



Comisiynydd
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**Future
Generations**
Commissioner
for Wales

The Future Generations Report 2020



Let's create the future together



Chapter 3
**Progress against the
well-being goals**



Future Generations Report 2020

Progress against the well-being goals: A Wales of Cohesive Communities

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A Wales of Cohesive Communities





A Wales of Cohesive Communities

In the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, this goal defines communities as: “Attractive, safe, viable and well-connected”.

Cohesive and connected communities are an important part of people’s individual well-being, and more people now realise the value of kindness, community and connections on well-being.

The COVID-19 crisis has shown what can be achieved when communities are given permission to take the initiative and collaborate to offer support. From food banks and sourcing empty tourist accommodation for COVID-19 emergency workers in North Wales, to community councils like Mumbles co-ordinating local volunteers to help the vulnerable and the National Business Response Network set up by Business in the Community (BITC) matching community needs with responsible businesses offering support.

"Attractive, viable, safe and well-connected communities."

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015)

This crisis has seen an overwhelming appreciation, across the UK, for the caring services and those who are continuing to put the needs of others over their own. COVID-19 has created an emotional reaction in people and communities around caring for others. The question now is how do we continue that community spirit going forward so that we can continue to benefit from this changed perspective around caring for others.

"Life’s most persistent and urgent question is: ‘What are you doing for others?’"

Martin Luther King Jnr



Vision for a Wales of cohesive communities in 2050

Communities in Wales in 2050 will be well-connected (including digitally), will be able to adapt to change, and will be focused around the well-being of the people who live there. People will be trusted and empowered to do the things that matter to them, and they will have good access to key services such as education, health, housing, retail, transport and community safety.

Where Wales was once a world leader in the industrial revolution, it will be leading the way in becoming a zero-carbon nation, through supporting community energy initiatives. (A Prosperous Wales and A Globally Responsible Wales)

Public bodies will be supporting initiatives such as Project Skyline across Wales, helping to connect people to their local landscape. Profits generated will be re-invested into local areas. Wales will also have more community-managed marine protected areas, benefitting the local, coastal population. (A Prosperous Wales and A Resilient Wales)



Community food partnerships, like the [Brighton and Hove Food Partnership](#), will help people learn to cook, eat a healthy diet, grow their own food and waste less food. In towns and cities across the UK, ventures like the one led by the [Orchard Project](#) will be restoring fruit trees and orchards and uniting urban communities (A Healthier Wales).

A four-day working week will mean people can spend more time with their families and communities. Volunteering will be the norm and employers across Wales will recognise the benefits of volunteering; helping their staff develop new skills. The negative health effects of loneliness and isolation will be tackled through widespread befriending and ‘technology for good’ programmes. (A Prosperous Wales)

The value of arts and culture to community cohesion will be recognised, and people will have equal opportunities to participate. (A More Equal Wales and A Wales of Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language)

The planning system in Wales will consider future population needs for local areas along with wider social, economic, environmental and cultural factors. Community buildings and facilities will be intergenerational, and placemaking will enable collaboration between organisations and involvement of people in planning. (A Resilient Wales, A More Equal Wales and A Wales of Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language)

Funding for community programmes will be embedded in a coherent way. All partners will be making investments in community services which mirror the placemaking approach, which will be setting out the planning and design of community infrastructure.



How people move will be informed by the needs and views of users, who are involved in co-designing local and regional transport plans and strategies. Sustainable transport hubs will be co-located with local services such as schools, GP surgeries, housing and shops, ensuring ease of access and enabling more people to work locally together. (A Prosperous Wales, A More Equal Wales and A Healthier Wales)

Improved placemaking is also delivering modern active travel infrastructure (such as cycle lanes), enabling more people to walk or cycle. The transport system will be zero carbon and accessible to everyone, helping to reduce inequalities. Reliable and available in more rural parts of Wales, its bilingual services will enable people to have access to employment, cultural venues, activities and events and sites of national significance. (A More Equal Wales, A Wales of Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language and A Healthier Wales)

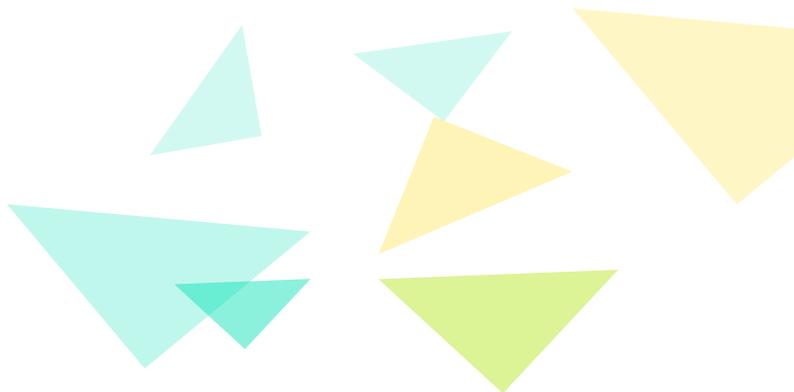
The wide adoption of an anytime/anywhere work pattern will help reduce peak time commuting, along with the overall need to commute. In rural communities, this will reduce the need to travel, enabling access to jobs away from where people live and improving their work-life balance. (A Prosperous Wales and A More Equal Wales)



Housing will be a basic human right in Wales. Homes will be energy efficient and will be adaptive to our changing needs as a population. Housing will help tackle climate change, reducing overall emissions through environmentally friendly choices such as sustainably sourced materials and supply chains, and in some cases, will be carbon negative. (A Prosperous Wales, A Resilient Wales and A Globally Responsible Wales)

Placemaking will improve people's access to the natural environment, with biodiverse green infrastructure enhancing nature and improving resilience to floods and droughts. (A Prosperous Wales, A Resilient Wales and A Globally Responsible Wales)

Farmers in Wales will continue to make an important contribution to rural communities, the economy, environment, Welsh language and culture. Everyone will have access to high-quality and reliable digital connectivity. In rural areas, the rise in digital technologies will generate new employment opportunities. 'Smart villages', which focus on revitalising rural communities and services through digital and social innovation, will be empowering local communities and helping address challenge such as local employment, sustainable business activity, local services, broadband connectivity and skills. (A Prosperous Wales, A More Equal Wales, A Wales of Cohesive Communities and A Wales of Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language)



People will feel safe in their homes and communities. A focus on early intervention and prevention of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) will have resulted in a reduction of violence in our homes and communities. ([A Prosperous Wales](#), [A More Equal Wales](#))

Schools will provide opportunities for learning life skills that can help address inequality, and a reduction in school exclusions will help break cycles of inequality and adversity, and help improve the life trajectory of children who are at risk of lifelong disadvantage. It will ensure that children have an essential sense of belonging and source of community, helping combat loneliness and disconnectedness in children, in turn leading to well-connected adults. ([A Healthier Wales](#), [A More Equal Wales](#))

Technology and better partnership working will enable better sharing of information on vulnerable people, and public bodies will work together with the voluntary sector, to predict vulnerability and act to prevent it. ([A More Equal Wales](#), [A Healthier Wales](#))

There will be a strong 'foundational economy' providing the universal basic services that support everyday life, such as health, care and retail. As these services make up approximately half of all local employment and are relatively stable and resistant to economic shocks, public bodies will value and strengthen them by creating the conditions to help them make a bigger contribution. ([A Prosperous Wales](#), [A More Equal Wales](#))

In Tyisha ward, [Carmarthenshire County Council](#) is undertaking a vast [community engagement programme](#) to gain people's views and ideas, ahead of plans to develop a regeneration programme (linked to the development of Llanelli Life Science Well-being Village) for the area.

