

By e-mail

31st October 2017

Advice from the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales to Swansea PSB

Dear Swansea Public Services Board and supporting officers,

Thank you for seeking my advice on how you might take steps to meet your draft well-being objectives. My team have found regular contact with your supporting officers and meeting some of you last week very helpful in giving them an understanding of how you work together as a PSB; the method you have taken to well-being planning and your intentions to deliver the objectives and take steps in a different way. As they will have discussed with you, I was keen that my advice would be useful to you and the context within which you work, so I hope you have also found these regular touch-points helpful and that they have given you some guidance along the way.

Thank you for sharing a copy of your draft well-being plan with the team. I understand that you have held workshops and engaged with citizens around the future of Swansea to determine your draft objectives, which currently are:

1. **Objective 1: Live well age well – to make Swansea a great place to live and age well.**
2. **Objective 2: Early years – to ensure the best start for all children.**
3. **Objective 3: Working with nature – to improve health, enhance biodiversity and reduce our carbon footprint.**
4. **Objective 4: Strong communities – to empower communities promoting pride and belonging.**

My advice is in two parts – firstly, to help you consider how you might take steps to meet your objectives effectively. Secondly, based on your themes and draft objectives it provides prompts, resources and contacts to help you demonstrate through your well-being plan that you have used the five ways of working and seven well-being goals to shape your steps. The purpose of this advice is not to give you my opinion on your well-being objectives. These are determined and owned by you, as a collective PSB.

I would encourage you to read this in conjunction with my response to your well-being assessment. I was keen that it was a 'feed-forward', rather than 'feedback', helping you to consider how to approach continuous assessment and well-being planning. As you know, I have recently published ['Well-being in Wales: Planning today for a better tomorrow'](#), which highlights key findings and recommendations for all PSBs and public bodies on the key areas of change needed to make better decisions for future generations. Both of these resources are also intended as advice to you.

Adopting different ways of working to take steps to meet your draft objectives:

Setting objectives and steps is not business as usual. In the past, we have drawn out themes and priorities and written plans that show what we are doing anyway. Achieving the ambitions of this Act is about a different way of working. The sustainable development principles is the 'what' AND the 'how' i.e. what are you doing to contribute to our shared vision of the seven national well-being goals? The goals acknowledge that sustainable development connects the environment in which we live, the economy in which we work, the society in which we enjoy and the cultures in which we share, to people and their quality of life, so what are you going to do differently together? And, how you are applying the sustainable development principle to shape your actions for Bridgend?

Comisiynydd Cenedlaethau'r Dyfodol Cymru

Siambrau'r Farchnad, 5-7 Heol Eglwys Fair
Caerdydd, CF10 1AT

cystylltwchani@cenedlaethaurdyfodol.cymru
cenedlaethaurdyfodol.cymru

Future Generations Commissioner for Wales

Market Chambers, 5-7 St Mary Street
Cardiff, CF10 1AT

contactus@futuregenerations.wales
futuregenerations.wales

I must emphasise that your leadership is required to adopt this new way of working. I made recommendations in ['Well-being in Wales: Planning today for a better tomorrow'](#) (p53-54) around the governance of partnerships, which I suggest you consider in the context of Swansea. The recommendations include consideration of how PSBs are managed and led. The way your PSB is currently structured around a Core Group and Partnership Group is unique to Swansea. This may be the best way of working for you, but my team have heard conflicting information on how this structure impacts on progress and decision-making. I question how dynamic you can be in making decisions and taking action in the governance structures you currently operate, so I would advise you to review their effectiveness for delivering the well-being plan.

Other recommendations of the report included consideration of how PSBs are chaired, who sits on the Board and how genuine collaboration can be enabled. I am keen that PSBs are inclusive and allow transparency of action and decision-making. Again, my team have received conflicting information on whether having a Core Group and a large Partnership Group best achieves this. It is impossible to make decisions responsibly if there is a lack of clarity on who does what and where and, given that I have heard confusion around this, I would suggest there is a risk in continuing the way you are. I advise you engage with all partners swiftly about their views on the structures and the sustainability of these arrangements. Delivering your draft well-being plan should be a driver for doing things differently.

