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**Future
Generations**
Commissioner
for Wales

The Future Generations Report 2020



Let's create the future together

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Chapter 5

Areas of focus

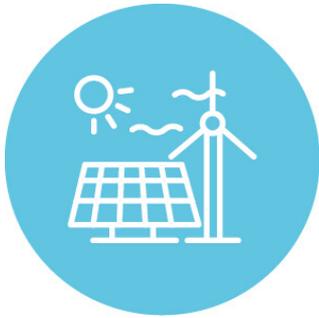
Future Generations Report 2020

Areas of Focus:

Land use planning and Placemaking

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Land use planning and placemaking

The way we plan, design and build our communities and infrastructure for the future is critical in addressing long-term challenges and ensuring well-being nationally and locally. Getting planning right can help us to meet a number of our well-being goals, by helping protect and enhance our ecosystems, strengthening our communities by ensuring they can get together and access the right services, facilitating healthy and active lifestyles, supporting a modal shift and identifying land for clean energy production and new ways of working and living.

What communities want and need in the future will fundamentally change as our planet requires rapid decarbonisation and restoration of nature, demographic trends such as urbanisation and an ageing population continue, and as technology continues to change the way we live and work.





The future of planning

Global trends and predictions (detailed in Chapter 1), such as climate change, an ageing population are all likely to have a significant impact on land use planning in the future.

Trends to watch:

- Increasing demand for land for housing, recreation, transport, the low carbon economy, climate change mitigation and energy [in the face of uncertain demographic change](#).
 - [Flood risk has significantly increased](#), as demonstrated in January 2020, when parts of Wales experienced severe flooding.
 - Rising global demand for food and changing commodity prices could affect the amount of land that is [brought into food production](#).
 - Growing risks from heat, water scarcity and slope [instability caused by severe weather](#).
 - Growing awareness of issues such as climate change, spatial injustice and food shortages has led to a resurgence of interest in community food growing and urban agriculture, how to protect the diversity of local high streets, and ensure the [local provenance of the food we eat](#).
 - Globally, communities are becoming more engaged in the planning process, and an increased focus on finding optimal [community engagement practices](#).
- [Rapid urbanisation](#), which can exasperate [health problems](#).
 - Increasing unbalanced growth across cities and regions, and [increasing spatial inequalities in wealth, education, social mobility and health](#).
 - An increasingly older population means that we need to re-think a lot of the features in our towns and cities, from the ease of navigability of streets to more compact urban centres for populations who will [increasingly rely on walking and public transport](#).
 - Decreasing general household size, requiring a greater number of homes, resources and energy to support the [overall increasing number of households](#).
 - The number of properties available may not keep up with this rise in households. Growth in population and housing [will not be uniform across Wales](#).
 - Increasing productivity of land and relief of some pressures associated with intensive land use [thanks to technology](#).



- Growing role of technology in reducing the negative impacts of urbanisation and farming on our land with new energy, water and waste treatment technologies, [as well as precision farming.](#)
- Diminishing number of planners and trainees working in the public sector and [loss of specialist skills as planning.](#)

Predictions for a possible future:

- Climate change is likely to increase the frequency of flooding, with consequences for property, livelihoods, infrastructure, agricultural production, and ecosystems.
- There is likely to be less suitable land available in Wales for development as flood plains, and other lower-lying land becomes [increasingly prone to flooding.](#)
- More than 4 billion people could be living in areas with a chronic shortage of water by 2050.
- By 2050 parts of the UK could experience an average annual reduction in river flows of 15%, and as much as 80% [in some catchments during the summer.](#)

- Feeding the world's projected nine billion global population in 2050 is forecast to require a 70% increase in food production but 80% of arable land in developing countries is already used, there is less water available for agriculture, and constantly increasing yields from major crops may be unrealistic, [raising concerns about 'food security' and 'peak food'.](#)
- Population increase and demographic change are likely to increase the pressures on the availability of land.
- By 2050, the equivalent of the world's current total [population will live in cities.](#)
- The UK will likely have a higher population than any other country in the [European Union by 2043 with 70-75 million inhabitants.](#)
- Demands for land for settlements could increase from 8% to 12% by 2050 due to population growth ([based on Climate Change Committee analysis of UK data](#)).
- If current trends continue, 18% of the UK population is projected to live in single-occupancy households by 2031, 42% of which will be aged [65 years or older.](#)
- The number of households in Wales also looks set to increase significantly. For example, the number of single-person households is [predicted to rise by over 30% in the next 20 years.](#)



The Vision for Wales in 2050, as set out in the Well-being of Future Generations Act – placemaking for well-being

In 2050, sustainable development, in line with the specific definition of the Act and placemaking, will be at the heart of every land use planning decision. The four dimensions of well-being - the environment, society, economy and culture - will no longer be seen as something to be ‘traded off’ or compromised on, but will be implemented as an integrated concept.

People will have the opportunity to co-design the places they live, work and spend their time in. Adequate investment will allow local plans to be co-produced with a diverse range of people in each community. Involvement will be in the form of an ongoing, two-way conversation, using methods to inspire and engage people rather than a traditional consultation with lengthy technical documents.



Cities will be designed to prevent the spread of epidemics and to promote healthy behaviours. The smart design of places and neighbourhoods will help us be more efficient and reduce our carbon footprint. Technology will enable remote working and reduce the need to travel. ([A Healthier Wales](#) and [A Prosperous Wales](#))

In cities, people will have access to everything they need through walking, cycling or sustainable public transport. Cities will be virtually car-free, improving air quality and public health. This will also benefit those who do not own a car, cannot drive or cannot afford public transport. Technology and digital connectivity will enable us to work remotely, and increased public transport will ensure our rural communities have full access to services while decreasing living costs. ([A Healthier Wales](#), [A More Equal Wales](#), [A Wales of Cohesive Communities](#)) (Please see the sections on [Transport](#) and the [Wellness System](#) in Chapter 5 for more information)

[Mexico City](#) - ‘Laboratorio para la Ciudad’ is Latin America’s first urban innovation lab, designed to help reform the city. It consists of 20 young people from various backgrounds (urban, political sciences, humanities, social sciences, art, activism, film making, and an adviser for cities and institutions). They provide creativity and the ability to imagine a different, better and more participatory [kind of future for the city](#).

880 cities in [Toronto, Canada](#), is the concept that communities should be built around the needs of everyone, whether rich or poor, eight or 80 years old. “Some city leaders have vision, but they don’t have action. And with some cities it’s the other way around, they have action, but no vision. We’ve been building cities based more on cars than people’s happiness.”



Through mixed-use developments and better digital connectivity, all communities, including rural communities, will have access to jobs, reducing inequalities between regions and communities in Wales. ([A More Equal Wales](#) and [A Prosperous Wales](#))

Placemaking will ensure that communities across Wales will have easy access to Welsh-medium services, schools, and social opportunities to use the language. It will also mean that people would not need to leave Welsh-speaking communities in rural areas to access better jobs and amenities. ([A Wales of Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language](#))

All communities will have access to cultural facilities or will be able to reach them at appropriate times, through reliable and affordable public transport. Public transport and active travel routes will also develop opportunities to promote the culture and heritage of places. People will be able to enjoy 'scenic' places that boost their spirits and well-being not only in rural settings but in built-up areas as well. ([A Wales of Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language](#))



[Amsterdam, Netherlands](#), has combined financial technology, energy efficiency and culture, with 90% of households in Amsterdam having bicycles and an advanced system of [automated services for the public use of shared bikes.](#)

[Paris, France](#) gave its people control and access to the city's data flows. Through the application of the Internet of Things (IoT), they try to optimize the flows of people and vehicles in the city. The Grand Paris Express project is one of the biggest overhauls of transport in Europe. It will redesign the transport network in the city's metropolitan area, adding four additional metro lines, 200 kilometres of new rail lines and 68 completely new interconnected stations, [all with a 100% automatic metro system.](#)

[Melbourne, Australia](#) – [The 20-minute neighbourhood pilot programme](#) is about 'living locally'—giving people the ability to meet most of their daily needs within a 20-minute walk from home, with safe cycling and local transport options.

[Maroochydore City Centre](#) on the Sunshine Coast of [Queensland, Australia](#) will be the first purpose-built city in the world [designed for driverless cars.](#) The city will feature a range of innovative technology.

[Netherlands: In Rotterdam](#), ['Humankind'](#) helped the public to reclaim the streets with the project 'Happy Streets', a colourful, playful and [refreshing take on designing for people instead of cars.](#)



The needs of specific groups will be analysed, considered and planned for, so that communities and places are designed with everyone's needs in mind. This will to promote inclusivity, integration and equality, thereby enabling everyone to live independently, actively and improve both physical and mental well-being. (A Healthier Wales and A More Equal Wales)

Our infrastructure will not just be carbon-neutral; our planning system will be used to reduce carbon emissions and provide net carbon benefits through nature-based solutions, including green infrastructure and re-forestation. Planning will support the nation's overall decarbonisation efforts as it affects all sectors (for example agriculture, transport, housing including carbon storage into buildings and energy) and it will provide the infrastructure needed to operate that shift. It will help the enhancement of biodiversity and with the restoration of lost habitats and connectivity for wildlife. (A Prosperous Wales, A Resilient Wales and A Globally Responsible Wales)

Planning regulations will help protect nature and will increase tree cover and green spaces. Forests will be spreading across Wales' landscape, and nature-based solutions will be used to tackle issues such as flooding. This will also help combat mental illness, such as mild and moderate depression. (A Healthier Wales)

The Welsh planning system will provide a leading global example of how a sustainable system centred around placemaking should look like. (A Globally Responsible Wales)



The [2025 Master Plan for Houston, USA](#), envisions a vibrant, economically sustainable district of residential, hotel, office, retail, dining and entertainment development, [capitalising on the future east-west transit lines of the metro light rail and existing public spaces](#).

The [cultural trail in Indianapolis, USA](#), is a curbed, buffered, beautifully paved, richly landscaped, and artfully lighted bike and pedestrian pathway that connects all cultural venues in the urban core. [It's an exploration trail that connects people to everything that's good in the city centre](#).

Frauen-Werk-Stadt (Women-Work-City) - [Vienna's](#) government has made the city a safer and more convenient place for women through improved street lighting, parks that are more accessible for young girls, widened pavements, and designed social housing and new neighbourhoods for the needs of women.

[Tokyo, Japan](#) has a plan for looking after Japan's super-ageing population through the construction of Daily Activities Areas, which are geographical boundaries where older adults may easily go about conducting their daily activities such as walking to their grocery store, library, post office, health clinic, social club, and other such local amenities.

The state of [Gujarat, India](#), has created enough [green energy](#) for 19,000 people by [teaming up with utility companies to install solar panels on people's rooftops](#).



Freiburg's Vauban quarter was built as "a sustainable model district" on the site of a former military base and is known as the [greenest part of Germany's greenest city](#). It combines [sustainable buildings and transport primarily by foot and bicycle](#).

Lima, Peru, sends out [drones to map](#) and assess the [city's greenspace and work on ways to improve it](#).

South Wales Fire and Rescue Service are part of the Healthy Hillside project: a multi-partnership approach to using land management techniques (such as bracken rolling) to help reduce the risk of wildfires and improve the natural environment and biodiversity.

Singapore set aside hundreds of acres and [planted 3 million trees](#) for an urban garden that [acts as the lungs of the city](#).



The [Glasgow and Clyde Valley Green Network](#) is creating a large functional green network for the Metropolitan region. It involves eight local authorities and five government agencies.

Stroud District Council [rural SuDs project](#) is a Natural Flood Management project where the Council worked with local community flood groups, land-owners, farmers and partner organisations to implement a range of measures. These measures include increased tree cover to reduce flood risk, improve water quality and enhance the biodiversity of the wider River Frome catchment.

My contribution to this vision

To support the achievement of the well-being goals in relation to planning, I have:

Provided advice and assistance to Welsh Government to ensure we get the national planning policy right

Collaborated with key stakeholders to ensure the Act and its requirements are understood and implemented throughout the planning processes

Worked with the sector on the development of guidance on planmaking and development management

See Chapter 6 'My Focus' for more information.



People's perception of planning

Listening to what people think and believe is an important part of involvement and it is clear that planning really matters to people. Planning is particularly polarising, and the people who contact me are often those dissatisfied with the system. While it is important that I reflect the views expressed to me, these comments should be read in context.

About 18% of people who contact my office and 28% of respondents to the 'People's Platform' identified planning and infrastructure as one of the biggest issues that matters and affects them.

Responding to these views and lived experience, I decided, in 2018, to make 'planning' one of my areas of focus.

People's views included:

Some people are frustrated by the current planning system. They think the planning process is not open or transparent and there is little involvement in the process.

There is a lack of consideration about the impact of planning decisions on transport infrastructure, carbon emissions and the environment.

Insufficient monitoring of planning outcomes, such as 106 agreements.

The onus is on the general public and councillors to object and be on the back-foot. Communities have to spend a lot of resources (they don't have) to fight planning developments and the system.

