

By email

09/10/2017

Advice from the Future Generations Commissioner to Cwm Taf PSB

Dear Cwm Taf 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. My team have found regular conversations with your supporting officers, the opportunity to attend planning meetings and being able to attend the Strategic Partnership Board (SPB) very helpful in giving them an understanding of how you work together as a Public Services Board (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.

Thank you for recently sending us a link to your draft well-being plan; I am basing this advice on the draft objectives and steps you have set out to date. My advice is in two parts – firstly, to help you consider how you might use the five ways of working to challenge business as usual and to maximise their contribution to each of the seven national well-being goals effectively. Secondly, based on your priorities, it provides prompts, resources and contacts to help you demonstrate through your well-being plan that you have used the five ways of working and seven well-being goals to shape your steps. The purpose of this advice is not to give you my opinion on your well-being objectives. These are determined and owned by you, as a collective PSB.

I would encourage you to read this in conjunction with my response to your well-being assessment. I was keen that it was a 'feed-forward', rather than 'feedback', helping you to consider how to approach continuous assessment and well-being planning. As you know, I have recently published ['Well-being in Wales: Planning today for a better tomorrow'](#), which highlights key findings and recommendations for all PSBs and public bodies on the key areas of change needed to make better decisions for future generations. Both of these resources are also intended as advice to you.

I can see that you have used a logic model to develop your draft well-being objectives from the findings of your assessment, which are:

- **To promote safe, confident, strong and thriving communities improving the well-being of residents and visitors and building on our community assets.**



- a. Develop Community Zones as an area or place based approach focussing support to improve outcomes for our residents with the greatest challenges.
  - b. We will work differently to involve our communities and to increase local volunteering.
  - c. Work with our communities to provide consistent messages and links and signposting to community, public sector and business support within and close to communities.
  - d. Work with and support communities who want to manage and improve their local environment.
  - e. (Medium term) Well co-ordinated community volunteers and public services with ACE informed and thriving communities.
  - f. (Medium term) Safe and pleasant environments and green spaces, where people are proud to live and participate.
  - g. (Long term) The communities shaping services to meet the needs of residents and visitors.
- **To help people live long and healthy lives and overcome any challenges.**
    - a. To target our support in the areas with the biggest challenges, working with our communities to make sure everyone has the best chance to live long and happy lives.
    - b. To work together as public services and with our communities to reduce levels of obesity.
    - c. Promote healthy lifestyles by encouraging people to take up the "One more healthy behaviour" approach with all staff and service users.
    - d. (Medium term) Reduce the frailty of our ageing population by improving the rates of the population that have 4 or 5 healthy behaviours to 20%.
    - e. (Long term) Improve the rates of healthy life-expectancy and life expectancy in Cwm Taf to the average Wales.
  - **To grow a strong local economy with sustainable transport that attracts people to live, work and play in Cwm Taf.**
    - a. To make the most of the investment and return opportunities of the £1.299 billion Cardiff Capital Region City Deal and Metro locally within Cwm Taf.
    - b. Growth and promotion of tourism using the assets of our beautiful natural environment, heritage and culture for the health, prosperity and benefit of the whole community and alongside the development of the Valleys Landscape Park.
    - c. Stimulate and boost the aspirations of our people.
    - d. Develop the Cwm Taf Public Service Apprentice, Graduate and Opportunity Scheme in response to integrated joint public service workforce planning strategy.
    - e. Further explore the opportunities for sustainable housing and renewable energy developments with associated community funds.
    - f. Develop and deliver a Valleys Marketing Plan, promoting our Valleys as a place to live, work and play.
    - g. (Medium term) Encourage opportunities for development and regeneration as the City Deal delivers jobs and returns on its investments, including attracting hotels.

- h. Supporting the development of a clean economy.
- i. (Long term) A sustainable, energetic and expanding economy with employment rates equalling the UK average.
- j. (Long term) A vibrant tourist industry attracting people from near and far, enjoying our natural environment, history and culture.

I believe my team have already been helpful in advising your supporting officers on your approach. The purpose of setting objectives and steps is not to include all of your organisation's corporate priorities, but to use your well-being assessment to consider where the PSB can have a collective and powerful impact. Your well-being assessment provided a rich reflection of people's lives, their surroundings and their state of well-being. My response to your well-being assessment advised that you should make greater links to the well-being goals as you moved towards planning. I feel that your draft well-being plan currently reflects the social and health aspects of well-being found through your assessment well, but objectives must maximise their contribution to the seven well-being goals and you need to demonstrate how you are addressing all aspects of well-being in the steps you take.

To do this, you need to think differently, be aspirational and repurpose resources, which will inevitably mean stopping some things. You need to demonstrate that you have explored how you contribute to all of the well-being goals and doing this will give you a more holistic picture of the issue you are trying to resolve, clarify your roles as PSB member organisations and enable you to maximise the range of resources and opportunities you can draw on to help you find solutions.