I stated in the report that it is important we move away from seeing PSBs as local authority led. It should be a new way of working, not driven by any one organisation's culture or processes. The members of the Board, how it is structured, how and where meetings are held, and how the PSB is supported can all shift mindsets and allow for healthier challenge to 'business as usual'. Doing this requires understanding of each other's professions and motivations as organisations. I am pleased to hear that you have started to do 'walk in my shoes' meetings across the Core Group partners, but consider the value other organisations can bring to these discussions too.

How you take messages from the PSB back to your own organisations is also important in communicating why the work of the PSB matters to your own senior management teams and using the well-being plan to challenge current practices within your own departments. Alongside this, you will also need to demonstrate how each of your organisations are taking all reasonable steps in the exercising of their functions to meet the PSB's objectives. I want to see that the work of the PSB is not seen as something separate to the priorities of all member's bodies. The Act sets out seven areas for change: corporate planning, financial planning, workforce planning, procurement, assets, performance management and risk. Often, officers do not understand the work of the PSB in these areas of work, yet these are the core organisational activities where applying the five ways of working would ensure the sustainable development principle frames how you work.

It follows that co-ordinating this work needs to be recognized by all of you as members of the PSB. I understand that organisational leads, objective leads and project leads have been assigned to this work. I am interested in how different PSBs are supported and it appears that when support is multi-agency, resourced and committed to by different partners, collaboration and integration across departments and structures becomes easier. I would encourage you to consider how effective organisational leads and objective leads have been to date – a conversation on how this process has gone is something I am encouraging every PSB to reflect on. For instance, some PSBs are already adopting closer working arrangements, a multi-agency virtual team with a senior leader or more formal secondments and co-location. There are several resources that may be of use in considering this, such as [Designing Multi-Agency Partnerships](#); [Leading Culture Change](#) and [Stepping up: a framework for public](#)

[sector leadership on sustainability](#). This will require you, people in positions of leadership, to play your part and be brave in driving the changes needed.

As such, to adapt your ways of working often requires a fundamentally different approach. My team have been developing a 'Future Generations Framework' in partnership with the New Economics Foundation, to assist thinking. The purpose of this framework (originally intended for projects concerning infrastructure) is to help public bodies use the Well-being of Future Generations Act as a framework for thinking when developing projects; it can also be used to review progress as the project develops. We are working on ensuring the framework is applicable to a wider range of projects including policy/programme development and it will be available shortly. We would be interested to hear any feedback on its usefulness to your work.

Academi Wales' [Sustainable Futures Architecture](#) articulates succinctly how leadership behaviours need to change in line with the principles. You need to give yourselves the time and space as a PSB to question whether current approaches to public service delivery are fit for the future and explore key pressures and tensions in delivery for each of your objectives. Practically, I am advising that PSBs take a dedicated meeting or create sessions for each of your draft objectives to be discussed in an honest forum. In general, for each of your draft objectives, I would like to understand what the steps mean for Swansea, and how this is a different way of working to what you would have done before.

I would advise that you will need to demonstrate how your PSB has considered the following in relation to each of your objectives:

- **Long-term:** I understand that your workshops considered future scenarios around each of your initial priorities for Swansea. Seeing what you understand about the long-term trends, opportunities, risks and likely scenarios for the issue would be welcomed. Have you explored their impact on your steps? Are there current gaps in your data or understanding? What fore-sighting or future trends information do you need to understand this issue better? What capacity, confidence and expertise do you need to fill gaps in knowledge?

Your draft well-being plan currently only looks 'seven plus' years into the future. My statutory role is to act as the guardian of future generations to meet their needs and to encourage public bodies to take greater account of the long-term impact of the things they do. I am advising public bodies to think beyond the next five, ten or fifteen years and think about future generations, in twenty-five, thirty, to thirty-five years' time.

To inform the action you take, you will need to adequately map and consider the future trends for each of your objectives. My office is working with others to build capacity in this area and, as your support team are aware, Welsh Government have been adding to the 'Future Trends' report resources, which you should make most use of by accessing through Objective Connect or by contacting David Thomas. [The Oxford Martin 'Now for the long-term'](#) report shows global and national future trends that we all need to react to in carrying out sustainable development.

- **Prevention:** In considering this issue, do you have an understanding of what you are trying to prevent? What are the root causes of the issue and when and where would be the best point to intervene? Are you clear on whether it is primary prevention i.e. seeking to prevent something before it has even occurred;

secondary prevention i.e. preventing something from getting worse; or tertiary prevention i.e. softening the impact of something that has ongoing effects; that is needed? This is the difference between encouraging someone to wear a bicycle helmet (primary prevention of head-injury); putting someone in the recovery position if they have fallen from their bike (secondary prevention of the injury worsening) and counselling after the accident (tertiary prevention to help ongoing injuries from worsening).