There is a lack of consideration of the cumulative impact that several planning applications (specifically intensive farming applications) can have when placed next to each other.

Concerns about the location of certain developments (such as fast-food shops, petrol stations and biomass plants), which people felt will negatively impact their health if placed in close proximity to residential areas and schools.

Destruction of greenspace, biodiversity and natural beauty and access to greenspace.

People from Black Asian and minority ethnic communities have told me that, at present, places are not designed with inclusivity and equality in mind. For example, they feel that the current Cardiff Local Development Plan doesn't promote integration in the way it is split into strategic economy zones rather than inclusive areas. They have highlighted in particular the need for more diversity in planning teams to design plans and decisions reflecting the diverse needs and views of minority communities.



Your Voice

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

"I would like to see more green roof space within the cities and the creation of community living within multi occupation buildings which will allow householders to socialise on a daily basis, which will help to prevent loneliness and depression."
(People's Platform)

"I would like to see less out of town shopping areas, they have been the downfall of towns and have been a planning disaster."
(People's Platform)

"The environment serves us as an ecosystem, yet it is being decimated by development and is not considered a priority above economic development. Without protection, future generations of people will suffer because of the lack of the service nature provides in carbon absorption, flood control, clean water (filtration), mental and physical health and general wellbeing."
(People's Platform)

"There are too many issues that I care about relating to my town, to Wales, to the UK and to the world to mention here. However, one of the issues that I have been trying to hi-light is the lack of tree cover in [my town] (and, of course, in general)."
(People's Platform)

"We need better infrastructure, working with nature not against it."
(People's Platform)



I would like to thank the following people and organisations for their contribution to my work in this area

I would like to thank the following organisations who have provided feedback and suggestions on several drafts, including [Phil Williams](#), (former President of RTPI 2016 and former Head of Planning at Cardiff County Council), [Roisin Willmott](#) from the [Royal Town Planning Institute](#), [Welsh Government Planning Division](#) and the [Planning Inspectorate for Wales](#).

Thank you also to the [Welsh Language Commissioner Aled Roberts](#), the [Design Commission for Wales](#), [Natural Resources Wales](#), [Royal National Institute of Blind People](#) and [Constructing Excellence in Wales](#), for their comments.



In addition to this involvement, I have also 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 following opportunities and challenges.

Challenges and opportunities for change

Ensure Planning Policy Wales 10 is properly implemented

What future generations need

Future generations need a land use planning system fully aligned with the Well-being of Future Generations Act. All plans at a local, regional and national level need to deliver against local authorities' well-being objectives and steps along with the national well-being goals.

The publication of Planning Policy Wales 10 is a significant step in the right direction, but the focus must now be on ensuring consistent implementation

Welsh Government has a long legacy of placing sustainable development at the heart of devolution since 1999. In 2015, they embarked on a complete recast of the planning system for Wales, to provide a planning system that is coherent, sustainable and strategic, breaking away from a tradition of incremental policies.

Following the passing of the Planning (Wales) Act 2015, Welsh Government then redrafted the national policy, Planning Policy Wales. They are now working on a spatial plan for Wales called the [National Development Framework](#), and in March 2020, they updated their guidance to support the design of Local Development Plans.

The most significant aspect of Planning Policy Wales was the introduction of requirements around placemaking, designed to unlock the power of planning in achieving each of the well-being goals.



Marie B- Navarro
@MarieBNavarro

Planning sector working with us @futuregenymru to develop ideas for implementation of the wellbeing Act in practice

Marie B- Navarro
@MarieBNavarro

Very productive workshop at Wales Planning Conference #walesplan19 generated lots of ideas for our inspirational planning journeys @RTPIPlanners @futuregenymru

Iona Hughes
@lonawastedr

Good @futuregenymru workshop on the Journey of Planning today and lots of feedback to work on. Thank you @RTPICymru for the space @MarieBNavarro

7:33 PM · Dec 11, 2019 · Twitter for iPhone

Marie B- Navarro
@MarieBNavarro

Very impressed with Welsh Minister Julie James. She says what matters is to have a seamless public service system. People not interested in the plumbing. In line with Well-being of Future Generations Act and needs the right attitude from public servants. Make it work she pleaded

Marie B- Navarro
@MarieBNavarro

Discussing planning and implementation of the Well-being of Future Generations Act with the Planning Inspectorate Wales @futuregenymru

Roisin Willmott
@RTPICymru

.@futuregenymru has identified 'planning' as a priority area, along with house building, sustainable transport plus others. Good to have focus in today's Spring Conference to inform framework to help adapt business as usual and make simple changes to help implement Act.

12:19 PM · Mar 20, 2019 · Twitter for Android



What is Placemaking?

"Placemaking" is 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 considers the context, function and relationships between a development and its wider surroundings. This will be true for major developments creating new places well as small developments created within a wider place.

Placemaking should not add additional cost to a development, but will require smart, multi-dimensional and innovative thinking to implement and should be considered at the earliest possible stage. 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.

Source: Planning Policy Wales 10

Placemaking is a vast concept, relevant not only to planning but also to other sectors, including housing and transport or any element of the built environment.

It is, therefore, particularly relevant to the Housing and Transport sections of this chapter.

Designing policy outcomes to maximise contribution to all of the seven well-being goals, as was done with the Planning Policy and demonstrated in the extract of the table on the right, should become the new norm for policymaking in Wales. Welsh Government should adopt this model for all national policies.

Placemaking will help us address living conditions that have the biggest impact on our well-being, such as housing, access to nature, tackling air pollution and improving social cohesion. Wales needs a planning system that delivers the vision within both the Well-Being Act of Future Generations Act and Planning Policy Wales 10, a vision that views the four dimensions of well-being - environment, society, economy and culture - in a holistic way. In practice, this means, every piece of land or landscape should help deliver multiple benefits simultaneously and help us achieve our national well-being goals. Planning services can also do more to limit their environmental footprint by printing and travelling less. The impact of planning goes beyond its sector.

Annex B

The national sustainable placemaking outcomes and their relationship to PPW Themes and Well-being Goals

OUTCOMES	Strategic & Spatial Choices	Active & Social	Productive & Enterprising	Distinctive & Natural	Globally Responsible	Prosperous	Resilient	Healthier	More Equal	Cohesive Communities	Vibrant Culture
Maximising Environmental Protection and Limiting Environmental Impact											
Has resilient biodiversity and ecosystems	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Has distinctive and special landscapes	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Has integrated green infrastructure	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Has appropriate soundscapes	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Reduces environmental risks	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Manages water resources naturally	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Has clean air	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Reduces overall pollution	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Is resilient to climate change	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Has distinctive and special historic environments	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Facilitating Accessible and Healthy Environments											
Has accessible and high quality green space	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Is accessible by means of active travel and public transport	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Is not car dependent	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Minimises the need to travel	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Provides equality of access	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Feels safe and inclusive	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Supports a diverse population	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Has good connections	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Has convenient access to goods and services	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Promotes physical and mental health and well-being	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•

Source: Planning Policy Wales 10

It can support and drive the decarbonisation of other sectors, such as transport and housing (see below for more detail).

We also need to continue moving away from the culture of considering developments and projects in isolation.

Where are we now

The publication of Planning Policy Wales 10 is a significant step in the right direction, but the focus now needs to ensure consistent implementation, and the recast of the planning system needs to continue at increased pace

Wales is leading the way in policy-making, now we have to show the world how we apply it. Planning needs to underpin all corporate strategies and well-being objectives. It needs to be valued and prioritised at a senior leadership level.



Every person involved in the planning system needs to adopt a placemaking approach, and this goes beyond the public sector. A Placemaking Charter was designed to support everyone, from Welsh Government to developers, including statutory consultees and local authorities, to assist with this change in thinking. A succinct placemaking guide to accompany the Charter is being developed by the Placemaking Wales Partnership, led by the Design Commission for Wales, in collaboration with the Welsh Government Planning Division, to help develop a common understanding of the breadth and depth of placemaking as a practice, as well as dispel common misconceptions. The guide will be aimed at anyone involved in placemaking, including urban designers, planners, architects, landscape architects, developers, transport planners, highway engineers and the local community.

"The way places are planned, designed, developed and managed has the potential to positively shape where and how people will live, work, socialise, move about and engage. Placemaking is ensuring that each new development or intervention contributes positively to creating or enhancing environments within which people, communities and businesses can thrive. It places people at the heart of the process and results in places that are vibrant, have a clear identity and where people can develop a sense of belonging."

"As stated in PPW 10, a holistic approach is needed that takes into consideration whole places rather than individual land uses or each development in isolation. Placemaking has developed in response to 'placelessness' within the built environment whereby new development lacks a distinct identity, character, sense of community or collective ownership."

Design Commission for Wales and Welsh
Government

It is important to recognise that while the concepts of placemaking and other policy developments set out in Planning Policy Wales are a significant step in the right direction, it will take time, support and resources to fully embed these changes throughout the system and avoid an implementation gap.

Welsh Government are committed to continuing their in-depth work to recast the planning system in Wales. In the interim, planning authorities need to embrace every opportunity they currently have; for example, demanding more from developers to get better proposals and maximising the use of conditions in development management. This might also require an update of Circular WGC 016/2014 on The Use of Planning Conditions for Development Management.

A year on, it is too early to assess what Planning Policy Wales 10 has achieved accurately. However, comments from the Planning Inspectorate for Wales are reassuring, in the message that Planning Policy Wales and the Well-being of Future Generations Act demand more from local authorities, developers and inspectors.

We need local authorities to embrace this encouragement from the Planning Inspectorate, to negotiate and improve proposed developments, and then refuse permission if these improvements are not included in the final application.

Planning Policy Wales 10 and its aspiration will also need to be reflected in local policy and supplementary planning guidance, which will also play a role in the implementation of placemaking.



Some examples of objectives and steps that are making links with housing and transport within the context of the planning system are:

[Welsh Government](#) has steps to: 'Deliver the South Wales Metro, underpinning the region's economic development, and spreading jobs and prosperity through more rapid transport, and ensuring that all new and significant developments in the region are sited within easy reach of a station.'

[Snowdonia National Park Authority](#) has steps to 'Ensure that the Local Development Plan continues to provide affordable housing. Support sustainable economic development within our communities which utilise the qualities and opportunities that Snowdonia provide. Work with agencies and providers to enhance the connectivity of our communities.'

[Cardiff Council's](#) steps include 'Progress the City Centre Transport Masterplan through achievable and deliverable transport projects. Projects will focus on delivering the sustainable transport infrastructure improvements and transport deliverables outlined in the Masterplan, Transport Strategy, the new Transport & Clean Air Vision, and Local Development Plan. Support the delivery of the Council's Active Travel agenda. Support the delivery of high-quality and well-connected communities. Increase the delivery of new houses to meet housing need through the development of Local Development Plan strategic sites, including 6,500 new affordable homes.'

[Powys Council](#) has steps to 'Continue to carry out improvements to the council's housing stock, ensuring all our tenants live in fit for purpose homes. Review the passenger transport offer for our communities and working with residents, we will provide a service that is fit for purpose. Continue to develop more community hubs in appropriate locations, to offer residents a mix of services all under one roof.'

Some local authorities have started to recognise the significance of placemaking as a holistic concept and as an important element of the decision-making within their organisation.

For example, [Monmouthshire Council](#) recently created the role 'Head of Placemaking, Housing, Highways and Flood' recognising the connections between these key areas of placemaking and the need for integration of these services.

While there is an important focus on carbon reduction in Planning Policy Wales 10, related land use planning policies are lacking specific analysis on how they will contribute to carbon reduction

The planning system can have a ripple effect across different areas because it so intrinsically linked to all built environment sectors (including transport, housing, power etc.). Getting this right will be a significant contribution towards achieving net-zero Wales.

A key feature of Planning Policy Wales 10 is the introduction of hierarchies for transport, energy and waste. Public bodies should follow these hierarchies in the making of strategic and local development plans but also when dealing with planning applications.



We need these hierarchies to be adopted and followed to help us meet our decarbonisation targets.

"So far PPW10's new approach has not been a bone of contention at appeal. I have heard that local planning authorities are reluctant to refuse planning permission on the grounds that a development isn't as good, as it could be for fear that Inspectors will not support them.[...] But it is not unreasonable to expect development making new places or having significant impacts on existing places to make a good place or an existing one better. PPW10 expects us to do just that, indeed it tells LPAs that they should negotiate to improve poor or average developments. PPW10 and the WCFG Act encourages collaboration between developers, LPAs and communities in the evolution of projects and where that works well there should be no need to resort to appeal. In cases where that does not work, PPW10 gives LPAs permission to set the bar above 'do no harm'. That will be new territory for all of us, including Inspectors."

Tony Thickett, Director Planning Inspectorate for Wales

Some public bodies are seeing planning as an enabler in providing innovative solutions to meeting the well-being goals but this needs to be more consistent across all public bodies in Wales

Please see the sections on a Healthier Wales, Decarbonisation and Housing in Chapters 3 and 5 for more information.