The city of [New York](#) has passed legislation to invest \$1.7bn (£1.3bn) in road infrastructure over the next ten years, including the [construction of 250 protected bike lanes](#), as part of major plans to reverse its car culture.

The [Encore Programme](#) provides employees nearing retirement, with paid time off for volunteering. The programme matches their skills to needs within the community, assisting with the transition to retirement.

[Monmouthshire County Council](#) became the first local authority in the UK to move forward with an [initiative](#) aimed at finding solutions to loneliness and limited public transport in rural parts of the county.

The [New Citizenship Project](#), established in 2014, is seeking to shift us from a society of consumers to one of citizens, to help foster stronger public participation and engagement.

The [government in Brussels](#) is supporting [initiatives](#) where older people offer a room in their homes to a younger person, to help combat loneliness and issues around housing affordability. Projects are already under way to create 350 new intergenerational homes as part of the city's public housing policies.



The [UK Community fridge network](#), founded in 2017, has 80 community fridges across the country, aiming to reduce food waste. Through them, residents and businesses can donate food, which is then available to anyone who needs it.

A new school planned in [Leeds](#) will form part of a multigenerational building, including a care home for older people. The development will have no parking spaces for staff, or for visitors, which developers hope will encourage children to walk to school and discourage drop-offs.

[Berlin](#) has a vibrant street art scene with dedicated spaces as legal 'galleries' which attracts visitors from all over the world.

My contribution to this vision is outlined through my work on my areas of focus and set out in detail in Chapter 6 - My Focus.



People's perception of cohesive communities

Listening to what people think and believe is an important part of involvement. That is why, in this section, I wanted to give a flavour of what people have told me, since the beginning of my term and in relation to this report.

People's views included:

- "Communities want to be able to do more to take action to solve local problems but there's often barriers to this."
- "There are widespread concerns about the future of local communities and town centres."
- "Concern about a lack of community spirit, and how to build cohesion."
- "We need opportunities to bring people together but there's a reduction in spaces for communities to connect due to budget cuts and planning."
- "It's important we care more about each other, especially those worse off than ourselves."
- "Isolation and mental health problems are connected but it's something we can tackle with thought and determination."



People's perception of cohesive communities

- "It's hard for people to engage with each other when they commute by car everywhere."
- "Schools are important for the well-being of communities as well as individuals."
- "People should feel safe where they live and work."
- "There is a need for more intergenerational facilities/activities."
- "Holiday homes are a problem in some areas, where incomers can afford to pay a lot for homes, but local people can't."
- "There are concerns that Brexit has led to some increased hostility and raised tensions between individuals and groups."



Steve Cranston
Goal Convenor for A Wales of Cohesive Communities on secondment from United Welsh

I would like to say thank-you to the following for their contribution to my work on this goal.

Many organisations and stakeholders provided input into the Journey, along with helpful and insightful comments on drafts of this report, which has been greatly appreciated. In particular, I would like to thank the [Welsh Council for Voluntary Action](#) for helping me reach out to their members, [One Voice Wales](#) who supported me with vital engagement with town and community councils, and networks such as [National Federal of Women's Institutes in Wales](#) and [Wales Young Farmers Clubs](#) for their contribution to my big ideas.

I would like to thank, in particular, [United Welsh](#), who were a partner in the Art of the Possible programme, especially [Steve Cranston](#), who was seconded to my office to support this work and for his continued insight during the preparation of the guidance on this goal; which forms the basis of this chapter.

In addition to this involvement, I also have carried out my statutory duty to monitor and assess progress by public bodies in meeting their well-being objectives and the requirements of the Act in general, and conducted research. As a result of these activities, I have identified the challenges and opportunities as set out in this chapter.

A Journey to A Wales of Cohesive Communities

- 1: People active in their communities:** Creating the conditions where people and communities can do the things that matter to them
- 2: Connected communities:** Supporting communities to be well connected and safe
- 3: Access to key well-being services:** Supporting vibrant foundational economies
- 4: Community anchor organisations:** Valuing the role and potential that community anchor organisations can play in building cohesive communities

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“Support communities to do it for themselves, this can support lots of areas. Health, loneliness, poverty, training, education, build aspirations, business, travel. Top slice off statutory services.”
(Gwent Citizens Panel, October 2019)

Your Voice

In engaging with over 5,000 people, the views here are representative of the key issues which have been shared with my office in forming this report.

“I’m keen that communities learn what is important in their locality, and why. And then use those important things to add value and strength to the community so that it can help itself and help others and get that ‘old-fashioned’ understanding and feeling back.”
(Our Future Wales conversation, Bangor)

“Place-based approaches – working with local communities to ensure they fully benefit is at the heart of implementing the Natural Resources Policy. Communities are best placed to shape and understand local priorities and opportunities and to find practical solutions that bring the widest possible benefits.”
(Our Future Wales response, Lesley Griffiths AM, Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs)

“Due to access in the valley that I live...there is lots of commuting and this impacts on the time people get to spend locally. Family members/neighbours that are vulnerable end up with less support from local people resulting in loneliness.”
(Our Future Wales conversation, Ebbw Vale)

“We need to find better ways to engage with citizens a lot more. This means, active participants. This could be on things like citizen juries and panels. This needs to be embedded across all public services.”
(Disability Wales Conference, November 2019)

“Connect is the magic word.”
(Gwent Citizens Panel, October 2019)



Challenges and opportunities for change

Create the conditions where people and communities can do the things that matter to them

What future generations need

Public bodies in Wales need to help create the conditions where people feel involved and empowered within their communities; enabling them to shape decisions that affect them.

Where we are now

Public bodies and Public Services Boards are committed in their focus on communities but should ensure they are embedding a culture of meaningful involvement, enabling communities to inform and shape local decisions

The events that have taken place over the last decade can make it feel that our communities are more divided than ever before. Inequality has increased between the wealthiest and poorest, and political uncertainty and global crises have sometimes polarised popular opinion. Despite the rise of social media and providing everyone with a platform, it can amplify opposing and extreme views.

It is perhaps no surprise then that [only 52% of adults in Wales agree there is 'good community cohesion'](#) in their area in 2018-19, falling from 62% in 2013-14.

Public bodies and Public Services Boards in Wales set more well-being objectives on the theme of 'community' than any other topic. For example, 109 well-being objectives (of 295) set by public bodies, and 46 well-being objectives (of 94) set by the 19 Public Services Boards for the period 2018-19, relate to this theme.

It's reassuring to see this focus from public bodies on the communities they serve.

Together with the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill, intended to reform and strengthen local government and improve electoral arrangements, public bodies should demonstrate collaboration, innovation, transparency and local ownership.



I am also encouraged to see well-being objectives referring specifically to people participating and being more active in their communities. For example:

Conwy County Borough Council: 'People in Conwy contribute to their community. They are informed, included and listened to.'

Cwm Taf Public Services Board's steps such as: 'Develop Community Zones as an area or place-based approach; Communities shaping services to meet the needs of residents and visitors; Work with and support communities who want to manage and improve their local environment.'

