

# Progress towards the Well-being of Future Generations Act

Overall Findings

October 2019



Comisiynydd  
**Cenedlaethau'r  
Dyfodol**  
Cymru

**Future  
Generations**  
Commissioner  
for Wales

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# Foreword

As Future Generations Commissioner for Wales, I am privileged to see so many examples of exciting initiatives and change as part of my work. Undertaking my duties to understand the progress being made by the 44 public bodies subject to the duties of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act has shown me that there is a growing movement of change, with people who believe in improving the social, cultural, environmental and economic well-being of Wales daring to deliver differently within their own organisations and wider.

These change-makers are doing so in a context of great political uncertainty with Brexit; increasing demand for public services alongside public sector austerity; conflicting priorities from government; and out-dated legislative duties. For these reasons, their leaders, including Government, sometimes lack focus and resources on delivering the requirements of the Act to change the way we do things to benefit both current and future generations.



**SOPHIE HOWE**  
Future Generations Commissioner for Wales

This report presents the main findings of my first round of monitoring and assessing exercise, looking back on progress made in 2017/18 by public bodies, and showcasing some of the exciting initiatives taking place. I also present some ideas on the actions needed to increase the pace and progress of change current and future generations need.

I have worked closely with the Auditor General for Wales, to complement the examinations and studies the Wales Audit Office undertake and have also drawn on intelligence gained from our day to day interaction with public bodies, the voluntary and private sectors, and from members of the public who write to me to highlight good and poor practice.

# Introduction

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 ('the Act') is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of people in Wales – now and for future generations. It places legal duties on the public sector to set their own well-being objectives that seek to improve well-being and maximise their contribution towards seven nationally agreed well-being goals.

As Future Generations Commissioner for Wales, I have a duty to monitor and assess the progress public bodies are making towards the well-being objectives they have set and a power to provide advice and assistance to help.

Most public bodies set their first objectives by April 2017 and collectively, this amounted to 345 well-being objectives being set across Wales. I analysed these objectives and published "Well-being in Wales: the journey so far" in May 2018 - a report on what the objectives were focused on, how public bodies were implementing the Act one year on and my expectations on how public bodies should report progress against these objectives.

At the same time, the Auditor General for Wales published a complementary report - "Reflecting on year one: how have public bodies responded to the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015?"



It is important to note that this report refers to the 345 well-being objectives set in April 2017 and the assessment of progress towards them in 2017/18.

**These findings follow on from "Well-being in Wales: the journey so far". They are the result of my first year of monitoring and assessing how public bodies have been progressing towards their well-being objectives.**

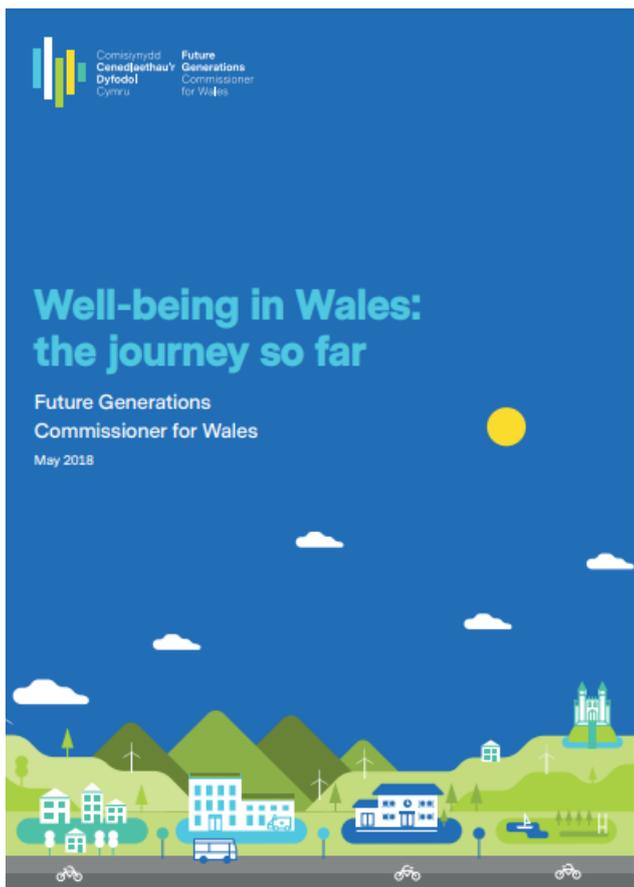
This report is structured to provide my overall findings on how public bodies progressed towards their well-being objectives and felt they were implementing the Act during 2017/18. I have then structured additional findings and ideas for change around each of the public sectors subject to the duties of the Act:

- National public bodies covering Wales;
- Local Government;
- Health sector;
- Fire and Rescue Services;
- National Parks.

The final part of the report outlines the method I have adopted for this first round of monitoring and assessing the well-being objectives being set across Wales.

I know that things have developed since then across Wales and I am privileged to see so many examples of exciting initiatives and change as part of my work. Although this assessment is at a point in time, I hope it provides helpful advice to public bodies and others in the work they are doing now to meet their objectives and for future reporting.

Next year, I will publish my first statutory Future Generations Report which will outline my assessment of the improvements public bodies should make in order to set and meet well-being objectives in accordance with the sustainable development principle. All my work to date will feed into this report, providing statutory advice to public bodies.



You can find a link to the report here.

# Overall Findings



# Finding 1:

**There are some excellent examples of innovation that the Act is bringing about across Wales. In many cases, during 2017/18, they appear to be pieces of a jigsaw that don't fit into the wider puzzle of the organisational approach. I have advised public bodies that they now need to consider and present a more coherent picture of how the organisation is collectively, as a whole, maximising its contribution to the seven national well-being goals through the setting and meeting of its well-being objectives.**

I have been encouraged by the interesting work that public bodies are doing across Wales and it is clear that progress is being made towards the aspirations of the Act. But the examples I have drawn out from the self-reflection tools later within this report tell a story of people delivering against the grain, using the Act as permission to do things differently against a culture of keeping things the same.

Innovation should be set within a context of a coherent, long-term vision for the organisation, driven by the leadership within the organisation and supported by Government in the way they set priorities, assess performance and allocate funding – rather than being siloed and ad-hoc examples here and there.

In the coming year I want to see more examples and a clearer explanation of how these efforts fit into the broader corporate approach of each public body. Public bodies should be providing a more complete picture of how the whole organisation sees itself maximising contribution to the national goals now – and over the coming years. This is part of their duties to take an integrated approach – how the well-being objectives impact on each of the well-being goals and on each other.

Firstly, I have advised that public bodies revisit the expectations I set out in 'Well-being in Wales: the journey so far'. Secondly, I have advised that, in reviewing their well-being objectives, they should map how they are contributing towards the national goals as a whole and have a sense of what success would look like in meeting their own well-being objectives and steps.



# Finding 2:

**The Welsh Government has not sufficiently resourced the implementation of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act in terms of leadership development, support for transformational change and delivering the infrastructure required by the Act; both within their own organisation and the organisations they sponsor.**

There is a growing movement of change, with people who believe in improving the social, cultural, environmental and economic well-being of Wales daring to deliver differently within their own organisations and wider, but this is not yet widespread because of the challenges of public sector austerity; out-dated legislative duties; a lack of focus and resources from leaders and government on delivering the Act; and new demands, which are impacting on us in the here and now but will also impact on the future generations of Wales.

Across the sectors covered by the duties of the Act, I have observed that financial pressure is limiting capacity to lead long-term change. But, despite this being a challenge which is difficult to address in the current financial and political climate, there are a number of areas where the Government could assist in supporting progress in implementing the Act, removing barriers and considering whether any new policy or approach would help or hinder the ability of public bodies to meet the aspirations of the Act.



## Finding 2: continued...

The most commonly cited barriers to changing practices were:

- Funding streams that are disconnected to the Act;
- Annual budget cycles, electoral cycles, pressure on organisations due to austerity and changes to public services making it difficult for leaders to think long-term and, instead, leading in a reactive way;
- Capacity to innovate when trying to manage increasing demand;
- Differences in language within policy, legislation and guidance, that distracts from the Act;
- Competing demands from Welsh and UK Governments, senior leadership within their own organisations, umbrella bodies, Commissioners and others;
- The perceived way success is measured- often focused on short term outputs rather than longer term outcomes and prevention of problems.



# What public bodies told us...

“The Welsh Government funding priority focuses on the NHS but misses the opportunity which could be gained through funding the social care preventative agenda and the community support to move people out of hospital and prevent delayed transfers of care.”

“As a consequence of Welsh Government we have an annual budget regime which makes it extremely difficult to plan longer term. The restrictive approach to annual or short term grant allocations also exacerbates long term financial planning. In reality, while we are working hard to use the 5 ways of working to deliver the financial savings, we are very much at the point where the cuts cannot avoid having a negative impact on future generations. When core services cease, it will be extremely difficult to re-establish them. Welsh Government still need to provide strategic direction on how they see the role of a Local Authority in the context of public sector reform.”

**A Local Authority representative**

“The integration of processes and legislation from Welsh Government, particularly the short notice of financial settlements, impacts on our ability to plan for the long term. Short-term notice of some funding streams can also inhibit our ability to truly plan for the long-term and make well-considered decisions.”

“Officer capacity, particularly at leadership and management level can also be squeezed. We have limited bandwidth to lead and drive some of the more transformational changes required in order to truly implement the sustainable development principles for the long term. To assist with this we feel there is a need to ensure the balance is right between accountability for delivering the act and allowing space to deliver the changes required to truly implement it. The memorandum of understanding between the Future Generation Commissioner and Auditor general is a positive step towards this. Considering the alignment of other legislation particularly the local government measure will be important.”

**A Local Authority representative**

# What public bodies told us...

“We’re not hearing it loud and clear in health bodies. Ministers need to be saying ‘five ways of working’, WFG Act, in everything they do. And then they’d sit up and take notice. Even using slightly different language in guidance, legislation, funding, like ‘A healthier Wales’, means it’s seen as the ‘new thing’ and starts to cancel out the WFG Act.”