It is encouraging to see that public bodies, other than just planning authorities, are considering the wider benefits of planning.

For example, while health boards have not set objectives on planning, some of their steps and wider organisational work demonstrate a recognition that planning has a considerable impact on the wider determinants of health, such as housing quality, access to green space, community infrastructure, food and access to learning.

Cwm Taf University Health Board have an objective to: 'Work with communities to prevent ill-health, protect good health and promote better health and well-being' and steps include: 'Through the Public Service Board we are working with Natural Resources Wales to explore how the built and natural environment could be used to promote active living and promote health and well-being.'

Public Health Wales has a step to: 'Demonstrate the impact of knowledge, evidence and advice on policy and practice relating to wider determinants both nationally and locally, e.g. Housing, education, employment, economic development and planning policy and practice.'

To this end, they have collaborated with Natural Resources Wales to provide a guide for Public Services Boards, public bodies and others on using the built environment to improve health and well-being. The [Creating Healthier Places and Spaces for Our Present and Future Generations](#) guide explains how greenspace, access to healthy food, opportunities to be active, clean air, well-designed buildings, and supportive local facilities can help people and communities thrive in Wales.

While it is encouraging to see this wider consideration of planning decisions, public bodies should be doing more to integrate their well-being objectives to create sustainable places.

Although links were made between issues like transport, housing and planning in annual reports, I also saw examples of public bodies not fully embracing the four dimensions of sustainability in their infrastructure and development plans and decision-making.



Figure 8: The Sustainable Transport Hierarchy for Planning

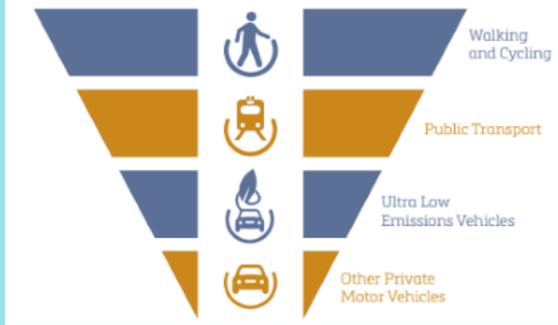


Figure 9: The Energy Hierarchy for Planning

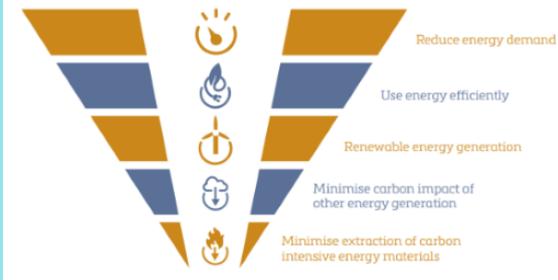
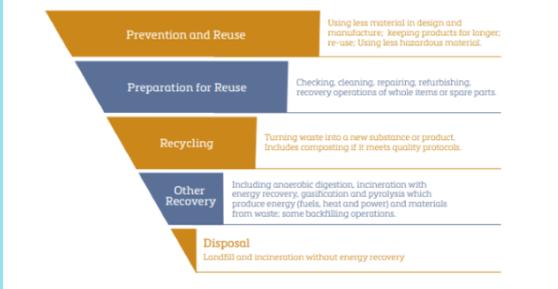


Figure 10: Waste Hierarchy



Source: Planning Policy Wales 10

Despite this important statement of policy intent in Planning Policy Wales, I am not convinced that all related planning policies currently go as far as they should in order to match this ambition. I recognise the progress in delivering placemaking policy with legal weight and was encouraged by the involvement exercise carried out for its production. However, it is important that the draft National Development Framework 2020-2040 does not weaken Planning Policy Wales 10. The framework will be a 20-year national land use plan for the whole of Wales, spanning from 2020 to 2040, so it is crucial to get it right.

The proposed framework currently favours the expansion of airports and ports, which is not in line with the government's decarbonisation targets, or the goals of 'A Prosperous' and 'A Resilient Wales.' In the published version, it will be vital that Welsh Government justifies how the plan will enable the delivery of renewable energy targets.

While I recognise this is an evolving position, these issues will need to be addressed in the final draft of the National Development Framework, which should be published alongside a detailed assessment of how the it supports the carbon reduction targets set out in the Environment Act, for Assembly consideration and approval.

We need to ensure the planning system realises its unique potential to have a ripple effect across different areas. If planning gets this right, it will be a significant contribution towards achieving net-zero Wales and every one of the well-being goals.

I welcome the valuable principles and intention of the new Placemaking Charter, as being a proactive way to support the implementation of the national policy by all involved in planning beyond the public sector. However, it does not make explicit reference to the need to decarbonise our society and to enhance biodiversity but I hope the guidance to accompany it will follow my advice and will do so.

I understand around 20 organisations have already signed up to the charter which is encouraging. The charter has the potential to be a useful mechanism for achieving consensus and implementing placemaking.



Planning for greener places

What future generations need

Planning has a vital role to play in helping public bodies meet decarbonisation targets and our biodiversity enhancement duty. We need the planning system to help reduce carbon emissions beyond carbon neutrality, through the planning of green infrastructure in various forms, from green roofs to natural flood management and support for re-forestation. We need it to help enhance biodiversity and restore lost habitats.

Planning needs to learn from past errors (before the creation of the planning system in 1948 and pre-TAN 15), and help us overcome the challenges we face, such as the risk of flooding. Currently, more than one in ten properties in Wales are at risk of being flooded.

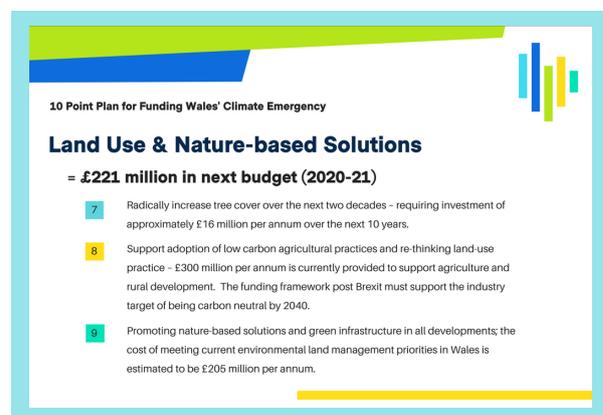
The planning of cities will become increasingly important in the years to come as urbanisation continues. Instead of being part of the climate problem, cities need to be designed and planned smartly to become a part of the solution. Many cities across the world are making progress towards reducing their greenhouse gas emissions, and Welsh cities and towns need to count among them. (Please see the sections on a Resilient Wales and Decarbonisation in Chapters 3 and 5 for more information.)

New York City has set out a plan, OneNYC 2050, to become net-zero by 2050. This plan includes investments and passing legislation to limit carbon emissions, such as installing charging infrastructure for electric vehicles and ensuring pension portfolios move away from fossil fuels.

We need to plan for people, nature and wildlife.

We need more integration between green infrastructure, air quality and health in planning considerations. There also needs to be ambitious targets for tree planting and enforcement of tree protection in urban and infrastructure developments. These are crucial for the achievement of our decarbonisation targets and realisation of the Act's vision. (Please see the section on a Resilient Wales in Chapter 3 for more information.)

We need substantial investment in land use and nature-based solutions. I have made suggestions in my 10 Point Plan for Funding Wales' Climate Emergency, to this effect.



Where are we now

While we have a long way to go to stem the loss of nature and biodiversity, several Public Services Boards and individual public bodies are recognising the opportunities to support nature in the management of their assets and the planning and design of communities



There is increasing use of green infrastructure in infrastructure projects, buildings and drainage systems and some public bodies are also recognising the benefits to people and nature through increasing the number of trees in their areas.

At a strategic level, Planning Policy Wales requires consideration of the characteristics and environmental qualities of places across Wales, and their particular natural or cultural heritage. The policy requires that these qualities are understood, valued, protected and enhanced. Planning priorities should reflect how these characteristics and qualities contribute to the attractiveness, liveability, resilience, functioning, economic prosperity and ultimately the health, amenity and well-being of people and places. The policy also requires avoidance of further fragmentation of habitats, while wherever possible, ensuring that green networks, corridors and connecting habitat within developed areas are protected and enhanced.

Public bodies need to take all opportunities to improve the resilience of ecosystems, by addressing: building on floodplains, diffuse pollution, soil compaction and sealing, while ensuring the protection of peat resources and improving approaches to coastal flood defence in urban areas and coastal margins.

The policy adds that all opportunities to develop green infrastructure should be taken wherever possible, and should support development which contributes positively to an area.

They should also support development that addresses environmental risks, by using previously developed land (also called brownfield) or existing buildings, while taking opportunities to ‘clean up’ land and address dereliction, where this is informed by the historic and natural environment.

In particular, public bodies need to ensure green infrastructure contributes to the enhancement of biodiversity and is not just a cosmetic enhancement of a development.

In late 2019, the Welsh Government Planning Division reminded planners of their duties under the Environment (Wales) Act, 'that development should not cause any significant loss of habitats or populations of species, locally or nationally and must provide a net benefit for biodiversity'. The duty to enhance biodiversity under the Environment Act is another good step in this direction.

“The purpose of this letter is to clarify that in light of the legislation and Welsh Government policy outlined above, where biodiversity enhancement is not proposed as part of an application, significant weight will be given to its absence, and unless other significant material considerations indicate otherwise it will be necessary to refuse permission.”

Welsh Government

Public bodies are demonstrating a greater understanding and implementation of nature-based solutions, but this needs to continue at pace to address the climate and nature emergency

In addition to increasing their tree canopy, for example by [Denbighshire County Council](#), (please see the section on a Resilient Wales in Chapter 5 for more information), some public bodies are developing joint strategies to ensure green infrastructure is included in land management practices, which is a step in the right direction.





"Green infrastructure refers to all the natural features which make life in our towns and cities possible. Ideally, green Infrastructure should be a strategic network of high-quality green spaces and other natural features, designed and managed to deliver the ecological services and quality of life benefits required by communities now, and in the future."

Natural Resources Wales

Torfaen Council has undertaken a scoping study on the potential for a digital tool to support joined-up working across Public Services Board partner organisations. They secured funding for a single joint Public Services Board Green Infrastructure Strategy to inform operational land management practices.

In Caerphilly Council, work is underway to deliver a Green Infrastructure Strategy to inform the development of the Valleys Regional Park.

Swansea Council make the links between planning opportunities to enhance nature with steps to 'Prepare a Green Infrastructure Strategy for the City Centre. Adopt the local development plan (LDP) that supports the regeneration of Swansea and promotes sustainable communities.'

However, not enough public bodies specifically make the link between planning and placemaking in meeting their well-being objectives, missing an opportunity.

For Public Services Boards, their objectives relating to planning are mostly about natural resources and the environment. However, they do not specifically make the connections between their environmental objectives and the role of planning.

Most of these objectives concern involving people in the community, to help them understand the value of the natural environment, how they can positively contribute through looking after their local area and enjoying the landscape, how they can improve the environmental resilience of their area, and introduce more green infrastructure.

For example:

- 'Value our green infrastructure and the contribution it makes to our well-being.'
- 'Where we live: Tackling Rurality; Protecting our Environment.'
- 'Develop a functional, connected network of natural areas that support the current and future well-being needs of local populations.'

It is also clear that protecting natural assets, such as trees, in urban areas in particular, is an issue of growing importance amongst communities

My office does not have the power and would be unable to get involved in assessing every planning application that proposes the loss of trees. However, it is clear that sometimes, there is a disconnect between what people want in terms of green infrastructure and the protection of local trees, and what they believe public bodies are doing.



From a planning perspective, the protection and enhancement of nature and biodiversity is a material consideration for every planning application. Therefore any planning decision should clearly set out how this has been considered. (See letter from Welsh Government on biodiversity duty mentioned above).

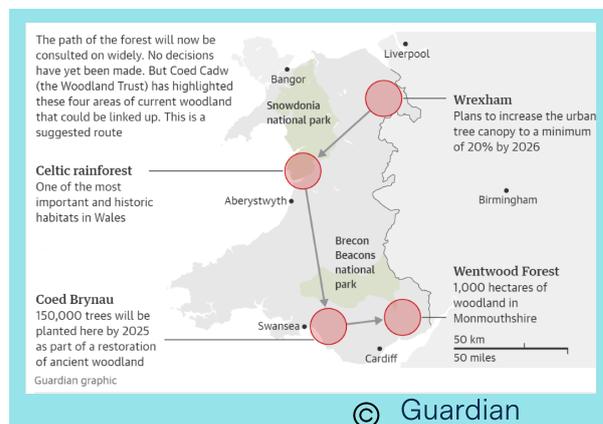
There is also growing recognition at a local and national level, of the benefits of increasing tree coverage. It is encouraging to see the value and benefits of tree canopy is increasingly recognised, and some public bodies are taking actions to enhance tree cover across their area.

