



Comisiynydd
Cenedlaethau'r
Dyfodol
Cymru

**Future
Generations**
Commissioner
for Wales

The Future Generations Report 2020: Executive Summaries



Let's create the future together

Leadership and implementation of the Act

Part 1 - Changing our public sector culture

For Wales to realise the aspirations of the Act, public servants need to be braver, broader-thinkers and collaborate better together and with other sectors.

The Well-being of Future Generations Act is the greatest cultural change programme the Welsh public sector has ever gone through. Any cultural change takes time, but changes of the magnitude envisaged by the Act will inevitably mean that this is a long-term mission rather than a short-term fix – or as I often describe it, an expedition rather than a journey.

My duty to monitor and assess the progress public bodies are making towards their well-being objectives involves me understanding whether the culture of organisations is changing in line with the aspirations and legal requirements of the Act.

The findings of Audit Wales and the Auditor General are a crucial source of evidence for me in understanding the improvements public bodies should make to apply the sustainable development principle. Given our respective roles under the Act, we have worked together to publish our reports and the Auditor General's report should be read in conjunction with this chapter.



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 Objectives in Chapter 4, but in setting their objectives all public bodies and boards covered by the Well-being of Future Generations Act (including Welsh Government) should always:

- Undertake horizon scanning exercises to think, plan and resource for the long-term future with others in collaboration – public, private, voluntary sector and members of their community. Welsh Government should help by establishing a targeted resource to help public bodies build capacity in long-term thinking, planning and futures techniques.
- Use the first part of the ‘double test’ to identify ‘what’ they should do to maximise contributions to the well-being goals.
- Set a long-term vision. Consider what success looks like for that objective in five, ten, fifteen, twenty and twenty-five years; and identify appropriate milestones and measures – considering the national milestones set by Welsh Government.
- Move towards better involving people throughout the decision-making process from defining a problem to delivery and evaluation, being open to real change as a result. Welsh Government should help by undertaking a review of the statutory guidance of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, to build in a specific mechanism for the public to be involved in the work of public bodies – learning from the Scottish Community Empowerment Act.



In considering their steps, all public bodies and boards covered by the Well-being of Future Generations Act (including Welsh Government) should:

- Test everything they do according to the Act's 'double test' of the 'what' and the 'how'.
- Collaborate with others and involve people to find the problems they need to prevent, understanding whether they fall into primary, secondary or tertiary prevention; using evidence to identify the best possible preventative interventions that maximise contribution to their objectives.
- Public Services Boards and public bodies should be seeking ways of more effectively collaborating and integrating their work with others such as town and community councils and national public bodies; and identifying opportunities with others such as registered social landlords, the private sector, trade union representatives and further and higher education in delivering their well-being objectives and steps.
- Set out much clearer steps to meeting their well-being objectives – reflecting what contribution each department will be taking to these steps.
- Clearly align financial planning and decisions across the seven corporate areas of change to the achievement of their well-being objectives. The vision provided by well-being objectives should provide a longer-term plan of funding and corporate plans/well-being statements should set out how spending plans will seek to finance their steps.
- Provide evidence in their well-being statements/plans/corporate plans and annual reports on how applying the Act to the corporate areas of change is informing the steps they are taking to maximise their contribution to the goals.

In testing and demonstrating how they are applying the Act, all public bodies and boards covered by the Well-being of Future Generations Act (including Welsh Government) should:

- Ensure they move beyond paper-based exercises, increase staff understanding and provide constructive challenge to show how the five ways of working have been applied, specifically how contribution to the goals and objectives can be maximised.
- Build challenge from other departments, experts and stakeholders into their internal decision-making processes.
- Develop their corporate centre and processes in line with the requirements of the Act, but also encourage innovation and culture change. All public bodies should be using and demonstrating use of resources like the Future Generations Frameworks, designed to help public bodies consider their proposal or decisions in the context of the Act. (See resources).
- Adopt the definition of stages of prevention and preventive spend and allocate spending accordingly within financial planning and risk management.