**A Health Board representative**

‘Being constrained by annual funding arrangements – which inhibits long term and preventative spend and sometimes hinders collaboration arrangements. We need to work with Welsh government to address this’.

**A national public body representative**

“Clarity in terms of reporting, and how to embed the Act into operational plans and reporting to Government would be something we would be interested in discussing further with you and other national bodies.”

**A national public body representative**

# Finding 3:

**Progress is being made towards meeting well-being objectives in some areas, but there is variation in how public bodies are applying the Act.**

Something unique to the role of Future Generations Commissioner for Wales is the ‘helicopter view’ this affords me in seeing how the 44 public bodies, and indeed other public, third and private sector bodies, are applying the Act to their thinking, their proposals, their decision-making, their delivery and their scrutiny. No one public body has ‘cracked’ the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act across all of its legal requirements and aspirations. I have always said that this will be a marathon not a sprint, an expedition rather than a journey; and my team are also learning to ‘walk the talk’ on the Act themselves to be able to better advise others. Monitoring and assessing progress towards the objectives set in 2017/18 has shown general variations between sectors (see the section on ‘sector findings’) and variations between organisations in the same sector.

**To loosely categorise these variations:**

**Organisations that have started with their corporate planning and strategies, and are working on their culture, delivery and decision-making.**

Organisations who describe being in this space during 2017/18 include Sport Wales, Public Health Wales, Hywel Dda Health Board and some Local Authorities, like Blaenau Gwent Council, Wrexham Council and Powys Council. These organisations have set a strategic direction and are now looking at communicating this, delivering differently and demonstrating progress differently. These organisations also tend to be those who have funded the production of resources, training and specific staff posts to encourage cultural change.

**Organisations who have struggled to fit their corporate planning and annual reporting into well-being objectives but are thinking and delivering differently because of the Act.**

These organisations typically tend to ‘undersell’ themselves when it comes to the innovative work they are doing, which is improving well-being and having multiple benefits. For example, some National Bodies have many examples of the work they’re doing to contribute to the national well-being goals, but struggle to align corporately and affect change more widely across the organisation. The Arts Council for Wales outlined how this had been a challenge for them and we could see this for some National Park Authorities too, where their work is excellent in implementing the aspirations of the Act but their planning cycles do not necessarily align to setting well-being objectives. Likewise, Fire and Rescue Authorities have embraced the Act and have case studies, collaborative working and evidence in how they have gone way beyond their ‘traditional duties’. But their examples are not always shown in the context of their well-being objectives or the five ways of working.

**Organisations where there is innovative practice, change-makers and champions of the Act – sometimes daring to deliver differently against a culture of ‘business as usual’, other times supported by leaders to work in a new way.**

There are many examples (such as those highlighted under Finding 1) across most of the public bodies of the changes brought about by dedicated individuals and teams, who understand the potential of using the Act as a framework for change.

Of course, these ‘pockets’ of innovation vary in prevalence within organisations too. For example, there are several large-scale programmes of work in public bodies like Natural Resources Wales that demonstrate contribution to the goals and application of the ways of working – as well as strategy that shows the organisation is trying to deliver in new ways. The National Park Authorities describe excellent examples through the self-reflection that show contribution to the national goals, use of the five ways of working and sustainable development principle. There are cultural projects that aim to provide alternative models to well-being, projects aimed at reducing carbon emissions through electric vehicle charging and managing tourism access, and collaboration with others to provide employment and skills opportunities.

In Welsh Government, there are ‘pockets’ within departments looking to push the civil service into using the lens of the Act to affect policy and guidance, a new team has been established dedicated to implementing the Act, programmes rolled out like ‘Future, Engage, Deliver’ set up by the Permanent Secretary to change mindsets, and the First Minister has set the direction of his term in the context of the Act.

Linked to ‘Finding 1’ of this work, whilst it is encouraging that a movement of change is growing, it is disappointing that many people report feeling isolated, exhausted and disheartened by the effort it takes to break the mould of an unsupportive system. Nevertheless, it is clear that, for many of these change makers, the Act is providing a helpful tool to challenge the system. I am pleased to play a role in challenging blockers in the system – managers and leaders at every level who act defensively towards learning to look at public services differently. But what troubles me is that I cannot know about every blockage and, even if I did, I do not have the resources to deal with them. This is why my key findings include the need to fund capacity, leadership development and support transformational change. Welsh Government have a significant role to play here in leading the way.

**Lastly, there are organisations who see the Act as a ‘side-line’ to their core business or where the leadership believes their organisation has already ‘cracked’ the Act and giving further attention to their organisational culture is unnecessary.**

I have commented that many of the Health Boards were in this space during 2017/18, with the Act often seen as something for local Public Health teams to deal with. I believe that there are some positive shifts in this regard, but often the approach from Government continues to undermine, rather than support, the necessary changes in the health sector. It is for this reason that I am considering a review into how the health sector is being supported to apply the Act. There are also a few Local Authorities and National Bodies that are reluctant to see the Act as an opportunity and a way to shape their core work. As well as providing this feedback to them directly, I am sharing my views on these public bodies with the Auditor General for Wales to ensure we work together to advise and monitor progress within these organisations.

The variation in how the Act is being applied is to be expected in the first couple of years of its implementation and there is much to be celebrated in how far we have come and the learning we are gathering along the way. Encouragingly, the findings chime with the responses submitted to the Wales Audit Office ‘year 1 commentary’ on the Act, which resulted in the Auditor General for Wales’ report “Reflecting on year one: how have public bodies responded to the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015?” Public bodies were feeling their way with the Act, but many felt it is a positive and necessary piece of legislation.

Considering these variations and the positive feedback I received from hosting regional collaboration workshops (where public bodies discussed their self-reflection submissions), I believe there is learning to be shared between organisations and I have encouraged public bodies to join cross-sectoral networks like the Sustainable Development Co-ordinators Cymru Plus Network and the National Public Bodies Sharing Network, plus create learning opportunities of their own.

# Resources

**As Commissioner, one of the purposes of my office is to support the public bodies in the application of the Act and, as well as responding to hundreds of requests for support, my team continue to work with public bodies and other sectors to produce resources, which we hope help in challenging thinking, decision-making, delivery and scrutiny.**

I am strongly recommending that each public body uses these tools in the planning, design and delivery of policy, services and infrastructure; and also to reflect on the effectiveness of their approach over the coming year.

- An updated version of the self-reflection tool using feedback from my approach this year.
- Achieving the 'Art of the Possible': a series of journeys towards each of the well-being goals and 'Involvement'.
- Considering future scenarios: a guide for using the International Future Forum's 'Three Horizons' model (coming soon).

Developing proposals, planning services and making / scrutinising decisions:

- Future Generations Framework for Projects;
- Future Generations Framework for Service Design (produced in collaboration with Welsh Government);
- Future Generations Framework for Scrutiny.

# Finding 4:

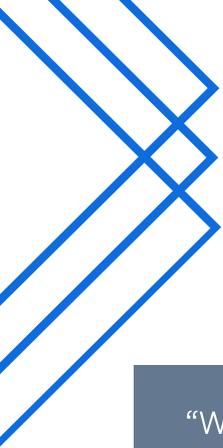
**The corporate areas for change identified in the guidance of the Act are described as ‘catalysts for change’. More progress and pace is needed in these areas given pressing challenges facing future generations, such as climate change. Although there are some examples of organisations seeking to reform their culture and approach, change within these departments should be integral to meeting well-being objectives.**

The Act describes the duty on public bodies to set well-being objectives, which maximise contribution to the seven national well-being goals, and take all reasonable steps to meet them. I have consistently told public bodies that the change begins with them and their own corporate centres. The public sector in Wales employs over 400,000 people – almost half a million people – which is a significant amount of resource to help in creating the Wales we want for our current and future generations. If we can galvanise efforts and create a movement of change, beginning within our own organisations, then we can make an impact on pressing challenges.

The corporate areas for change identified in the Act include:

- Corporate planning - “the right balance should be struck between dealing with short term pressures in the context of your priorities for the long-term.”
- Financial planning - “applying the five ways of working to your financial planning will address the tendency for short-term priorities and administrative process to overtake long-term interests.”
- Workforce planning – the cultural change envisaged by the Act may impact “Board members; Senior managers; equality and diversity champions; human resources staff; policy makers; communications staff; procurement staff.”
- Procurement - “an important part of how a public body allocates resources under the Act.”
- Assets - “strengthen arrangements for the effective management of assets.”
- Risk management - “use the well-being goals and the five ways of working to frame what risks you may be subject to in the short, medium and long term, and together with the steps you will take to ensure they are well managed.”
- Performance management - “well-being objectives should frame the way that a public body contributes to the well-being goals and the role of performance management is to enable progress to be tracked, analysed and communicated.”

(Extracted from Welsh Government: Shared Purpose, Shared Future 1)



The self-reflection submissions show a mixed picture in how organisations have begun to change their approaches within these corporate functions. Some public bodies reported not appreciating how much the guidance emphasises these areas as “catalysts for change” before seeing a question on the topic within the self-reflection tool. These public bodies are now looking more closely at what they can do differently and how they communicate changes.

“We will be looking at strategic priorities and the goals, the five ways of working and seven corporate areas of change in a different way this year. The self-reflection tool has really helped with that – with thinking differently. Last year, the corporate officers asked each service area how they contribute most to one of the seven goals – this year, I have a much better understanding of the Act thanks to the tool. We'd never really looked at the corporate areas of change before.”

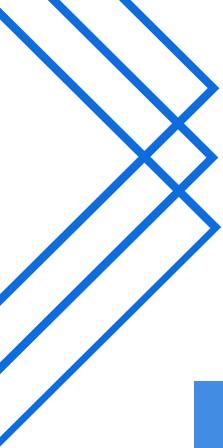
South Wales Fire & Rescue Service

It is positive that many public bodies are seeking to accelerate reducing their carbon emissions through use of their assets. Projects like the carbon positive project within Natural Resources Wales are making progress in this respect and both 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. Linked to other findings within this report, those involved in these projects report that, at times, it was like “pushing treacle up a hill” with real and perceived barriers to overcome in guidance, policy and attitudes.