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

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. 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 Cwm Taf? How are you going to work differently together?

It is important that you show how your objectives and steps both individually and as a collective set, maximise their contribution to *all* of the well-being goals, so I would encourage you to continue to develop the connections between the objectives in agreeing and delivering your steps.

To adapt your ways of working in this way requires a fundamentally different approach. It is good to hear that you have identified that you want your PSB to work collaboratively that aims to put the people in your communities at its centre, with an ambition to break down the barriers between public services to change the way you work. This

requires you to be bold and brave in questioning current structures for decision-making and operational delivery. I have advised all PSBs to give themselves the time and space 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 their objectives. Academi Wales' [Sustainable Futures Architecture](#) articulates succinctly how leadership behaviours need to change. You could use this framework to help explore your board's own behaviours and how you can develop.

My team has shared with me how you are looking to try new ways of working, such as senior leaders committing to spend time in communities to listen directly to people's views. I am encouraged to hear that you are already having these conversations as a PSB about how you can work differently, however it is not clear how what you propose through your objectives and steps, represents the step change that is needed in meeting the aspirations of the Act, and indeed your own objectives. I am therefore asking you to consider further what other new approaches you will take together in the steps you will take to meet your objectives and maximise contribution to the seven national well-being goals. For your well-being plan, I would like to understand how the five ways of working have shaped your approach, how you have considered the contribution you currently make (and could make) to each of the well-being goals, in relation to each draft objective and step you are setting. What does it mean for Cwm Taf and how is it different to what you have done before?

**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:** 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? You may want to consider developing future scenarios or using other future methods to help frame your objectives and steps around the future. These can be extremely powerful in starting a discussion about the opportunities, risks and mitigating actions we can take for the long term.

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 and where 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).

How are you using local evidence to understand the most effective preventative measures? This recent [NESTA and Alliance for Useful Evidence guide](#) is intended to help public bodies use research gathering approaches effectively to inform their decision-making. Many PSBs haven't used their assessments to fully understand both the current situation and the scale and nature of the response required. 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:** I commend the time your support officers dedicate to working across the Cwm Taf area and the collaborative workshop approach you have taken in developing your objectives. You continue to be the only merged PSB in Wales and I know your officers work together well. I am saying to each PSB that 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 and its SPB sub-group. There are strong partnership relationships in Cwm Taf, but I would advise that you take the time to consider whether your organisational structures are fit for purpose, and your decision to review the terms of reference of SPB once the well-being plan has been adopted gives you an opportunity to start to do this. Have you got the right people around the table, at the right level to make decisions around an 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 your objectives?

In delivering the steps, you should examine how might your organisations collaborate better? 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 and achieving multiple benefits? I am pleased to hear that in your discussions you have started to consider the interconnections between your emerging priorities to help inform your decisions about the most effective steps and would urge you to continue to do this deliberately and explicitly. 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?

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 and lead with others on achieving this objective? My team have spoken positively about your approach to regional collaboration and I will be really interested to understand the benefits of this as we move towards delivering well-being plans. As a PSB, 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 praised the methods you took to involving people in the development of your well-being assessment and I frequently cite the Cwm Taf Hub (and now PSB website) as an example of collaboration. I know you are actively involved in the Valleys Taskforce work and my team attended the launch of the public engagement network earlier this year. It's good to hear that you are still working collaboratively with a range of people to create the meaningful involvement of residents in Cwm Taf. I want to see PSBs keeping a focus on continuously involving people in the development of well-being objectives and beyond the publication of their plans. This is much more than the usual consultation and ad-hoc engagement. I will want to see in your well-being plan how you are 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?

Your Well-Being Group have worked hard to help you achieve this level of progress in assessing well-being for the area, synthesising this evidence into high-level priorities, creating an extremely comprehensive response analysis whilst engaging with a wide range of people to move your well-being planning forward. But I must emphasise that it is your leadership that is required to adopt a new way of working. I am aware that the Act can be seen as another thing for organisations to comply with and the PSB as another meeting that you must attend. But the Act is an enabler, a way of challenging the methods we have always adopted to try and make more sense for the people of Wales – now and in the future. I have a role to recognise and mitigate barriers, but only you – as senior leaders, can make this change happen and create a PSB that actually achieves change.

I want to see spelt out in your well-being plan what is different about what you are doing now from before, and how you are working differently both as individual organisations and collectively, asking yourselves regularly 'what can we do together' to turn around some of the deep-rooted, perennial problems that have not been effectively addressed by how you currently operate.

This leadership and partnership working needs to permeate at every level of your member organisations. Consistency in representation and how you take messages back from PSB to your own organisations is critical to building relationships and creating action. The well-being plan is not a culmination of all of your current work, but an opportunity for integration and beneficial collaboration at a senior and influential level. Communicating why the work of the PSB matters to your own senior management teams and using the well-being plan to challenge current practices within your own departments is crucial to creating the culture change you have highlighted in your discussions with my team. Challenge your managers to work differently and be 'safe to fail'.