In supporting cultural change, all public bodies and boards covered by the Well-being of Future Generations Act (including Welsh Government) should:

- Starting with Welsh Government, adopt a model of well-being budgets. While our legislation requires us to look at the whole budget, a positive place to start this transition would be with ‘new money’.
- Galvanise efforts and building a movement of change, placing well-being and kindness at the centre of public policy.
- Involve their workforce in meeting their well-being objectives; start with their own actions, their teams, departments and whole organisations; to meet the national well-being goals.
- Put in place arrangements to ensure staff understand how and why the Act should be applied.
- Support opportunities to collaborate, second staff to other organisations and make joint appointments.
- Take action to diversify their workforce and put in place arrangements to draw on their lived experiences. (For more detail please see Chapter 2 recommendations to Welsh Government on the ‘Real Life Fast Track’).
- Ensure scrutiny committees, boards, and Audit and Risk Committees have received training on the Act and are using the Future Generations Framework for Scrutiny. (See resources).
- Ensure that they have mechanisms in place to involve children and young people in their decision making processes.
- In the same way that public bodies seek to appoint people with expertise on finance, risk, governance and human resources; an appropriate number (at least one for every board) of public appointments should be made where specific expertise and detailed understanding of the needs of future generations is a specific requirement.
- Be brave in calling out behaviour in partnership environments which does not embody the five ways of working; and should be supported by Welsh Government, the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales and other appropriate agencies to address this.



In measuring their progress, all public bodies and boards covered by the Well-being of Future Generations Act (including Welsh Government) should:

- Starting with action from Welsh Government, public bodies should align their corporate planning, performance management and reporting with the requirements of the Act, encouraging planning that focuses on long-term and prevention.
- When set, use Welsh Government [national milestones](#) to define appropriate success measures for achieving well-being objectives and steps in five, ten, fifteen and twenty-five years' time.
- Consider a similar method to the setting of national milestones, to define appropriate success measures for achieving well-being objectives and steps in five, ten, fifteen and twenty-five years' time.
- Find ways of measuring the success of initiatives based on well-being to encourage integration, preventative thinking and collaboration.
- Invest in building a movement of change, identifying and breaking down barriers to implementation and promoting wide understanding of how each part of their organisation contributes to the national mission of the Act - improving the well-being of future generations.

Where are we now? My assessment of the progress made by public bodies in implementing the Act

Innovation

The Act is bringing about some excellent innovation. I am seeing a growing movement of change, with people daring to deliver differently to improve economic, cultural, social and environmental well-being. For example...

Solar power for future generations

[Monmouthshire Council](#) have developed a solar farm on council-owned land. The Council is contributing to A Globally Responsible Wales, A Resilient Wales, A Prosperous Wales and A Healthier Wales by setting an objective to 'Maximise the benefits of the natural and built environment for the well-being of current and future generations'.

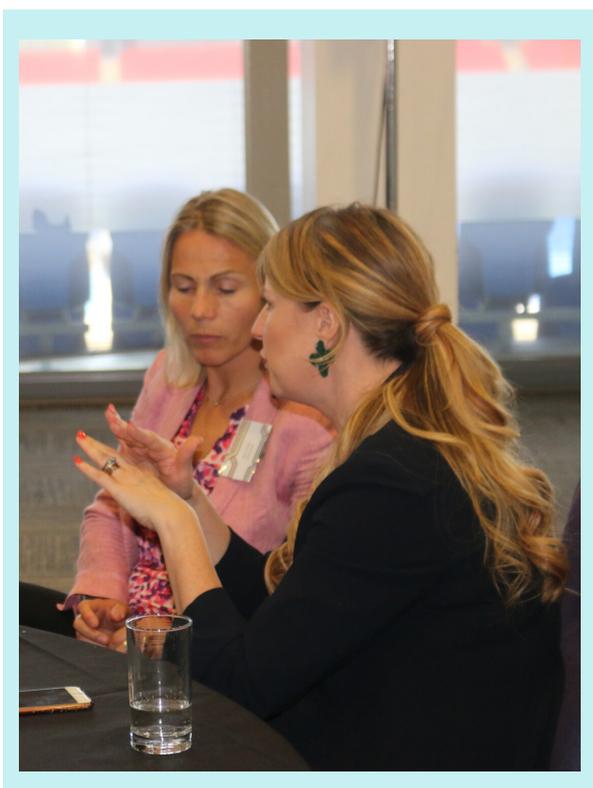
The council say the farm can generate enough electricity to power around 1,400 homes and also save over 2,000 tonnes per year of CO₂ by generating clean, renewable energy.