Other public bodies have made changes to their corporate planning and performance management – through setting, meeting and tracking progress on well-being objectives and steps. There are also some emerging examples of public bodies reforming their approach to procurement.

Monmouthshire Council have developed a new procurement strategy cultivating local supply chains, creating jobs and developing new and existing business growth for the county – contributing to a prosperous Wales, a resilient Wales, a globally responsible Wales and a Wales of cohesive communities. They have “pledged to transition to a circular economy model, not only for products and processes, but for services and behaviours too” and describe a “Whole life costing philosophy, where decisions move beyond awarding contracts because of ‘initial purchase price’”. They are also a ‘Fair Trade County’.

Powys Council have launched a ‘Powys Pound’ as a commitment to boost the amount of money spent with Powys businesses. Amgueddfa Cymru also describe the community benefit plans implemented in redeveloping St Fagans Museum, which included work placements, apprenticeship hours and employment of local workforce with an overall investment of £27,242,693 in the Welsh and UK economy.



Many public bodies are looking at their assets and considering how they can reduce their carbon emissions through measures like installing LED lighting, increase their usage and use them as ways to improve social connectedness and promote culture.

“Wrexham Council are contributing to a Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language, a prosperous Wales, a Wales of cohesive communities, a globally responsible Wales and a healthier Wales through their objective of “Supporting a sustainable and thriving economy: encouraging people to live, work and invest here.” The Council supported the creation of “Ty Pawb” – which was a covered market owned by the Council, in need of refurbishment and losing trade. By long-term thinking, collaborative working and involving local people, they have supported the re-creation of the building as an arts and cultural centre and, through involving local people and businesses, they have created a space which is a street food market, marketplace, gallery, arts and crafts school, cinema and more – providing multiple benefits for the town centre and local

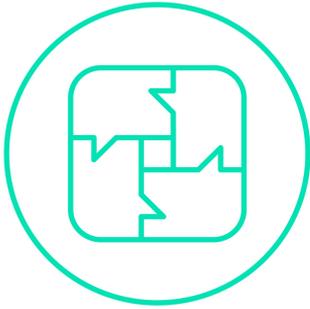
Cardiff Council have been undertaking a number of initiatives recently within their corporate areas of change to contribute to a prosperous Wales, a resilient Wales, a healthier Wales, a Wales of cohesive communities and a globally responsible Wales. The Council, in collaboration with the Public Services Board, residents and businesses have been developing a clean air and transportation strategy for the city. This relates to the planning and infrastructure of their own assets, such as schools, roads and community buildings – enabling active travel to be the norm through schemes like “NextBike” and creating Ysgol Hamadryad in the Butetown area as a school pretty inaccessible to vehicles. The Council has also applied the sustainable development principle to financial planning and risk, with their recent decision to call for the fund that manages their staff pensions to disinvest in fossil fuels.

Despite these emerging examples, there has been generally insufficient focus on transforming ways of working in the seven corporate areas of change so far. Public bodies provided little evidence to show change in work force planning, risk management and financial planning in line with the five ways of working or how they were seeking to take all reasonable steps in these areas to meet their well-being objectives.

I have shared my findings here the Wales Audit Office and we have found commonalities in our findings. We are continuing to work together on the reports due for publication in 2020 and will seek to provide common advice and feedback to public bodies.

I set out in ‘Well-being in Wales: the journey so far’ that public bodies must begin reporting on how the corporate centres of organisations are adapting their ways of working.

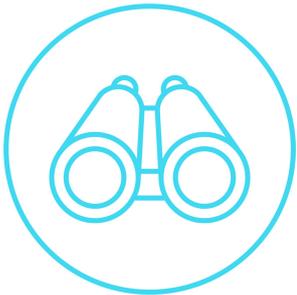




Within the feedback to public bodies on their self-reflections, I have asked that, as they take steps to meet objectives around skills, for example, they consider how they are undertaking workforce analyses, skills gap analyses, considering the workforce they will need in the future and upskilling their current workforce to meet changing skill demands.



Likewise, within objectives on climate change and the environment, I have advised public bodies to look at their own organisations first, map the areas over which they have control and which have the biggest emissions, and to have a plan in place to reduce them. I have advised, in line with the Welsh Government 'Low Carbon Pathway for Wales', that immediate areas of focus should include carbon reduction through procurement, ultra-low emissions vehicles (fleet), buildings, fossil fuel divestment, decarbonising heat, transport and tourism.



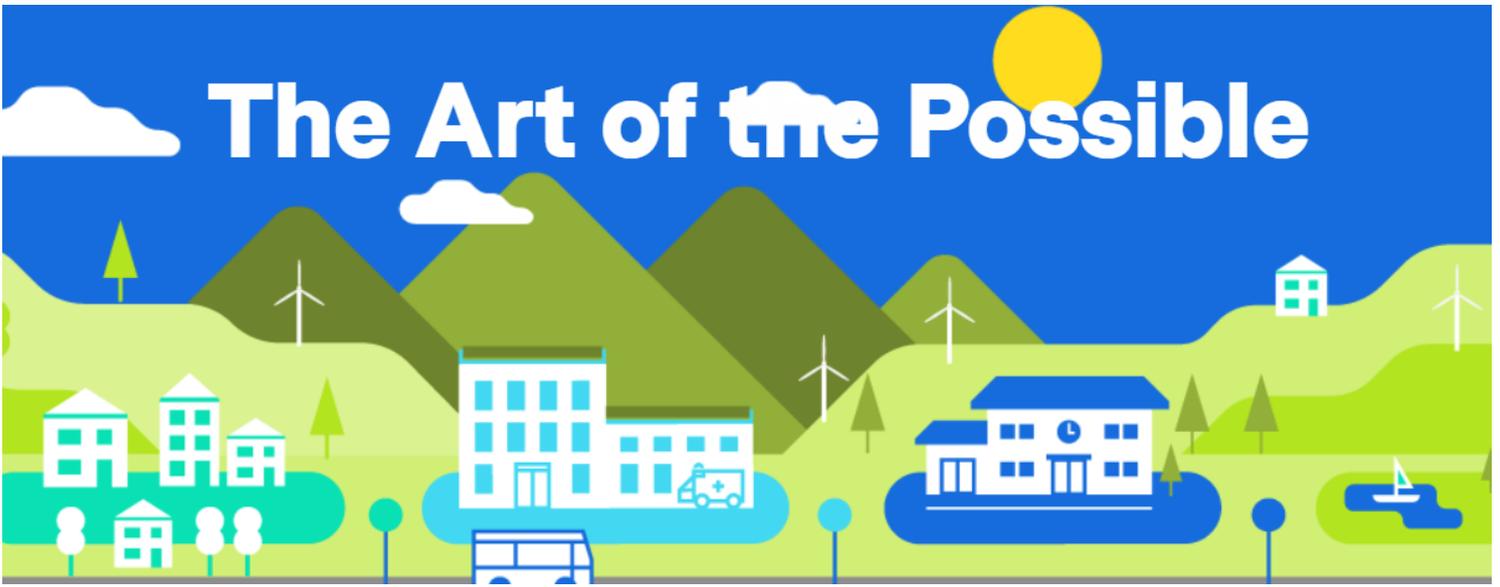
I have also drawn attention to a definition of preventive spend I recently agreed with Welsh Government and advised that, within financial planning and risk management, public bodies should seek to adopt this definition and use it to inform their spending decisions.



Public bodies should be drawing out the potential for change within the corporate areas listed in the Act's guidance because these demonstrate how they are going to meet their objectives, rather than the what they will do. There are some examples of how the sustainable development principle is informing action but mostly, action is described retrospectively. For instance, public bodies describe what they've been doing and how it fits into the five ways of working and seven goals, rather than showing how the ways of working and goals have shaped their thinking, proposals and decision-making. I would like to see more evidence that applying the Act to the corporate areas of change is informing the steps public bodies are taking to maximise contribution to the goals.



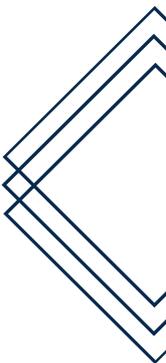
# The Art of the Possible



I have published ‘simple changes’ public bodies can make to begin their journey in meeting the seven national well-being goals. Many of these relate to the corporate areas of change, like “review your procurement policy to ensure it includes fair and ethical practices” (contributing to a globally responsible Wales); “have a flexible working policy” (relating to a healthier Wales and several other goals); “procure and plant native trees and shrubs as a first choice” (contributing to a resilient Wales).

I shared the ‘simple changes’ with the 44 public bodies subject to the Act and asked for feedback. So far, 33 have responded to me and I am aware of several others who are considering how to adopt them at Board level. Across the 33 public bodies who have already responded, on average 72% of the simple changes are already adopted or are ‘in development’, 12% are being considered for future adoption.

**The “journeys towards the well-being goals and involvement” provide further advice and inspiration, beyond simple changes, on the action public bodies can take.**



# Finding 5:

**Progress is being made towards meeting well-being objectives in most public bodies. But the quality of objectives and steps set in 2017/18 did not always meet the aspirations and the requirements of the Act.**

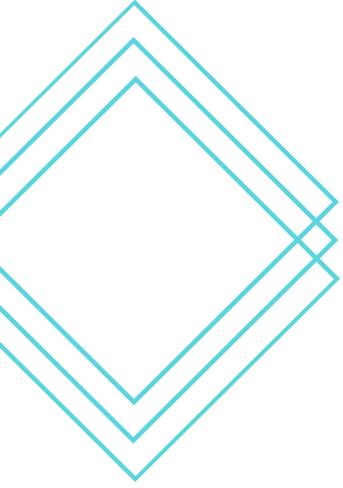
Linked to ‘Findings 1 and 3’, it is positive to see the progress being made in public bodies to meet their well-being objectives, to deliver innovatively and to change culture in their organisations but innovation is very often happening separately to the well-being objectives and steps. As I reported in ‘Well-being in Wales: the journey so far’, the well-being objectives set in 2017/18 largely resembled corporate priorities of the past and some public bodies have described that they were waiting for Public Services Boards to publish their well-being plans (in May 2018) and for a wider understanding of the Act to grow across the organisation before they fundamentally reviewed their approach.