In doing so, you will need to demonstrate how each of your organisations 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 already 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 or to other partnership meetings and will be following this up later as we progress through the first phases of implementation.

It follows that co-ordinating this work needs to be recognised by all of you as members of the PSB. I am interested in how different PSBs are supported and it appears that when support is multi-agency, resourced and committed to by different partners, collaboration and integration across departments and structures becomes easier. I know this has been the case in Cwm Taf and a member of my team attended the well-being plan sub-group and was encouraged by the multi-agency commitment demonstrated there. But I know that there are still some partners who are reluctant to collaborate at all levels across Wales, which is vital to achieving any sense of change. Some PSBs are already adopting 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](#); [Leading Culture Change](#) and [Stepping up: a framework for public sector leadership on sustainability](#). This will require you, people in positions of leadership, to play your part and be brave in driving the changes needed. I hope you continue to lead an intelligence-based approach to finding different solutions to how things have previously been done.

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. The second section of my advice seeks to help you demonstrate through your well-being plan that you have used the five ways of working and seven well-being goals to shape your steps.

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

From the regular conversations you have had with my team, I know your supporting officers have worked hard over the summer to draw on your assessment findings, prioritise issues through engaging with you and are taking a considered approach to drafting objectives and steps. This section of my advice is based on your three draft

objectives and the steps you have identified so far and 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 the Cwm Taf region.

I am pleased that you have attempted to scope your draft steps across longer timescales, however the purpose of the medium and long-term steps is unclear in the way they are currently written. Your short-term steps are set out as a series of detailed actions, whereas the medium and long-term steps are framed as objectives not steps. This presents a confusing picture. As you carry out your consultation on your objectives and steps, you may want to use the intelligence from this period, your previous engagement work and the Well-being Assessment to inform a broader scope for some of your steps that should help you realise a greater range of multiple benefits. This could be presented as a long-term vision for each of your objectives and set of steps that clearly sets out what will have changed as a result of your interventions over a period of time.

Consistently using the five ways of working to challenge your usual approach and seeking to maximise your contribution to the seven well-being goals in each of your objectives will give you a new framework for planning and delivery which challenges you and your organisations to do things differently.

**To promote safe, confident, strong and thriving communities improving the well-being of residents and visitors and building on our community assets.**

- a. Develop Community Zones as an area or place based approach focussing support to improve outcomes for our residents with the greatest challenges.
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- c. Work with our communities to provide consistent messages and links and signposting to community, public sector and business support within and close to communities.
- d. Work with and support communities who want to manage and improve their local environment.
- e. (Medium term) Well co-ordinated community volunteers and public services with ACE informed and thriving communities.
- f. (Medium term) Safe and pleasant environments and green spaces, where people are proud to live and participate.
- g. (Long term) The communities shaping services to meet the needs of residents and visitors.

As leaders of local agencies, you have a key role to play in promoting and supporting community cohesiveness. The potential for your role in this area goes beyond building community capacity through facilitating networking and coordination and providing training for community groups and employees. These aspects of community support can only go so far in addressing the problems that people and communities face. How are you tackling some of the systemic barriers that stop people, communities and employees from using their training or knowledge or prevent them from accessing services that can help? Have you considered how you could reform

current services so they could deliver a preventative approach- stopping problems such as ACEs before they happen- through commissioning these services differently?

Your well-being assessment identified community spirit as the main asset of Cwm Taf. I would like to see a deepened understanding of how you can channel this into positive action and I believe that this is best learnt from the lived experiences of people who live there. Involving your staff, getting out and about to speak to people and collaborating with them to deliver projects is a way of winning the trust of communities and seeing positive results. Understanding the lived experiences of people could give you an important insight into how different communities are functioning and where your services would be most helpful. Signposting people is something public services do and often, that person is forgotten about when they leave our desk. Integrating your services far better, improving information sharing and really listening to the assets of that person can mean a more preventative, timely and effective response.

Currently, services are often not set up in a way that would deliver this objective. We deal with people in neat 'service-user' categories, such as 'domestic abuse victim', 'anti-social behaviour perpetrator', 'substance misuser', 'problem tenant', which often create barriers for people to have equality of opportunity or outcome. This approach means we fail to join up the dots, to integrate and to spot signs of a worsening situation. Your work in the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub is seeking to break down these silos and should be regarded as best practice and I would like to see you building on this approach in terms of meeting your other objectives.