Lansbury Park

Caerphilly Public Services Board are radically changing their approach, by taking a place-based, collaborative approach to focusing services and regeneration in high areas of deprivation, such as Lansbury Park. In targeting regeneration funding at the homes and neighbourhood of the area, organisations have involved people, listening to their issues, concerns and reasons to celebrate the community. The Public Services Board involve the community in delivering their well-being objectives. For example, parents and children producing books designed to inform carers, teachers and children about the effects of adversity experienced in childhood.

This is a good example of a Public Services Board considering both what they do in line with the Act and then applying the principles of the Act to how they do it.



Finding new ways to solve problems

South Wales Fire and Rescue Service and Natural Resources Wales have demonstrated the power of collaboration, integration and involvement by seeking to work towards their objective to 'Reduce the number of deliberate fires'.

A range of methods have been adopted, but the '[Healthy Hillside](#)s' project in collaboration with the Wildlife Trust, local authorities, other voluntary sector partners, local farmers and the wider community shows contribution to A Prosperous Wales, A Resilient Wales, A Healthier Wales, A Wales of Cohesive Communities and A Globally Responsible Wales.

Wildfires were having a significant impact on the habitats, watercourses and biodiversity of the region, as well as the well-being of the community. By working together, the partnership adopted land management techniques like bracken management, controlled burns and encouraging grazing animals; moving to an approach that prevents wildfires, prevents resources being spent on fire fighting and prevents further habitat loss.



Public Services Boards are showing the power of collaboration, and many public bodies are going beyond their traditional functions to work with others. Collaboration now needs to move beyond involving the most obvious partners and from 'information-sharing' towards pooling resources.

The Act has provided public bodies and Public Services Boards with a renewed focus on meaningful involvement. But, their governance, decision-making processes and scrutiny could be more diverse and involve a wider range of people.

More could be done to involve the public sector workforce, placing well-being and kindness at the centre of public policy.

Implementation

The early years of the Act required significant focus on process and on building relationships, but attention is now turning to action.

Public bodies were required to set their first well-being objectives by April 2017. At the same time, Public Services Boards were coming together for the first time and many have spent time on building trust and relationships.

Most public bodies are making progress on implementing the Act but in different ways (see below for more information). In the next phase, they need to apply the Act across all of its aspirations and legal requirements.

Collaborating to create integration in Cardiff

By seeking to understand the wider social, economic, environmental and cultural impact they could have, Cardiff Council collaborated with the wider partners of Cardiff Public Services Board, residents and businesses to develop a clean air and transportation strategy for the city, recognising that this is an important lever to meet a number of their well-being objectives and the national well-being goals.

The work has been given a 'public health' lens through the secondment of a Public Health consultant to the council. This has prompted a significant refocus on how they can address problems with congestion and poor air quality in a way which drives further progress on meeting their objectives.

This work has led to a focus on making active travel the norm through schemes like 'nextbike', introducing the 'congestion charge' to the city, and creating buildings like Ysgol Hamadryad in the Butetown area as a school inaccessible to vehicles; encouraging more people to walk or cycle. They have considered the socio-economic links to this work by prioritising the most deprived areas with the lowest life expectancy for investment in cycle lanes and active travel infrastructure.