Swansea Bay University Health Board: 'Work with local communities, individuals and partners to build community resilience.'

Cardiff Council: 'Continue the implementation of a strengths-based approach to social work practice to put individuals, families and communities at the centre of their well-being.'



And there are examples of good practice across Wales where this is happening already. For example:

In **Flintshire**, [DO-IT](#) are a community interest company delivering an asset-based approach and using Time Credits to support the financial inclusion of people living below the poverty line and greater inclusion for people with disabilities.

Mumbles Community Council has developed a progressive and comprehensive community plan through community involvement, setting out ideas for how the village can maximise its contribution to the well-being goals.

Swansea Council allocates a '[community budget](#)' to local areas and elected representatives.

Pembrey and Burry Port Town Council have embarked on a programme that has resulted in greater involvement across the community; the creation of a sensory garden and a community orchard; setting up a board games club to combat loneliness and isolation; an award of a grant of £8,500 to deliver an inter-generational project on modern technology; a new youth group; and a wide range of community events supporting Carmarthenshire's Town of Culture 2020.

South Wales Fire and Rescue Service are making their stations and facilities available for community groups to meet in.

The **North Wales Police and Crime Commissioner** has established a [Youth Commission](#) for young people to have their say on policing and community safety.



Despite examples like these, [less than 20% of people across Wales think they can affect decisions made locally](#), and there has been a gradual decline since the peak in 2012-13 and 2013-14.

Public bodies should be embedding a culture of meaningful citizen and stakeholder involvement, as well as making more explicit links with the voluntary sector and town and community councils, both as a voice and delivery partner.

This means having meaningful conversations with people in communities, finding out what matters to them, and reflecting their views before decisions are reached. I've set out the steps public bodies can take to ensure meaningful involvement [here](#).

There are some promising projects that connect people with their local surroundings and natural resources in a way which can help rebuild and create a new future for communities

Public bodies often struggle to understand the range of assets that exist within communities, such as networks, associations, facilities, natural assets, land, buildings, green space, small businesses, and fail to make the most of these strengths when they develop their place-based plans. Unlocking these strengths is crucial.

It should be straightforward for residents and staff in public bodies, voluntary sector organisations and businesses to offer time and skills, and these opportunities should be used to help build trust and confidence across sectors and organisations. Too often, communities face barriers when it comes to doing simple things for themselves.

Supporting community energy initiatives is a good way to increase autonomy and financial resilience, as well as helping Wales move towards becoming a low carbon nation. Profits generated from local energy initiatives are kept within the community and invested in projects that meet a local need.

Community stewardship of land also provides an opportunity to connect people to their local area. In South Wales, [Project Skyline](#) is working to give communities a connection to their local landscape, that can provide income, jobs, a place of social and cultural activity, and a home for nature.

Initiatives like Project Skyline are significant because they are bringing people together to imagine a different future, one in which land is managed sustainably to meet the needs of the people who live there, in a way that doesn't compromise the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Project Skyline's [key report](#) set outs 14 key recommendations.

I endorse the [report's](#) recommendations, including the need for public bodies in Wales (including Welsh Government) to recognise that community stewardship of land offers a significant opportunity to deliver on the promise of green growth – to enhance social, environmental, and economic well-being. Welsh Government should support the establishment of similar pilot landscape-scale, community stewardship projects, building on the lessons learned from Project Skyline. Public Bodies and Public Services Boards should also do what they can to support initiatives like these. Public bodies and Public Services Boards should do what they can to support initiatives like this.



Support communities to be well-connected and safe

What future generations need

Well-connected, safe communities are places where housing and key community developments are planned around key services, amenities, the natural environment and public transport, creating a safer and more welcoming local environment for people.

Good digital connectivity is also important in helping connect people within their community, as well as to job opportunities, social events and directories for their local area, [helping reduce feelings of loneliness and isolation](#).

Where we are now

The publication of Planning Policy Wales 10 is a significant step towards ensuring Wales has well-connected and safe communities, but the focus should now be on consistent implementation

Wales needs an efficient, clear and transparent planning system that works for planners, developers and communities. Communities need to be involved from the very beginning, in a meaningful way, in the design of the plans and decisions which will affect them.

[Planning Policy Wales 10](#) is intended to ensure that the planning decisions taken in Wales, no matter how big, or how small, are going to improve the lives of both our current and future generations.

It sets out the concept of ‘placemaking’ which is described as: “a holistic approach to the planning and design of development and spaces, focused on positive outcomes. It draws upon an area’s potential to create high-quality development and public spaces that promote people’s prosperity, health, happiness, and well-being in the widest sense [...] Placemaking adds social, economic, environmental and cultural value to development proposals resulting in benefits which go beyond a physical development boundary and embed wider resilience into planning decisions.”

Implementing placemaking will be important in helping ensure communities are well connected and safe.

Please refer to my section on 'Planning' in Chapter 5, for further information, analysis of well-being objectives and my recommendations.



There is a need for public bodies and Public Services Boards to consider mobility solutions that benefit community cohesiveness, health, equality and the environment

Connectivity is important to everyone's lives, and we spend, [on average an hour a day commuting](#). If we get connectivity right, it will have a significant impact on our ability to improve community cohesion, reduce air pollution, improve health and well-being, and meet carbon reduction targets (transport currently accounts for [14% of Welsh greenhouse gas emissions](#)).

Future generations will need easy access to an integrated, low-carbon, affordable, reliable and efficient public transport network that improves health and activity levels and tackles issues such as air pollution, climate change and inequality.

My analysis of well-being objectives shows that public bodies make clear links between transport and economic well-being and infrastructure. For example, Flintshire Council's well-being objective: 'Developing the transport infrastructure and employment sites, and transport services, widening access to employment and training sites'.

However, less clear is the way public bodies understand how transport and connectivity improve other aspects of well-being, such as community cohesion, health, the local environment, air quality, and reducing emissions.

Despite this, it's encouraging to see examples such as [Pembrokeshire County Council](#) funding the Pembrokeshire Association of Community Transport Organisations, who help people who don't have access to transport, or who cannot use conventional public transport services. The initiatives include [13 'dial-a-ride' services](#), a social car scheme, '[Bus Buddies](#)' and '[Take Me Too](#)' – a rural car share scheme currently being developed. The scheme '[Bwcabus](#)' also operates in the more rural parts of the County.

Please refer to my section on 'Transport', in Chapter 5, for further information, analysis of well-being objectives, and my recommendations.

Public bodies recognise the importance of good quality housing on people's well-being but are not considering the longer-term trends

In Wales, there is currently a shortage of affordable, appropriate housing and, as our population changes, the demand for single-person households is [expected to increase](#) by 27% by 2039. In October 2018, there were 347 people [estimated](#) to be sleeping rough across Wales. Nearly [half of households](#) threatened with homelessness had dependent children.

Poor-quality housing is strongly associated with inequality, poverty and limited life chances. The [World Health Organisation](#) [found](#) that, across Europe, living conditions (including housing and access to green space) are a key factor in the difference in people's reported health, with a lack of agency, trust, belonging and insecure neighbourhoods also having a strong influence.