The self-reflection tool submissions are based on the first year of public bodies seeking to meet their well-being objectives and several have now reviewed, changed or revised their objectives and steps. I have commented in the past that it’s unfortunate I do not have duties and powers to advise public bodies on the objectives they set until the first Future Generations Report (to be published by May 2020).

Nevertheless, I have advised many public bodies on how they can expand their contribution to the goals within the objectives they have set. Currently, well-being objectives are broad but the steps to meet them were narrow – with public bodies finding it challenging to show what success would look like to them over the short, medium and long-term.

Examples from 2017/18 include:

- “Create a better, enhanced environment and infrastructure that will benefit our communities, businesses and volunteers” is an objective for one Local Authority and the steps include: “Develop a Highways Management Plan in line with Welsh Government guidelines” and “Improve the implementation of the waste and recycling collaborative change programme.”
- "To support people to prevent accidental dwelling fires and stay safe if they do occur" is a step for a Fire Service and steps include: “Deliver 20,000 Home Safety Checks.”
- And a Health Board set “Improve the health and well-being of families across Wales by striving to care for the needs of the whole person” and no steps included per se.



Whilst these objectives show some ambition, the steps to meet them are business as usual. I want to see public bodies using the Future Generations Frameworks and the “journeys towards the well-being goals and involvement” to take more ambitious action and seek to integrate the work they are doing more effectively (see Finding 1), both within their organisation and with others.

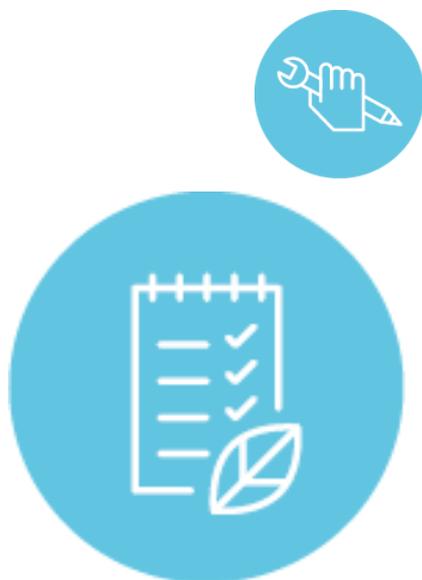
I also want to see how they are influencing the work of the Public Services Board, Regional Partnership Board and other partnerships like the Regional Skills Partnerships to help them meet their objectives.

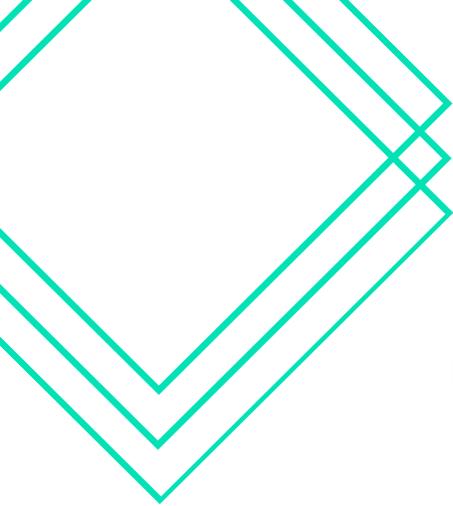
Within my areas of focus as Commissioner, I have given specific advice to public bodies in response to their self-reflection tools, such as:

### **Planning:**

The revised Planning Policy Wales (PPW) 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.

I expect to see how adopting a placemaking approach (in line with PPW) is influencing your decision making, enabling you to demonstrate how good planning can support progress across all of your objectives, particularly objectives on growth, housing, communities, the environment, culture/leisure, and the challenges you highlight around transport.





## **Transport:**

It is encouraging that some public bodies are seeking to invest and install electric vehicle charging infrastructure and most are seeking encourage active travel, within their own organisations and with their communities. I have advised that we have targets in Wales to reduce our total emissions by 27% by 2020; by 45% by 2030 and 67% by 2040. Transport accounts for 14% of these emissions and we have only seen a 3% reduction since 1990. It also contributes to air quality problems - it is estimated that air pollution contributes to 2,000 deaths a year in Wales (6% of total deaths).

The 'Low Carbon Pathway for Wales' sets out a number of policy areas of change. The pathway has a significant focus on shifting from car dependency to sustainable forms of transport. Public bodies should be considering how to encourage your own staff to make this shift, how you can reduce emissions in the way goods, services and people are moved and how you can plan future infrastructure and housing in a way that enables people to use low-carbon transport, public transport, walk or cycle. Providing sustainable transport options for your staff and for your communities is an area where you can have an impact today – I would like to understand progress on the business case for this.

## **Better ways of keeping people well:**

Alternative approaches for improving health and well-being, such as social prescribing, are increasingly seen as a more progressive approach to improving people's health and well-being, with the potential to reduce the financial burden on the NHS. The social prescribing model encourages health services to link people to sources of non-clinical, community based support for wellness such as joining an exercise class, a craft or musical group or a volunteering programme instead of solely relying on the traditional prescription of medicine.

I expect Health Boards and Local Authorities in particular, to be driving work with the third sector and other relevant public sector bodies (such as Natural Resources Wales, the Arts Council for Wales, Amgueddfa Cymru, Sport Wales, the National Park Authorities, Fire and Rescue Authorities and others) to invest in preventative, alternative models of keeping people well and improving well-being.

## **Housing:**

The Independent Review into Affordable Housing recently reported their findings, providing recommendations on a new approach to housing. One of the recommendations is homes should be expected to be near zero carbon/energy performance rating A from 2021 and have a long term goal that by 2025 (at the latest), all homes have the same standards, irrespective of tenure. I would expect to see a focus on regenerating and decarbonising existing homes and empty homes and buildings, rather than solely focusing on building new.

I would also like to see public bodies planning for future trends in housing such as demographic change; how you're considering housing that's 'fit for the future', protected from future challenges like extreme weather; and how you're adopting a placemaking approach (in line with the revised Planning Policy Wales) to design well-connected environments that help you achieve the modal shift from car travel to public transport and active travel.

Housing is an underpinning factor for well-being; the World Health Organisation identified that differences in quality of living conditions (including access to greenspace) contributes to 29% of the gap in health between top and bottom income quintiles for men & women in Europe, with only 10% due to health services. Improving housing, access to green space and feelings of community cohesion could have a significant impact on preventing health problems.

This is an opportunity for you to collaborate with your Registered Social Landlords and Public Services Board partners, and directly involve tenants (or influence others to do so) to help you deliver this objective and maximise your contribution to the well-being goals. I'd like to see greater integration between objectives on housing and skills, the environment, development planning, community cohesion and culture, in taking a new approach to housing fit for the future.

## **Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs):**

Tackling adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) requires a collaborative and preventative approach, which means working with others and shifting resources to deal with root causes. Understanding someone's lived experiences in this context also gives a fresh perspective to shaping preventative services - what public services think they're getting right is often far different for the people on the receiving end.

Looking at a whole system approach is crucial, given that ACEs impact on people throughout their life course and working with Public Services Board partners (and others) is expected, given the ways in which early adversity can affect children, young people and adults – as well as the next generation. Whilst awareness-raising is important, this goes further to looking at the current provision of services, the integration of approaches and the impact of interventions already in place. Are services for the right people at the right time having the intended impact?

Over the coming year, I expect more public bodies to be pooling budgets and seeking to collaborate in preventing problems from occurring.

## Skills for the future:

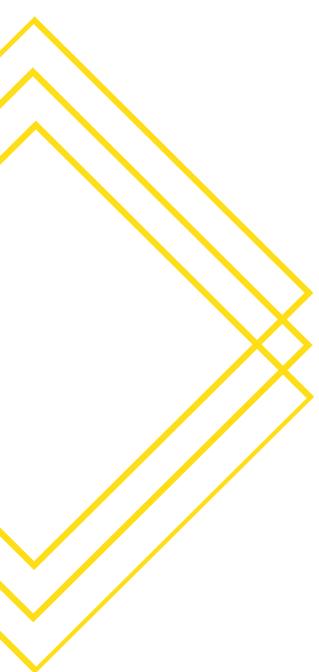
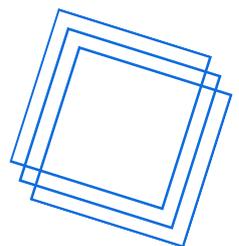
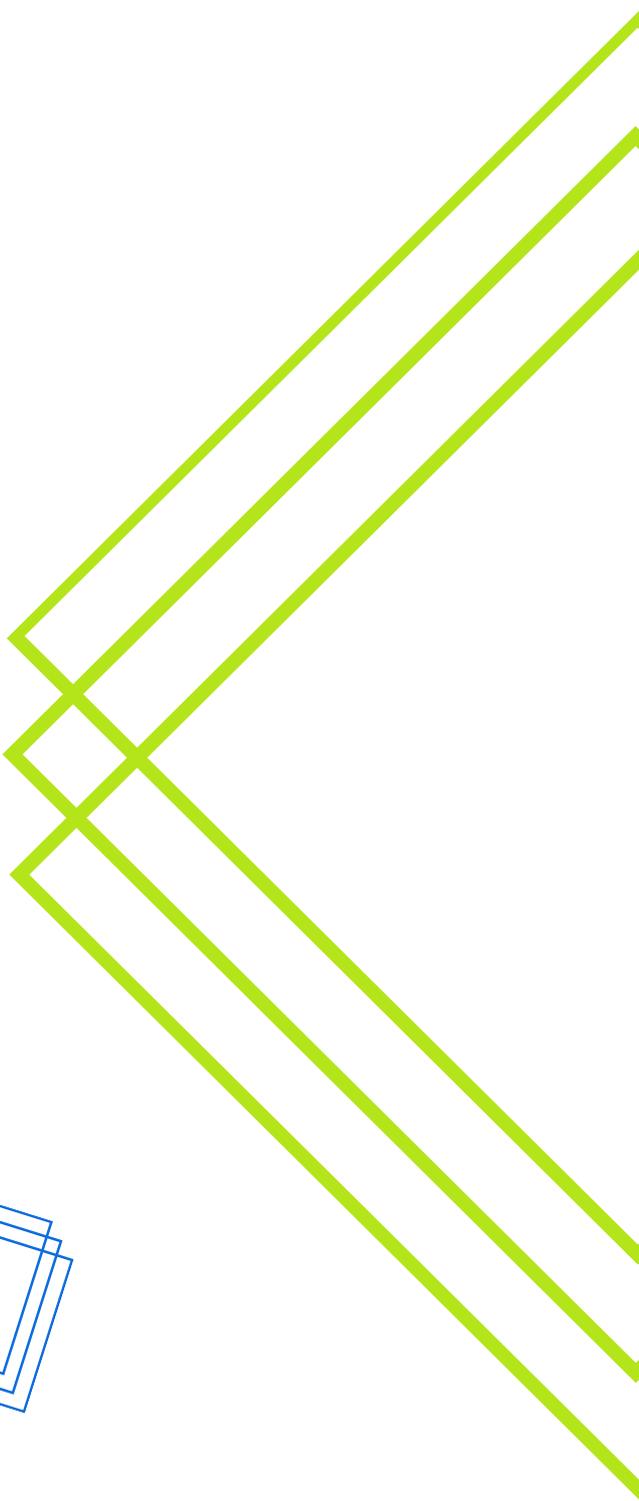
According to the 2018 Future of Jobs Report, 75 million jobs are expected to be displaced by 2022 in 20 major economies. At the same time, this could also create 133 million new roles, driven by growth in new products and services. A Wales Centre for Public Policy report found we need to focus on fostering the development of transferable skills that are difficult to automate, such as creativity and critical thinking competencies, alongside skills for the digital economy, technical skills, and in STEM subjects.

