



Comisiynydd  
Cenedlaethau'r  
Dyfodol  
Cymru

**Future  
Generations**  
Commissioner  
for Wales

# **The Future Generations Report 2020: Executive Summaries**



**Let's create the future together**

# A Wales of Cohesive Communities



**“Attractive, safe, viable and well-connected.”**

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

**"Connect is the magic word."**

Gwent Citizens Panel,  
October 2019

Cohesive and connected communities are an important part of people’s individual well-being, and more people now realise the value of kindness, community and connections on well-being. Communities in Wales in 2050 will be well-connected (including digitally), will be able to adapt to change, and will be focused around the well-being of the people who live there. People will be trusted and empowered to do the things that matter to them, and they will have good access to key services such as education, health, housing, retail, transport and community safety.



# Policy Recommendations

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

Welsh Government should...



Ensure its loneliness strategy is identifying how it can make a contribution to meet its well-being objectives and Wales' well-being goals.



Ensure everyone in Wales has access to reliable digital and internet connectivity; and work with business and voluntary organisations to help achieve this.



Require applications for the community facilities programme to demonstrate how they will contribute to local well-being objectives.



Support public bodies to deliver a more integrated approach to service delivery in rural areas.



Support public bodies to work better together to plan, prepare and shift their activity and resources towards prevention; to help tackle crime and anti-social behaviour.



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



Ensure the socio-economic duty aligns to the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (Also a recommendation in CH3: A Prosperous Wales).



Support the establishment of two or three pilot landscape-scale, community stewardship projects, building on the lessons learned from the Skyline project. (Also a recommendation in CH3: A Resilient Wales)



Set standards to ensure people can access biodiverse green spaces within 300 metres of their home. (Also a recommendation in CH3: A Resilient Wales)



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

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

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

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

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



# Where are we now? My assessment of progress in achieving A Wales of Cohesive Communities:

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

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

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

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

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

Wales needs an efficient, clear and transparent planning system that works for planners, developers and communities. Communities need to be involved from the very beginning, in a meaningful way, in the design of the plans and decisions which will affect them. [Please refer to my section on 'Planning' in Chapter 5, for further information, analysis of well-being objectives and my recommendations.](#)

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

If we get connectivity right, it will have a significant impact on our ability to improve community cohesion, reduce air pollution, improve health and well-being, and meet carbon reduction targets. For example, around 24% of all car trips across the UK are under two miles, meaning that a large proportion of these trips could be done by walking, cycling or scooting. An integrated, low-carbon, affordable, reliable and efficient public transport network can improve health and activity levels and tackle issues such as air pollution, climate change and inequality. Around 57% of those recently surveyed by the RAC said that they would be willing to use their cars less if the quality of public transport improved. [Please refer to my section on 'Transport', in Chapter 5, for further information, analysis of well-being objectives, and my recommendations.](#)



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

My analysis shows that 43 of the 295 well-being objectives set by public bodies relate to housing (set by 24 of the 44 bodies covered by the Act). However, few public bodies have expanded on their objectives to explore the long-term trends within housing. For example, how they're considering demographic change, different living arrangements, such as house sharing or intergenerational home shares, or advances in technology that could mean people living at home for longer. [Refer to my section on 'Housing', in Chapter 5, for further information, analysis of well-being objectives and my recommendations.](#)

**Loneliness is a national crisis and is being increasingly recognised by public bodies in their well-being objectives and steps.**

[Figures published by the Office for National Statistics](#) tell us that 2.4 million adult British residents – of all ages – suffer from chronic loneliness. In Wales, 16% of people were found to be lonely in 2017-18, with younger people more likely to report feeling lonely than older people. Public bodies and Public Services Boards are making the connections between well connected, safe communities and the broader issues of well-being, particularly in tackling loneliness and isolation. For example, Monmouthshire County Council's step to: 'Develop opportunities for people to be involved in their local communities reducing isolation and loneliness'.

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

For example, Newport Public Services Board have a well-being objective which states: 'Newport has healthy, safe and resilient environments'. From this, a 'Green and Safe Community Engagement Officer' was funded to facilitate delivery of the objective which has significantly contributed to progress, with all partners working together to shape a Newport wide vision called the 'Newport Green and Safe Offer'. However, there is still a long way to go in getting more people in Wales outdoors, using and enjoying their local surroundings, helping them connect to nature and discover the history of their communities. Recent data from the Green Space Index suggested that over 236,000 people in Wales do not live within a ten-minute walk of greenspace and many people are not reaping the benefits of spending time together outdoors in their community.

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

It will require specified public bodies, when making strategic decisions such as 'deciding priorities and setting objectives', to consider how their decisions might help reduce the inequalities associated with socio-economic disadvantage. Welsh Government should ensure it is aligned, both in principle and in practical terms, with the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

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

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

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

There are many community and voluntary sector groups across Wales improving well-being in their areas, but these organisations have told me the work they do is not always fully appreciated by public bodies, and they are frustrated with their ability to secure long-term funding and work as partners on an equal, trusted basis. This is consistent with my analysis of well-being objectives.

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

such as A Prosperous Wales, A More Equal Wales and A Wales of Cohesive Communities. It is encouraging that Welsh Government have prioritised this area for investment with their [£4.5m Foundational Economy Challenge Fund](#), supporting businesses and organisations operating within the foundational economy. I am encouraged to see the number and variety of projects that have been funded across Wales. For example, £100,000 to Cwmni Cymunedol Bro Ffestiniog in North Wales to support community businesses to work with three social enterprises to develop plans in community tourism, renewable energy and digital media content. A new consultancy service for the foundational economy will also be established, and £100,000 given to Carmarthenshire County Council to increase the number of local or regional food businesses supplying the public sector in the area.



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



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



## **Below are the areas I recommend that all public bodies, including Welsh Government, should focus on:**

- Create the conditions where people and communities can do the things that matter to them
- Support communities to be well-connected and safe
- Ensure everyone has access to key services
- Value the role and potential community anchor organisations can play in building cohesive communities

For my full evidence, assessment, key findings and advice please see the section on A Wales of Cohesive Communities in Chapter 3: Progress against the well-being goals of the Future Generations Report.

