

Future Generations Newsletter April 2024



Foreword



1 - Derek Walker, Future Generations Commissioner for Wales

I've made it my mission to help ensure all Welsh public bodies achieve their net zero and nature positive goals by 2030, supporting all of us, and our children and grandchildren, to live healthy, happy lives.

So much good work is already happening and many of the solutions to tackle the climate and nature emergencies are already known. Now, we need organisations to work together, connect the dots and upscale the great ideas that can make a powerful difference to the whole of Wales.

Over the next six years my team and I will be doing more to support public bodies tackle the 'implementation gap' on climate and nature and turn our ambitious legislation and policies into practical action on the ground that people can truly feel and see the benefit from including a net zero public sector; a halt in biodiversity decline; more locally produced food; more green jobs; and clean, green communities we are proud to live in.

We can't deny that budget cuts are going to make this even more challenging but with preventative spending and long-term thinking in everything we do, public bodies can [transform how they plan and deliver services](#).

In my new strategy, [Cymru Can](#), I've committed to helping public bodies reach net zero and public bodies are already taking action on emissions from their own operations, but that's only one part of a big picture.

Considering 'area based' emissions, those that take place within their borders, recognises the important role of communities, businesses, land managers and other organisations as we transition to a low carbon future.

That's why we've called on public bodies across Wales to join [Race to Zero](#), a United Nations-backed initiative and the world's largest coalition of non-state actors taking action to halve global emissions by 2030.

Alongside Nigel Topping from the UK Climate Change Committee, [I convened more than 30 senior representatives](#) from public bodies to explore how Race to Zero can make a difference in Wales.

Positively, around half of Wales is on a path to join including Cardiff Capital Region, the three Welsh national parks, some local authorities, and businesses.

[Bannau Brycheiniog National Park Authority](#) is one of the leaders in this space and their CEO Catherine Mealing-Jones shared their first-hand experience of aligning county-wide climate action with Race to Zero. You can read more about their work [here](#).



Public bodies have the power to unlock significant collective change, if they enable and remove barriers from some of the passionate people and groups making a difference across Wales. And we already have structures in place for this through our regional partnership arrangements.

It won't be one size that fits all and action must not come at the expense of the organisational and sector approaches, but I'm looking forward to working with a coalition of the willing to explore this gap and show how our public services, communities and businesses in Wales can work together to get to net zero faster.

There is no time to lose.

Movement for Change - Play Streets

This month my team spoke to Vale of Glamorgan Council's Vale Play team and residents from Barry to discuss how they're supporting local action for healthier, greener and more cohesive communities through play streets.

Since we highlighted this example, Cardiff Council has announced it is exploring the Play Street scheme for the capital.

Play Streets, or Playing Out sessions, are neighbour-led temporary road closures, popular across the UK, which are creating safe spaces for children to play freely together on their doorstep.

Vale of Glamorgan Council's Vale Play team have been working with **Play Wales** and **local residents** to implement street closures for outdoor play at two locations in Barry.

As part of the pilot scheme, which launched in May 2023, Romilly Road and Dunraven Street are closed to through traffic for two hours on one Sunday a month so children and residents can engage in outdoor play and socialisation.



Play is one of the most important aspects of children's lives and when asked about what matters to them, children consistently mention playing and meeting up with their friends.

However, many face barriers to play, particularly outside, due to safety concerns and fears around traffic. The lack of opportunity to play outside has an impact on our children's health and well-being and on their resourcefulness and resilience.

Play Streets is also working to engage communities, improving our health and well-being, decreasing loneliness and opening up local resources and support.

As well as improving our communities' well-being and cohesion, it's hoped Play Streets will help improve on air quality by reducing carbon emissions during the road closure period.

The scheme aligns with their well-being objectives, ‘To work with and for our communities’ and ‘To support people at home and in their community’ in addition to their Project Zero initiative to become carbon neutral by 2030.

“The traffic-free space means the kids have the freedom to safely explore their street and have mini-adventures with their neighbours.

We’ve seen kids learning to cycle, develop their skateboarding and skating skills, drawing beautiful chalk pictures on the road, sharing food (real and imaginary) and generally just having fun with the people they are going to grow up with.