Cycles continue to the next generation, as illustrated by Public Health Wales' work on ACEs and tackling ACEs must therefore be seen as a responsibility of the whole system, not just in terms of awareness but in terms of how the system operates. Making people and those who work with them aware of the signs and able to adopt a trauma informed approach is important, but I want to see how you intend to address services as a whole. It is important that you consider how well the services which currently respond to families where ACEs are a factor are responding and whether they are fit for purpose in terms of preventing on ongoing adverse experiences for children and families. You have made a good start with your work on vulnerability, the MASH, the women's pathfinder and your support for domestic abuse services but I would like to understand how you intend to move forward in commissioning reviewing and reforming these services as well as your substance misuse and mental health services so that they are best placed to prevent and respond to ACEs.

Applying the five ways of working to this issue would mean that services for families in criminal justice, housing, social services, early years, substance misuse, domestic abuse and others would be integrated and effective in being preventative of a worsening situation as well as informed by peoples lived experiences and an understanding of what works for them and what doesn't. The work you undertook a number of years ago with the Kafka Brigade in respect of domestic abuse was a good example of how this can be done and I would encourage to give further consideration to how you could adopt similar approaches as you move forward in taking steps to meet your objectives. Alyson Francis, Director of the ACE Support Hub, has recently worked with my office to write to you, outlining that ACEs are not another thing to do, but an opportunity to reconsider how

we deliver services together that make sense for the families receiving them. The ACE Support Hub could also act as a central place for PSBs to share practice, as almost all of the PSBs in Wales have discussed early years, children and ACEs in their draft objectives and steps. Alyson Francis and I are also on the panel of the [Good Practice Exchange Wales webinar on understanding ACEs](#) on the 7th November, which may be helpful to you in considering your steps for this objective.

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. I know your Community Zones work will attempt to change this and I will be interested to see how you have learnt and developed as a PSB in delivering this change.

The costs of the worst start in life are enormous, both to the individual's life and to public services. [Late intervention services for young people are estimated to cost England and Wales £17bn per year](#) (£6bn on child protection and safeguarding, £5.2bn on crime and anti-social behaviour, £3.7bn on youth economic inactivity, £680m on school absence and exclusion, £610m on child injuries and mental health problems, and £450m on youth substance misuse). I want to see that your organisations recognise it is part of all of their responsibilities to prevent poor outcomes. The Public Health Wales' [First 1000 days](#) work shows how investing in a child's life from the very beginning can have benefits to all areas of their well-being. How might local services have to change if you redirect investment? What does this mean in the context of communities in Cwm Taf?

As you have identified, poverty, abuse, discrimination and other forms of disadvantage can have long-lasting effects on children and young people's well-being and can severely impact their prospects of securing a prosperous, healthy, safe and socially active future. Childhood is a key window of opportunity and the positive interventions Wales puts in place now to protect and provide for children will help to secure a more prosperous, healthy and cohesive future for Wales. Consideration should be given to how well public bodies and PSBs factor children's rights into processes for consultation, decision-making and programme-planning. This will include developing in a children's rights policy focus, enabling children to learn about their rights and empowering them to play an active role in their communities. To support this work, a toolkit is being tested and will be available before the end of the year. The Children's Commissioner's office would be happy to advise on engaging with children and young people and taking a child-rights approach to securing well-being for future generations.

As your well-being assessment demonstrated, feeling a sense of community and belonging is crucial to good well-being. Therefore, I advise that you involve and collaborate with 'unusual suspects' in understanding the value of this on other aspects of well-being. Collaborating with different people and using the definition of the seven well-being goals as a guide can give you steps you could take to meet this objective that contribute to a more equal Cwm Taf as well. Involve children and young people through schools; draw on the knowledge of businesses and

the economic sector; consider the role the Community Councils and the third sector play in connecting people too. I would advise each of your organisations to commit to the National Participation Standards and work with [Participation Cymru](#), who can support your officers in gaining the skills vital for effective and meaningful involvement. [Co-production Network Wales](#) could help you consider time banking schemes, provide examples of good coproduction and help you to identify and engage community leaders.

Volunteering makes an invaluable contribution to the culture, resilience and cohesion of communities. The well-being plan offers a real opportunity to connect the act of volunteering with coherent outcomes for individuals and communities. I would like to see you digging deeper into the data to develop your understanding about why people in Cwm Taf might volunteer, as well as the barriers that stop people and the areas where volunteering could be used in less obvious ways to help meet a local or individual need. This should provide a sense of 'purpose' for this step and will help you identify innovative actions. Most people will only get involved in something that directly impacts them, their family or the place where they spend time and, often, this can lead to much bigger outcomes - shown by the work that ['Nurture Development' do around Asset Based Community Development](#). The [Centre for Regeneration Excellence Wales' 'Deep Place' study in Tredegar](#) also gives inspiration on how an understanding of place can have multiple benefits on well-being. For instance, are there ways the PSB could encourage and reward this community activism in ways that would help you meet your objectives in particular areas? The Royal Town Planning Institute's report on ['Poverty, Place and Inequality'](#), includes several recommendations around why place-based approaches are key to tackling inequality between and within communities. The research documented in ['What Works in Community Cohesion'](#) also provides a useful reference for PSBs on the different dimensions of community cohesion.