© Cardiff Council



In implementing the Act, some public bodies are delivering the 'what' and some are delivering the 'how' examples; however, there is further work needed for public bodies to fully demonstrate the 'double test' of the Act - applying both.

- For example, initially the Housing Innovation Fund was established by [Welsh Government](#) with the Act at its centre - to fund innovative ways of increasing housing stock that was fit for the future. However, in implementing the 'what', government initially did not fully consider the 'how' and the first few rounds of funding asked bidders to demonstrate their contribution to only one well-being goal.
- Other public bodies have been considering the 'how' but not the 'what', suggesting a lack of integration and collaboration. For example, [Swansea Bay Health Board](#) have positively reduced gas and electricity consumption. While positive, this does not appear to be linked to their well-being objectives and therefore chances to consider the wider opportunities that decarbonisation could deliver to their core duties of improving the health of their population are being missed.



Public Services Boards are beginning to work together more effectively. For example...

In the five [Gwent Public Services Boards](#), partners are [collaborating](#) on a regional basis to use funding for projects like the Gwent Green Grid, which is identifying local collaborative opportunities for protected sites and natural and built environments to contribute towards the resilience of wider ecosystems in the region. The region has also introduced Integrated Well-being Networks, a place-based collaborative project to set up health and well-being hubs and use the assets of communities, with the aim of preventing people in the community needing to access hospitals or social services.



I have been providing advice and assistance to [Cwm Taf Public Services Board](#) to help them work collectively to tackle adversity experienced in childhood. Through a "Live Lab" approach, my team have supported member organisations of the Public Services Board to use the Act to challenge their thinking, understand different organisational cultures and find an [integrated](#) way forward through a complex issue.



However, their efforts to operate in a more transformational way are being hindered due to barriers such as funding, complex governance and capacity.

For example, funding is needed to support more capacity and capability in long-term, futures thinking, involvement, research and data analysis. Public Services Boards require access to more government funding opportunities that would enable the board to take more substantial steps towards meeting their well-being objectives. They are struggling to be as effective as they could be because boards exist in a complex partnership governance landscape which has a knock-on effect of some partners not being engaged in Public Services Boards – their attention diverted to other boards. (See my [advice and recommendations to Welsh Government on removing barriers to implementation of the Act.](#))

The corporate planning, performance management and reporting requirements set by Welsh Government for public bodies need to reflect the Act better:

Currently, reporting progress on well-being objectives is a challenge because of responding to other duties and requirements from Welsh Government. Public bodies have reported how difficult it is to change to a long-term, integrated and collaborative form of measuring progress when Welsh Government continue to hold leaders to account on short-term plans and short-term performance and financial measures. Requirements should enable public bodies to shift from focusing on short-term delivery and move to planning preventatively, for the long-term and in an integrated way.

Financial planning and short-term funding inhibit the ability of public bodies to meet their well-being objectives and make collaboration, prevention, long-term thinking and integration more challenging.

The corporate areas of change (i.e. corporate planning, financial planning, workforce planning, procurement, assets, risk management and performance management) outlined in the Act are potential levers to drive change, but public bodies must make better use of them.

Currently, many organisations are seeing these functions as a hindrance rather than a help to meeting the aspirations of the Act. There are inconsistencies in how far public bodies are going to achieve what's possible and driving cultural change within their corporate areas of change. For example, in Carmarthenshire, two new primary schools have recently been built to Passivhaus standards, meaning a high-quality learning space for pupils, a sustainable environment using less energy and local materials being used. Public Health Wales and Swansea Council have recently furnished and decorated their offices using the Act as a guide. As much as possible, furniture was sourced second-hand, flooring and paint were obtained from off-cuts and social enterprises were used to carry out the restoration and refit. These sorts of innovative, corporate approaches are not being applied consistently across the public sector. Public bodies and Public Services Boards should be evidencing that applying the Act to their corporate areas of change is informing the steps they are taking.