Whilst the curriculum provides an important opportunity to develop the right sort of future skills, as one of the major employers in the county, this change should also be driven in your local workforce. With technological advances, creativity and problem-solving is a human advantage, your recruitment and workforce planning processes should identify and reward these skills and you should have plans to reskill existing employees ensuring equal opportunity in this new world of work. This change starts with your own workforce planning and you should have up to date workforce audits and skills gap analyses looking at the lens of the seven well-being goals (including Welsh language skills)– linked to our comments regarding the seven corporate areas of change. Public bodies should have recruitment and workforce planning processes identifying and rewarding skills identified for the future, like creativity and problem-solving, together with plans to re-skill existing employees in this way.





# Findings by sector

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- Findings across national public bodies
  - Findings across local government
  - Findings across the health sector
  - Findings across fire and rescue authorities
  - Findings across national park authorities

# Findings across national public bodies

## **There is variation in how the national public bodies apply the Act.**

I can see that where national bodies have a specialist remit, such as the Arts Council for Wales or Natural Resources Wales, there is a stronger contribution to the relevant well-being goals. It is positive to see good practice in these areas but important that national bodies explore through collaboration how they can respond to social, environmental, cultural and economic well-being. Public bodies must set objectives that maximise contribution to each of the national goals, not just those that relate most to their remit.

I have seen that those national bodies who have been engaging in peer learning facilitated by my office and by each other are making more significant progress in applying the Act. Therefore, I think there is a need for more shared learning. There is a regular network meeting of the national public bodies, which each public body should commit to attend and contribute to. For those public bodies who have led this network, they are already collaborating and seeing cultural change happening.

I have observed limited acknowledgement of Public Services Boards (PSBs) by national bodies because some national bodies have found it a challenge to engage with PSBs, given the number across Wales. Despite issues of capacity, I have advised that national bodies understand what PSBs (and likewise, other public bodies) are doing and aim to integrate (as defined in the Act) their work as much as possible, building a clearer picture of collective contribution to the goals.

### **Case study**

Amgueddfa Cymru are contributing to a Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language, a prosperous Wales, a more equal Wales, a Wales of cohesive communities, a healthier Wales and showing the impact of collaboration through their objective “People in Wales have opportunities to develop skills through cultural learning”. They have embarked on a project to increase the number and diversity of their volunteers. In 2011, approximately 80 people volunteered for the national museum and most were of a white, middle aged, retired, well-educated and female demographic. By actively collaborating with other organisations including the Wallich, Diverse Cymru, the Wales Council for Voluntary Action, Volunteer Cardiff Services, Quest Support, New-Link Wales and others over the past seven years, they have diversified and broadened the volunteer base and substantially increased the numbers volunteering to approximately 700 people.





## **Reporting is seen as challenging given timescales and other requirements on national bodies.**

National bodies say they are struggling with integrating their duties under the Equality Act and Well-being of Future Generations Act. Welsh Government should provide some guidance on how this can be done. Sport Wales and HEFCW have made some attempts to integrate their duties and are providing learning to others, which should continue. The review currently being undertaken by the Welsh Government should seek to provide some clarification on this.

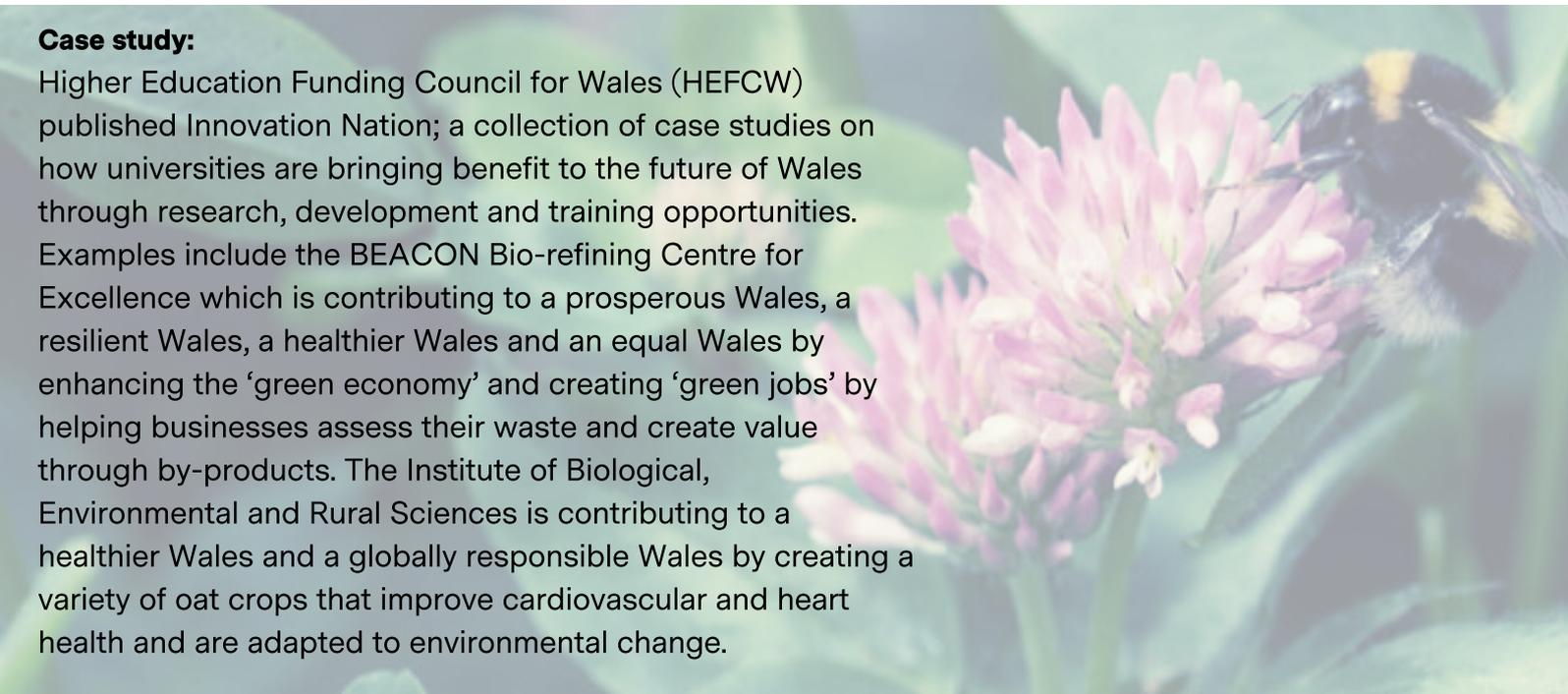
I suggest remit letters should provide clear requirements around implementation of the Act and should follow a discussion with Government on how the remit letter reflects both the well-being objectives of the Government and the individual public body. This would aim to ensure that the requirements of the remit letter clearly reflect the interaction between the two and expectations on steps that will be taken to deliver them. Currently, the letters provide some reference to the Act but at a high level and there is little evidence that this is filtering down to actions.

I advise that national bodies need to be more transparent in their reporting. It is difficult to ascertain in some cases what the well-being objectives and steps are, which makes assessing progress to meet them difficult. The Act and my expectations state that public bodies must clearly set out their well-being objectives and take all reasonable steps to meet them. This must include how the five ways of working and national well-being goals have been used to inform the setting or reviewing of objectives and steps.