[Solva Community Council](#) in Pembrokeshire are an interesting example of how volunteers and older residents have benefited from a scheme to reduce isolation and improve well-being. There are many 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. This is where the five ways of working should be challenging your thinking and I will be interested in seeing how you influence and task the Social Services and Well-being Regional Partnership Board in delivering your response to your objectives.

How are you thinking about the long term trends for how people get involved in something? Increasingly so communities exist outside of the physical space in a virtual one. Digitalisation means the world is now a different place and this is only set to continue over the long term. This recent report on [Digital Childhoods](#) from Barnados shows the pace at which technology is moving and the way children now consume information, although [the Carnegie Trust](#) warn against assuming that all young people are digitally literate or have access to digital infrastructure. How are your organisations harnessing the power of technology to help you meet this objective? How can it be used in a positive way? What changes might you have to make to your organisational systems and policies to enable people to get more involved in communities and shape local services? How can you use technology to gather community intelligence and involve people? I see public services in Wales stuck in the early 2000s in the way they call residents to a community hall for 'engagement'. 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; and [43% of 'millennials' are driven to make financial donations through social channels](#). There is a real opportunity to engage with people in way 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.

Opening up land and buildings to the community could be a way of encouraging community ownership, bringing people together in areas where they don't have a community facility and allow for better use of the natural environment. I'm aware that there are already successful examples of this in Cwm Taf and the Valleys Landscape Park planned by the Taskforce offers opportunities for community involvement and ownership. 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 Cwm Taf? The [Welsh Government National Assets Working Group](#) captured some Welsh examples, 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.

I noted that your well-being assessment identified that you have some of the highest proportion of socially disadvantaged communities located in flood risk areas and that the risk of surface water flooding is likely to increase as a result of climate change. The social disruption caused by floods can seriously undermine the quality of life of individuals and impact on the fabric of affected communities. Research by the [Joseph Roundtree Foundation](#) shows us that existing climate change policy does not adequately address many aspects of well-being that are adversely affected by climate-related hazards and that many socially disadvantaged communities are also more likely to suffer greater losses to well-being as a result of climate change events like flooding. I urge you to consider the impact of climate change on Cwm Taf especially on those that are more vulnerable.

[Zero Carbon Britain's recent 'Making it Happen'](#) report sets out what responsibilities we all have to future generations to act on climate change now. Flooding affected homes and businesses last year in a number of counties 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](#), so, understanding how different weather events impact on communities is crucial to prevention. I would like to see the PSB considering the specific effects for Cwm Taf in their short, medium and long-term actions. In the future, the effects of climate change are likely to cause droughts in the summer, meaning a shortage of water, declining bio-diversity and a knock-on effect for agriculture across Wales. We all rely on our environment for income, food, water, recreation and I suggest you need to look at critical infrastructures most at risk. Using the seven well-being goals to frame your approach can help all partners understand their contribution to this significant issue. Are current approaches adequate to cope? 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? Projects such as ['Rainscape' through Dwr Cymru](#) suggest ways that we can all mitigate the effects of floods, with communities playing an equal role. [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. The [WWF environmental footprint calculator](#) also serves a sharp reminder to us all of our potential to impact change.

You will not be surprised to note that other Public Services Boards are also considering setting objectives around engagement, developing / sustaining strong communities, fostering belonging and shaping services. In particular, you may wish to share ideas with Vale of Glamorgan; Blaenau Gwent; Ceredigion; Cardiff and Powys PSBs, who have supplied me with similar draft objectives.

- **To help people live long and healthy lives and overcome any challenges.**
  - a. To target our support in the areas with the biggest challenges, working with our communities to make sure everyone has the best chance to live long and happy lives.
  - b. To work together as public services and with our communities to reduce levels of obesity.
  - c. Promote healthy lifestyles by encouraging people to take up the "One more healthy behaviour" approach with all staff and service users.
  - d. (Medium term) Reduce the frailty of our ageing population by improving the rates of the population that have 4 or 5 healthy behaviours to 20%.
  - e. (Long term) Improve the rates of healthy life-expectancy and life expectancy in Cwm Taf to the average Wales.

Well-being is not just about our health, but our social lives, our feelings of belonging, our built and natural surroundings, our income and community life – all of which are wider determinants of health. In taking steps to meet this objective, I would advise you to look at the assets of Cwm Taf – in the state of the natural environment, the community spirit and the heritage of the area. People don't often improve their health because they are told to do so by public services, but because they realise themselves the value of their own lives and the importance of staying healthy for longer. Only by continuously involving people to understand what matters to them can you begin to affect behaviour change. You have a role in considering what opportunities people might need to improve their own health, the services people need to recover well from ill-health and in creating the right built environments to maximise people's health and well-being.

