pleased to see a draft action in your engagement materials on providing electric charging points for vehicles around the county. In a county as large as yours, steps like this can really encourage behaviour change, which starts with your leadership and your own staff. What can you do to encourage the use of electric pool cars and encourage less travel by use of technology? As such, your own roles in protecting the environment for future generations will need to be clear in the steps you will take to meet this objective. This includes how you plan, design and locate future developments (as part of your Local Development Plan), buildings, infrastructure and other public and community spaces. Involving different people and perspectives in this planning is crucial. I fed back that your well-being assessment did not acknowledge the Brecon Beacons national park as a major and unique social, environmental, economic and cultural asset. As a member of your PSB, the national park can play a role in the tourism, local economy and environment of Powys and I would like to see more PSBs collaborating with the national parks of Wales in finding innovative solutions.

Together, you also have a large amount of public sector estate, responsibility for infrastructure and a say in how public buildings are designed and refurbished. [The Closing the Circle](#) report on the circular economy and the Welsh Environment is a useful report by Constructing Excellence in Wales, giving practical examples of where the public sector can look to minimise waste and resources in future projects. You can also take inspiration from some of the projects mentioned in the recent [Constructing Excellence Awards](#), such as the Active Classroom. Having a consideration of how 'green' these buildings are, both in terms of energy efficiency and sustainable construction, is a quick win for you as a PSB. The [Wildlife Trust in Wales report into green infrastructure](#) outlines how green infrastructure delivers a wide range of proven, tangible, and cost-effective economic, social and environmental benefits. The [Design Commission for Wales](#) also has case studies and resources on design that focuses on users, maximises energy efficiency and has been shown to significantly improve patient recovery in health.

Although the public sector only accounts for a relatively small amount of Wales' emissions, you are uniquely placed to influence emissions far more widely in areas such as transport, energy, land use and procurement. [The Welsh Government recently published](#) carbon emission levels subdivided by Local Authority. The Welsh Government also released a [Call for Evidence](#) to explore the most effective mechanisms for achieving a carbon neutral public sector by 2030 and I wrote to you urging you to consider and contribute before the deadline of 13th September. I will be hosting an event in November, in partnership with Welsh Government and Natural Resources Wales to: explore how the public service in Wales can involve people in collaborating and integrating their work, to take greater account of the long-term carbon implications of their activities, and help prevent the effects of climate change becoming even worse.

Your well-being assessment identifies a number of renewable energy schemes in the county. I would advise you to consider how you encourage this, as we have clear commitments to meet in terms of carbon reduction and meeting more of our energy will be key to this. The UK has pledged to have zero emissions by 2050 and every Welsh Government has pledged for more green jobs. But despite Wales, and Powys especially, being a place of great potential in providing natural energy, only 10% of Wales' electricity in 2013 was provided through renewable energy. Last year, the National Assembly for Wales Environment and Sustainability Committee produced '[A Smarter Energy Future for Wales](#)', with 19 recommendations for how Wales could transform its approach to energy. More recently, Smart Energy GB have produced a report on '[A Smart Energy Future for Rural Areas](#)', giving examples and case studies of rural areas across the UK who are making that transition. Following the recent Welsh Government consultation on Natural Resources Policy, they have [summarised their consultation responses](#), highlighting 'accelerating green growth by increasing resource efficiency, renewable energy and innovation' as an emerging priority. Furthermore, in its Programme for Government [Taking Wales Forward](#), the Welsh Government committed to, "support the development of more renewable energy projects, including tidal lagoons and community energy schemes". You may find this [seminar](#) from the National Assembly for Wales' Research Service and the Learned Society for Wales, provides insights from the leading energy experts in Wales and their thoughts on the future of renewable energy in Wales. [The Policy Forum for Wales](#) keynote seminar takes place on the 7th December this year, with a focus on priorities for energy policy, growing the sector in Wales and increasing investment in renewables.

