



Comisiynydd
**Cenedlaethau'r
Dyfodol**
Cymru

**Future
Generations**
Commissioner
for Wales



A Journey to

A Wales of Cohesive Communities

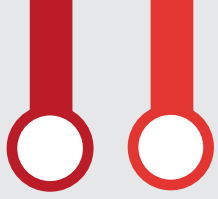
1: People active in their communities: Creating the conditions where people and communities can do the things that matter to them

2: Connected communities: Supporting communities to be well connected and safe

3: Access to key well-being services: Supporting vibrant foundational economies

4: Community anchor organisations: Valuing the role and potential that community anchor organisations can play in building cohesive communities





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In the Well-being of Future Generations Act,
this goal is defined as

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



Defining the goal

American writer Meg Wheatley wrote: “there is no power for change greater than a community discovering what it cares about.” Despite that, less than 25% of people across Wales think they can affect decisions made locally.

When communities are cohesive, they're well-connected (including digitally), can adapt to change, and are focused around the well-being of the people who live there with good access to key well-being services such as education, health, housing, retail and transport and that people can do the things that matter to them.

Cohesive and connected communities are an important part of people's individual well-being. The World Health Organisation identified that lack of agency, trust, belonging and insecure neighbourhoods explain 19% of the gap in poor health between the top and bottom average incomes for men & women in Europe.

A key feature is the presence of strong, locally based institutions - often called 'community anchor organisations' – such as development trusts, social enterprises, coops, housing

associations and town or community councils. They're important because they understand local communities and have a long-term commitment to the area they serve.

Cohesive communities also place well-being at the heart of local economic development. The Foundational Economy is about the universal basic services that support everyday life, such as health, care and retail. As these services make up approximately half of all local employment, are relatively stable and resistant to economic shocks, public bodies can value and strengthen them by opening space for conversations to maximise their potential, creating the conditions to help them make a bigger contribution.



Case studies

Throughout the document you will find a number of reports relating to the topic subject. Please read the link if you see this symbol.



Defining the goal

Where to focus action in contributing to this goal

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

[\(See cohesive communities Wales journey topic 1: People active in their communities\)](#)

Support communities to be well-connected

[\(See cohesive communities Wales journey topic 2: Connected communities\)](#)

Support access to key well-being services in communities

[\(See cohesive communities Wales journey topic 3: Access to key well-being services\)](#)

Value the role of key organisations in building cohesive communities

[\(See cohesive communities Wales journey topic 4: Community anchor organisations\)](#)

Understand the role of housing in cohesive communities

[\(Journey topic to be explored further in next phase\)](#)

Create communities where people feel safe

[\(Journey topic to be explored further in next phase\)](#)

Enable communities to be digitally connected

[\(Journey topic to be explored further in next phase\)](#)



Other statutory requirements in relation to this goal

Active Travel Act 2013 requires local authorities to map and continuously improve routes and facilities for “active travel” – defined as walking and cycling for a purpose, like accessing work or services, rather than for leisure.

Planning Policy Wales is significant in moving us towards a low carbon, resilient society, building well-connected environments for everyone in Wales that improves our lives, health and well-being. It introduces the concept of placemaking, a holistic approach to the planning and design of development and spaces, focussed 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.

Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 imposes duties on local authorities, health boards and Welsh Ministers that require them to work to promote the well-being of those who need care and support, or carers who need support. The principles of the Act are: to support people who have care and support needs to achieve well-being; that people are at the heart of the new system by giving them an equal say in the support they receive; partnership and co-operation drives service delivery; and services will promote the prevention of escalating need and the right help is available at the right time.