Tree protection orders have a role to play, but it is also important to consider potential changes to habitat and the ability of species to migrate. Habitat fragmentation should be avoided. Instead, wildlife corridors should be encouraged and promoted to encourage habitat connectivity. (Please see the section on a Resilient Wales in Chapter 3 for more information.)

Swansea Magistrates' Court recently fined both a director and his company for the illegal felling of a 200-year-old redwood tree subject to a tree protection order and 71 other trees while building a new development. The decision has been appealed, but this represents a strong signal for developers and development in Wales as the court fined the Director Fiorenzo Sauro £180,000 and the company Enzo Homes Ltd an additional £120,000 on 15th October 2019.

At a strategic level, Welsh Government have planned for and started creating a National Forest for Wales. The forest will act as a corridor for wildlife of the whole length and breadth of the country.

They have committed to investing £5 million for this project, and it will form part of the National Development Framework for Wales. This is an important step towards recognising how land use planning can drive benefits for biodiversity and carbon reduction.



The requirements for all new developments to contain Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems is a progressive development, which has the potential to increase green infrastructure and to enhance biodiversity

The requirement for all new developments to contain Sustainable Drainage Systems is a progressive development in the construction industry with the potential to improve amenity, enhance biodiversity and increase well-being.

Introduced in January 2019, the Welsh Sustainable Drainage Systems Standards clearly embed the principles of the Well-being of Future Generations Act. The standards place greater emphasis on amenity, biodiversity and maintenance considerations. They encourage close collaboration with the Sustainable Drainage Systems Approval Body (within the local authority) throughout the design process.



Unlike in England, where Sustainable Drainage Systems implementation is encouraged, the Welsh Sustainable Drainage Systems Standards are a mandatory part of the planning process for all developments over 100m² in Wales.

This legislation requires water to be managed on, or as close to, the surface and source of the runoff as possible, ensuring pollution is prevented at source and reducing the flood risk downstream.

Public bodies should use this requirement to take every opportunity to meet their well-being objectives and to achieve the national well-being goals.

Difference being made on the ground:

By 2025, [Cardiff](#) is predicted to have over half a million residents, making it the UK's fastest growing city. However, sustainable travel options are inadequate, resulting in over 50% of residents commuting by car. The Local Development Plan aimed to facilitate a 50% modal shift away from the car to sustainable modes of transport and sought to match growth with infrastructure.

[Cardiff Council](#) joined other local authorities across the UK in declaring a "climate emergency" in 2019, and subsequently in January 2020, released their document "Transport Vision to 2030".

This vision outlines a radical transport development plan and includes the introduction of Cardiff Cycleways, formed by five "branches" linking the suburbs to the city centre.

Through the use of SuDS in the realisation of this vision, the streetscape of the city centre will be drastically improved by bringing 50 trees to a heavily constrained site. This will further improve air-quality through carbon dioxide removal and enhance safety by introducing a vegetated buffer between cyclists and motorists. This project was the first retrofit scheme in Wales to achieve planning approval through the SuDS Standards with construction planned to begin summer 2020.

This ambitious retro-fit project provides the essential infrastructure to enable Cardiff to address climate change and prepare for growth, demonstrating the multiple benefits that can be achieved through holistic, sustainable design.

"I had the fantastic opportunity of leading the water management design for these Cycleway projects, working closely with Cardiff Council and other key stakeholders to introduce functional and attractive green spaces in my home city – I'm really looking forward to seeing my designs become a reality. My hope is that Wales embraces the responsibility of spearheading environmental and socio-economic issues. Our legislation equips all industries to think about how our plans, actions and spending will impact future generations. Through design that considers the Well-being Goals at the outset of planning stages and decision making, Wales can reverse the effects of climate change and help to shape a better world for now and the future."

Dan Tram, Civil Engineer
at Arup and Future Generations
Leadership Academy participant



"Infrastructure is often looked at as just a bridge or a building but not as place integrated with its surroundings."
(Our Future Wales response)

Your Voice

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

"It's about the language being used, a lot of the time we talk about austerity measures and how we cut finance with other bodies, with the actual message isn't whether it's the cheapest option but is it the best option? If you look at Chiswick park where they built a new business centre with the people living in that area where they have a huge pond they have carp in the pond, they have places to play netball, they have places for food and everyone has going to work smiling and how does that compare to RCT where we have the highest rates of suicide and mental health issues."
(Our Future Wales conversation, Culture Round-table)

"They're building too many houses and not putting enough services to support it like schools, community centres and things for teenagers to do."
(People's Platform)

"Equal opportunities for towns - We now need a new focus and as we have such a wonderfully diverse country with amazing countryside, coastline and culture, that seems to be where the future lies. We have made huge improvements in accessibility and infrastructure but there is much to be done and it's not happening fast enough to save us from poverty. Some towns have kept their historic beauty and interest, others have been mishandled and left to sink, this is not fair. We need more equality, that's a buzz word at the moment but doesn't seem to apply to every situation. More needs to be done to improve poorer areas, to bring people into these towns to spend their money and create more vibrant places. The opposite is happening right now."
(People's Platform)



Reduce inequalities through planning

What future generations need

Proper planning and placemaking have the potential to help reduce inequalities. The needs of specific groups have to be considered and planned for, so that communities and places are designed with the local population needs in mind, seeking to promote inclusivity, enabling people to be able to live independently and improving physical and mental well-being.

For example, cities need to be age-friendly, allowing access to all services by older people, as well as accommodating to the needs of a diverse population, people with disabilities, and people with children who may use bikes and buggies. Pedestrianisation can create barriers, but street furniture is often a useful addition for those who struggle to walk far – whether that’s grandparents or toddlers. [Living Streets](#) undertake 'street audits' to see what barriers people would experience in walking different routes.

These design issues need to be considered from the outset by involving people from our diverse communities to ensure they work for everybody.

For example, the [World Health Organisation’s Age-Friendly Cities](#) initiative has recognised cities that have made themselves more age-friendly by adapting buildings, transport and planning rules, to enable people of all ages 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.

The specific links between equality and planning are highlighted in The Royal Town Planning Institute’s recent report, [Poverty, Place and Inequality](#):

“The poorest are often pushed to live in degraded environments with fewer services and amenities, poor access to public transport, educational opportunities and jobs, a lack of green spaces, lower air quality and higher rates of crime and anti-social behaviour. This, in turn, reinforces poverty and inequality. We also know that children’s and young people’s life chances remain heavily influenced by the places in which they grow up.”

Royal Town Planning Institute

We also need places that provide all communities, not just the leafy suburbs, with access to open green and blue spaces. We need spaces that promote local food growing and food-retail environments that provide access to healthy food options.

Planning must also reduce inequalities between the countryside and the city to and enable people in both to thrive.

Where we are now

The planning system needs to show how it is taking future trends into account and, in particular, the needs of our growing and ageing population

As the UK and Welsh population are growing and ageing, this poses a challenge for planners and decision-makers dealing with the increased demand for services, infrastructure and housing and the wider issue of equality.

Currently, [there are around a quarter of disabled people in Wales](#), and as the population ages, the number is set to grow.



People with disabilities are more at risk from poverty and social exclusion as they are often unable to access work, social services and other facilities. [A report from the Royal Town Planning Institute](#) found that train stations sometimes have limited choices for people who cannot use the stairs. Car-dominated cities disadvantage people who are not car-owners.

When planning development for the future, all aspects of inclusion needs consideration. [The Royal National Institute of Blind People](#) explains that taking a design-inclusive approach doesn't necessarily mean it will cost more money; it is about how the space will be used and what can ultimately make the difference for someone to leave their home independently and feel a part of their community. For example, LED lighting is not only energy-efficient, but a much brighter source of lighting for streetlights and can help people feel safe in their community. The use of trees and plants as wayfinding points helps the environment, look good and also help people with disabilities navigate the space independently. For example, blind and partially sighted people rely on detectable tactile features on pedestrian crossings and walkways for navigational information as to the location, geometry and dimensions of the road junction. Without such consideration, the road junction will become invisible to blind and partially sighted people; they may be unaware that they are nearing or already walking, on a surface that is also an active space for cyclists or vehicles.

Planning authorities need to ensure they take these inclusivity considerations into account in their work

Please see the section on a More Equal Wales in Chapter 3 for more information.

Welsh Government's Framework for Independent Living, published in 2019,

specifically requires a focus on better access to public transport and buildings, streets and public spaces. Its implementation through the planning system will become increasingly important as the number of older people in Wales grows. The advice published by the Royal Town Planning Institute on '[Dementia and Town Planning](#)' demonstrates how town planning has a crucial role to play if health and social care policies are to succeed. They explain how if you get an area right for people with dementia, you get it right for older people, for young disabled people, for families with small children, and ultimately for everyone.



Placemaking is gendered and should be explicitly considered in Local Development Plans and major developments

Taking account of women's needs in planning has also been identified as an area which needs more work. For example, [Research from the University of Queensland](#), has shown how cities do not always account for the needs of women. The authors explain that poor city planning can make women feel unsafe and that the planning of our cities has historically made women's life harder concerning family and employment. This is partly due to how housing, work, shopping and entertainment were separated into sometimes distant and disconnected locations and public transport systems not joining these things up.



The services provided were not always adapted to women's needs in terms of access to healthy food, as opposed to conveniently located fast-food, and childcare facilities were also detached from both homes and workplaces. The research adds that women generally drive less than men, which makes getting around more difficult for them because extensive and congested highway systems slice across cities, while public transport is designed along inflexible trunk lines and schedules. The authors add that the system does not always 'meet the complex travel needs of working mothers who run myriad errands throughout the day, [...] and risk getting crushed or groped aboard cramped carriages.' They conclude that this is the result of having cities designed by men without the involvement of women.

This is echoed in 'Invisible Women: Exposing data bias in a world designed for men' by Caroline Criado Perez who added that we also need to design transport systems that enable women to do their extra care unpaid work in addition to their paid work.

The role of women and planning (both women working within the profession and the impact of planning decisions on the day-to-day lives of women) is currently being researched by the Royal Town Planning Institute, and they will publish a report on '[Women and Planning](#)'. A research paper published in February 2020 already suggests that sexism (from inappropriate comments to lack of promotion of female employees) remains an issue across all planning sectors (public, private, third and academic). They also suggest that the lack of family-friendly policies (and lack of support upon return from maternity leave) are still perceived as crucial barriers to professional advancement.

A place for everyone? Oxfam
Gender equality and urban planning
A ReGender Briefing Paper RTPI

Why is planning a gender issue?
Looking at gender issues in planning is central to success in economic regeneration and social inclusion. We take the opportunity of the new Gender Equality Duty on public authorities to look at the barriers, examine planning levels, and recommend changes, giving examples of good practice. Land-use planning provides the spatial setting for government policy, shaping the way our towns and cities are designed. However, planning policy tends to ignore the fact that women and men use public space very differently and have different concerns about how it meets their needs. For more detailed guidance, we recommend the Royal Town Planning Institute Good Practice Note on Gender and Spatial Planning (RTPI, 2007)

Gendered patterns in use of space

- Poorly considered land-use zoning policy separates residential areas from employment locations, with a greater impact on women's mobility.
- Women make more complex journeys than men, often travelling to childcare, school, work, and shops. More than twice as many women as men are responsible for escorting children to school.
- Seventy-five per cent of bus journeys are undertaken by women
- Only thirty per cent of women have access to the use of a car during the daytime.
- Poor public transport and lack of caring facilities and shopping outlets near employment locations restrict women's access to the labour market.
- Women feel less safe than men being out alone after dark, especially in the inner city, or social housing estates.

A virtuous circle?
When planning takes into account the different needs of women and men, this means:

- public transport routes that support women's travel patterns
- measures to make public space feel safer at night
- more support facilities, such as local shops, childcare, and public toilets
- employment opportunities locally, meaning more mixed use development
- more women would be able to take employment, training, and leisure opportunities
- economic development opportunities would be increased
- social inclusion programmes would be more effective.

Planning policy tends to ignore the fact that women and men use public space very differently

continued overleaf...

Source: [A place for everyone? Gender equality and urban planning, a ReGender Briefing Paper, Oxfam and RTPI](#)



There is inconsistency in the application of Welsh Language assessments

Planning also has an important role to play concerning the vibrancy of the Welsh Language. Through the Planning (Wales) Act 2015, the Welsh language became, for the first time, a consideration in planning legislation.



Local Development Plans' sustainability appraisals now must 'include an assessment of the likely effects of the plan on the use of the Welsh language in the area of the authority', and in dealing with applications for planning permissions (in particular, for residential schemes), local planning authorities must have regard to 'any considerations relating to the use of the Welsh language, so far as material to the application'.

However, [a review by the Welsh Language Commissioner](#) of Welsh planning authorities' procedures showed that there are inconsistencies in the ways language impact assessments are carried out, and that clear guidance on language impact assessment and defining areas of linguistic sensitivity is needed. The Welsh Language Commissioner suggests that these need to be addressed to safeguard the Welsh language within the planning system and to ensure consistency in the way that planning authorities operate across Wales. The creation of a specific Planning Inspectorate for Wales will provide an opportunity to consider and address some of these issues, specifically the question of linguistic expertise in the Planning Inspectorate, that has been flagged.