My kids really look forward to it and so do I – it’s a great chance for our community to get together and to get to know each other, too. Now, when we see neighbours on the street, people quite often stop for a chat, rather than just a hurried nod.”

Aoife Blight, a resident who coordinates one of the sessions, and who also works for Sustrans, had been running informal, pop-up Play Streets for months before the scheme started, and engaged with neighbours to gauge demand and support for the pilot.



The project places an emphasis on free, unstructured play with children encouraged to bring their own toys including skipping ropes, bikes and scooters, and parents and residents encouraged to get to know each other better.

Residents are provided with signage, hi-vis wear, a small play-kit, and information cards to carry out the road closure, with a Community Play Development Officer from the Council also available for support during the scheme, helping communities champion the Play Streets sessions.

If the pilot scheme proves successful, play-related road closures could be made available for eligible roads across the Vale of Glamorgan.

Some of the benefits Play Streets have reported from schemes across the UK include:

- Children are more physically active (up to five times more than normal)
- Children make friends on the street and gain new skills and independence
- Neighbours meet and get to know each other and gain confidence through taking action to change things
- Streets feels safer and friendlier

If you're interested in implementing Play Streets in your area, visit [Play Wales' website](#) for more information.

You can find more information on the Barry Play Streets pilot on the Vale of Glamorgan Council's website [here](#) or watch us being interviewed by ITV News on the scheme [here](#).

Read our full release on the importance of community action when tackling the climate and nature emergencies and its inequalities [here](#).

“The pilot Play Street projects have had a huge impact on their communities, not only increasing opportunities for children to play but also for neighbours of all ages to come together. The team is excited at the prospect of now supporting similar initiatives elsewhere in the Vale.”

Joanne Jones, Senior Healthy Living Officer at the Vale of Glamorgan Council

Meeting our missions – Well-being Economy and Climate & Nature

We need a Well-being Economy Minister for Wales

As our new First Minister assembled his cabinet, I called for the creation of a Well-being Economy Minister (rather than a traditional economy minister) to recognise Wales' approach of pursuing sustainable economic development.

This was as part of the [evidence](#) we gave to the [Senedd's Economy, Trade and Rural Affairs Committee](#)'s inquiry into the green economy.

Economic policies and plans in Wales need to consider how they maximise benefit across all the well-being goals so that our whole economy becomes 'greener' and achieves the vision of [A Prosperous Wales](#).

This will require a major transition at all levels of economic policy and delivery.

At national level, I am encouraged by the direction of travel of the [Welsh Government's economic mission](#), and its commitment to reviewing the mission's progress against the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

On a more local level, Corporate Joint Committees are required to develop well-being objectives and I look forward to working with them, particularly as they collaborate with the Growth Deals, around the contribution of their regional economic strategies to Wales' well-being goals.

The [Nature Service Wales](#), which my team have supported from inception, is also an important part of this equation.

It is essential that all these layers of economic governance pull together in the same direction.

We must focus on areas of growth in the sectors where there is potential to create green jobs while simultaneously, improving environmental resilience and well-being in communities.



[Sustainable Farming Scheme](#)

I recently published a [statement](#) on the [Sustainable Farming Scheme](#) calling for Welsh Government to act swiftly to resolve the issues that have been widely covered in the media, so that the scheme can progress quickly to implementation stage.

The nature and climate emergencies require us to take urgent action and the involvement of the land use sector is important because it accounts for 13-20% in total emissions and has the ability to sequester (absorb) carbon. In all scenarios, to achieve [net zero by 2050](#), its involvement is crucial.

It is essential to protect the nature and climate targets proposed in the Sustainable Farming Scheme and recognise that change is needed while also supporting farmers and communities to prepare for the future.

How we do this must also be part of a national food strategy for Wales, one that allows us to plan how we'll feed Wales in the long-term while also considering nature recovery and urgently tackling climate change.

It has not helped that the debate seems to have become polarised but it's not an either or - the scheme can and must provide a robust plan to enable nature and our farming communities to thrive, together.

Strengthening environmental governance

We'll soon be submitting our response to Welsh Government's consultation '[Securing a Sustainable Future Environmental Principles, Governance and Biodiversity targets for a Greener Wales](#)' around how they intend to strengthen environmental governance and further address climate change and biodiversity loss in Wales.