My analysis shows that 43 of the 295 well-being objectives set by public bodies relate to housing (set by 24 of the 44 bodies covered by the Act). Consistent themes among these objectives are building more housing (such as 'increase the supply of good quality housing' and improving energy efficiency (such as 'explore the potential for low carbon affordable housing developments').

However, few public bodies have expanded on their objectives to explore the long-term trends within housing. For example, how they're considering demographic change, different living arrangements, such as house-sharing or intergenerational home shares, or advances in technology that could mean people living at home for longer.

Alongside this, there is a need for better integration between objectives on housing and other areas such as the natural environment, skills for the future and transport. While some public bodies do refer to energy efficiency, there is limited information on building homes fit for the future, with a reduction in raw material consumption, better access to green space, placemaking and zero-carbon homes, which is disappointing.

Refer to my section on 'Housing', in Chapter 5, for further information, analysis of well-being objectives and my recommendations.

Loneliness is a national crisis and is being increasingly recognised by public bodies in their wellbeing objectives and steps

Figures published by the Office for National Statistics tell us that 2.4 million adult British residents – of all ages – suffer from chronic loneliness. In Wales, 16% of people were found to be lonely in 2017-18, with younger people more likely to report feeling lonely than older people.

Public bodies and Public Services Boards are making the connections between well connected, safe communities and the broader issues of well-being, particularly in tackling loneliness and isolation. For example:

Wrexham County Borough Council are aligning their work as a council with their Public Services Board's well-being plan: 'With the publication of the Wrexham Public Services Board well-being plan (May 2018) a 'Good Health Partnership Board' will be looking at issues of loneliness and isolation and we will be working in partnership on this issue.'

Powys Teaching Health Board's step to: 'help people to overcome loneliness and social isolation and be an active member of their community.'

Monmouthshire County Council's step to: 'Develop opportunities for people to be involved in their local communities reducing isolation and loneliness'.

It is also encouraging to see public bodies and Public Services Boards recognising the important role volunteering can play in helping reduce loneliness and isolation. Over a quarter of adults (28%) in Wales volunteer, and as well as benefitting people's health and well-being, it also makes an invaluable contribution to the culture, resilience and cohesion of communities.



Aneurin Bevan University Health Board and its partners have developed the [Ffrind i Mi \(Friend of Mine\)](#) initiative. This is ensuring anyone who feels lonely or isolated is supported to reconnect with their communities; thereby matching the interests of people to volunteers with the same interests, e.g. gardening, watching sport, dog walking etc. They are continuing to build on this work with new partners, to explore broader benefits. For example, they have recently partnered with the Fire Service to bring cadets on board as intergenerational volunteers.

Pembrokeshire Coast National Park is also making the links between volunteering and reducing loneliness and isolation within communities, with their step to: “Promote well-being for people of all ages through developing, delivering and evaluating initiatives that focus on improving mental and physical health and address social isolation, particularly through volunteering.”



Cwm Taf Public Services Board, have a cross-cutting objective: “Tackling loneliness and Isolation: we will work in new ways to channel the undoubted strengths of our communities, including volunteering to tackle more effectively the loneliness and isolation which often exists within many of them.”

Conwy Council’s [Community Well-being Team](#) have linked care home residents and school pupils across the area and started to deliver “[Wee ones meeting Wise ones](#)” sessions, where young mothers and their infants meet and chat with older people.

In [Rhondda Cynon Taf](#), care home residents in Ferndale visit the school and share activities with children, who in turn visit the care home. Similar activities have been trialled in Pembrokeshire. A bowls club in Rhondda Cynon Taf has also involved young people, who were previously committing antisocial behaviour, in using the club and contributing to improvements, for example, creating a mural.

Caerphilly Council has brought together the local ‘50+ Forum’ and Parent Network to collaborate on books for parents, grandparents and children.

Cardiff and Vale University Health Board have facilitated an intergenerational pilot ‘Staying Steady Schools’ as part of their work on reducing the risk of trips and falls. Young people from St Monica’s Church in Wales Primary have worked with the health board to raise awareness on reducing the risk of falls which has developed into an ongoing relationship between the school and their local care home.



Digital connectivity is important in helping connect people within their community. However, [while 89% of adults in Wales use the internet, 13% of households do not have access to it.](#)

While many have observed how social media can make us more lonely, technological interventions can also be part of the solution in addressing loneliness and isolation. For example, [GoodGym](#) is a UK initiative where people sign up to go for a run via an app, and combine that run with helping an older person in their community, such as help with a task around the house. Since starting, [GoodGym Cardiff](#) has achieved nearly 5,000 'good deeds'.

In February 2020, Welsh Government launched Wales' first ever [loneliness and social isolation strategy](#), which calls on government, public services, businesses, communities and individuals to work together to help tackle these issues. It establishes four priorities for action:

- increasing opportunities for people to connect
- improving community infrastructure to support people to come together
- establishing and maintaining cohesive and supportive communities
- and building awareness and reducing stigma.

It is supported by a [£1.4 million fund](#) to support community-based organisations test or scale up innovative approaches.

The strategy, together with the funding, is a positive step. Welsh Government should ensure the strategy is identifying how it can make a contribution to meet its well-being objectives and Wales' well-being goals.

Public bodies and Public Services Boards should build on their work to date and mainstream approaches like these within their service delivery, to help tackle loneliness and isolation. This requires taking a longer-term, preventative approach, rather than relying on funding to introduce new, short-term initiatives.

There are several positive interventions taking place at a national and local level to intervene earlier to address the root causes of crime and violence

Crime and antisocial behaviour undermine the safety and well-being of residents and are a constant challenge to public bodies.

- Women are [less likely](#) to feel safe than men in their community (58% compared to 83%).
- People [feel less safe](#) if they live in more deprived areas.
- The number of [hate crimes doubled](#) between 2012-13 and 2018-19 (from 1,765 to 3,932), with race, sexual orientation, disability and religion judged to be motivating factors.

“The Brexit divide in Britain is symptomatic of serious divergence in values, identity, and culture amongst Brits, and Wales hasn't escaped this either. In terms of the impact of this social crisis on BME communities, we've seen it impact on BME communities, as well as poor white communities, in several ways. The first is prevalence of youth violence, this includes gangs, the increase in serious violent crime, especially knife attacks. But a related phenomenon is the uptake of religious or political extremism.”

 Race Alliance Wales,
November 2019



Some levers of influence relating to cohesion and hate crime are not devolved, such as policing, criminal justice, media and internet regulation. However, in many areas, Welsh Government has put in place positive policy interventions which contribute to the safety and cohesion of communities.

The Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 is an important part of this (see [section on 'A More Equal Wales' in Chapter 3](#)), as is the work to tackle hate crime and improve community cohesion across government departments. For example, the [Hate Crime Report and Support Centre](#) provides independent advocacy and support for victims of hate crime in Wales. This is a positive step but is an area that will require continual monitoring, given the increased incidences of hate crimes since Brexit, and the fact that longer-term trends suggest migration will increase over the coming decades.

Public Services Boards across Wales are committed to developing collaborative public services that put people and communities at the centre. Given that 43% of all well-being objectives set by Wales' 19 Public Services Boards in 2018-19 relate to 'community', they have a key role in ensuring people in Wales live in safe, healthy places.