In addition to this planning requirement in the Planning Act, county councils and national park authorities in Wales are required to comply with Welsh language standards under the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011. (Please see the section on a Wales of Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh language in Chapter 3 for more information.)

There is concern about the effectiveness of the Rural Exception policy

There are inequalities between rural and urban communities regarding accessibility to goods, services and cultural opportunities.

Planning for the national territory needs to help remove inequalities between the countryside and the city, enabling people in both to thrive, giving equal access to work opportunities, recreation and green and blue spaces.

The previous chair of the Royal Town Planning Institute Cymru has pointed out the approach to affordable housing and economic opportunities in rural areas as a potential shortcoming of Planning Policy Wales 10. He explained that the policy restates:

“The rural exceptions policy [which] has not worked for years and yet it [had] remained unchanged [...]. The ‘country’ part of town and country planning has largely become a development no-go area, which makes it more exclusive, doing little for economic well-being, social cohesiveness and stemming the exodus of young people.”

Huw Evans, Chair, RTPI Cymru,
RTPI Newsletter, 2019

The rural exception policy referred to in Planning Policy Wales allows for affordable housing for local need on small sites, within or adjacent to settlements, that would not otherwise be allocated in Local Development Plans or granted planning consent. However, the Royal Town Planning Institute Cymru report '[Rural Housing Delivery in Wales: How effective is rural exception site policy?](#)' 2019 demonstrates that it has had limited effect.

This policy is an issue for further considerations, and Welsh Government should review whether it is in line with the Well-being of Future Generations Act.



The land use plans at all levels (national, regional and local) need to ensure the well-being of their population is improved in both rural and urban settings. (Please see the sections on a Healthier Wales and A Wales of Cohesive Communities in Chapter 3, and the other sections of Chapter 5 for more information.)

The planning system could make more use of expertise on health impact assessments

The Welsh Health Impact Assessment Support Unit provides support for public bodies to undertake impact assessments on a range of issues, including Local Development Plans and specific (larger) planning applications. To date, they have published 15 impact assessments relating to planning and development control, which could indicate that there is more scope for using their expertise in assessing the health impact of major developments in particular.

Early analysis of revisions of Local Development Plans seem to raise questions about the quality of the Equality impact Assessments undertaken

Local authorities are required to undertake Equality Impact Assessments of their Local Development Plans. However, early analysis of those who have updated their plans since the Well-being of Future Generations Act raises questions about the quality of these assessments. Some assessments make general statements such as 'the Local Development Plan should promote the social inclusion of all sections of society and should not discriminate against any one group' or the 'Local Development Plans should facilitate the development of health facilities and access to those facilities for all sections of society'.

Likewise, one Equality Impact Assessment does not appear to mention gender or the different travel care and work patterns of women which specifically impact on transport despite being an area with the highest level of commuting by car.

Others appear to be more specific referring to 'meeting Future Needs (including) housing need which includes the needs of people who are ageing and disabled. Directing development according to a sustainable settlement hierarchy will provide the opportunity to live and work in settlements / communities with good access to services and facilities.'

Most seem to recognise the need to improve the position of Gypsy Travellers in respect of allocating sites for housing this community. For example, 'The Local Development Plan will have a positive impact for Gypsies and Travellers as specific accommodation needs have been identified and met. A site has been identified for this use and there is a criteria based policy to assess planning future applications for needs which cannot be met on this site.'

While there appears to be some progress on addressing equality considerations, it appears that in-depth analysis of the needs of different groups, and how Local Development Plans should be addressing them, is lacking. This is an area that would benefit from further consideration by the Welsh Government, the planning sector and the Equality and Human Rights Commission



Local Development Plans must take future technological trends into account

Given the prominence of urbanisation, with two-thirds of the UK population living in cities, we need to ensure cities are fully able to improve the well-being of the people in Wales. The advancement of technology can help improve the designing exercise, by using artificial intelligence and big data, which will help us understand better how our cities work and thereby help alleviate strain as cities continue to grow. The [rise of smart cities](#) has the potential to [reduce commuting times, crime, emissions and increase air quality](#).

Public bodies need to embrace these and I am pleased to see efforts being made, for example, by Cardiff Council's recently published [Smart City roadmap](#).

Technology will also change our life patterns and habits. Planning needs to anticipate and plan for those, particularly at the national level, in the upcoming National Development Framework and at the local level in Local Development Plans. This forward-thinking approach will be a real challenge as Local Development Plans have a 15-year life and take a long time to review. We know the needs of our society change quickly. Take, for example, the rapid explosion of online retailing and its impact on the high street.



Planning will need to adapt and have more agile systems to enable us to react to our fast-changing world. (Please see the sections on a Prosperous Wales, Skills for the Future and Transport in Chapters 3 and 5 for more information.)

These new technologies require time and investment, and I recognise the considerable resource pressures already placed on planning officers.

To support planning officers and everyone involved in planning, I have produced a Future Generations Framework, which provides prompts regarding all requirements of the Act. The framework can be used to sense-check how strategic or individual plans contribute to meeting the well-being goals and objectives. My office is currently undertaking further work with planning professionals to refine this product for the planning system. This should be an overarching framework for checking how, at all levels, planning is using the Act in decision-making. However it must also be recognised that additional capacity is needed in the system.



Section 106 agreements can help to meet well-being goals but they need to be more transparent and accessible to the public and demonstrate clearly how they are meeting well-being objectives

Community benefits can help reduce inequalities in the infrastructure available to communities.

Such benefits, sometimes delivered through Section 106 agreements, have a significant role to play in meeting well-being objectives at a community level, to complement better strategic planning and better-quality proposals in the first place. The purpose of Section 106 is to make a development acceptable in planning terms. This could mean community infrastructure provision, affordable housing, highway improvements, cycle routes, funding school places, etc. However, I heard from Assembly Members at a Public Accounts Committee evidence session in February 2020, that such agreements (from the developer to provide community infrastructure) are sometimes simply not implemented.

Planning authorities might also need to reprioritise the Section 106 contribution made by developers to ensure it is in line with the Well-being of Future Generations Act and their well-being objectives.

Planning authorities should make sure that such agreements are implemented and directly contribute to the well-being objectives and goals by encouraging active travel, building green infrastructure and connecting people to public transport, for example.

Applications that include community benefits should be sense-checked as to whether those meet the principles of the Act and contribute to meeting well-being objectives. This is challenging, and it may be time-consuming, but we need to move beyond traditional thinking on what is funded through section 106 agreements and ensure that they are facilitating community benefits which are future focused and aligned to well-being objectives.

I was interested in the Auditor General's suggestion that the community infrastructure levy might be an alternative way of doing this, but I would like to caution the fact that we should not rely on one solution alone.

Community benefits, if done in a way to maximise their contribution to the well-goals and objectives, could be efficient. However, an appropriate mechanism to align to well-being objectives and for the monitoring of implementation is needed.

Invest time and resources in planning services and placemaking

What future generations need

Planning teams need adequate resources to implement placemaking and the vision of the Well-being of Future Generations Act. Considerable cultural change is needed, with training and support at all levels and across sectors, to ensure a meaningful shift in the way we plan places to meet current and future generations' needs.



Realising the ambition of placemaking while working with limited resources (discussed below) requires strong leadership. Leaders both in Welsh Government and in local authorities need to change the culture from favouring the cheapest way of operating or development authorised, to maximising their contribution to the well-being goals that would bring most benefits in the long-term. Developers also need to move away from a short-term profit drive. This also applies in relation to housing and procurement. (Please see the sections on Procurement and Housing in Chapter 5 for more information.)

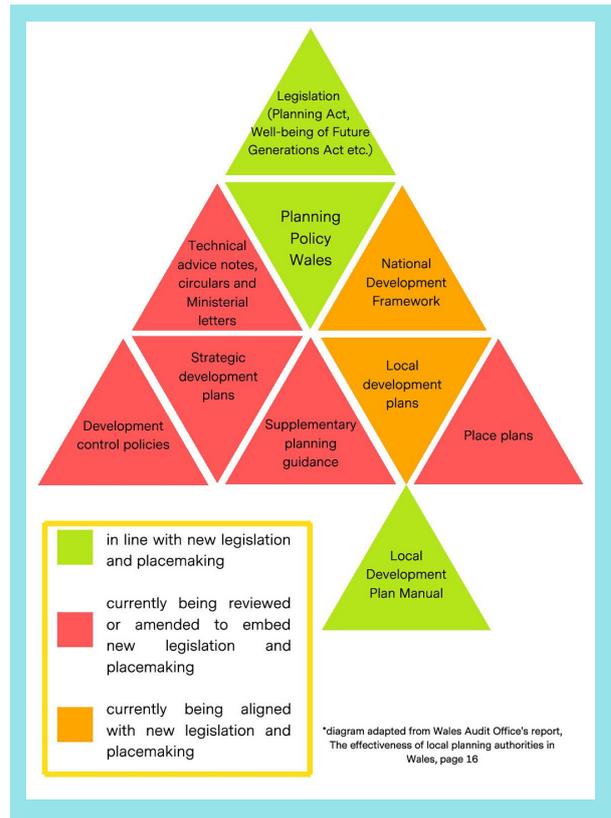
Where we are

The total recast of the planning system in Wales is a positive, necessary and ambitious step that will require significant time, investment and resources

The planning system in Wales is in the middle of a recast that is many years from completion. Only a fraction of planning rules have been aligned to Planning Policy Wales 10 and the Well-being of Future Generations Act so far. The diagram on the right shows the extent of the recast as of March 2020.

Recasting a whole system is a huge endeavour, and it is notable that Welsh Government have demonstrated their commitment to this. While this timescale frustrates some, profound and long-lasting change takes time, and it is necessary to ensure we get this right.

However, for the planning profession, this is likely to place additional burdens in the short-term, as they attempt to navigate a system in which reform is incomplete and contradictory rules still apply.



The different stages at which Local Development Plan revisions are taking place across Wales presents a challenge

All 22 unitary authorities and the three national park authorities need to ensure that their Local Development Plans are fully aligned with their well-being objectives and steps and embed the vision of the Act and Planning Policy Wales. The current position is that most Local Development Plans were adopted prior to the existence of the Act. Some Local Developments Plans are being reviewed, and I expect the revised plans to align with local well-being objectives, be based on the evidence included in the Well-being Assessment for their area and [Natural Resources Wales' Area Statements](#). I also expect the authority to use the five ways of working for their revision, and I have expressed my expectations to the Planning Inspectorate.



The Local Development Plan Manual – the guidance on how to adopt and revise Local Developments Plans – has just been published. This means that the revisions which started taking place before this was published, may rely on older guidance not aligned with the Act. I provided advice to Welsh Government on the revision of the guidance. In the future, Welsh Government should improve the timing of the guidance it issues to make sure it has maximum impact. The Planning Inspectorate has received three Local Development Plan revisions in 2019 and six in 2020, that would not have been made using the new Local Development Plan Manual. The Inspectorate expect to see three further Local Development Plan revisions in 2020-2021 and nine Local Development Plan revisions 2021-2022 (Business Plan 2020-21), depending on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Given these timing issues, it seems only reasonable to expect to have all Local Development Plans fully aligned to the Well-being of Future Generations Act and Planning Policy Wales 10, in the next round of Local Development Plans, post-2030. In the meantime, the system has to find ways to adapt and revise current Local Development Plans to bring them in line with the Act and will have to respond to the challenges regarding policy misalignment while the system recast is ongoing.

It is a significant challenge for planners to balance out competing interests and implement several new policies, legislation and guidance with dwindling funding and diminished resources

It is clear that to make a success of the ambitious recast of planning in Wales, Welsh Government need to invest in supporting the planning profession in the public sector,

while also recognising the role that private sector, consultants and developers play. The Placemaking Charter addresses some of that but the halving of land use planning resources in the last decade has already impacted on the ability of the system to handle its everyday activities. And in many councils, the Chief Planner is no longer on the executive team.

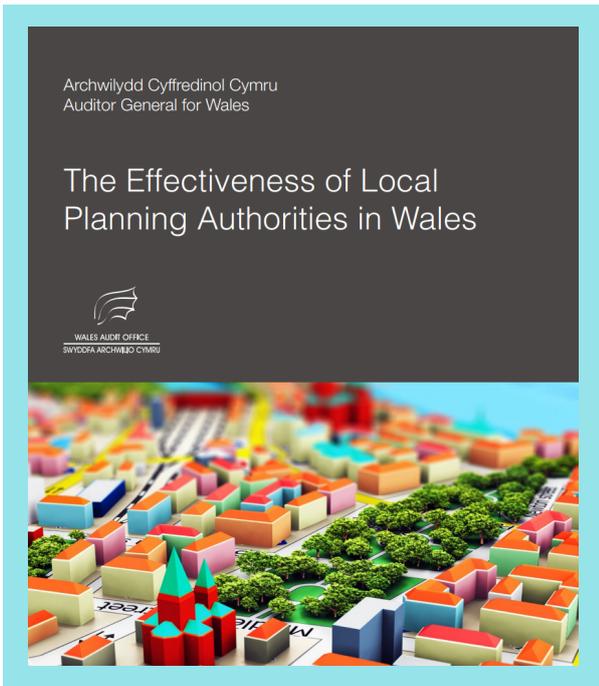
It is, therefore, challenging for local authorities to maintain the status quo, let alone find the time and space to support the transformational change needed to embed placemaking and the Act. This was evidenced by the Auditor General’s report on the [Effectiveness of Planning Authorities in Wales](#).