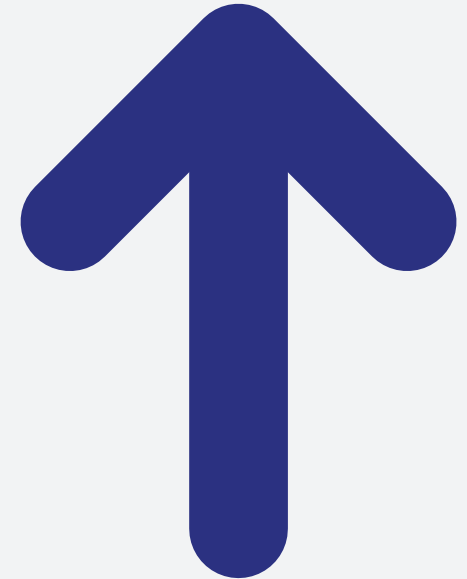


Some of the suggested steps and actions in this document complement the policies set out in legislation - specific steps and actions that adhere to these are highlighted in orange and with an ‘St’ symbol.

Enablers

Achieving this goal is **more likely to happen** when...

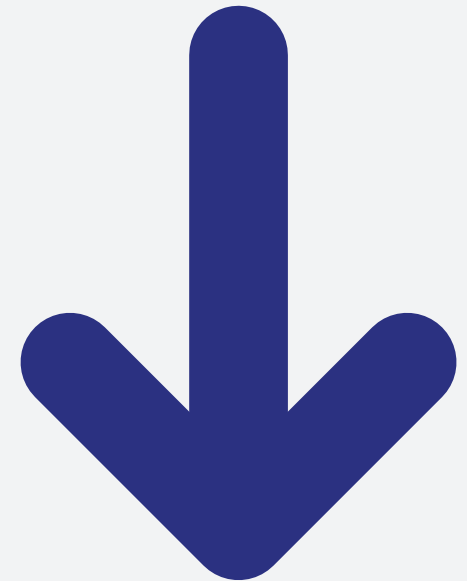
- **Public bodies create the best conditions to help communities do what matters to them.**
- **Public bodies embed 'what matters' to people conversations into how they work (see the [Journey to Involvement](#)).**
- **There is creative use of key funds and local budgets.**
- **Community anchor organisations which can give a voice to local people, are supported to hold assets and build resilience.**
- **There is support for community leaders, activists, entrepreneurs and volunteers.**



Disablers

Achieving this goal is **less likely to happen** when...

- **Public bodies work in silos and don't take 'place-based' approaches to what matters to people.**
- **Public bodies take a deficit view of communities, focusing on perceived weaknesses and ignoring strengths.**
- **Funding opportunities are short term and fragmented.**
- **Attitudes to community ownership of assets are constrained by a view that public bodies are the 'natural place' for assets to be held and community ownership only becomes a possibility when public bodies cannot afford them.**
- **Public bodies talk about involvement and co-production but don't invest in doing it properly.**





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A Journey to

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1: People active in their communities

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

Defining the issue

Positive relationships, kindness and trust are at the heart of personal and community well-being. Despite living in a more digitally connected age, many people report feeling more isolated and that meeting neighbours and other members of the community is more difficult. Public bodies often struggle to understand the range of assets that exist within communities: networks, associations, facilities, natural assets, land, buildings, green space, small businesses etc, and fail to make the most of these strengths when they develop their place-based plans.

People have skills, lived experience, energy and commitment and finding ways of unlocking these strengths is critical. It should be easy for residents and staff in public bodies, third sector organisations and businesses to offer time and skills - and these opportunities should be used to help build trust and confidence across sectors and organisations. Too often, communities face barriers when it comes to doing simple things for themselves, such as local community events.

Synergies and connections to other journeys



Journey to a Wales of Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language
Topic 5: Culture available to all



Journey to Involvement – All topics



Journey to a Resilient Wales
Topic 2: Natural green space



Journey to a Healthier Wales
Topic 1: Treating people with compassion



Making **Simple** Changes

Remove barriers to enable communities to organise local events that bring people together, [such as the Big Lunch](#). Local authorities should review any consents, permits and insurance requirements and make them proportionate to [street level activity](#).

Review whether [requirement for consents](#) and licenses (such as road closures, music licenses, insurances, food hygiene certificates) are proportionate for important small-scale events which can bring residents and neighbours together.