Cultural change requires everyone to play their part.



Insight

Public bodies and Public Services Boards are considering the long-term more than ever before.

For example, in their well-being assessments, Cardiff Public Services Board looked at ‘Cardiff Tomorrow’, exploring the possible scenario for every topic based on existing trends and what shift might be needed to take preventative actions now.

The Public Services Boards in the Gwent region collaborated with Ash Futures Consulting to publish a Horizon Scanning report on likely trends for the next 10-20 years. Hywel Dda University Health Board on setting a 20-year strategy for their work: 'A Healthier Mid & West Wales: our future generations living well.'

But the whole system needs to move to be thinking and acting for the long-term.

Public bodies have an increasing understanding of the need to take preventative action.

I can see this in well-being objectives and steps (for example: ‘Promote good health and well-being’) and there is a good theoretical understanding of prevention - things like housing, poverty, education and environment having a positive or negative effect on your life. However, there seems to be less understanding of the actions that needs taking as public bodies are often looking at problems in isolation. Newcastle City Council found that their school-based approach to dealing with young people Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) was focused on the wrong things. The biggest indicator was multiple contacts with social services, not GCSE attainment. The research showed that those who had had as little as six interactions with social services spent almost three times longer out of education or training.

Public bodies are not always making the best use of insight provided by a wide range of partners, the public and their workforce.

Whilst partnership working and collaboration has improved, public bodies should explore more comprehensively the information and intelligence held by organisations and groups beyond the more obvious partners.



Integration

The Act is facilitating more integrated thinking, with many Public Services Boards working together effectively to tackle issues and public bodies working beyond traditional organisational and geographical boundaries.

For example, Fire and Rescue Authorities going beyond 'traditional duties', finding ways of preventing injury in the home.

But sometimes opportunities are being missed to achieve wider preventative benefits through integrating their objectives and collaborating with others,

failing to recognise the preventative benefits of good quality housing or the links between culture and gaining skills.

Several public bodies have introduced tools and templates to help people consider how their proposal is integrated and contributing to each of the seven national well-being goals,

such as online impact assessment tools (for example, Denbighshire Council) or integrated impact assessments (for example, Welsh Government).

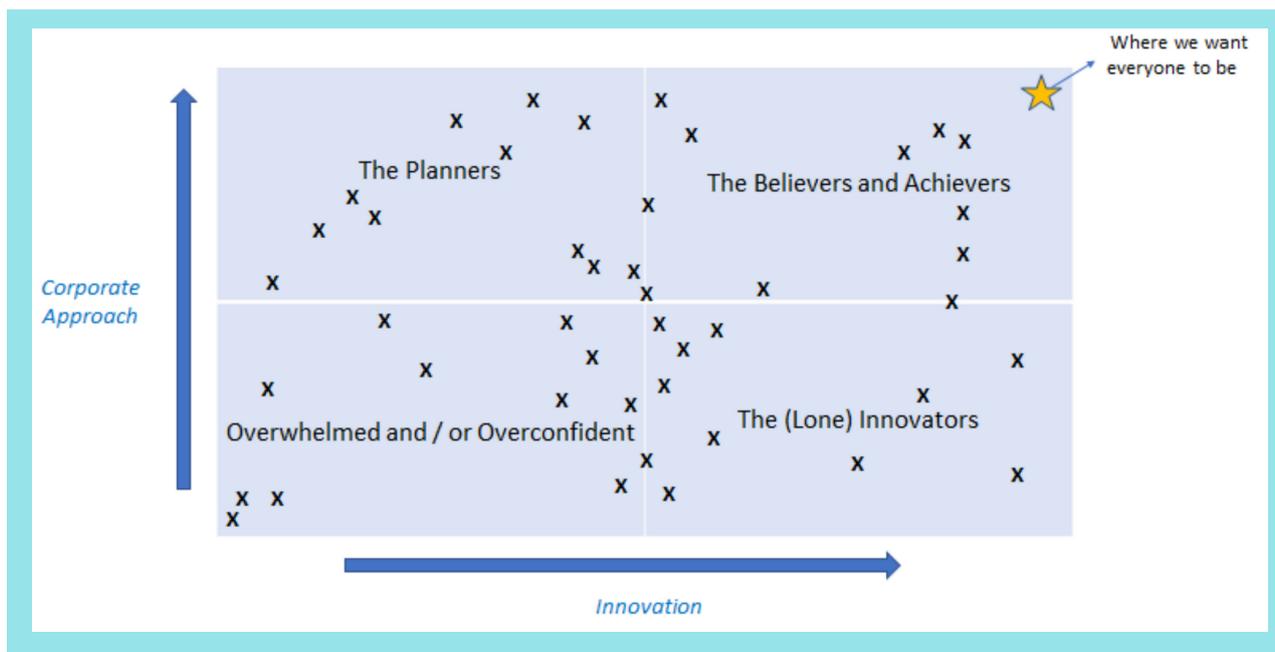
However, paper-based exercises are not enough to show how public bodies are working differently.