[Neath Port Talbot Public Services Board](#) has worked effectively together (particularly between the local authority, police, housing and third sector) around the issue of tackling county lines and drug deaths in the area. While this demonstrates effective partnership working to tackle an immediate problem, the Public Services Board also recognises it needs to now build on this work to tackle the issues which lead to these problems, including Adverse Childhood Experiences, poverty and vulnerability.

Appropriately planning and preparing for future problems arising from these causes of crime is essential, as well as more effective sharing of data around the profiling of new types of crime, such as cybercrime, which will need to be addressed by all public services.

In several areas, and much like the health service, the police service often picks up problems that could have been avoided. [Approximately 70-80% of calls now relate to non-crime issues](#), including vulnerable people and mental health.

Each police force plays a key role in Public Services Boards, and many are taking a leading role in investing resources in prevention and earlier intervention. For example, 5,500 police officers across Wales have received training in identifying and responding to Adverse Childhood Experiences, and many are working to meet local well-being plans with priorities in this area, by working with other partners to intervene earlier.

Whilst policing is not devolved to Wales, I want to highlight the positive contribution of police forces to the 19 Public Services Boards - a great example of a non-devolved service operating within a devolved context. It is also notable that other public bodies, including health boards, local authorities, fire and rescue services, Public Health Wales and Natural Resources Wales, are increasingly working together on preventative agendas such as domestic abuse, Adverse Childhood Experiences and grass fires.

Likewise, Welsh Government has demonstrated it recognises the contribution policing plays at a community level through supporting the employment of [500 Police Community Support Officers \(PCSOs\) in Wales](#), enabling police services in Wales to maintain their important approach to neighbourhood policing, in contrast with many forces in England.



Health has been consistently identified as a key link to early identification of domestic violence and abuse. In South Wales, the [Identification and Referral to Improve Safety \(IRIS\)](#) programme is a general practice-based domestic abuse and sexual violence training and referral programme, launched by the Police and Crime Commissioner and Cardiff and Vale University Health Board in 2014.

Funded by South Wales Police and the Police and Crime Commissioner, the programme was the first of its kind in Wales, with health and local specialist partners, [working across 25 practices in Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan](#). In its first year, training was delivered to 280 staff (including 93 GPs), with 70 referrals giving victims of domestic abuse the opportunity to access information and support they may otherwise have missed out on. The success of the programme means it is now being mainstreamed into police and health budgets.

Similarly, in 2019 a specialist Violence Prevention Unit to tackle violent crime was established in South Wales, after receiving £880,000 of funding from the Home Office – the only policing area in Wales to receive funding to help tackle violent crime. This unit will bring together South Wales Police, local authorities, health, community leaders and other key partners to tackle violent crime by understanding its root causes. The unit will be responsible for identifying what is driving violent crime in South Wales to develop a coordinated response. It is intended that this work will be rolled out to cover the whole of Wales.

It's positive to see examples like these where partners are working together to tackle root causes, through early intervention and prompt, positive action. They could provide a template for how public bodies work together and take preventative approaches to tackle some of our most challenging issues.

DRIVE is a programme which targets perpetrators of domestic abuse - an area which has traditionally had less focus. It has been piloted in five Police Force areas across Wales including South Wales. It has seen a 30% reduction in domestic abuse offending 88% reduction of sexual abuse, 82% reduction in physical abuse, 75% reduction in stalking and harassment and 73% reduction in controlling behaviour. It costs £2,400 per offender.

Involving different groups in communities to shape services, through involvement and co-production, enables public bodies to build a better understanding of people's vulnerabilities and ability to access services.

Culture and language can help people feel safe and involved, and supporting opportunities for increased local ownership in communities can provide a safer and more welcoming local environment.

Studies show that easily accessible and safe green and blue spaces can reduce levels of violence and certain types of crime, such as assault, robbery and burglary. This is due to increased surveillance in vegetated spaces and the therapeutic effects of vegetated landscapes.

Public Health Wales, working with [Natural Resources Wales](#), published '[Creating Healthier Places and Spaces for our current and future generations](#)', a helpful guide intended to support Public Services Boards, public bodies, organisations and individuals take forward actions that address and enhance the health and well-being opportunities afforded by the natural and built environment.



In the [Brecon Beacons National Park](#), the 'Shape My Brecon Beacons' [guide](#) and toolkit are aimed at helping people/communities play a part in shaping the places that matter to them, giving tools and ideas to explore, change and improve towns, villages or neighbourhoods in the national park.

Welsh Government should support public bodies to work better together to plan, prepare and shift their activity and resources towards prevention. Public bodies and Public Services Boards should be using the relationships they have developed to do this, helping tackle crime and antisocial behaviour in their areas.



Ensure everyone has access to key services

What future generations need

To be attractive, viable and cohesive, communities need to have good access to quality services in housing, health, transport, education, social care, local business, the environment and cultural activities.

Where we are now

Access to key well-being services in communities is unequal across Wales

According to the [2018-19 National Survey for Wales](#), 80% of people were satisfied they were able to get to or access the services they need. They were [least satisfied](#) with their ability to access services like community centres, secondary schools, libraries and youth clubs.

As a result of the COVID-19 national household lockdown, there was a re-definition of key services. The services deemed necessary for day to day life during the pandemic were listed as:

- Health and social care
- Education and childcare (for key workers' children)
- Key public services
- National and local government
- Food and other necessary goods
- Public and national security
- Transport
- Utilities, communication and financial services



Some of the greatest necessary changes and restrictions have been placed on access to normal places of work/business, education, childcare, retail, hospitality and leisure pursuits. There are considerable differences between lockdown experiences in rural and urban areas of Wales.

The COVID-19 crisis has shown what can be achieved when public bodies work closely with community help initiatives in their areas, particularly in relation to vulnerable and isolated people, and this should continue beyond the pandemic to help connect Wales' communities

Communities themselves have played a substantial role in delivering what would previously have been regarded as key services. For example, help for the most vulnerable, volunteering in hospitals and online support for education, mental health, and culture and recreation.

After the pandemic, perhaps the time is right to re-examine what is meant by key services and to build those upon a place-based understanding of need, and not a generic model of one size fits all in Wales. Customisation of the delivery of those services, could, for example, re-look at the [transfer of some local authority assets to local community groups](#).

In terms of delivery in communities, it is positive to see examples such as the Strong Communities Grant Fund in the [Vale of Glamorgan](#), which has committed over £400,000 to a range of community projects, including community centres, a local cinema club and heritage projects, that align with the council's '[Reshaping Services Programme](#)' and Well-being of Future Generations Act.

However, despite examples like these, ensuring everyone has equal access to key, everyday services remains a challenge. For example, the Equality and Human Rights Commission [highlighted](#) half of the railway stations in Wales are not fully accessible to disabled people, with 34% having no access for wheelchair users. With two-thirds of single pensioners in Wales having no car, this leaves them vulnerable to not being able to access key services, particularly in rural areas.

With two-thirds of single pensioners in Wales having no car, this leaves them vulnerable to not being able to access key services, particularly in rural areas.

Elsewhere local authority cuts to school transport have driven up reliance on car use, which may not be affordable for all families. Future planning will need to take these issues into account when considering new mobility models of the future. For example, the increase in cycle use, along with the rollout of electric scooters and Tuk Tuks, as seen in many towns and cities across Europe, may be welcome from a mobility, health and carbon reduction perspective. However, without significant planning and involvement from disabled people, this could potentially pose further problems in terms of exclusion.