Look to bring communities together through arts, cultural and sporting projects which deliver multiple benefits.

E.g. [United Welsh Housing Association](#) and [No Fit State](#) brought performances and workshops to [Bryn Aber](#), [Lansbury Park](#), [Aberbargoed](#) and [Tredegar](#).

Celebrate the value of communities getting involved with sports, culture, food/ growing, green space and the benefits this brings, and promote when and where it's happening.

E.g. [Caerphilly](#).

Map public land to identify and publicise land that is accessible for use by all community groups. Be open to starting conversations with community members and organisations about how to use these.

E.g. [Space Saviours](#) – is a collaboration between **United Welsh, Newydd, V2C, Tai Calon Housing Associations** to help communities bring unloved land back into use. <https://youtu.be/0RITmJiSRbY>

Making **Simple** Changes

Make it easy for residents to start up [Park Runs in their communities](#). This includes pro-actively offering the use of parks to emerging groups and using key funds to support groups to pay for modest upfront Park Run registration fees.

Eg

E.g. Residents in Aberdare worked with **Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council** to get their [Park Run](#) started really easily. <https://youtu.be/YkGPQxzoq6E>

Promote culture and the arts as an effective way to bring communities together.

Eg

E.g. [‘It’s art but it’s not’](#) programme – **Trivallis Housing**.

HOME

Use sport in approaches that get young people active and address tough challenges like holiday hunger.

Eg

E.g. [‘Fit and Fed’ from Streetgames Wales](#)

Support local people to start and get involved in [Dementia Friendly Communities](#) - everyone benefits from being part of a community that looks out for each other.

Eg

E.g. [Dementia friendly towns](#) and <https://youtu.be/B9InyzCaMvs>

Nurture a culture of hospitality and warm welcome to those seeking sanctuary - especially those fleeing from war and persecution.

Eg

E.g. [Cardiff City of Sanctuary](#)

Promote opportunities for people to get active in their communities and to volunteer their time, experience and skills. This includes promoting local volunteering opportunities (through Community Voluntary Councils) and [online tools](#) which offer [sports volunteering](#), [student volunteering](#) and more [information on time credits](#).

Making **Simple** Changes

Check to see if [Time Credits](#) schemes operate in your area. If they do, explore partnership opportunities to enable citizens to play an active role in their communities.

Promote the use of [Dewis Cymru](#) to promote local opportunities within communities.

Encourage people to set up [Kindness Networks](#) to build individual and community resilience.

Encourage the use of Community Mapping tools to help you focus on where you can best make a difference in your communities.

E.g. **Vale of Glamorgan** [Community Mapping toolkits](#) have been used by residents to help shape community projects across the county.

E.g. [Shape my Town](#), tool to help communities understand local priorities and possibilities.

Ensure information about [key funds and community funding pots](#) is widely available and easy to access to help people make good things happen in their communities.

Promote [Community Lands Advisory Service](#) to help communities seeking to understand options and possibilities to develop community land assets for local benefit.

Provide support to community groups who want to start up, grow and prosper. This includes support with set up, planning and development of projects, help with funding, recruiting and supporting volunteers and helping to measure impact.

E.g. [Interlink RCT](#) offer free information, advice and support to individuals and community and voluntary groups in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

Making **Simple** Changes

Encourage public body staff and partners to join networks that champion [co productive approaches](#) to designing and delivering public services.

Consider the campaigning priorities of [Citizens Cymru](#) when making your own plans. Seek to connect active people to this network to seek to shape future priorities.

Support uptake of initiatives such as [Eco-schools](#), [Forest Schools](#), and [Size of Wales](#) to help develop awareness of environmental and global issues.

Understand that empty homes can blight communities. Consider new approaches to bringing empty homes back into use.

Eg

E.g. [Homestep Plus](#) – **United Welsh Housing Association** providing opportunities to buy refurbished properties.

Being More **Adventurous**

Ensure you understand the value of local residents coming together, and use the spaces created by these opportunities to listen and understand what's important, to identify opportunities to co-produce solutions.