As part of your Local Development Plans, through the Active Travel Act and in the work you are involved in around the Cardiff Capital Region, you have a role in planning, housing and transportation, creating places that are adaptable and able to change for at least the next two generations. At the moment, most of the older housing in Wales fall short of energy efficiency, creating implications for health and personal finances. Homes are being built for traditional family structures and without flexibility of use, and we are consistently seeing large estates being built with little appreciation for active travel, far from walking distance to shops, pubs, green or blue space, or public services.

This objective links very much to the others, as feeling safe and purposeful is important for health, delivering sustainable transport, both through improving air quality and by encouraging active travel is good for health; and

the skills to work within a strong economy is also important for health. I advise that the seven well-being goals are used as a frame to shape thinking around planning and developing communities, which will have multiple benefits – including improving health and independence. I would challenge you to make these connections explicit in your steps. Who do you need to involve and collaborate with to gain an understanding of these connections? How are the registered social landlords involved in the work of the PSB? Who else might you need to involve?

How have you considered the impact of our natural environment on our health? Air pollution from traffic, industry and urbanisation can cause cancer, respiratory diseases, damage to organs and reduce life expectancy. [The Welsh Government recently published](#) carbon emission levels subdivided by Local Authority and has released a [Call for Evidence](#) to explore how the public sector can contribute to a less polluted Wales, setting the target of a carbon neutral public sector by 2030. 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. I will be hosting an event on the 9<sup>th</sup> November, in partnership with Welsh Government and Natural Resources Wales to: explore how the public services 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.

In improving their health, most people will only get involved in something if it's fun and of benefit to them, so how can you use the assets of the area like sport, heritage, language, the outdoors and culture to enable people to participate? How can community gardening, food growing and even bee-keeping have a positive effect on your natural environment, help Cwm Taf to be more globally responsible and enable people to eat healthily? Bringing people together with their different cultures, cooking, art and performance creates cohesion and a sense of belonging - linked to your first objective. How might people take part in cultural activities to help feel involved and potentially improve their health? The Welsh Language Commissioner is working with my team to understand the best way for supporting PSBs to increase the number of Welsh speakers, as in '[Cymraeg 2050](#)', through community use of the language. Similarly, the [Arts Council for Wales' strategy](#) 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. Only by giving people a hook can you seek to grow volunteering, help people celebrate the community connections of their area and create wider benefits on health. Collaborating with the national public bodies subject to the Act, such as Sport Wales, Arts Council for Wales, National Museums of Wales and National Library of Wales, will be able to help you see how your steps to meet this objective could maximise contribution to each of the goals.

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. Their work has included successfully working with young mums in the Valleys to get them involved in more physical activity. There are many models of social prescribing and alternative models of health, but evidence is suggesting how taking a different approach to health can have multiple benefits. This [study, on social prescribing](#)

[in Bristol](#), 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. I would encourage the PSB to use the five ways of working to challenge the re-purposing of resources and support other such initiatives.

There are opportunities for you to work with organisations such as the National Trust and Wildlife Trusts to develop a region-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 the third sector feel empowered to help? [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. In your area, 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, how can we better collaborate on resourcing initiatives like this?

Like with many areas in Wales, your well-being assessment highlighted how mental health can affect people in Cwm Taf. 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. If the symptoms are there at such an early age – what can be done to prevent the problems at later life? If we know that on average, the NHS spend over £21 million on the prescription of anti-depressants, how can we act earlier? [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. How can the PSB charge the Social Services and Well-being Regional Board in taking steps to meet these objectives? I would also advise you involve children and young people in understanding any issues with accessing the right care and support, designing different services and evaluating the effects of this approach. This issue is also clearly linked to how you respond to tackling ACEs and I would therefore advise you to consider these issues as part of the same picture.

How have you considered the long term trends and opportunities of an older population? With health and life expectancy improving, I advise you recognise how much of an asset the older population are in terms of caring, volunteering and contributing to the economy. The work of the [Older People's Commissioner](#) is particularly helpful in exploring the steps you could take to meet this objective and includes her recent guidance to PSBs. Also ask yourselves if current provision is appropriate to manage this growing issue? In what areas might provision need more collective action? Currently, social services and health are barely dealing with the current demand and, unfortunately, many are looking at traditional models of resourcing 'crisis' intervention to deal with this. This is where the five ways of working should be challenging your thinking. This [report by the Young Foundation](#) provides inspiration on 'Innovating better ways of living late in life', challenging the traditional siloes we are working in. Creating flexible and age friendly communities and environments can prevent people from needing social care, from becoming isolated, from suffering ill-health or having an accident at home.

Research [by Ageing Well Wales](#) has shown this and suggests that loneliness in people is both about how connected people are to their communities physically and about feeling purposeful in society. In our sharing economy, could there be other online technical solutions to preventing social isolation, around car-pooling or community transport connected to social media? The '[Hypervillage](#)' concept developed by FutureScape imagines villages connected by their assets, [encouraging people in rural communities to capitalise on technology](#). How have you thought about the long-term possibilities of employing technological solutions for this issue? How can older people become more connected to social opportunities and volunteering? Are volunteers currently involved in the work of the PSB to help you consider how they can help you to meet your objectives?