I am encouraged by the number of objectives and steps set by public bodies that have a clear focus on involving people in improving access to key well-being services. For example:

[Hywel Dda University Health Board](#)'s objective to: 'Improve efficiency and quality of services through collaboration with people, communities and partners.'

[Velindre University NHS Trust](#)'s objective to: 'Bring communities and generations together through involvement in the planning and delivery of our services.'



Conwy Council's objective: 'People in Conwy contribute to their community. They are informed, included and listened to', with a step to: "work with communities, transport providers and other partners to undertake a fundamental review of transporting the public and access to services.'

Pembrokeshire Council's objective to 'Seek to create an efficient, cost-effective and modern council that is focused on working together to improve the lives of people in Pembrokeshire.'

To help address these challenges, Welsh Government should commit to introducing the 20 minute neighbourhood concept for all towns and cities in Wales, creating healthier, happier communities fit for a zero-carbon future. This means strong, well connected neighbourhoods where people live within a 20 minute walking distance of key everyday services, and prioritising mix-type development which combines housing, transport links, public services, workplaces and recreational facilities.

With regard to rural communities, austerity appears to have affected public services and community infrastructure. Audit Wales' report on '[Services for Rural Communities](#)' highlights: "the things that contribute to making their community a great place to live and work, coupled with the impact of public funding cuts and continuing economic uncertainty, have changed their communities in recent years, and not always for the better."

Of the citizens surveyed for the report, [43% expressed a view that council services had gotten worse in the last five years.](#)

Alongside this, the growth in online banking and mobile services has seen a reduction in banks and posts offices, with Powys seeing the largest reduction in Wales. The report also found that demographic changes are increasing pressure on already stretched public services such as social care, as demand for services increase.

Depopulation and an ageing society in remoter rural areas are also resulting in local services becoming less viable. The demography of rural Wales, and, in particular, the growing number of older people, has implications for the future of public service provision, for example, increasing demand on social care and housing services. Between 2012 and 2016 all nine primarily rural councils had seen [a reduction in the number of people aged under 18 and an increase in the number of people aged over 65.](#)

While all rural areas will see the number of households in their area increase by 2035, eight of the nine primarily rural authorities will see new household formation at [levels lower than the Welsh average.](#) This is having a knock-on effect on the ability of public services to recruit to key roles within rural communities such as primary school teachers, planners, firefighters and Welsh-speaking carers.

Despite these challenges, Audit Wales found that there is little demonstration of how public bodies understand the diverse nature of their rural communities. For example, in the Well-being Assessments and Well-being Plans that mention rural matters, infrastructure is a common area for improvement. However, there are few specific actions or steps to improve infrastructure, such as actions to improve roads and cycleways, integrate public transport and extend broadband networks.



Welsh Government should support public bodies to deliver a more integrated approach to service delivery in rural areas. Public bodies should continue to build on the work they are doing and ensure they involve a wide range of people, organisations and service users in their communities to help inform and shape their services.

The COVID-19 crisis has highlighted the importance of digital technology. [Access to digital services can connect people](#) with their wider community, job opportunities, social events and directories for their local area, helping to reduce feelings of loneliness and isolation.

However, [13% of households in Wales do not have access to the internet](#), and we must ensure people, both in rural and urban areas, can not only access digital services but also have the skills to navigate an increasingly digital world.

To help ensure everyone in Wales has access to reliable digital and internet connectivity, Welsh Government should be working with businesses, voluntary organisations and communities to help achieve this.

The Community Facilities Programme and Community Hubs programme are supporting positive approaches in bringing communities together but needs to be aligned with the plans and objectives of public bodies and Public Services Boards

Welsh Government has committed to investing in improving community facilities through its [Community Facilities Programme](#). The programme provides investment to secure the long-term future of community facilities, recognises the importance of bringing communities together as a way of preventing problems, and contributes to several well-being objectives.

Good examples of how this fund is meeting wider objectives include:

- Activities designed to prevent loneliness and isolation
- Night shelter provision for the homeless
- Youth activities combatting anti-social behaviour

However, while the programme clearly contributes to several well-being goals, there is a disconnect to local objectives set by public bodies in the respective areas the grants are being awarded. There is also [currently no requirement for applications](#) to demonstrate how their proposals will contribute to meeting local well-being objectives and plans. This needs to be joined up so that Welsh Government funding is clearly supporting the delivery of local as well as national objectives and goals.



The more recent [£15m Community Hubs programme in Wales](#), funded through the Infrastructure Fund, is a good example of a joined-up approach from Welsh Government to making capital investment decisions which support community well-being. It will provide an additional 21 community hubs and learning centres supporting innovative, radical new approaches to supporting children and bringing communities together.

There are some promising examples across Wales of the programme prompting integration amongst services. For example, [the Valleys Taskforce is helping facilitate a joined-up approach using community hubs to develop a new generation of health and care centres](#); expanding them further to develop new models of community learning, childcare provision, parenting support, family learning and community access to facilities built around the school day.

Healthcare services, community learning, childcare and even post offices are being brought under one roof in areas across Wales, demonstrating a significant step forward in moving towards a system which has the physical infrastructure to focus on wider well-being.

While these programmes are important opportunities to improve community cohesion, Welsh Government should ensure they are connected and aligned with the delivery of plans and well-being objectives of public bodies and Public Services Boards in each area, and are not delivered in isolation.

The socio-economic duty is an opportunity to reduce inequalities in Wales and should align with the Well-being of Future Generations Act

The socio-economic duty in Wales provides an opportunity to help safeguard equality and human rights in Wales and ensure public bodies put tackling inequality at the heart of strategic decision making.

It will require specified public bodies, when making strategic decisions such as ‘deciding priorities and setting objectives’, to consider how their decisions might help reduce the inequalities associated with socio-economic disadvantage.

Again, this development is encouraging; however, Welsh Government should ensure it is aligned, both in principle and in practical terms, with the Well-being of Future Generations Act. When setting well-being objectives and steps intended to address socio-economic disadvantage, I recommend public bodies set objectives that will both meet this duty and contribute to a wider set of well-being goals.

More public bodies are recognising that access to green and blue spaces can have a positive influence on community health and well-being

We know [access to green and blue spaces can have a positive influence on people’s health](#), and everyone in Wales should be able to live in a healthy, wildlife-rich natural world, having a voice in helping shape how they can access and use outdoor spaces.

The National Survey for Wales 2018-19 shows that greenspaces are readily accessible for most people in Wales, and the perceived quality of these spaces appears to be stable.



However, recent data from the Green Space Index suggested that over 236,000 people in Wales do not live within a ten-minute walk of greenspace. Furthermore, many people are not reaping the benefits of spending time together outdoors in their community.

Public bodies and Public Services Boards are recognising the important role high-quality greenspace plays in people's health and well-being.

[Newport Public Service Board](#), for example, have a well-being objective which states:

'Newport has healthy, safe and resilient environments', with steps including:
'Newport has a clean and safe environment for people to use and enjoy; improve air quality across the city; communities are resilient to climate change.'

From this, a 'Green and Safe Community Engagement Officer' was funded to facilitate delivery of the objective which has significantly contributed to progress, with all partners working together to shape a Newport wide vision called the 'Newport Green and Safe Offer'.