Support the development of community networks that bring engaged people and organisations together around common themes and issues and help to develop peer networks of support. Ensure you find ways for these networks to feed into strategic policies plans and approaches to service delivery

Eg

E.g. [Swansea Environmental Forum.](#)

HOME

Eg

E.g. **Renew Wales** puts communities in touch with Peer Mentors who are willing to share their knowledge and experience to inspire, support and enable others, and stimulate action on climate change at a community level. <https://www.renewwales.org.uk/>

If you are part of a Public Services Board, ensure that it uses every opportunity to facilitate conversations with civil society groups to update progress on actions and talk about what else needs to be done.

Eg

E.g. [Caerphilly Public Services Board.](#)

Eg

Embed the use of Community Connector and Area Coordination approaches to connect residents into local networks of support.

E.g. [Swansea Council local area coordination](#)

Eg

E.g. [Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council Community Connectors](#)

Encourage more GP practices to take part in [social prescribing projects](#) to enable local people to join active and supportive networks in their communities.

Eg

E.g. [United Welsh Housing Association 'Well-being for You' scheme](#)

Being More **Adventurous**

Encourage all public bodies, third sector and local businesses to adopt [employee volunteering schemes](#) to enable staff to contribute time and expertise to local community projects.

Ensure you are utilising projects that support and empower community groups, activities, and entrepreneurs.

Eg

E.g. Support to social entrepreneurs through [Lloyds TSB/School for Social Entrepreneurs](#).

Be open to starting conversations with community members and organisations about how under-utilised assets owned by the public sector, such as unused land, green space, buildings, could be owned and managed as [community assets](#).

HOME

Explore the potential to use local budgets, starting with modest community funding pots, as [Participatory Budgeting experiments](#), to involve residents and community groups in making decisions about what is important to them.

Eg

E.g. Participatory Budgeting examples in [Blaenau Gwent](#) using Home Office funding (2014).

Support more spaces where community and voluntary organisations can come together, [share learning](#) and offer [peer support](#).

Eg

E.g. [Talwrn, Building Communities Trust](#) and [Renew Wales](#).

Learn from organisations that have used culture and the arts to bring communities together.

Eg

E.g. [Health and Heritage partnerships](#) to support people to access culture through volunteering.

Eg

E.g. [National Museum Wales Diversity Forum](#) – finding new ways of interpreting culture through engagement with representatives of different communities.

Being More **Adventurous**

Highlight the way communities use 'food' as a way to [bring communities together](#) – addressing food inequality issues, practically [promoting foodbanks](#), preventing [food waste](#). Learn from an [explosion of best practice](#) across the UK. Ask whether [Food Fridges](#) would work in your community?

Pilot 'play streets' and utilise recommendations from Play Wales about how to encourage children to play outdoors.

Complete the [Investing in Volunteers](#) Health Check.

Support local [Care and Repair agencies](#) to enable more older people to remain active, independent, healthy and safe in their own homes.

Support and encourage intergenerational activities such as [Ffrind I Mi](#) (Friend of Mine), a new initiative in Gwent ensuring people of all ages who feel lonely or isolated are supported to reconnect with their communities, benefitting their health and well-being.

Strengthen health and housing collaborations to support residents to remain active, connected and healthy in their homes and communities - '[Why Housing matters to health and care](#)'.

Understand the importance that good design makes in creating a sense of neighbourliness and community. Refer to [Planning Policy Wales 10 \(PPW\)](#) and the concept of placemaking, and consider adopting the 21 sustainability recommendations in the [Building Healthy Places Toolkit](#).

Develop options for residents and housing associations to explore [co-operative housing](#) opportunities.

Being More **Adventurous**

Explore opportunities for supporting or running vital community facilities which provide a broad range of benefits to community well-being.

Eg

E.g. **Monmouthshire County Council** is the first local authority in the UK to manage, run and open a [community Post Office](#).