Linked to this, Wales has an opportunity to develop housing that better meets demographic change, adopting technology to allow people to live independently for longer. Programmes like the [World Health Organisation's Age Friendly Cities](#) initiative have encouraged and recognised those cities that have made themselves more age-friendly adapting buildings, transport and planning rules, which enable older people to stay healthy and connected to things that matter to them for longer; [Laguna woods](#), the first city exclusively for older people in the US and the Marjala suburbs in Finland are examples of design suited to multiple abilities. As well as responsibilities around planning and designing infrastructure, there are numerous innovative global projects encouraging co-housing, supported housing and homeshares. [Students are living rent free in nursing homes](#) in exchange for socialising and providing basic care to the older residents; Australia and New Zealand have introduced '[HomeShare](#)' schemes, and, as part of their national government's demography strategy, [Germany](#) has introduced intergenerational housing for older people and young families in need. In Singapore, young people are given a \$50,000 grant if they move within 1km of their aged grandparents. These are all innovations that are proving to have an impact.

Other PSBs looking at similar objectives include Neath Port Talbot; Cardiff; Conwy / Denbighshire; Monmouthshire and Powys.

- **To grow a strong local economy with sustainable transport that attracts people to live, work and play in Cwm Taf.**
  - k. To make the most of the investment and return opportunities of the £1.299 billion Cardiff Capital Region City Deal and Metro locally within Cwm Taf.
  - l. Growth and promotion of tourism using the assets of our beautiful natural environment, heritage and culture for the health, prosperity and benefit of the whole community and alongside the development of the Valleys Landscape Park.
  - m. Stimulate and boost the aspirations of our people.
  - n. Develop the Cwm Taf Public Service Apprentice, Graduate and Opportunity Scheme in response to integrated joint public service workforce planning strategy.
  - o. Further explore the opportunities for sustainable housing and renewable energy developments with associated community funds.

- p. Develop and deliver a Valleys Marketing Plan, promoting our Valleys as a place to live, work and play.
- q. (Medium term) Encourage opportunities for development and regeneration as the City Deal delivers jobs and returns on its investments, including attracting hotels.
- r. Supporting the development of a clean economy.
- s. (Long term) A sustainable, energetic and expanding economy with employment rates equalling the UK average.
- t. (Long term) A vibrant tourist industry attracting people from near and far, enjoying our natural environment, history and culture.

Your assessment of economic well-being identifies the complexity of economic growth and challenges faced in different parts of the county. Although there will be multiple reasons for the deprivation experienced in some parts and no easy solutions, there are steps you could take as a PSB to strengthen the resilience of these areas and encourage economic growth and regeneration. You must consider what role you can play as leaders of the public and voluntary sector and you should appreciate the influence you can have other partnership arrangements and organisations in Wales. To take steps towards maximising your contribution to the seven well-being goals and improving economic well-being, you will need to be brave in pooling resources, changing policies and taking risks by trying different approaches. You will need to communicate these changes within each of your organisations. You will need to be clear about how you have reflected on the full definitions of each of the well-being goals, including the goal for a prosperous Wales. To do this, you need to dig deeper into the data and do more analysis about what this means for Cwm Taf - where there is scope for innovation; low-carbon economy; and the potential for decent jobs.

The seven areas of change in the Act are a starting point for the impact you can have. They are corporate planning, financial planning, workforce planning, procurement, assets, performance management and risk, which are the core organisational activities where applying the five ways of working would ensure the sustainable development principle frames how you work. You should see these as a blueprint of the quick-wins for PSBs. I am glad you are already considering your joint approach to workforce planning. How can your procurement procedures help to meet the seven national well-being goals? How can your organisational policies seek to help sustainable local businesses? In contributing to cutting your emissions, how can supporting local business help to reduce transportation of goods and look at wider sustainable development, not just economic value? [Forum for the Future](#) have published reports on this and my office are working with [Value Wales](#) to pilot sustainable procurement in the context of the Act.

As I have mentioned above, it will be critical that the steps you take are integrated across the other priorities and objectives. The environment is an asset for your local economy and sustainable tourism should be encouraged. [Essen in Germany](#) is similar to Cwm Taf, in that it was built on coal and steel industry, which had a detrimental impact on the environment. Now that the authorities have considered how green their city is, this is bringing tourism, new residents and new businesses in droves. How can you involve communities in finding active travel

routes; creating small and local business opportunities? Encouraging a focus around the culture and language of the area can also help you maximise your contribution to all of the goals. How can your policies also champion equality in business and 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?