Research from the Royal Town Planning Institute at the UK level has shown that the budget cuts have had, what I consider, a negative impact on the way authorities handle planning applications, in a way that is not in line with the Act. Their approach can be ‘pro-development’ and tick-boxing, as a result of time pressure and budget cuts:

“Local Planning Authorities have had to adapt to survive in this environment, often adopting private sector working practices and aggressively pro-development stances to draw in the funding they need to resource their planning teams...proceduralism’ – in other words, a boxticking culture – has closed down a lot of the space planners traditionally had for reflection, professional discretion, and proactive planning. [Exceptions – large projects often in urban areas].”

Royal Town Planning Institute’s [response](#) to Public Account’s Committee inquiry





The cultural change required by the Act is already a common challenge for all those required to implement it. (Please see Chapter 2 for more information.) However, there are additional challenges faced by planning officers, summarised by Audit Wales’ report and seen through my engagement with the planning profession over the last two years.

“Whilst planning and wellbeing of future generations acts are the key drivers for future land use and development in Wales, their introduction placed huge demands on local planning authorities. It is fair to say that there has been a ‘lukewarm’ reception from local planning authority staff and planning committee members we engaged with to the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act. Senior planning officers note the challenges of implementing the two pieces of legislation at the same time, which placed additional demand, overburdening a service that struggles with capacity.”

Audit Wales,
[The Effectiveness of Local Planning Authorities in Wales](#)

Worryingly, the key finding from the Auditor General, is that planning authorities are not resilient enough to deliver long-term improvements because of their limited capacity and the challenge of managing a complex system. This finding is truly concerning. I agree with the Auditor General’s findings and in particular:

“Despite the new legislation and heightened expectation on the contribution planning can make to delivering the aspirations of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act, local planning authorities have seen a significant reduction in capacity and struggle to deliver their statutory responsibilities.”

Auditor General for Wales

This reduction in planning budgets and capacity is a false economy, and we should be making brave decisions to reinvest in the planning area, recognising the significant benefits it could have, delivering a number of other outcomes in health, poverty, decarbonisation and a whole range of important issues.

There is also a loss of skills, as fewer young people are choosing to become planners in the public sector. This under-staffing and lack of up-to-date knowledge can lead to delays within the decisions around planning applications.

“The way we plan cities today takes about 4-5 years to produce a plan, but by the time these plans are done, these plans are out of date. We envisage that a better system is based on outcomes – rather than counting only the numbers of homes, the number of jobs, we can actually start measuring health, well-being and happiness.”

Euan Mills, Future Cities Catapult





There is also evidence to suggest that another pressure point for planning are delays in responses from statutory consultees who might also be struggling with their own resources. I encouraged the Public Accounts Committee to look at this issue.

Equally, public bodies, consultants and statutory consultees need to develop new skills to embed the Act. Many have asked for timely comment and better collaboration between statutory consultees and planners, to achieve mutual benefit and to get us beyond ticking statutory boxes.

Investment in planning is not always seen within the context of the cost-saving it can achieve in other services

Undoubtedly, the Well-being of Future Generations Act and Planning Policy Wales 10 are challenging to implement, especially in an already underfunded system.

However, placemaking also provides an opportunity that could help during a climate of austerity for our public services, especially health and social care, where demand is vastly outstripping available resources. The Royal Town Planning Institute has produced a [toolkit](#) designed to demonstrate the value planning contributes and how planning is positively contributing to Wales' seven well-being goals.

According to the toolkit, good placemaking can save public services money in the following ways:

- Health – through the promotion of active travel, better housing, improving air and water quality
- Waste (reduction and collection), energy with clean energy projects and infrastructure
- Biodiversity enhancement with green infrastructure – nature-based solutions should be part of planning and could attract joint funding (prevention, integration, long term and collaboration)

A comprehensive application of the placemaking approach could also increase revenues from local authorities:

Some public bodies such as [Bridgend and Merthyr Tydfil Councils](#) have started realising this potential and have used the Value of Planning tool to quantify the value of planning. The Royal Town Planning Institute estimated that the value of planning in Wales would be around £2.3 billion.



“Planning fees and other income from development management are just a small part of the story. Planning and placemaking can also raise income by developing new industrial and employment space, which comes with increased business rates. It can make a place more attractive to visit, which brings income to the local economy. And it can help provide new homes in places people want to live, which brings in more council tax [...] Investing in planning is an investment which will bring not only social return, but increased tax revenue for local authorities by bringing people and economic activity into areas and by reducing social costs... relatively major increases in resourcing could be made with little overall impact on budgets... local planning authorities could help deliver social, environmental and economic outcomes which make society more resilient, happier and fairer.”

Royal Town Planning Institute

Welsh Government is currently exploring an increase in planning fees in Wales, to assist in improving cost recovery for local planning authorities in a consultation that closed in March 2020. It has become increasingly clear fee levels do not cover the costs of running development management services. Welsh Government [consulted](#) on a proposed 20% increase in application fees, excluding pre-application services, and introducing a fee of £230 for applications for Certificates of Appropriate Alternative Development, for example.

The Planning Inspectorate is starting to reinforce the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations Act and Planning Policy Wales 10 in their approach. However, more work needed to ensure implementation

The whole system needs to consider how each proposed development will improve social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being.

This consideration needs to start with developers and continue to be reinforced by the Planning Inspectorate.

While the recast takes place, I expect to see planning authorities and the Planning Inspectorate be bold and take every opportunity to demand more contribution from developers; using all their powers in development management. For example, they should require developers to demonstrate how their proposals contribute to well-being objectives and goals and evidence their use of the five ways of working before granting planning permission.

The Planning Inspectorate has already recognised the importance of this shift and encouraged public bodies to be bolder:

“PPW10 expects us to do just that, indeed it tells LPAs [Local planning authorities] that they should negotiate to improve poor or average developments. PPW10 and the WBFG Act encourages collaboration between developers, LPAs and communities in the evolution of projects and where that works well there should be no need to resort to appeal. In cases where that does not work, PPW10 gives LPAs permission to set the bar above ‘do no harm’. That will be new territory for all of us, including Inspectors.”

Tony Thickett, Director of
Planning Inspectorate Wales,
RTPI Cymru Newsletter, Winter 2019

This shift in the burden of responsibility is crucial and could have a significant impact, but is required by Planning Policy Wales. It might also require a change in law. While this places some of the burdens on developers to justify their proposals against the Act, it would still require additional resources within local planning authorities, because they would have to check whether what the developers are saying is accurate or not.



Positively, the Planning Inspectorate has also used the Act to refuse or grant appeals, on the grounds that the development was or was not aligned with the well-being objectives or goals of the Act. While the decisions have not been tested in a Court, this is an encouraging signal.

[Pets at Home case, Carmarthenshire](#)

The planning decision dismisses the appeal noting that 'allowing the proposal without bilingual content, contrary to the local strategy set out in the adopted LDP, would not accord with the duty imposed on public bodies within the WCFG Act to achieve the well-being goal of a vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language'.



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The new Planning Inspectorate for Wales to be created by April 2021, will be able to develop itself from scratch, presenting a unique opportunity to create its policy and governance arrangements based on the principles of the Act from inception. This is a rare opportunity, which I hope they will maximise and embed from the outset, both within their internal functions and their decision-making on appeals.

[Meals on Wheels case, Carmarthenshire](#)

The Planning inspectorate allowed an appeal and granted planning permission for a lady to use an outbuilding to provide a 'meals on wheels' service after the closure of the Council's service, using the Act:

'I have considered the duty to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, under section 3 of the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. I give weight to the fact that the proposed meals on wheels service would contribute to the objectives of delivering quality health and care services and promoting good health and well-being for everyone. I consider that my decision to allow the appeal and grant planning permission is consistent with one or more of the well-being objectives identified by the Welsh Ministers.'

There is a need to improve the monitoring of planning outcomes

Planning Policy Wales 10 stresses the importance of monitoring and learning from development outcomes to drive sustainable improvements in planning practice. We need to move beyond the duty for local planning authorities to produce annual monitoring reports assessing the implementation of their Local Development Plan's aims and policies in a quantitative manner, with a strong focus on the system itself.

Instead, we need a more qualitative, well-being, outcome-focussed approach. So far, no-one has to produce maps of actual development against the plan, and no-one is in charge of assessing the quality of outcomes of the planning decisions for the area, against the Local Development Plan, Planning Policy Wales and the Well-being of Future Generations Act.



Measuring qualitative outcomes can be challenging because land allocations, local plans and consenting are, for a very short time, influenced by planning and because their quality, impact and shaping over time can be difficult to 'measure'.

Welsh Government should look at putting mechanisms in place to monitor the quality of what is delivered and built, not only at plan level but also nationally and for major projects. This will require involvement and collaboration with stakeholders and the public to see how this could be done in practice to move us away from simply allocating land for a specific purpose (such as land for business, land for housing, etc.) towards implementing placemaking for communities instead.

In doing so, they should take into account the outcomes from the inquiry, the Assembly's Public Account Committee's report and the report from the Auditor General for Wales on the Effectiveness of Planning Authorities.

The current way to measure performance in planning needs to improve to support the monitoring of outcomes towards meeting well-being objectives and goals

The success of planning teams in local authorities is still measured by the time taken to approve planning applications, which could mean that the speed of decision-making is valued over the quality of a decision or level of involvement carried out. The Planning Inspectorate also reports against these types of measures. For example, see their [Business Plan 2020-21](#).

Measuring processing time rather than the quality of decision or outcome of the decision could not only prevent meaningful involvement, but it can also drive the wrong behaviours. Welsh Government should look into improving the scrutiny and monitoring outcomes of planning, locally and nationally.

I welcome the initiative from the Planning Minister, Julie James AM to call in every application (post 15 Jan 2020) of more than ten houses, or more than 0.5 hectares, conflicting at least one provision of the Local Development Plan. This is a step in the right direction. Still, the overall scrutiny framework should be reviewed to move towards better measures of the outcomes delivered by the planning system, in achieving the national well-being goals, rather than the current focus on process outputs.

The Public Accounts Committee is looking at this issue as part of their inquiry on Audit Wales' report regarding the effectiveness of planning. Their recommendations are expected to be published following the publication of this report, but I will consider their findings carefully.

Encouragingly, Audit Wales has found that some local authorities have started reviewing their governance arrangements to ensure both decision-making and their support arrangements reflect the Planning Act and better align with the wider well-being duties under the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

“For instance, the quality, accessibility and coverage of member training on planning issues is increasingly aligned with the implications of the Well-being of Future Generations Act. We also identified some good examples of how planning committees consider wellbeing issues; most notably in the three national park authorities, Newport City Council and Flintshire County Council.”

Audit Wales



There is a need for comprehensive support, advice and constructive challenge to improve proposed individual applications

Over the past two years, I have been working on a piece of guidance on implementing the Act in plan-making and development management – which I intend to publish in 2020. Many consultants and local authorities have raised their need for advice on the Act when considering specific planning applications. Suggestions have ranged from the appointment of a specific panel of experts, input from my office or support from the Design Commission for Wales, to help them review the projects in front of them.

Planning Aid Wales provides support to public bodies and the public, and The Design Commission for Wales already provides most of the requested services, including training, a review service and support in plan design and for individual projects.

All projects coming to Design Review by the Commission are already asked to explain and demonstrate their contribution to the goals of the Act and the five ways of working, as well as how they would contribute to the authority's well-being objectives. Around 100 schemes annually, across Wales, are prioritised by the Commission for full strategic review, as well as desktop and client support at the early stages. The Design Commission is unique to Wales, and it is important we take this opportunity available to us. Its services need to be better known and accessed as widely as possible. The Commission's advice and expertise on a pro-bono co-production model is efficient and cost-effective.

There is, however, scope to better resource the Commission, expand their services and strengthen the links with my office.

The Commission is aware of the need to align the strategic planning and the Local Development Plans process with the work of Public Services Boards to support and embed a place-led, quality-driven approach across the system. Strategic transport and movement issues are increasingly important. They would benefit from additional expert input via the Commission, examining and contributing at all scales from the nationally strategic (upstream) to the locally specific, neighbourhood and street design – building on their existing collaborations, including with Transport for Wales and making better use of their infrastructure knowledge and experience.