Owning your **Ambition**

National or collaborative actions

Recognise kindness as being at the very heart of our well-being, and ensure public service practice and policy is informed by kindness in communities. Learn from the [Kindness Innovation Network](#) conversations that have been happening in Scotland in partnership with [Carnegie Trust](#).

Make a [co-production approach](#) the default in finding out what's important to communities, listening to their needs and enabling communities to understand the priorities of public bodies working in those communities. Activity is both designed and implemented in a way that delivers for the needs of all.

All public bodies are [Investing-in-Volunteers](#) organisations, and the use of [time credits](#) has become the new normal.

Funding is allocated to public bodies without unnecessary constraints, such as those seen through multiple small grants, and is based on meeting agreed national outcomes in line with the well-being goals. Lessons can be learnt from the [Scottish](#) approach.

Organisational actions

Learn from Town and Community Councils who share Community Development Support teams to work long term with communities.

Eg

E.g. Ogwen Partnership case study (page 5) <http://www.bct.wales/uploads/resources/2018-07-11-01-1-our-local-economies-manifesto.pdf>

Use evaluation and lessons learned from [PLANED \(Pembrokeshire Local Action Network for Enterprise and Development\)](#) which supports communities with community participation representation, well-being, entrepreneurship and skills.

Owning your **Ambition**

Implement participatory budgeting learning from local authorities and cities that have embedded [Participatory Budgeting](#) at scale and over time. Learn from [Dundee](#) in Scotland.

Eg

E.g. Participatory Budgeting – [Paris – 5% of city budget.](#)

Through the development of Community Asset Maps, understand the strengths and assets in your communities. Learn from work in [Scotland](#) and keep in touch with emerging work in [Wales](#).

HOME

Use Natural Resources Wales' [Area Statements](#) as an evidence base to inform or be informed by community assets mapping. This enables communities to understand where the opportunities are in 'their place' to come together and tackle or utilise the natural environment to build community cohesion and resilience.

Learn from [Fire Starter](#) Scotland – a series of collaborative learning events, illuminating creative, disruptive and innovative ways in which to 'transform ourselves, our organisations and the wider system'.

Promote and support volunteering opportunities in areas relating to Public Services Board's priority areas.

Make housing cooperative opportunities, like [Loftus Road](#), area a default option for local communities to consider.

Eg


E.g. **Swansea City Council** has [adopted a co-operative housing policy.](#)

Enable a co-design approach to making improvements to housing estates, involving residents, professionals and support from universities.

Eg

E.g. **Cartrefi Conwy Housing Association** – [Tre Cwm regeneration scheme.](#)

Owning your **Ambition**



Ensure that Housing Associations work in partnership with local communities to save much loved heritage assets and to build their future community use into [mixed use](#) housing developments.



Eg

E.g. **Caerphilly County Borough Council** and **United Welsh Housing Association** conversion of [Bargoed Chapel](#) into a community hub.



Plan and design housing and communities to support intergenerational relationships.



Eg

E.g. [An innovative retirement home](#) in the Netherlands has opened its doors to students who live on site and help elderly residents in return for free lodgings while they carry out their studies.



HOME

Other examples and resources



[Co-production Network Wales knowledge base.](#)



[Big Lottery Awards for All](#) fund are easy to access community key funds.



[Arts Council Night Out Scheme](#) makes it easy to use community venues and put on local creative events.



Sustrans pilots - designing traffic out of communities to increase neighbourliness and well-being in **[Bridgend](#)** and **Rhondda Cynon Taf**.



[Building Healthy Places Toolkit](#) – strategies for enhancing health in the built environment, Urban Land Institute.



Tempo time credits schemes embedded in [health and social care projects.](#)



The importance of - [Kindness, emotions and human relationships](#) - the blind spot in public policy.



Ogwen Partnership, Cai Park Wrexham and ACE Cardiff – [Case studies](#) - pages 3, 20 and 21.



[Planed](#) - supporting communities with community participation, representation well-being, entrepreneurship, skills and entrepreneurship.