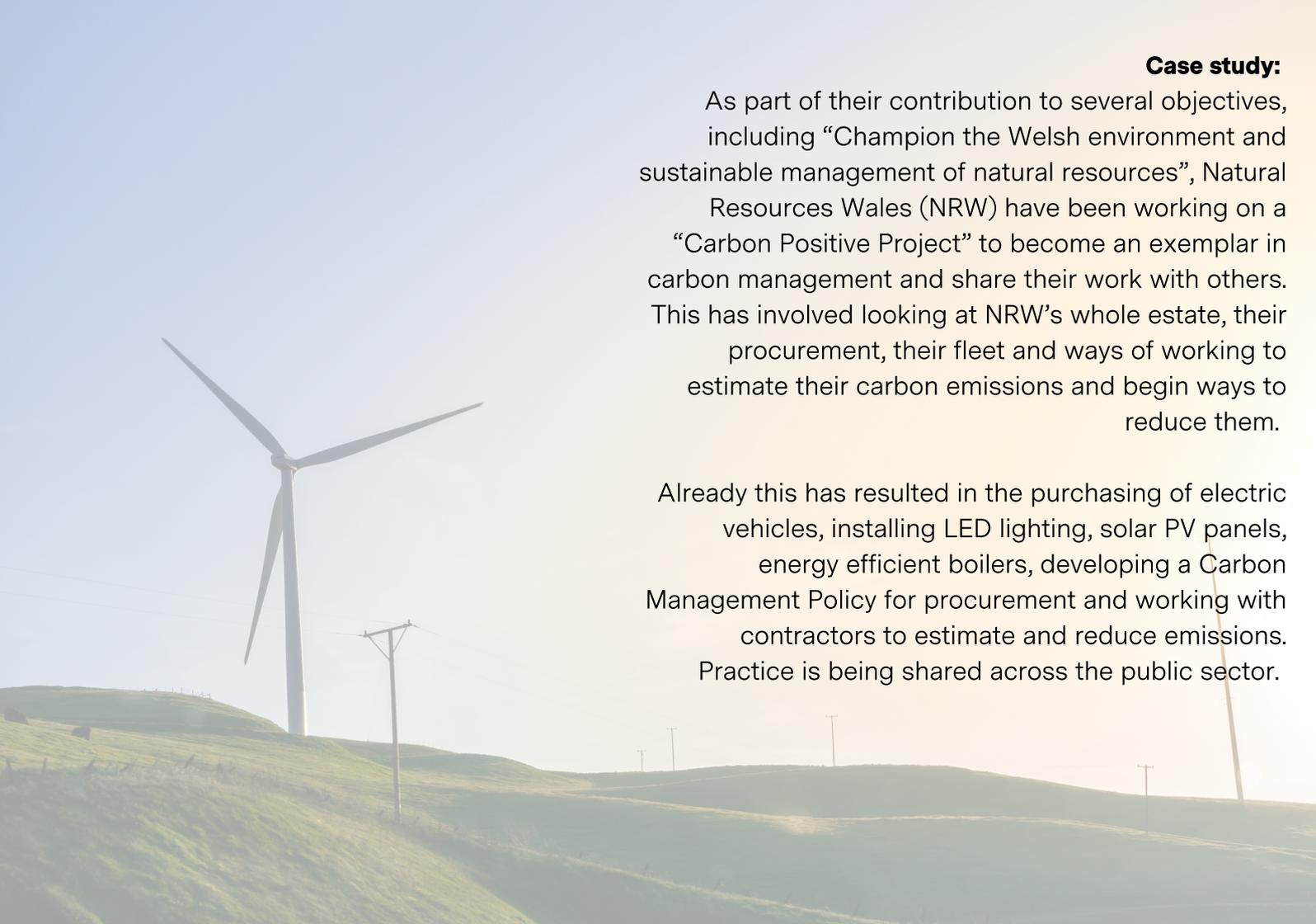
I can see that some national bodies have struggled to set long-term well-being objectives and measures of performance. Some of the objectives are 'business as usual' and, during the first year of reporting, some national bodies struggled to set well-being objectives and steps at all. I have provided advice to these specific bodies to rectify this situation immediately.

Similarly, performance measures, where they are in place, are mostly traditional output measures. This means it is difficult to see how the organisations are having an impact on well-being. I have advised using more meaningful quantitative data increasing use of qualitative data (case studies, testimonials) to demonstrate how they are progressing towards objectives.

### **Case study:**



Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) published Innovation Nation; a collection of case studies on how universities are bringing benefit to the future of Wales through research, development and training opportunities. Examples include the BEACON Bio-refining Centre for Excellence which is contributing to a prosperous Wales, a resilient Wales, a healthier Wales and an equal Wales by enhancing the 'green economy' and creating 'green jobs' by helping businesses assess their waste and create value through by-products. The Institute of Biological, Environmental and Rural Sciences is contributing to a healthier Wales and a globally responsible Wales by creating a variety of oat crops that improve cardiovascular and heart health and are adapted to environmental change.



**Case study:**

As part of their contribution to several objectives, including “Champion the Welsh environment and sustainable management of natural resources”, Natural Resources Wales (NRW) have been working on a “Carbon Positive Project” to become an exemplar in carbon management and share their work with others. This has involved looking at NRW’s whole estate, their procurement, their fleet and ways of working to estimate their carbon emissions and begin ways to reduce them.

Already this has resulted in the purchasing of electric vehicles, installing LED lighting, solar PV panels, energy efficient boilers, developing a Carbon Management Policy for procurement and working with contractors to estimate and reduce emissions. Practice is being shared across the public sector.



**Case study:**

Amgueddfa Cymru are contributing to a prosperous Wales, a more equal Wales, a Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language and looking to the long-term through their objectives “Wales has a strong and creative economy” and “Digital users are attracted by an interactive and animated online experience”.

They are experimenting with digital Augmented Reality and Virtual Reality innovations at National Museum Cardiff, National Roman Legion Museum and Big Pit. This work is developed in partnership and developed through participation with users. For example ‘A Bilingual Google Expedition at Big Pit’ provides the first Welsh language VR tour available on Google Expeditions.

# Findings across local government

## There are particular capacity issues being felt in Local Government.

Financial pressure facing Local Authorities is limiting capacity to lead long-term change. This is not necessarily about needing resources for new services or more people, but rather about the capacity of the stripped back services and corporate areas of Local Authorities to lead change, think innovatively and reach out to collaborate and integrate with others - whilst also managing increasingly pressurised day jobs.

I have found that Local Authority officers who are change makers in their organisations can feel frustrated and isolated but, in some cases, they are actively supported and encouraged. As the positive impact of their work gains momentum and the understanding of the requirements of the legislation are understood better, there is evidence that there is increasing recognition and support from the leadership of the organisations for their work. I encourage joining networks like the Sustainable Development Co-ordinators' Cymru Network, the WLGA networks and others, and forming agendas that become learning sets to help honestly share challenges and innovative practice, especially in times of austerity where some are managing this challenge better than others.

### Case study:

Wrexham Council are contributing to a Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language, a prosperous Wales, a Wales of cohesive communities, a globally responsible Wales and a healthier Wales through their objective of "Supporting a sustainable and thriving economy: encouraging people to live, work and invest here."

The Council supported the creation of "Ty Pawb, an arts and cultural centre and, through involving local people and businesses, they have created a space which is a street food market, marketplace, gallery, arts and crafts school, cinema and more – providing multiple benefits for the town centre and local people.





**Progress is being made on meeting well-being objectives in some areas, but there is variation in demonstrating how setting objectives and decision-making is applying all of the five ways of working.**

I have recommended that Local Authorities need to better explain how they have applied the five ways of working and duties to take all reasonable steps to meet objectives to their decision-making. In future years, I will be considering how they have demonstrated clearly that these resources have been used to work through proposals, decision-making and scrutiny.

Government should establish a targeted resource to help individual public bodies build capacity in long term thinking. Some Local Authorities have started to think longer term and innovatively and the Gwent region have used PSB regional funding to build capacity for futures thinking. But across the board, Local Government should more clearly demonstrate how they have considered long term trends and scenarios. Most Local Authorities, for example, have objectives on skills but very few have demonstrated how they have (with or without other partners) considered what skills will be needed in the future beyond planning for existing skills gaps. Aside from the use of well-being assessments, which considered the long-term trends and data for each area, consideration of long-term trends is not yet embedded in decision-making processes. A large part of this appears to be due to capacity and expertise. The Government, Local Authorities and the WLGA should seek to find ways to build capacity in this area.

I cannot see clearly how the connection to other public bodies who are critical to meeting the well-being objectives set by Local Authorities are being adequately made. Explanation of how the priorities and delivery amongst city region or growth deal infrastructure, regional partnership boards and others are aligned with the delivery of local authority well-being objectives is lacking in some cases. Reporting in many cases, for example, lacks explanation of how objectives relating to skills / employment are being delivered with Growth Deals, City Regions, Regional Skills Partnerships and schools, colleges or any Higher Education Institutions within the area.

Many examples of innovation are about improving social well-being. For example, well-being coordinators based in GP surgeries; social prescribing initiatives and school-based activities to improve health. But I have advised that Local Government is missing opportunities to approach meeting these objectives using the lens of social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being. For example, in designing social prescribing programmes, we cannot see evidence that Local Authorities and Health Boards are considering initiatives like 'heat on prescription', which not only improve social well-being in terms of health and fuel poverty, but contribute to environmental well-being through a reduction in carbon emissions also.





## Reporting is still seen as challenging given timescales and other requirements on Local Government.

I have found that the timings of the legislation has been an issue for most Local Authorities. Elections shortly after the publication of objectives (May 2017) and the later publication of Public Services Board well-being assessments and well-being plans are viewed as anomalies within the Act. I have already encouraged critically revisiting objectives and steps on a regular basis – the self-reflection tool can help public bodies to do this.

Local Authorities tell me the requirements of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 are seen as a distraction, that it is disrupting their desire to act for the long-term in requiring an annual report that shows measurable improvement annually. This is still driving the wrong behaviours and requires a change in approach from Government. The Local Government Bill is seen as an opportunity to clarify the situation. I have advised Local Authorities to make this case to Government and challenge the current performance management structures using the Act as a catalyst for change.

For Local Authorities, performance management and reporting is still following a traditional approach. It is too heavily focused on what has been done ('the what' / outputs), rather than how it was done ('the how') and its impact ('the so what?' / outcomes). Some of this is being driven by performance measures set by Government which should be systematically reviewed to ensure they are aligned with the Well-being Future Generations Act.

However, Local Authorities accountable also have a role in showing leadership on this and seeking to measure what matters, not merely what can be counted. Public bodies should be using more meaningful quantitative data and increasing their use of qualitative data to demonstrate how they are progressing towards meeting their objectives.