There are some national well-being goals that are less understood and clarity is lacking on how public bodies are meeting them.

This is particularly true of 'A Prosperous Wales', 'A Resilient Wales' and 'A Globally Responsible Wales'. There is a tendency to rely on the title of the goals, neglecting the full extent of their legal definitions (see [Chapter 3 for more information](#)).

Further information:

My overall analysis of progress loosely categorised public bodies into the following groups:



- “The Planners” - organisations that have started with their corporate planning and strategies but often lack innovation.
- “The (Lone) Innovators” - thinking and delivering differently because of the Act but often only in pockets of individuals and teams.
- “The Believers and Achievers” - organisations where there are examples of innovative practice, change makers and champions of the Act supported by corporate centres and leaders to work in a new way. Public bodies should be in this space.
- The “Overwhelmed and / or Overconfident” - organisations that seem overwhelmed by responding to crises and / or those that believe they have already ‘cracked’ the Act and giving further attention to their organisational culture is unnecessary.

Dedicating time to a corporate vision pays off, but you need corporate vision, innovation and ‘hearts and minds’ in balance. As such, the Act should apply at two stages of decision making – as a ‘double test’. Firstly, ‘what’ you decide to do. Secondly, ‘how’ you decide to do it and ‘how’ the organisation implements the proposed solution. For those implementing policy and delivering services, understanding what the Act is trying to achieve and understanding their role in delivering it is crucial to seizing every opportunity, not just to do these same things better, but to do better things. (See section on Setting Good Well-Being Objectives in Chapter 4.)

Public services in Wales are around 400,000 people strong - a significant resource. The wider workforce should understand the national mission of the Act and why Wales is at the forefront of improving well-being for future generations, what this means in practice and their role to play. Public bodies could also be using their workforce far more to build a movement of change towards putting well-being at the heart of everything they do.

The Government could go further by adopting the same approach as the Scottish Government in placing the value of kindness at the centre of public policy. The recent COVID-19 crisis showed the power of people when others need help. Although in difficult circumstances, the crisis showed that public servants act in a way that is compassionate and uses common sense.

Implementing the Act would be easier if the corporate planning, performance management and reporting requirements set by Welsh Government for public bodies reflected the Act better; financial planning was longer-term and integrated; and everyone played their part in cultural change. (See my advice and recommendations to Welsh Government on removing barriers to implementation of the Act.)

While cultural change takes time, it is essential we all actively challenge these barriers to progress. Five years on from the Act being in place, it is now incumbent on me, the Auditor General for Wales, Welsh Government and organisations themselves to call out this behaviour and challenge the decisions being made that do not reflect the ways of working required by the Act.