It is also encouraging to see public bodies and Public Services Boards making the links between volunteering and the natural environment. For example:

In [Snowdonia National Park](#) volunteers engage on a number of different activities linked to their promotion of the Welsh language.

In 2017-18, [Powys Council](#) had a [team of 102 volunteers](#) who clocked up 2,348 volunteer hours to deliver works such as building new bridges, installing gates and vegetation clearance.

In [Pembrokeshire Coast National Park](#), the Well-being of Future Generations Act was a major influence in project planning and design of the '[Pathways Project](#)', which targets those who are new to volunteering and have barriers to engaging in regular activity outdoors—particularly younger and older people and those experiencing mental health issues.

[Park run](#) is a fantastic example of people in communities coming together, across the UK, in parkland surroundings. The weekly 5km runs are free, open to everyone, and safe and easy to take part in.



Some public bodies are making the connections between their core duties and benefits to health, cohesion and wider well-being from initiatives such as parkrun. In Cardiff, [South Wales Police have worked with parkrun](#) to identify issues of harassment affecting women, and a GP cluster has been working with parkrun to deliver the first health-led parkrun in Wales, as part of a social prescribing initiative, demonstrating a real community effort with doctors, nurses and reception/managerial staff involved.



It is encouraging to see the importance of the natural environment recognised. However, there is still a long way to go in getting more people in Wales outdoors, using and enjoying their local surroundings, helping them connect to nature and discover the history of their communities.

With the nature, climate and public health crises we face, this is an area I expect to see Welsh Government, public bodies and Public Services Boards doing more to accelerate the change we need to see. A good starting point to do this, in a way which maximises the benefits to community cohesion, would be to set standards to ensure people can [access green and blue spaces within 300 metres of their homes](#).

Please see the section on ‘A Resilient Wales’ in Chapter 3 for more information.

Value the role and potential community anchor organisations can play in building cohesive communities

What future generations need

Cohesive communities need to have strong anchor organisations, such as development trusts, co-operatives, housing associations and town or community councils, who understand the local area and have a long-term commitment to it. Organisations like these play a fundamental role in listening to the needs and views of local people, championing and advocating on their behalf, working across sectors, and providing key services and activities.

A strong foundational economy also has a key role to play in supporting economic development in communities that delivers well-being in its widest sense, helping address long-term challenges such as persistent poverty, poor health and improving the life chances for everyone.

Where we are now

Every community in Wales has its key anchor organisations, and their role should be better recognised and valued by public bodies and Public Services Boards

There are many community and voluntary sector groups across Wales improving well-being in their areas. Many have a good track record of:

- Bringing in outside investment
- Providing support and training to businesses and community groups
- Targeting resources to meet local needs
- Adopting a place-making approach because they often see things in an integrated way
- Demonstrating good involvement and collaboration
- Taking innovative approaches

However, these organisations have told me the work they do is not always fully appreciated by public bodies, and they are frustrated with their ability to secure long-term funding and work as partners on an equal, trusted basis.



This is consistent with my analysis of well-being objectives. While some public bodies and Public Services Boards do recognise the important role of the voluntary sector (and volunteers themselves) as an asset within communities to help deliver services, there is little mention or recognition of ‘community anchor organisations’.

There have been positive developments from Welsh Government in recognising and supporting the contribution that inclusive local economies can make towards a number of the well-being goals

Wales needs an approach to economic development that delivers well-being in its widest sense and helps address long-term challenges such as persistent poverty, poor health, and improving the life chances for everyone.

The foundational economy has a key role to play in supporting this. It is about the basic goods and services on which every citizen relies and which keep us safe. For example, health and care services, food, housing, energy, construction, tourism and retailers on the high street are all examples. They are industries and firms that are there because people are there. They usually have ties which include local ownership and/or management, a regional supply chain, local labour and a local customer base.

They can help retain and re-circulate wealth in an area. For example, [research by the Federation of Small Businesses \(FSB\)](#), found that when local authorities spend money with small firms, the local economy benefits by an average of 58%, as the investment stays in the community and is recycled for wider economic and social benefits.

It is encouraging that Welsh Government have prioritised this area for investment with their [£4.5m Foundation Economy Challenge Fund](#), supporting businesses and organisations operating within the foundational economy. I am encouraged to see the number and variety of projects that have been funded across Wales.

For example:

£100,000 to [Cwmni Cymunedol Bro Ffestiniog](#) in North Wales to support community businesses to work with three social enterprises to develop plans in community tourism, renewable energy and digital media content. A new consultancy service for the foundational economy will also be established.

£100,000 to [Carmarthenshire County Council](#) to increase the number of local or regional food businesses supplying the public sector in the area.

£99,920 to the [Bevan Foundation](#) for work in the South Wales Valleys for a community regeneration think tank, in partnership with the Wales TUC, to help increase fair work in foundational sector businesses.

£65,000 to the [Cadenza](#) partnership to adapt an online approach for providing consistent, easy to use social prescribing records and opportunities.

Thriving high streets are a crucial part of inclusive, vibrant communities.

Examples like Crickhowell and Treorchy (named UK High Street of the Year in 2018 and 2019 respectively), show us what's possible when local communities are empowered.



Treorchy (Rhondda Cynon Taf) is a fantastic example of how we can do things in Wales, [winning UK's best high street of 2019](#), ahead of 39 other shortlisted streets. There are now 120 members of the chamber of trade, compared with 30 in 2018, and between 25 and 30 new businesses have opened in the past couple of years with occupancy at 96%.

There are also good examples of social enterprises which are both well engaged in their communities and active in the foundational economy.

[ELITE Paper Solutions](#), based in Merthyr Tydfil, helps organisations across Wales reduce their carbon footprint through effective recycling of confidential waste. The social enterprise was launched in 2015 with the aim of creating paid employment or work opportunities for people with disabilities and at a disadvantage.

Founded in 2015, [Creating Enterprise](#) is an award-winning building and maintenance social business based in north Wales. A wholly-owned subsidiary of Cartrefi Conwy Housing Association, 100% of its commercial profits are reinvested into employment initiatives via its employment academy, which creates volunteering, training and employment opportunities for social housing tenants.

Swansea-based organisation [Down to Earth](#) has been delivering training and development programmes for over 14 years. It is fast gaining a reputation as an example of best practice for working with people living in challenging circumstances via nature, sustainable construction and the outdoors.

Refer to the paragraph 'support inclusive local economies' in 'A Prosperous Wales' section of Chapter 3 for more information on the role of the foundational economy and my recommendations.

Public bodies are not always clearly making the links between prosperity and 'fair work' in their objectives and steps

Everyone who works needs to be able to have an adequate standard of living, safe and healthy working conditions, fair wages, time to rest, and the opportunity to take part in public life.

While public bodies are focussing on employment and economic growth in their areas, few are making the links to 'fair work' in their objectives and steps.

The Social Partnership Bill and Socio-Economic Duty in Wales are important developments to put Wales' social partnership approach in statute and ensure public bodies put tackling inequality at the heart of their strategic decision making.

Refer to the paragraph on 'ensure people can secure decent, fair work' in the 'Prosperous Wales' section in Chapter 3 for more information and my recommendations.