You have also identified how important your environment is for tourism and recreation. In maximising your contribution to the seven well-being goals as a PSB, I would advise you consider how the environment benefits on the health, cohesion and culture of communities. As you've rightly recognised, there is huge potential for businesses in Powys to take advantage of adventure tourism. As you're aware, areas of North Wales have benefitted from this advantage over recent years. How can you encourage these businesses to be sustainable and of benefit to local residents, and other businesses such as local renewable energy schemes? Other rural communities across the globe have seen a recent upsurge of younger people staying in their place of birth, both with improved technologies but also by celebrating the way of life and introducing sustainable tourism. [This World Economic Forum article](#) suggests that some of the answer may lie in bottom-up community initiatives, where young people take a sense of pride and ownership in telling others about their heritage and environment, starting small scale businesses that benefit from visiting tourists.

Your assessment and key topics identified transport as a particular problem. How can you involve communities to connect parks, mountains, lakes, sites of special interest and historical significance with active travel opportunities, public transport and, at the same time, benefit local business? This involves a place-based focus on planning and a wider focus on the environmental, social and cultural well-being of an area – rather than purely economic gain. The Welsh Government recently launched a pilot scheme offering [free bus journeys across the TrawsCymru](#) network until May 2018, to encourage people to 'spend their weekends enjoying the diverse beauty of Wales'.

Other PSBs considering draft objectives and steps around their natural environment and renewable energy include Blaenau Gwent; Ceredigion; Carmarthenshire and the Vale of Glamorgan.

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As a PSB, you need to demonstrate how you have considered what you are seeking to prevent for all of your objectives. This vision is about prevention and enabling people to improve their well-being. As such, it connects to all of your objectives, as your key topics from the assessment include early intervention and prevention and community links. Your steps, therefore, should not just relate to how health can be improved but link to people's built and natural surroundings, their income and their community life – all of which are wider determinants of health. I advise you actively use the definitions of the seven well-being goals, as they are intended to show you how we can have multiple benefits on well-being through actions we take.

Currently, our services are often not set up in a way that would deliver this objective. We deal with people in neat 'service-user' categories, which often create barriers for people to have equality of opportunity. We deal with symptoms, such as substance misuse, domestic abuse, mental health, frailty, obesity and so on, rather than seeking to understand root causes. This way of working means we fail to join up the dots, to integrate and to spot signs of a worsening situation. The five ways of working are intended to challenge how we currently do things and provide a different lens as a whole public service for dealing with problems. Involving people is central to challenging the system because only by understanding the lived experiences of people can we design services that are fit for current and future generations. This example ['Why poor people don't plan long-term'](#) provides an insight into the barriers people face in overcoming inequality and; the case studies [contained in this report by Locality](#) demonstrate the financial and social costs of not taking this holistic and preventative approach to people's lives.

To take steps to meet this objective, your organisations must work towards better integration of services, co-locating teams, pooling resources and working in a way that makes sense for that community. In the steps you take, it is important to review the local initiatives that focus on mental health, substance misuse, criminal justice, housing, services and others to ensure they are preventative, joined up and actively seeking to better situations for families and for future parents to stop cycles of inequality continuing to the next generation.

Your vision provides an opportunity to consider the Powys your grandchildren will grow up in and how you can take action now to influence the outcomes of children being born today. As we know, the early days of a child's life and their family environment is crucial to their well-being throughout life. Public Health Wales' work on the [First 1000 days](#) and on the impact of adverse childhood experiences is clear in the impact we can have on the start of a child's life. [Late intervention services for young people are estimated to cost England and Wales £17bn](#)

[per year](#). Enabling people to have a healthy start in life is not just down to you, but the families that children grow up in and the communities they live in, as well as the families they then start of their own. The [New Economics Foundation work](#) on investing in children might be helpful, which highlights the need to address both material wellbeing and external circumstances – such as housing, poverty, and schooling – as well as psychosocial wellbeing and inner resources.

You have identified this objective around lifestyle choices and encouraging people to take advantage of their surroundings. The growing wellness industry, outdoor living and adventure sport should all be seen as opportunities for Powys. Are there steps you can take to help people change their behaviour by contributing to the seven goals? For instance, change often 'sticks' when people are involved in wider social and cultural activities together; for example, the [Nudjed 'Behaviour Change is a Team Sport'](#) report found getting people together increased exercise patterns. How does this relate to your other objectives and overall vision? What cultural activities can encourage children and adults to live healthier lives? How might people take part in cultural activities to help manage their health? This this is an opportunity to improve access to cultural activities and promote heritage, use of the Welsh language and encourage people to get together around a local cause, such as their environment.