This is an important but overdue consultation as a result of Brexit and is around their proposals to embed environmental principles in Welsh law, establish an environmental governance body, and introduce targets and statutory duties for the protection and restoration of biodiversity in Wales.

Leadership Academy Graduation

Thirty-five leaders of tomorrow have just graduated from our third Future Generations Leadership Academy.

Our academy is a group of 18-30 year-olds putting the Well-being of Future Generations Act into action – creating future generations plans for their workplaces, mentoring Welsh leaders and informing my team and I's work.

At an event at Wales Millennium Centre, participants shared their reflections from the programme, and the action plans they're putting in place to drive change at their own organisations or in their communities, and improve Wales' future.

Action plans covered topics including the relationship between South Wales Police and the Well-being of Future Generations Act, a Wales Graduate Schemes Network which would bring public body graduate schemes together to facilitate cooperation, and the development of a Race Equality Network within Football Association of Wales.

Jane Hutt MS, Trefnydd and Chief Whip, spoke alongside our Academy sponsors including Wales Millennium Centre and Principality Building Society, and members of our Alumni.

This year's participants are an impressive group of ambitious and dedicated individuals who come from a diverse range of backgrounds.



2 - Jane Hutt MS, Trefnydd and Chief Whip



3 - Academy Alumni

One of the graduates included Ali Al-Anbaki, 27, from Cardiff who moved to Wales in 2022 after fleeing his home country of Iraq at the age of 20, where he studied laboratory analysis and was a civil activist on social media, speaking out about the dangers of political corruption on young people.

Ali spent two years living in tent in a refugee camp in Samos, Greece, before being homeless for four months, and was then refused asylum in Germany, finally arriving in the UK following seven days in a detention centre in London.

He moved to Wales and applied for the Leadership Academy while volunteering and was granted refugee status in November 2023, receiving the news while in an Academy session. Ali is now using the experience to support a better future for Wales' asylum seekers and refugees.

In January, he set up Cartref, a free, warm space in Grangetown for asylum seekers and refugees with a special focus on physical health and well-being and is led by individuals who have lived through similar experiences. They've also collaborated with South Wales Police and Cardiff and Vale College to engage asylum seekers and break barriers and is developing an app for connecting asylum seekers to volunteering opportunities.



4 - Ali Al-Anbaki



5 - Saffron Rennison

Other FGLA graduates include Yusra Chaudhary, a Welsh Centre for International Affairs and Climate Cymru volunteer, and board member at Grange Pavilion Youth Forum. Yusra was awarded the Plan International Young Change Maker award for her social media campaign around menstruation, raising awareness about period poverty and creating safe spaces on social media for individuals to share their own period stories.

Saffron Rennison, a Football Services Executive in the Football Association of Wales, engages with grassroots football clubs and wants to help promote gender equality in football.

Shaun Bendle leads on the Equal Power Equal Voice partnership mentoring scheme for Disability Wales, to get individuals from underrepresented groups into decision-making roles within Wales and

is the founder and manager of the social media education and news factchecker account 'That's Devolved', which focuses on media inaccuracy around reporting on devolved matters.

For more information on each of our Academy participants, read our [Meet the Participants](#) guide.

For more information on the Academy and how you can get involved, whether as a sponsor or participant, please visit [our website](#).



Long-term thinking to reduce health inequalities

Think about the youngest person you know. What will their life look like in 2050? What about 2100? What will they eat? Where will they live? How will they celebrate their birthday?

Now imagine the invisible link that connects you in the present to that image of the future. How will the decisions you make today impact their future in 2100?

Thinking long-term is not just one of the five ways of working in the Well-being of Future Generations Act – it is the idea sitting at the very heart of this world-leading legislation. The Act requires us to look at the challenges we face today through a more integrated, intergenerational lens and reminds us that we have a responsibility, as good ancestors, to leave a better world for future generations.

The lives of too many people in Wales are being cut short because they cannot access the essential building blocks of health - education, housing, social connections - that enable a long, healthy, happy life.