### **Case study:**

Conwy Council are contributing to a prosperous Wales, a resilient Wales and a globally responsible Wales through their objective "People in Conwy value and look after the environment". Their steps include a number of carbon saving initiatives - they have: installed a Combined Heat and Power and Building Management System at Colwyn Bay Leisure Centre, which has saved 6 tonnes of carbon in its first two months; upgraded to LED lighting across 6 sites; confirmed 8 sites for photovoltaic panels and there are screens to show live energy consumption data to staff.

### **Case study:**

In 2017, Monmouthshire Council developed a solar farm on council-owned land in Crick. 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 has the capacity to generate enough electricity to power around 1,400 homes and also save over 2,000 tonnes per year of CO<sub>2</sub> by generating clean, renewable energy. They have supported 'Riversimple' to run a trial of 20 hydrogen fuel cell cars in Monmouthshire.

**Case study:**

Powys Council are contributing to a prosperous Wales, a resilient Wales, a Wales of cohesive communities and a globally responsible Wales through their objective to “Develop the economy.” The steps they have taken include securing £1.5m from the European Rural Development Programme grant for the “Home Grown Homes” project, where all new council homes developed from this point on will seek to maximise the use of locally grown and home grown timber.

**Case study:**

A collaborative project between public and voluntary services in the Cwm Taf region is contributing to a healthier Wales and showing integration between services. Rhondda Cynon Taf Council noted how the project, the ‘Stay Well @ Home Service’, is contributing to their overall objective “People: promoting independence and positive lives for everyone.”

Taking a preventative approach, the service is aimed at reducing the number of people admitted to hospital. An evaluation after the first year of the service found that, of the 2,426 assessments carried out by the service, 58% were able to return home rather than be admitted.



# Findings across the health sector

## **Welsh Government processes and targets are a challenge and barrier.**

I have found that Health Boards are not giving prominence and priority of the key elements of the Act in Management Board discussions. This is partly driven by the focus on performance and finance and the absence of any requirement on health boards to account for their performance against their objectives from the Health Minister or senior officials. The performance management framework set by Welsh Government needs to evolve rapidly to reward and recognise the delivery of well-being outcomes, not focus on outputs, quantitative information and processes.

The people implementing the Act in Health Boards identified that the management see it as separate to what they do. In part, this is due to Welsh Government causing confusion with the use of slightly different language in guidance and policy, providing funding streams that only pay lip-service to the well-being goals and placing targets on health that drive them away from the sustainable development principle and five ways of working. This is serving to distract Boards and senior leaders and I have already made my concerns known to Government.

An example is the perception that the delivery of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act has been far better resourced than the Well-being of Future Generations Act by Government, despite both Acts demanding transformational change and the fact that the majority of broader health determinants lie outside of the health and social care interface. This has meant that the attention of Health Board staff is often diverted from the work of Public Services Boards to Regional Partnership Boards, where the scope of improving well-being is more limited. There appears to be little recognition and priority attached by the Government's Health Department about the importance of addressing the wider determinants of health.

The current approach facilitated by the Integrated Medium Term Planning (IMTP) and annual reporting framework is a significant barrier to incentivise health bodies to adequately implement the Act. I expect to see far better demonstration by leaders in health bodies that the Act is creating change and Government removing the constraints of this happening currently.



## **Health bodies should consider setting broader well-being objectives and ensure that the steps they are taking to meet their objectives are clear.**

Health bodies have largely focused on health and social well-being. There is little evidence in the current annual reporting of how the health sector is responding to environmental, cultural and economic well-being, although developments in the last year (outside this reporting period) are more promising. Public bodies must set objectives that maximise contribution to each of the national goals, not just those that relate most to their remit. Some health bodies have not adequately met their duty in this respect during this reporting period, and I expect to see this integrated with corporate reporting i.e. Integrated Medium Term Plans (IMTPs).

Some more recent examples show progress. For example, Swansea Bay Health Board are seeking to improve environmental and social well-being by working with the Public Services Boards and partners, to promote health through access to nature; Cardiff and Vale Health Board have been a key part of delivering the Cardiff Public Services Board Healthy Travel Charter and have a focus on the benefits of arts and culture to health; Aneurin Bevan Health Board has introduced preventative and collaborative schemes such as 'Ffrind i Mi'; and Hywel Dda Health Board have adopted a 20 year strategy.

## **Lack of use of the Welsh Government definition of prevention.**

Overall, prevention was scored relatively highly across the health sector in the self-reflection tool. However, there is little evidence in the narrative that bodies have considered the type of prevention they are investing in (primary, secondary, tertiary), the outcomes they want this investment to achieve and how they should shift investment to primary and secondary prevention. Preventative activities still primarily relate to medical interventions rather than considering a holistic approach to prevention more widely.

## **Ability to look long-term**

Whilst I welcome the fact that some health bodies have 10-year or 20-year strategies in place, the IMPTP process only requires a 3 year plan. There is a need for greater consideration of long-term thinking across their work. I understand that this lack of focus is partly due to pressures but also due to understanding of trends, futures-thinking, potential disruptions and the impact on localities. Although the Welsh Government's Future Trends report is a source of evidence, the Government response to futures needs more funding - both so that it can better support the Government's own policy development and to support the work of other public bodies.



**Case study:**

Aneurin Bevan Health Board are contributing to a healthier Wales, a Wales of cohesive communities and showing how involving people can make a big difference. They have set well-being objectives including “Support adults and children in Gwent to live healthily and to age well, so that they can retain independence and enjoy a high quality of life into old age”; “Promote mental well-being as a foundation for health, building personal and community resilience” and “Encourage involvement of people who use our services and those they support, in jointly owned decisions regarding their own health and care plans, and in wider service planning and evaluation so that we, with our partners, deliver the outcomes that matter most to people”.

A programme aimed at taking steps to meet all of these objectives is ‘Ffrind i Mi’. It is an intergenerational and volunteering project aimed at helping anyone who feels lonely to reconnect with their community, matching people according to their interests and helping volunteers connect with opportunities to create more cohesive communities in their area.

**Case study:**

Hywel Dda University Health Board are contributing to a prosperous Wales, a more equal Wales and actively considering their workforce of the future through their well-being objective to “Ensure a sustainable, skilled and flexible workforce to meet the changing needs of the modern NHS”. The Health Board have established a programme aimed at increasing their registered nurses. The Grow Your Own programme is a combination of existing, new and innovative schemes to grow their workforce the future and increase the prosperity of the area by providing opportunities for local people.



# Findings across fire and rescue authorities

**Fire and Rescue Services are demonstrating how they have embraced the Well-being of Future Generations Act through case studies, collaborative working and fostering cultural change.**

**But there is some variation in demonstrating how setting objectives and decision-making is applying the five ways of working.**

There are case studies across the sector demonstrating application of the Act and how this sector are going beyond their 'traditional duties'. For example, implementing 'safe and well' checks in the home and introducing education programmes to prevent arson, fire, general anti-social behaviour and injury. I am encouraged by this and have already shared good examples with others. I would encourage them to do the same through their influence at PSB.

Prevention is now easily demonstrable by the work of the Fire and Rescue Services. There is less evidence in the self-reflection tools on how they are thinking long-term and, despite some good examples, there is an opportunity to better involve people in their planning, strategy and evaluation of services.

As such, these examples are not always shown in the context of using the five ways of working and contributing to the well-being goals. Therefore, further action is needed on explaining how these innovative projects are providing a coherent picture across the organisation in achieving their well-being objectives. This may mean reviewing their objectives and steps to ensure they are still fit for purpose, in accordance with the Commissioner's expectations in 'Well-being in Wales: the journey so far'. I would like to see use of resources, like Future Generations Frameworks and 'journeys towards the well-being goals, to provide further good practice of what Fire and Rescue Services are achieving.

I was told that successful implementation of the Act is largely down to leadership, which includes elected officials, understanding the value of implementing the Act. Whilst I am promoting the sustainable development principle as widely as possible, public bodies must also take ownership at a leadership level to demand change and create culture that allocates time and resource to try different things, challenge the status quo and communicate learning. I want to see this shift in attitude and action – what is different to before should be reported transparently and clearly.



Finally, there is variation between level of detail within well-being objectives across the three services. Some are focused on operational activity and can lack adequate explanation as to how they will seek to maximise contribution to the well-being goals. But in contrast, the case studies provided demonstrate that this is already happening. Again, a coherent narrative on how, as an organisation, they are implementing the Act would be helpful in future annual reports. We would encourage sharing learning with each other, as well as with networks like the Sustainable Development Co-ordinators' Cymru, which brings together officers from across Wales seeking to implement the Act.

**Case study:**

Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service are showing their contribution to a more prosperous Wales, a resilient Wales, a healthier Wales and a globally responsible Wales through their objective to “Support economic sustainability within our business community” and have introduced hydrogen powered vehicles and electric bikes in the Neath Port Talbot and Swansea areas, which enabled personnel in that area to reduce their carbon footprint and move around the city more easily.

**Case study:**

North Wales Fire and Rescue Service have worked in collaboration towards their objective “To support people to prevent accidental dwelling fires and stay safe if they do occur” by developing a “Safe and Well Check”, which includes advice on gas and electrical safety and hazards that could cause falls to make every contact count with members of the public. Collaborating with Betsi Cadwaldr Health Board, North Wales Police, Local Authorities, third sector and housing associations like Cartefi Conwy, the Fire Service have sought to contribute to a healthier Wales, a Wales of cohesive communities and a more equal Wales through this dedicated work.

**Case study:**

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 Hillsides’ project in collaboration with the Wildlife Trust, Local Authorities, other third 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, water courses 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.



# Findings across national park authorities

**National Park Authorities have embraced the Well-being of Future Generations Act and, with some development in corporate centres, could become an exemplar sector for the rest of the public bodies covered by the Act.**

The general attitude and commitment of the National Parks to the Act should be commended. As they have said "If the Act wasn't a good fit for us, we'd be worried!" I have recommended they lead other organisations in demonstrating progress and I will look for the impact of this through their collaboration with others.