In this way, I can see you have thought about 'social prescribing'. Collaborating with others to make this happen could make a real difference to our well-being. Methods of social prescribing cover a huge range of things, but it is growing and I am encouraged to see it being recognised as a preventative approach. This [study, on social prescribing in Bristol](#), provides information on different models and gives some insight into the improvements in mental and general physical health. The recent BBC documentary, ['The doctor who gave up drugs'](#), showed several examples of how alternative approaches to prescribing pills can have a more holistic, long-lasting positive impact on someone's life – with people getting physically fitter and healthier mentally without the reliance on prescriptions. As I'm sure you've recognised there are opportunities for you to work with organisations such as the National Trust and Wildlife Trusts to develop a county-wide approach. The [Natural Resources Wales' 'Actif Woods'](#) project is an example of getting people outside, protecting their environment and enjoying the positive effects on health and well-being. How can you involve other 'unusual suspects' in exploring the steps to meet this objective? How can the third sector feel empowered to help? In some areas, community organisations have been funded by the Intermediate Care Fund to act as community coordinators for older people – linking them with local activities and services in their area and helping them to stay active and well. If this is proving successful in keeping older people independent and out of statutory services, how can we better collaborate on resourcing initiatives like this? [WCVA produced wider information](#) on how the third sector play a role in contributing to the Act including resources on the seven well-being goals.

You have identified in your assessment, as with other parts of Wales, that more young people are accessing mental health services. Approximately 50% of people with enduring mental health problems display symptoms by the time they are 14 years old, and many at a much younger age. How can you collaborate to recognise symptoms of illness at a younger age? What can be done to prevent the problems at later life? How might services need to

change or universal services be adapted to have prevention at their core? [Cardiff have trialled mental health lessons for children](#) and a new report from Respublica and Barnado's, '[Making young minds matter](#)', highlights early interventions (such as in-school counselling in Wales) that can have a positive impact on mental health.

A number of PSBs are drafting objectives to improve health, improve prevention, enable people to take more responsibility for their health, introduce behaviour change and social prescribing; including Caerphilly; Cwm Taf; Pembrokeshire; Conwy / Denbighshire and Monmouthshire.

- **People in Powys will be connected to resilient communities and a vibrant culture . . . The Powys of 2040 is a county founded on strong and resilient communities who innovate and create local solutions. Powys has also built on its reputation as a county offering a culturally diverse range of activities and events to suit all tastes.**

It is clear that there is already community activism in your county. The number of businesses and community organisations shown in your assessment, and the fact that you have 110 Town and Community Councils puts you in a fortunate position for this objective. This objective connects with all of your other objectives in raising levels of innovation (such as in businesses, renewable energy, employment), strength (in health and well-being), resilience (of the environment and eco-systems) and culture (connecting people through transportation, community links, interests and language). There is a real opportunity here for you to think about how you maximise your contribution to the national goals. The heritage, language, traditions and natural environment of Powys are all things people are passionate about. [The Arts Council for Wales' strategy, which](#) outlines some of the benefits involvement in creative activity can have on the health, cohesion and skills of the population. The [Cultural Commissioning Programme, funded by Arts Council England](#) seeks to help commissioners of public services understand how they can improve outcomes by integrating arts and cultural activities into a range of services, including mental health and wellbeing, older people and place-based commissioning. Collaborating with the national public bodies subject to the Act, such as Sport Wales, Arts Council for Wales, National Museum and National Library of Wales, may be able to help you see how your steps to meet this objective could maximise contribution to each of the goals.

As you have identified, the number of Welsh speakers has fallen in recent years in Powys. Being bilingual not only improves feeling of belonging and identity, but is an important skill for employment and business growth in Wales. How are you seeking to grow the language through promoting opportunities to use Welsh, providing activities that teach Welsh and ensuring tourism promotes the language as an asset? The Welsh Language Commissioner's team are considering how they best help PSBs to consider the role they can play in growing the Welsh language, as set out in '[Cymraeg 2050](#)'. Please let my team know if you would like to connect with relevant individuals in these organisations.