Health inequalities in Wales, and around the world, are being exacerbated by trends such as climate change, demographic change, and digitalisation. With many of these trends set to get worse, we cannot continue as we are. We need a wholesale shift to preventative approaches which improve health now, and in the future.

Thinking about the long-term can give us agency to proactively envision and work towards a future we want to be a part of, but it can be difficult to do when priorities are deeply rooted in the present.

Thinking and acting for the long-term can help us navigate an increasingly complex and uncertain world in a way that reduces risk and unlocks opportunities. It can help us build resilience into our organisations and systems and get out of the constant 'firefighting' mode.

We must move on from only treating disease to promoting good health and preventing illness for everyone in Wales. But time and effort, alongside new knowledge and skills, are needed to to undertake this cultural and behavioural shift.



Together we can shape the future

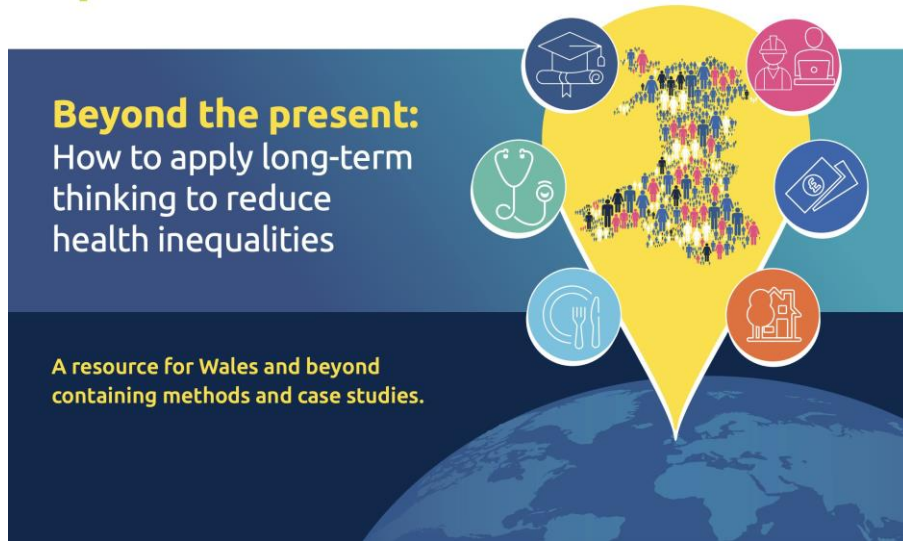
In my new strategy, [Cymru Can](#), my team and I have committed to supporting people and organisations to think, plan and act for the longer-term and to help with that, in collaboration with Public Health Wales, we have created [Beyond the present: How to apply long-term thinking to reduce health inequalities](#).

This resource is meant to help public bodies, Public Services Boards and others, know where to start with long-term thinking and navigate the different futures methods available.

Our resource includes 12 accessible futures techniques for thinking long-term and considering the impact of the present on our future, and 14 examples of good practice from organisations across Wales which have used them.

All of these are considered through the lens of health inequalities as a cross-cutting theme that impacts - and is impacted by - almost all of our decisions and actions.

The futures methods in the resource include techniques to identify relevant trends, explore potential futures and setting a course for the desired future.



6 - [Find the resource on our website](#)

The resource also showcases a variety of case studies including:

- how the Welsh Centre for International Affairs used the creative narratives method to define a 100-year long-term strategy
- how Natural Resources Wales used scenario planning with people from across Wales to co-create a preferred vision for the future of the natural environment

In exploring each case study, the resource guides people through the various approaches to long-term thinking that have been used. It offers tips on approach, who to involve, time required, outputs and recommends specific toolkits for each approach.

Together, we can drive the vision of the Well-being of Future Generations Act and ensure that we are protecting and promoting good health and well-being today, and in the long-term.

Together, Cymru Can.

Please get in touch with us to share how you're using the resource and your own experience thinking long-term.

If your organisation is interested in futures workshops or would like to discuss long-term thinking, please get in touch with us via contactus@futuregenerations.wales marked for the attention of Petranka Malcheva.

Contact us

Want to catch up on previous issues of the newsletter? You can find them on our website [here](#).

For more information get in contact here:

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