You are also responsible for a large amount of public sector estate. How you plan, design and locate future developments, buildings, infrastructure and other public and community spaces (as part of your Local Development Plan) should all be considered. [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 and have local economic benefits. 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.

We have clear commitments to meet in terms of carbon reduction, the UK has pledged to have zero emissions by 2050 and every Welsh Government has pledged for more green jobs. But despite Wales 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. [The Policy Forum for Wales](#) keynote seminar takes place on the 7<sup>th</sup> December this year, with a focus on priorities for energy policy, growing the sector in Wales and increasing investment in renewables.

The Cardiff Capital Region is an exciting opportunity for South Wales, but I have previously expressed concern that the deal is being progressed with those involved seeing the Well-being of Future Generations Act as something you assess your actions against, rather than shaping how things are planned and agreed. You play a central role in steering these opportunities as a city benefitting from the investment. I would advise that, as people in positions of leadership, you need to influence the current negotiations with the economic, environmental, social and cultural well-being of people across the region in mind. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation estimates that poverty costs the whole region £2.2 billion per year. Increasing GDP has little impact on reducing inequalities, and in eight out of the ten Local Authority areas in the region, child poverty is above the Welsh average. So, interpreting the value of the City Region as purely economic would be misplaced. Yes, this is a

positive economic opportunity but how can we balance our responsibilities to develop a city region that is sustainable and puts people at the centre. My [letter to those involved in December 2016](#) hopefully provides you with some advice on the matter and [I also recently commented](#) in response to Dr Mark Lang and Professor Terry Marsden's recent report "[Re-thinking Growth: Toward the Well-being Economy.](#)" I look forward to further working with you in advising you on these matters.

This objective links to your other objectives, in that a [2013 review carried out by the London School of Economics for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation](#) found that children in lower-income families have worse cognitive, social-behavioural and health outcomes. Crucially, this study demonstrated that it was in part because they are poorer, not just because low income is correlated with other household and parental characteristics. How can the PSB collaborate with others to improve the economic well-being of families across the region? How can the most deprived communities, in particular, be focused on? Are the Community Zones an opportunity of trialling particular ways of working? Whilst providing opportunities for people to learn and develop is no bad thing, enabling people to take full advantage of these opportunities is most important. Therefore, I would advise that you need to dig deeper into the data here and understand the full picture. Ask yourselves, what would really make a difference to the learning and development of people throughout their lives?

What other things are having an impact of people's life chances that you, as public services, can prevent? For example, Social Finance were commissioned by Newcastle City Council to do some deeper digging for them to help them address the problem with NEETs (those Not in Education, Employment and Training). Whilst traditional focus looks at GCSE attainment, what this analysis shows in reality is that academic achievement is not the most significant factor at all, instead showing that 67% of 17-19 year olds who were NEET had come from the 25% of 17-19 year olds who had multiple contacts with social services during their childhood. The research showed that those who had had as little as six interactions with social services spent almost three times longer out of education or training. This study demonstrates that looking at the issue in a more holistic way clarifies the steps you can take as a PSB to achieve your objectives.

How have you thought about the long term economic opportunities of Cwm Taf? Jobs that exist now were unheard of when I left school and it will be the same for our children. Currently, your response to growing the economy is based on last century assumptions of travelling to work and doing jobs that currently exist in Newport, Cardiff and Bristol. 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 exist yet. How can you act for the long term now and seek to instil skills in young people that are fit for the future? What life skills might your children need to make it in the future? The [Future of Work report](#) also 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. Team work, communication and confidence are as valuable to young people as good grades when entering the workplace (in the [Prince's Trust recent Results for Life report](#)). How are you planning to involve people from across Newport to seek their advice on creating opportunities? How can your organisations offer apprenticeships for all ages to learn these skills?

According to [McKinsey](#), technology could automate 45 percent of the tasks people are currently paid to do— how have you considered the impact of many of these roles being replaced by automation? This is both an opportunity and a potential risk, as [this article suggests](#) we have a responsibility in recognising this and thinking about advantages. 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?

You should consider who else you might need to collaborate with in developing the draft objectives, such as schools, businesses, Coleg y Cymoedd, universities and social enterprises. What social responsibilities have the private sector adopted in the area? How are businesses coming together to drive positive, long term change and does the PSB have any influence over this? What opportunities can be offered to budding community enterprises through the PSB collaborating with the private sector and education providers? What research has been undertaken about the local economy? How might you encourage local businesses to use their social responsibilities and enable better learning for younger and older people?

Several other PSBs are drafting similar objectives and steps include Powys; Cardiff; Ceredigion; Pembrokeshire; Monmouthshire and Caerphilly.

**I hope you have found this advice helpful in moving forward towards publishing a well-being plan. 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 Cwm Taf Joint PSB Scrutiny Committee on how I have chosen to approach this statutory duty and the advice I have given.

Please keep in touch with me and my team.

Kind regards,



Sophie Howe