I have been impressed by the way you've started to involve people in different ways, such as by producing animations and by making simple materials available to the public on your work. I want to see PSBs demonstrating that they've considered the long-term trends and opportunities for all of their draft steps, so have

you considered the ways people may wish to be involved in future? What sort of changes might you need to make to your organisational systems and policies to enable people to get more involved in communities and shape local services? Currently, research shows that children aged between five and 16 years spend an average of six and a half hours a day in front of a screen; [28% of young people use social media](#) as their primary news source; [43% of 'millennials' are driven to make financial donations through social channels](#); and according to [the 2017 ONS survey](#), 87% of all adults in Wales were recent internet users (meaning they had used the internet in the last three months). Although some people are currently offline, and there is clearly a need for a tailored approach, there is a real opportunity to engage with people that is most convenient to them and is part of their daily life, not an additional chore. "[Monmouthshire Made Open](#)" is an example of an online platform that has anticipated how people might contribute to improving their area in the future, with opportunities to share ideas, ask the community, start a project and seek volunteers or resources. Matthew Gatehouse, working with Monmouthshire PSB, would be able to share their learning with you on establishing this website.

Involving people in the running of their community can also have a positive effect on helping to make the local environment more resilient. [NESTA has a guide](#) to working with communities to tackle climate change, including the 'Big Green Challenge', where participants changed their lifestyles to reduce their carbon footprint. Projects such as ['Rainscape' through Dwr Cymru](#) suggest ways that we can all mitigate the effects of floods, and an extreme example includes the [Isle of Eigg in Scotland](#), where the community are having a positive impact on their environment by introducing renewable community energy schemes, building sustainable businesses and improving biodiversity. In a county so vast, there will be differences across Powys that need to be interpreted and explored, which will involve empowering people and staff spending more time on the ground. I would encourage you to use the asset of Town and Community Councils, as working with community councils, the third sector and other networks can help you to understand how best to engage people and encourage behaviour change focused on place.

Opening up land and buildings to the community could be a way of encouraging multiple benefits to be realised. Across the UK, austerity has meant that buildings, land and services have been transferred to community ownership and, in many cases, it has increased well-being for the people involved. How can you better use the collective public estate you have in Powys? If isolation and transportation is an issue, how can some provision be provided in a different way? The [Welsh Government National Assets Working Group](#) captured some Welsh examples that you might wish to explore, but there are many national organisations promoting better use of publicly owned land and assets, such as [Shared Assets](#), [Nurture Development](#) and [Locality](#), with the aim of encouraging communities to thrive.

You should consider what this objective and steps are seeking to prevent. Is this in response to the growing population of people living alone in the county, particularly in older age? Loneliness and social isolation affect people of all ages, particularly in rural communities. But as your assessment shows, older people particularly value feeling connected to their communities. Linking this to the objective above, research [by Ageing Well Wales](#) has shown that loneliness in older people is closely linked to poor mental and physical health, how can you

maximise the benefits of increased involvement to improve the health of older people in your area? There are some good examples of projects that seek to bring people together to learn new skills, socialise and build their resilience in later life, like [Men's Sheds Cymru](#), happening across Wales that the PSB could encourage and support. [Solva Care](#) also demonstrates innovative initiatives that focus on the needs of the community first and integrate services to improve well-being. The Older People's Commissioner recently wrote to you as PSBs, outlining some of the approaches you may want to take in recognising this part of your population.

Other Public Services Boards are also considering setting objectives around engagement, culture, developing / sustaining strong social networks, fostering belonging and shaping services. In particular, you may wish to share ideas with Vale of Glamorgan; Ceredigion; and Newport PSBs.

I hope you have found this advice helpful in moving forward towards publishing a well-being plan for formal consultation. Please get in touch with my team if you want further contact details for any of the organisations and reports mentioned in this letter.

I am also learning the best ways to advise, support and monitor how public bodies are seeking to apply the five ways of working and maximise their contribution to the seven well-being goals, so I would welcome any feedback from you, supporting officers and the Powys PSB Scrutiny Committee on how I have chosen to approach this statutory duty and the advice I have given.

I look forward to receiving your draft well-being plan and please keep in touch with me and my team.

Kind regards,

Sophie Howe

Yours sincerely,



Sophie Howe