Your Voice

In engaging with over 5,000 people, the views here are representative of the key issues which have been shared with my office in forming this report

“We would like to ensure digital services are accessible to all and exploit the benefits of the digital economy whilst ensuring people are equipped to protect themselves from online exploitation.”
(Our Future Wales Response, Neath Port Talbot Public Services Board)

“Due to access in the valley that I live... there is lots of commuting and this impacts on the time people get to spend locally. Family members/neighbours that are vulnerable end up with less support from local people resulting in loneliness.”
(Our Future Wales conversation, Ebbw Vale)

"I would like to see us embracing diversity and change, a more involved sense of community as society becomes more individualistic. A society where discrimination based on gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation is lessened as more people are aware of these issues equally, poverty, and its detrimental effects on developing adults (encourages anti-social behavior), this often leads to a life of crime, bullying, drug use etc is lessened. A more politically-active society (voting age becomes 16)."
People's Platform

“A kind of poverty results from the closure of local post offices, schools and libraries.”
(Our Future Wales conversation, Bangor)

“We are concerned about the future of those buildings being there and accessible for future generations to access, enjoy and retain for their future generations. Equally, we are concerned about the current trend of worsening building conditions which are already impacting on the quality and accessibility of the cultural and sport programmes delivered.”
(Our Future Wales Response, Community Leisure UK)

“We need to ensure all sectors in community, especially the public statutory bodies, work collaboratively and corporately to promote, enhance and facilitate communities sensitive and friendly to age. It must be across all areas – social, environmental, economic and cultural.”
(Our Future Wales conversation, Bangor)



A Wales of Cohesive Communities

Recommendations for Welsh Government

Key Recommendation

Welsh Government should seek to adopt a placemaking approach for community programmes, facilities and services aligned to the placemaking principles contained within Planning Policy Wales.

Policy Recommendations

Welsh Government should:

- Support the establishment of two or three pilot landscape-scale, community stewardship projects, building on the lessons learned from the Skyline project. (Also a recommendation in CH3: A Resilient Wales)
- Ensure everyone in Wales has access to reliable digital and internet connectivity; and work with business and voluntary organisations to help achieve this.
- Ensure its loneliness strategy is identifying how it can make a contributing to meet its well-being objectives and Wales' well-being goals.
- Support public bodies to work better together to plan, prepare and shift their activity and resources towards prevention; to help tackle crime and anti-social behaviour.
- Support public bodies to deliver a more integrated approach to service delivery in rural areas.
- Require applications for the community facilities programme to demonstrate how they will contribute to local well-being objectives.
- Ensure the socio-economic duty aligns to The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. (Also a recommendation in CH3: A Prosperous Wales)
- Set standards to ensure people can access biodiverse green spaces within 300 metres of their home. (Also a recommendation in CH3: A Resilient Wales)
- Commit to introducing the 20 minute neighbourhood concept for all towns and cities in Wales; creating healthier, happier communities fit for a zero-carbon future. This means strong, well connected neighbourhoods where people live within a 20 minute walking distance of key everyday services, and prioritising mix-type development which combines housing, transport links, public services, workplaces and recreational facilities.



A Wales of Cohesive Communities

Recommendations for Welsh Government

Process Recommendations

In their day to day actions Welsh Government should **stop**:

- Funding fragmented programmes that expect results within short term timescales.
- Focusing on perceived weaknesses in communities and ignoring their strengths.
- Considering community ownership and management of assets as only possible when public bodies can no longer afford them.
- Working in silos and isolation; failing to see the connections across government departments in order to support communities.

In their day to day actions Welsh Government should **start**:

- Analysing the provision of and access to nature by socio-economic disadvantage, particularly in respect of funding programmes. (Also a recommendation in Chapter 3: A Resilient Wales).
- Taking 'placebased' approaches in communities.
- Creating the conditions to help communities do what matters to them.
- Take partnership working beyond 'dealing with' problems in communities towards preventing problems in communities.



A Wales of Cohesive Communities

Advice on setting well-being objectives for all public bodies and boards covered by the Well-being of Future Generations Act (including Welsh Government)

Please refer to the chapter on Setting Good Well-being Objectives, but in setting their objectives specifically in relation to this goal all public bodies and boards covered by the Well-being of Future Generations Act (including Welsh Government) should:

- Clearly demonstrate the connections between their well-being objectives and steps on community cohesion, and other areas such as tackling inequality and poverty, the natural environment, fair work, skills, health and well-being.
- Clearly set out how you understand the definition of the goal: 'A Wales of Cohesive Communities'.
- Align their action and reporting on this goal with your commitment under the socio-economic duty, to ensure their well-being objectives are addressing socio-economic disadvantages.

In setting their steps, public bodies and boards covered by the Well-being of Future Generations Act (including Welsh Government) should focus in the following areas and should:

- Enable people to be active in their communities by creating the conditions where they can do the things that matter to them.
- Support communities to be well connected and a place where people feel safe.
- Enable good access to key well-being services.
- Value the role and potential of community anchor organisations can play in building cohesive communities.



A Wales of Cohesive Communities

Recommendations for all public bodies and boards covered by the Well-being of Future Generations Act (including Welsh Government)

Process Recommendations

In their day to day actions they should **stop**:

- Planning and investing in siloes without clearly applying the principles of placemaking as set out in Planning Policy Wales.

In their day to day actions they should **start**:

- Applying the steps and actions set out in my 'Journey to Involvement'.
- Building on their focus on communities, demonstrating collaboration, innovation, transparency and local ownership; particularly in light of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill, intended to reform and strengthen local government.
- Embedding a culture of meaningful citizen and stakeholder involvement; as well as making more explicit links with the voluntary sector and town and community councils - both as a voice and delivery partner.
- Supporting and working with community leaders, activists, entrepreneurs and volunteers in the delivery of well-being objectives.
- Recognising that community stewardship of land offers a significant opportunity to deliver on the promise of green growth – to enhance social, environmental, and economic well-being.
- To collaborate with town and community councils and voluntary organisations to set and deliver local well-being objectives and steps.
- Building on their work to help tackle loneliness and isolation and mainstream approaches like these within their service delivery. This requires taking a longer-term, preventative approach.
- Using the relationships they have developed to work better together to plan, prepare and shift their activity and resources towards prevention; to help tackle crime and anti-social behaviour.



Process Recommendations (continued)

In their day to day actions they should start:

- Continue to build on the work they are doing and ensure they involve a wide range of people, organisations and service users in their communities to help inform and shape their services.
- Connecting the Community Hubs programme to the delivery of plans and well-being objectives in their areas.
- To support the long-term development of the Community Facilities Programme in a way which supports their own local well-being objectives and national well-being goals.
- To work with key partners to set standards to ensure people can access green space within 300 metres of their home.



Resources / Useful Information

Future Generations Commissioner for Wales

- [Journey to a Wales of Cohesive Communities](#)
- [Future Generations Framework](#)
- [Future Generations Framework for Scrutiny](#)
- [Future Generations Framework for service design](#)

Welsh Government

- [Well-being of Wales 2019](#)
- [Planning Policy Wales 10](#)
- [National Survey for Wales](#)

Other

- [Auditor General for Wales: Local Government Services to Rural Communities](#)
- [Skyline: Skyline Report](#)





Comisiynydd
**Cenedlaethau'r
Dyfodol**
Cymru

**Future
Generations**
Commissioner
for Wales