There are some excellent examples demonstrated by the National Parks through the self-reflection tools. It is positive to see case studies and activities that show contribution to the national goals, use of the five ways of working and sustainable development principle. The cultural projects that aim to provide alternative models to well-being, projects aimed at reducing carbon emissions through electric vehicle charging and managing tourism access, collaborating with others (such as Princes Trust Cymru) to provide employment and skills opportunities demonstrate the National Parks are thinking holistically about improving well-being. I have encouraged them to share these case studies as widely as possible.

**In some cases, reporting is challenging for National Park Authorities and there is a variation in how they are showing progress towards objectives.**



The timings of the legislation has been an issue in how it related to the review of the National Park Management Plans and the publication of the Public Services Board local well-being assessments and well-being plans. But some Authorities have already reviewed objectives and steps using the additional information since 2017.

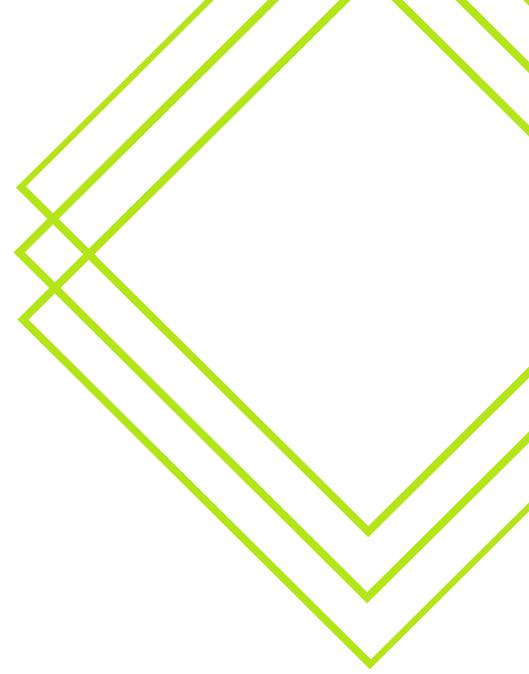
National Parks have two specific purposes and duties (conservation and environment, understanding and enjoyment). Positively, the management plan and Local Development Plan clearly influenced the setting of objectives. I would encourage this integration to continue.

In some cases, the level of objectives National Parks have set and steps they are taking to meet them are extremely varied. Some objectives are very high level and others more achievable. Some steps are simple actions, others involve a lot of work and time. I would like to better understand how they are actively using the Act to frame your actions, and encouraged them to use resources including the Future Generations Frameworks and journeys towards the well-being goals (the Art of the Possible).



**Case study:**

By progressing towards their objective “Continue to ensure equality is embedded in the work and culture of the National Park Authority”, Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority have introduced a range of initiatives that contribute to a more equal Wales, a prosperous Wales, a healthier Wales, a resilient Wales, a Wales of cohesive communities, a Wales of thriving culture and vibrant Welsh language and a globally responsible Wales. These include introducing beach wheelchairs; creating an access for all and walks for all guide; involving a diverse range of groups in beach clean ups, rebuilding of the historic round houses and creating tourist routes like Mind Pembrokeshire, young people, gypsy and traveller groups and older people.

**Case study:**

The Brecon Beacons National Park Authority are contributing to a prosperous Wales, a resilient Wales, a Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language by setting an objective around “Resilient Communities” and creating their “Ambassador Schools” project. This is a programme to support schools within and around the National Park to make the most of the outdoors for learning. The programme helps children to connect with their environment, exercise outdoors, learn about their surroundings and be the future ambassadors for the ecosystems of their area.

**Case study:**

Snowdonia National Park Authority have set an objective to “Work with our communities to develop the economic, cultural and social well-being of Snowdonia”, which includes a step to “Further develop our work in understanding, promoting and managing our cultural heritage.” This includes projects which maximise contribution to a healthier Wales, a Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language, a resilient Wales and a globally responsible Wales. For example, like “Literature Reach” through “Bwrlwm Eryri” has enabled people receiving mental health treatment, the elderly, people receiving treatment for substance misuse and other groups to participate in arts activities in the outdoors and at heritage sites, including visual arts, poetry and music.

# My Approach

in 2018/19



# My approach in 2018/19

The statutory guidance of the Act ('Shared Purpose, Shared Future') sets out that public bodies should report on progress using their existing corporate processes - through their annual reports, or similar documents, that are used to demonstrate accountability to Welsh Government, regulators and the public.

Annual reports should be the primary source of evidence in how the Act is being implemented and I set out my expectations of how public bodies could report on progress in the 'Well-being in Wales: the journey so far' report. Reporting on 2017/18 was the first time for public bodies to report under the Act and, whilst I recognise that traditional annual reporting requirements are not necessarily designed for this purpose, the quality of annual reporting varied considerably. Coupled with the volume of well-being objectives set, the style of reporting made it challenging in most cases to monitor and assess progress on well-being objectives based on annual reports alone.

I decided to work with an independent reviewing team - made up of five experts - to assist me in designing a method of understanding where public bodies are in meeting their objectives.

By involving representatives of the public and voluntary sectors in how I should approach this duty, the independent team worked collaboratively with others to design a method that would be applicable and flexible enough to apply to the different sectors and reporting requirements of the public sector in Wales.

The result was a 'self-reflection tool' - a form that encourages public bodies to think critically about the objectives they set, the progress they are making and their overall approach to the Act as an organisation. I was very conscious of causing confusion or an additional burden to public bodies in asking them to complete this tool and so the tool was designed to encourage public bodies to draw on evidence from their annual reports, corporate documents and other publications - rather than reproduce existing evidence or produce new material.

The tool was distributed to lead nominated contacts in each of the 44 public bodies in November 2018 and between then and July 2019, I was pleased to receive completed submissions from all 44 organisations.

In February 2019, I held three regional collaborative workshops alongside the expert review team - in Wrexham, Swansea and Cardiff. In advance, public bodies shared their self-reflection tools with one another. The workshops encouraged feedback on the process of self-reflection, comparisons on how the Act is being implemented in different organisations and shared learning of successes, barriers and challenges.

Following the workshops, attendees filled in a short survey providing opinion on workshop content and their views on how they would like to receive feedback on their progress towards objectives.

"There was lots of structured time to talk to partner organisations and share honest experiences and challenges being faced, rather than just focusing on 'good news' which often masks the frustrations and practical problems being wrestled with"

"I found the event very useful, due to the mix of organisations and the different approaches. It also gives you a rough gauge on where others are in terms of their journey."

## Giving feedback to each public body

The majority of respondents asked for honest, short feedback with recommendations and comments aimed at the senior managers of the organisation.

My team took this feedback on board and created bespoke PowerPoint presentations for each individual public body. The feedback was made up of the following sections:

- overall findings I have observed from across the relevant sector;
- observations on the approach your organisation took to the self-reflection tool;
- a personalised general assessment and advice on the progress you're making;
- a more specific assessment and advice on the progress you're making towards your well-being objectives.



## What public bodies have said about our feedback

The feedback I have received to date from public bodies about the relevance and usefulness of my advice has been mostly positive. Representatives of the public bodies who have responded swiftly tell me they will be discussing my feedback with senior management and with relevant officers.

Whilst the timescales this time have not been perfect for Local Government, in particular, as many publish their annual reports in October each year, everyone who has responded so far has done so positively and said:

“A really excellent and thorough piece of work...”

“Thank you for the feedback, it’s very timely as we consider our next annual report...”

“We have reviewed the feedback with senior managers and been able to use it as a reminder that they’ve slipped or forgotten about a few things.”

“We are using your feedback to develop our new Corporate Plan...”

“I like the personal approach and the overall sector findings.”

“Useful summary of our specific and wider work.”

“We’re using the tool as we prepare our next annual report and the feedback is timely to ensure we can take account of it as much as possible.”

“The feedback was really comprehensive.”



## Working with the Wales Audit Office

In addition to issuing self-reflection tools and undertaking my own duty to monitor and assess the progress public bodies are making towards their objectives, I have also been working closely with the Auditor General for Wales and the Wales Audit Office (WAO) as they seek to meet their duties under the Act.

“The Auditor General for Wales may carry out examinations of public bodies for the purposes of assessing the extent to which a body has acted in accordance with the sustainable development principle when—

- a) setting well-being objectives, and
- b) taking steps to meet those objectives.

The Auditor General must examine each public body at least once in a five year period and must present a report on the examinations to the National Assembly for Wales before each Assembly election. In carrying out an examination, the Auditor General must take account of any advice or assistance given to the public body, or any review of and recommendations made to the body, by the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales. He must also consult the Commissioner.”

Source: Section 15 of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

Our duties are complementary and we have been seeking to work together as much as possible to avoid placing confusing or competing expectations on public bodies; share and take account of one another’s work; seek to place reliance on one another’s work where appropriate; and pool our respective expertise and knowledge.

Examples of this include:

- The WAO building on the interpretation of the five ways of working in the Future Generations Frameworks in undertaking their examinations under the Act with public bodies;
- My team accompanying WAO to a selection of their examinations and using the information gathered to add to our intelligence on how public bodies are progressing and inform the advice and assistance I provide;
- Considering and providing feedback on each other’s findings and feedback;
- Sharing information on particular studies, for example, one of my areas of focus is development planning and we have fed into WAO’s recently published report on the topic;
- Working closely with the Good Practice Exchange to provide relevant support, resources and ideas to public bodies;
- Sharing knowledge and feedback on our respective approaches.



The 44 completed self-reflection tools provided an overview of the successes and challenges for each sector subject to the Act. I have been sharing many of my findings with the Auditor General for Wales, to complement the examinations and studies the Wales Audit Office undertake.

In 2020, the Auditor General for Wales will be publishing his first national report under Section 15 of the Act and I will be publishing the first Future Generations Report. We are already discussing our approach, findings and common messaging for our respective reports and will continue to work together.

To find out more, visit <https://futuregenerations.wales/work/our-future-wales/>

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Powys Teaching Health Board  
South Wales Fire & Rescue Service National  
Public Services Board Support Team Network  
Brecon Beacons National Park  
Public Health Wales  
Cardiff Council

If you have any comments relating to this report, please contact me by writing to [contactus@futuregenerations.wales](mailto:contactus@futuregenerations.wales)



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**Cenedlaethau'r  
Dyfodol**  
Cymru

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