I am aware that the Design Commission is already looking at the creation of robust, practice-led research and learning capacity to help better contribute to skills and development for the rapidly changing context of placemaking, resilience and well-being.

There is an opportunity for Welsh Government to provide additional resources to assist them in the development of these three areas which could make a lasting, strategic and systemic contribution.

The Welsh Government should consider issuing guidance and suitable arrangements on the use of this service (subject to it being adequately resourced) for all major development applications.

There is a unique and important opportunity for the Commission to provide a similar early and strategic service in respect of new Local Development Plans and strategic planning, within the annual and five-yearly cycle of Local Development Plan development, review and renewal and this will need to be efficiently resourced.



I recommend Welsh Government provide extra resources to the Design Commission to ensure more public bodies have access to the advice of the Commission, as well as support to implement that advice throughout the planning process, from the Local Development Plan design (upstream) to the individual projects (downstream).

Planning Committees need comprehensive training to understand the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations Act

Planning committees are an integral part of the planning system and an important part of giving voice to citizens by scrutinising and deciding on applications. Applications for planning permission are often managed by planning officers, to whom councillors delegate most decisions. The planning committee still considers the largest and most contentious applications. Sometimes, planning committees choose to overturn recommendations made by officers, and this has led to a perception amongst some, that political considerations are sometimes overtaking the technical aspects of the planning process.

Once again, I agree with Audit Wales that councillors need training to understand the consequences of their decisions, which can help or hinder meeting the goals and well-being objectives, and to ensure that the recast of planning policy is delivered on the ground.

Increase collaboration

What future generations need

Our lives go beyond the boundary of one local authority and the individual remits of most public bodies. Given the pressure on resources (natural, financial and human), we need to work smarter and collaboratively.

This means recognising that placemaking cannot be done in a silo and does not simply stop at any authority's border.

Local Development Plans and the Marine Plans, for example should work together, support integrated decision-making and collaboration across marine and terrestrial interfaces and boundaries.

We need a 'holistic operating system' that works in collaboration with other departments regulating the built and natural environment (e.g. Natural Resources Wales, water companies, local health boards, housing and transport departments etc.) and with developers and landowners, to ensure that public and private interests are aligned.

Where we are

Although collaboration between local authorities is encouraged by Welsh Government, authorities are not embracing all the opportunities to collaborate



The Act demands we integrate and collaborate in the exercise of public functions and regional planning is an important element of this. People's lives are not always contained within local authority boundaries. Welsh Government has recognised that collaboration across sectors and across borders is needed to deliver placemaking and to plan for the infrastructure our communities need. They made provision in the Planning (Wales) Act 2015 for Strategic Development Plans to be adopted on a voluntary basis. However, no Strategic Development Plan has been adopted to date.

What is a Strategic Development Plan (SDP)?

The Planning (Wales) Act 2015 allows Welsh Ministers to identify 'strategic planning areas', that are larger than individual local planning authorities, and for 'strategic planning panels' to be established for these areas. Local authorities can choose to work with their neighbouring authorities, and the panels will comprise elected members from the constituent local planning authorities joining forces. The panel will produce the Strategic Development Plan for that area which will cover cross-boundary issues such as housing and transport.

Where there are complex border movements, Strategic Developments Plans become very important, and Scotland's experience has shown their value. Strategic Developments Plans should be seen as investment strategies as well as planning documents, that highlight future opportunities and assets that are to be valued. This should link to well-being priorities and other joint governance structures, such as city deals and regional economic growth boards.

Strategic Development Plans should provide a level of planning for making difficult strategic decisions, and where future plans for, and investment in, development and infrastructure can be linked together. In the Welsh context, it appears that attention that had been focused on the production of a Strategic Development Plan in some areas may have been diverted when economic growth deals were approved. This diversion of focus is unfortunate as a Strategic Development Plan should be used to guide investment decisions.

While no Strategic Development Plans has been produced to date, some public bodies have started creating joint Local Development Plans, such as Gwynedd and Anglesey, formalising collaboration between planning authorities.

There are also preliminary discussions between councils, particularly at the City Region level, to develop governance and evidence-based frameworks within which Strategic Development Plans can be promoted. For example, in South East Wales (authorities within the South Wales Valleys, Cardiff, Vale, and Newport'), and another cluster around the Swansea city region, including Pembrokeshire. Based on the experience of the production of Local Development Plans, these Strategic Plans could take years to materialise.



Regional working will be an important mechanism for the improvement of the population's well-being as required by the Act, and I encourage public bodies to work more with their neighbours to this effect.

However, producing such plans can be slow and difficult. Some estimate that the process will take at least four years between the formal agreement between the councils and the actual publication of the plan. Practice to date also seems to show that the governance structures can be a sticking point (particularly regarding the allocation of votes, rather than opting for equality across authorities).

Learning from the Scottish Experience – Royal Town Planning Institute findings

The key learning points from the Scottish position are that for strategic planning to function there needs to be:

- Commitment from the local authorities and key stakeholders – demonstrated through the provision of finance and personnel.
- Building relationships and trust should not be sacrificed for the sake of expediency.
- There needs to be agreement on approach and governance structures.
- The plan needs to balance competing demands of short-term budgets, long-term aspiration and commitment.
- The SDPA will often operate in an environment with a fragmented and diverse stakeholder community.
- There is a need to overcome the separation of the plan/strategy and implementation – what role will the local authority, national government, agencies and the private sector play?

Welsh Government should review progress on adoption of Strategic Development Plans and consider making them mandatory if they are not progressed within a reasonable timeframe.

Integration of policies and services relating to the built environment causes confusion and could be improved

The complex governance around land use planning is often misunderstood.

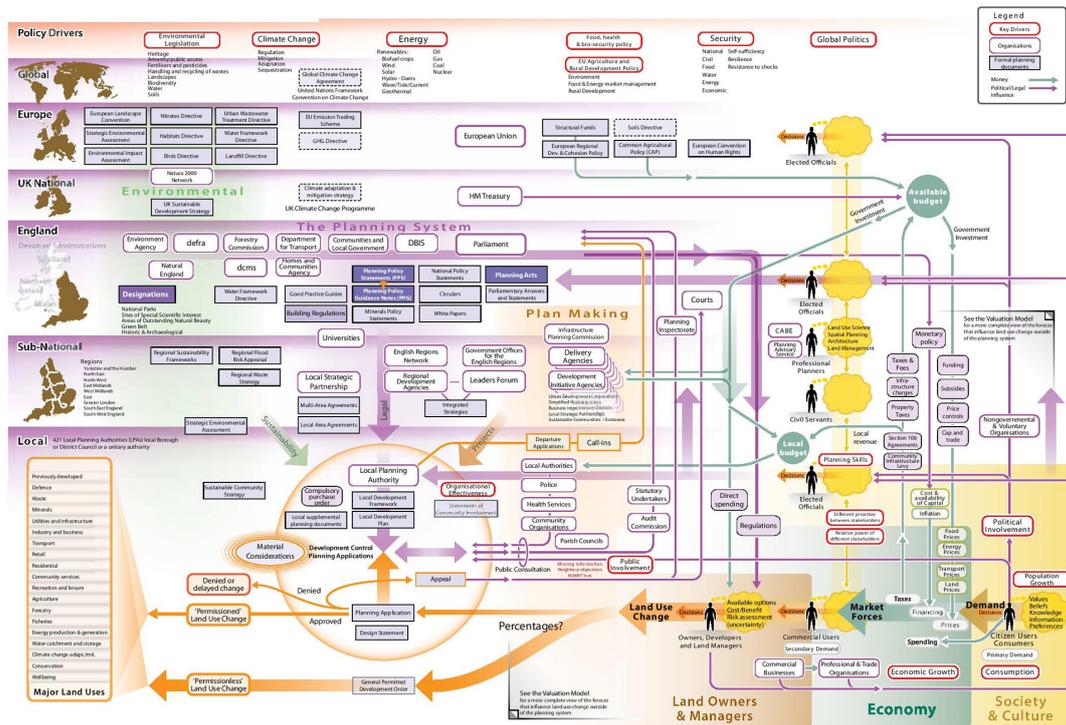
The public often assume that planning/development management is responsible for all developments and each element of every development, but this is not the case.

The map below, created by the UK Government in 2010, gives a sense of the complexity and interconnections within the built environment in terms of governance and influence on the land use. While a similar illustration does not appear to exist for the system in Wales, it is undoubtedly just as complex.

Planning decisions interact with a multitude of different pieces of legislation, regulations and policies that cover highways, housing, building regulations, waste, energy, education, health facilities, pollution and flooding. It requires complex connections with other bodies such as developers, statutory consultees and agencies such as water boards and the National Grid. This makes land use planning technical, time-consuming and sometimes appearing to be disjointed or conflicted. While these functions are all relevant to planning, they are also governed by other priorities and legislation. There is a need to set out how they align with Local Development Plans in particular.



Governance framework – overview



While the lack of integration between policies is not a problem unique to planning, it could be exacerbated by the fact that planning is not always represented at the top table. Consequently, the impact of policies on land-use planning is not always considered. This is an area which warrants further consideration.

Welsh Government has been working on Data Map Wales to replace Le, aiming to achieve something similar.

Technology can facilitate integration between different sectors.

Whilst it is important that sectors and organisations with different expertise have a role in assessing different aspects of a proposed development, concerns have been raised that there is a disconnect between land use planning and environmental permitting. For example, local authorities are responsible for considering some aspects of developments that need permitting, such as the location of a development, and Natural Resources Wales is responsible for looking at others, such as the pollution potential and control. This may appear an artificial divide, as one influences the other, and this is an issue causing concern and confusion amongst the general public.

For example, the Greater London Authority introduced a mapping infrastructure application that aggregates all infrastructure layers into a single platform (demographics: population, employment, skills; development: commercial, residential; context: opportunity areas, borough boundaries, environment etc; infrastructure; transport energy water).



“There is almost universal condemnation of this decision, with people confused and angry that their views in this matter have been given such little consideration. There is also genuine fear about the detrimental effect that the combined emissions from the plant and lorries serving it, will have on people’s health, together with frustration and bewilderment that the acknowledged increase in heavy vehicle movements was not included as part the Inspector’s decision making process.”

Correspondence relating to the Hazrem waste plant in Cwmfelinfach, Caerphilly

In 2018, I made recommendations to Welsh Government that they should undertake a review of the planning/permitting regime, to ensure that the whole system leading to proposed developments needing to be approved/licensed/permited is acting coherently, in line with the Well-being of Future Generations Act and in a way that is easily understood by the general public. Welsh Government have said they will consider this as part of their post-Brexit review of environmental law in the years to come.

In the meantime, public bodies should take every opportunity to collaborate and integrate their work with everyone contributing to the built environment. Welsh Government need to look at simplifying the processes and competing demands.

Collaboration needs to go beyond the public sector, to include the private sector and landowners, so that national aspirations of placemaking can be delivered throughout Wales.

Reconnect people with planning

What future generations need

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

We need planners to be fully aware and trained on their role in delivering the goals, well-being objectives and the ambition of the Act, and in the use of the five ways of working, in their every-day activities.

Developers need to understand the benefits of the new legislation and planning requirements; understanding that these are not optional. Developers need to involve the communities affected by their proposal fully.

Active involvement, in whatever form it takes, needs to be embraced as it is powerful in shifting perceptions and inspiring others to see the Act as an important strategic tool – not a burden of compliance.

Involvement needs to be complemented by training sessions for local authorities and their clients, as it needs aligning with culture change and strong leadership.

Planning should consider all aspects of inclusion needs, how the space will be used, and what difference it can make to allow people leaving their home independently and feeling a part of their community.

Where we are now

There is a perception that ‘well-being’ is not sufficiently taken into account in the way the system is currently operating



People who contact me often express concern that planning proposals do not take into account their well-being. Their concerns often relate to their individual well-being (specifically their health), as opposed to the wider population well-being, that the Act requires public bodies to improve. There is clearly a different understanding of the term well-being between public bodies and the public, which partly explain the differences in expectations.

Despite the ambition of Planning Policy Wales and the ongoing recast of planning policy, there is still a view amongst some communities and planning professionals that the current system is designed to promote development, that economic benefits are still the predominant consideration, and that there is insufficient consideration of the social, environmental and cultural dimensions of well-being.

“I hear all about well-being of children, but these are just words, we want someone to do something, anything to help these children. We don't want them growing up obese with diabetes, mental health problems, anxiety, being bullied...”

Public correspondence regarding a planning application for fast-food development next to their school.

This disconnect between people's views and the planning practice they observe is also echoed in Audit Wales' Report, The Effectiveness of Local Planning Authorities in Wales:

“Overall, many citizens we surveyed see local planning as a system which results in things happening in communities which they are unable to influence or control. There is a growing disconnect between what people want from their planning authority and what their planning authority is delivering.”

Audit Wales

The people I have engaged with and who contact my office with planning concerns have expressed frustration with the complexity of the system, the lack of appeal avenues once a decision has been made, as well as the lack of meaningful involvement (beyond, what they feel is tokenistic consultation) with the community when it comes to land-use plans and decisions.

Some people feel that they do not have an opportunity to shape the future of their immediate community

For many of the people who approach me, their Local Development Plan is too remote and too technical for them to engage with. When they want to get involved at the application stage, it is too late.



People are consulted and have an opportunity to influence the plan-making stage, but less so on the outcomes of planning applications. Coupled with the ways they are consulted, some people feel their views are not taken into account. When preparing their report, Audit Wales also found that:

“The negative perception of citizens is not helped by the poor-quality information often provided by local planning authorities to help explain what they are doing, where and when. Repeatedly, our survey respondents told us they considered information to be inaccessible and not useful. Over half of those responding to our survey stated that it is not easy to access information on planning, and 70% stated that local planning authorities are not good at engaging with stakeholders about planning proposals and their potential implications.”

Audit Wales

There is some emerging good practice on involving citizens but all public bodies need to find better ways to involve their communities in the development of their area

There is some emerging good practice where public bodies are making a real effort using innovative techniques to reach out to people beyond traditional consultation methods. I am pleased to say that I have also seen some excellent examples of involvement in planning, that I would like other public bodies to adopt in involving people to shape their spaces.

[Carmarthenshire Council](#) has embarked on a programme to involve the residents of Llanelli in regenerating the Tyisha ward, as part of the development of the Swansea Bay City Deal Llanelli Wellness Village. As part of this, school children have made 3D models of the area, a number of involvement events have been held, a community group has been established to have a say on the investment in the area, and as many people as possible have been invited to give their ideas and views on regenerating their community.

Every effort should be made to involve people in the design of plans (Local Development Plans, in particular), as this could save time and money for the authority by avoiding complaints and judicial reviews. It will also help ensure that a diversity of ideas and views are included, which is important for inclusivity and equality. Public bodies should learn from my Journey to Involvement and find new and innovative ways to engage with people in a meaningful way.

[Shape my Brecon Beacons](#) is a practical guide and toolkit developed in collaboration with [Brecon Beacons National Park Authority](#) and the [Design Commission for Wales](#). It is aimed at helping people and communities play a part in shaping the places that matter to them, giving tools, resources and ideas to explore, change and improve towns, villages or neighbourhoods.



Brecon Beacons National Park Authority have also developed place plans in collaboration with local communities, including a process for adoption as Supplementary Planning Guidance, e.g. Crickhowell Community Plan and Hay town plan. The Place Plan was created through workshops led by the [Design Commission for Wales](#), using their participatory approach via the Shape my Town online resource created by the Commission and partners.

Shape My Town Tool and My Square Mile

To offer a bridge between plan makers and the communities, the [Design Commission for Wales](#) created a tool: [Shape My Town](#). The tool is aimed at involving and enabling the public, avoiding jargon and industry language, to engage with plan-making. It is intended as a third-party resource to help others and provide guidance but not to be overly directive with people who know their places well. It includes some pilot studies, reports and examples. It will be updated in 2020 to reinforce placemaking further.

There is also a resource developed for schools and younger children - [My Square Mile](#) - a resource rooted in the distinctive Welsh concept of the square mile. [The toolkit is already used globally.](#)

I see these as useful tools for involving communities and for fostering wider collaboration, and I encourage public bodies to use such resources.



Merthyr Tydfil is also working with the [Design Commission for Wales](#) on '[Merthyr Heritage Charette](#)', which is involving people in the shaping of the future of Cyfarthfa and wider Merthyr Tydfil plan, in the context of the city region and for the long-term. The current design-led work, with an international team appointed via The Design Commission, intrinsically embeds the Act.



A charrette is an intensive planning session where citizens, designers and others collaborate on a vision for development. It provides a forum for ideas and offers the unique advantage of giving immediate feedback to the designers. More importantly, it allows everyone who participates to be a mutual author of the plan and to enable co-design. They should be used widely by public bodies in relation to planning.

Co-designing plans and projects is key for communities to feel fully involved. Still, it requires adequate resourcing, which is difficult with the current 50% budget reduction in planning departments, and because communities themselves can lack resources.

Co-designing is the process of citizens and designers collaborating to produce a product or service that meets the needs of the end-user.

Co-designing removes barriers that make it difficult for people to engage and give feedback by ensuring designers communicate in an inclusive way. To be inclusive, this would include large print in a font size from 14-point upwards, audio recording, British Sign Language (BSL), Easy Read, Braille, electronic documents such as plain text, or an accessibly tagged PDF with text-described diagrams and maps. Three-dimensional tactile diagrams have been successfully used in public consultations; an excellent example of this is Network Rail who produced a tactile proposal of station designs.

It is also important to meet environmental needs of those participating, such as the time and physical location of consultation meetings, abilities and strengths of those involved, and facilitating and agreeing on mutual outcomes, as is flagged by the Royal National Institute of Blind People.

In 2000, the head of Forward Planning in [Torfaen](#) encouraged the community to work alongside planners to produce the development plan for Torfaen. Members of the community sat down with the planner and produced the policies and proposal to include in the plan. He explained that this approach gave the community an insight into the restrictions and considerations the planning authority needed to address when producing the plan, as well as allowing residents to share local knowledge (where to locate housing, for example). “By being part of the process, the community would gain a better understanding of the Development Plan process and as they have been involved in writing the policies and as such gain ownership.” he explained.

Technology can also help public bodies to engage with communities. Approaches like webcasting of meetings, 3D software to show potential developments and how they would integrate with the current environment, and better use of social media, can go a long way to ensuring that the community have their say in decisions that affect them.

Not all of them are costly. There are multiple online public consultation platforms, for example, [Stickyworld](#) or [City Swipe](#) that make involvement easy through interactive content and flexible settings. These platforms are cost-effective and allow people to comment on maps or photos of a proposed development or to express public concerns and vision about specific areas to inform planners’ work for the future. Such software and techniques can improve the process of consulting citizens on planning proposals or getting their input on how they would like to see their local area developed in order to inform plan-making and planning decisions.



I have seen innovative ways of involving people both in Wales and further afield:

[Brecon Beacons National Park Authority](#) also used a 'Minecraft' style approach to engage with Children when planning their communities of the future.

[Adelaide, Australia](#) has produced a [3D city model](#) to provide a tool for public consultations by visualising transport and other planning matters.



Technology can be useful to streamline the process through, for example, a single interactive digital platform which contains all the relevant information rather than producing bespoke reports for individual planning applications that can sometimes run out of date. This will save time and make the work of planners easier.

There is a lack of clarity of terminology and the expectations of involvement in the planning system

As I have noted throughout this report, I have found that there is confusion around the terminology used in different policies, legislation and guidance. Terms such as engagement, public participation, and consultation are used interchangeably. Welsh Government is missing opportunities through the inconsistencies in the terms they use.

From 2016 onwards, all policies should reinforce the requirements to 'involve' people who have an interest in achieving the well-being goals. Involvement goes beyond consultation and, therefore, it is important that these expectations are aligned in all policy documents to avoid confusion in what public bodies (in this case, the planning function) are expected to do, and citizens can expect to experience.

For example, the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2016 requires Natural Resources Wales to produce a 'public participation' statement. Chapter 2 of the proposed Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill 2019 is entitled 'Public participation in local government' and section 46 proposes creating a duty to 'encourage local people to participate in local government'. Most new legislation continues to refer to consultation or public participation rather than involvement. The word 'involvement' is rarely mentioned in Welsh Government documents that do not relate directly to the Act. Welsh Government should be consistent in the terminology they use in new policies and legislation and ensure it is aligned to the Act and does not move us back toward consultation and minimum participation of people. Involvement requires more. [\(Please see Chapter 2 for more information.\)](#)

To address these concerns, I agree with Audit Wales' recommendation to review the Development Management Procedure Order 2012 and update the engagement and involvement standards for local planning authorities. Any update should also reflect my guidance on involvement. Welsh Government and planning authorities should also publish easy access versions of planning rules and processes, as has been done for criminal law for example, in addition to the codification of planning law Welsh Government has started to undertake.



Planning

Recommendations for Welsh Government

Key Recommendation

Welsh Government should use the precedent as set out by the recast of the whole planning system in depth to realign other policy areas, such as education and housing, with the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

Policy Recommendations

Welsh Government should:

- Continue exploring how financial levers (including the newly devolved stamp duty tax and green finance finding for major infrastructure projects) can be used to bring back adequate resource in planning.
- Provide additional resources to the Design Commission for Wales to increase the number of applications they can provide advice on, specifically on the application of the the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, as well as on the revisions and the production of new Local Development Plans. Welsh Government should also consider imposing requirements that developments over a certain size undergo this process.
- Put in place mechanisms to better monitor the outcomes delivered by the planning system aligned with the Act.
- Review progress on the adoption of Strategic Development Plans and consider making it mandatory if it is not progressed within a reasonable timeframe.
- Review the impact, in five years time, that Planning Policy Wales 10 and The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 are having on changing the presumption on which planning law is based. This should be reviewed so that the bar is raised above 'do no harm' into ensuring that only developments which maximise contribution to the goals are authorised.
- Ensure a comprehensive Equality Impact Assessment is undertaken at the development of Local Development Plans and that any new development is demonstrating how it is addressing equality consideration identified in the Equality Impact Assessment.



Planning

Recommendations for Welsh Government

Process Recommendations

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

- To invest significantly in the implementation of placemaking and Planning Policy Wales 10 to ensure placemaking is delivered and that skills are not lost.
- To produce a plain language explanation of the Planning Code and process.



Planning

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

- Ensure well-being objectives relating to ‘planning’ are based on ‘placemaking’ and integrated with other objectives so that wider benefits are achieved.
- Understand the connections between housing, the environment, technology, transport, access to services, culture and language now and for generations to come in order to help them achieve multiple objectives and steps.
- Find new ways of measuring the success of planning decisions against their well-being objectives and adopt broader measures to help in turn broaden out their objectives and enable wider well-being. For example, designing measures of success around well-being – rather than counting planning applications or looking at how long it takes to approve them – would help people take more rounded decisions about places. The Royal Town Planning Institute have recently commissioned research for the UK and Ireland, with support from Welsh Government, on measuring planning outcomes. Public bodies and in particular Welsh Government will need to consider the findings.

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:

- Put in place arrangements to ensure that placemaking is considered in all strategic decision-making forums.
- Ensure resources and training are provided by planning authorities to improve involvement in the design of their local plans.
- Ask for more from developers and better involve communities to ensure projects; subject to planning permission; maximise contribution to the well-being goals and objectives.



Planning

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**:

- Looking at Local Development Plans, well-being objectives and well-being plans in isolation.
- Accepting developments that are not fully aligned with Planning Policy Wales 10 and The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.
- Approving proposed developments which do not enhance or maintain biodiversity.
- Measuring success through the speed at which planning applications are approved.
- Focusing on short-term solutions.
- Showing generic consideration of equality impact of Local Development Plans and major developments.

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

- Taking every step to integrate work between agencies impacting placemaking and our built environment.
- Aligning Local Development Plans and well-being plans/well-being objectives.
- Training everyone involved in planning on the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and Planning Policy Wales 10.
- Refusing developments which are not fully aligned with Planning Policy Wales 10 and the Well-being of the Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 i.e. which do not contribute towards the delivery of sustainable development and do not improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales.
- Making use of the advice and review service of the Design Commission and of the Welsh Health Impact Assessment Unit for major development and design and revisions of Local Development Plans.



Process Recommendations (continued)

In their day to day actions they should start:

- Using the Value of Planning Tool to identify ways to build a case for increasing investment in planning.
- Align planning decisions with Welsh language policy and promotion standards.
- Changing mindsets from consultation to involvement and make every effort to involve people in plan design.
- To synchronise and align all their infrastructure plans.
- Considering starting to adopt Strategic Development Plans or Joint Local Development Plans where there are complex cross border movements.
- Producing plain language explanation of their Local Development Plans and their planning documents and guidance.
- Embracing the new presumption in Planning Policy Wales 10 paragraph 1.17 in favour of sustainable development in accordance with the development plan to ensure that social, economic, cultural and environmental issues are balanced and integrated.
- Using the outcome model provided in annex B of Planning Policy Wales 10.



Resources / Useful Information

Future Generations Commissioner for Wales

- [Future Generations Framework for Projects](#)
- [Future Generations Framework for Scrutiny](#)
- [Three Horizons Toolkit](#)
- [Art of the Possible Journeys towards the well-being goals and involvement](#)

Other

- Royal Town Planning Institute: [Value of Planning resources and toolkit](#)
- [Shape My Town tool](#)
- [My Square Mile tool](#)
- Public Health Wales: [Creating Healthier Places and Spaces for the Present and Future Generations](#)
- WHIASU [resources](#) and toolkit
- [I-tree tool](#)
- Wales Audit Office: [The effectiveness of local planning authorities in Wales](#)





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