Many PSBs haven't used their assessments to fully understand both the current situation and the scale and nature of the response required. I appreciate you might not know the full picture yet, but I want to see all PSBs exploring how they break cycles and dig deeper into data to see the implicit messages in the data to better understand the causes and effects of key issues and trends to inform your steps.

- **Collaboration:** I understand you are collaborating more across Local Authority boundaries and have regional support. As I have already recommended, now is a timely opportunity to review the invited membership of the PSB and consider who are the 'unusual' suspects that you may need to work with to take steps to meet your objectives? It is important that the people who sit around the PSB table can bring the best range of insights, constructive challenge, data and solutions to the PSB. How does this play out between the Core Group and the Partnership Group? Have you got the right people around the table, at the right level to make decisions around an issue? Are people clear of their roles? Who else might you need to be collaborating with to better understand this?

In delivering the steps, how might your organisations collaborate? You will need to demonstrate how your PSB is considering the steps that need to be taken together and across organisational boundaries in order to effectively meet your objectives. This could include co-locating staff, breaking down traditional structures, arranging job-swaps and secondments and, importantly, pooling resources. I will want to see how you have considered these benefits and how the steps you will take move you towards achieving this collaboration.

- **Integration:** For each objective, how are you going to move away from just doing something that meets the objective, and instead, demonstrate that you are taking steps which maximise your contribution to each of the goals? I am telling all PSBs to deliberately and explicitly consider the interconnections between your objectives to help inform your decisions about the most effective steps. Instead of looking at this issue in a traditional and general sense, have you looked at the definition for each of the goals to widen your understanding of well-being for this issue and the opportunities which might exist for meeting these goals through each of your objectives? How well do you understand the contribution your organisation makes at the moment to this objective? And do you understand how different is the contribution you will need to make going forward for this objective?

How can you plot what's going on elsewhere in your respective organisations, the strategies and plans at a regional or a national level, to connect and lead with others on achieving this objective? I understand you have acknowledged the relationship between your Board and that of the regional Social Services and Well-being Board. Integration means ensuring that the other partnerships understand and contribute to each other's work. The PSB should not be seen as a separate entity. Have you yet acknowledged the barriers or tensions that have arisen and what steps can you (or others) take to remove them? Who else is needed around the PSB table to help you interconnect decision-making and improve well-being for this issue?

- **Involvement:** My response to your well-being assessment suggested that you build on the engagement work to date as a PSB. I want to see a demonstrated focus now from all PSBs of going beyond the usual consultation and ad-hoc engagement. PSBs will need to demonstrate how they are seeking to understand the lived experiences of people in the area and how this is shaping your actions. How are you now actively seeking better ways of involving people in decision-making? How can you collaborate with members of the community in meeting these steps? As with the Social Care Wales Board, what options are there for involving people with lived experience on Boards and partnership groups?

These questions should be considered by all PSBs, but I appreciate every PSB has taken a different approach to drafting their well-being objectives and will be going about delivering their well-being plan in the context that is right for them. The second section of my advice seeks to help you demonstrate, through your well-being plan, that you have used the five ways of working and seven well-being goals to shape your steps.

Advice on how you might take steps to meet your draft objectives:

From the regular conversations you have had with my team, I know your supporting officers have worked hard over the summer to draw on your assessment findings, synthesize key messages and draft logic models relating to each of your objectives. This has hopefully given you an idea of the collective action you need to take to meet your objectives. I suggest you now consider how you take action that maximises your contribution to all of the well-being goals. Ask yourselves – what more could we do? I advise you to look at the legal definitions of the seven well-being goals and look for ways that maximise your contribution to all seven, for each objective. By exploring connections to the goals, you will not only gain a more a holistic picture of the issue you are trying to resolve but you also can maximise the range of resources and opportunities you can draw on to help you find solutions.

- ***Objective 1: Live well age well – to make Swansea a great place to live and age well.***

Well-being is not just about our health, but our social lives, our feelings of belonging, our built and natural surroundings, our income and community life – all of which are wider determinants of health. In taking steps to meet this objective, I would advise you to look at the assets of Swansea – in the state of the natural environment, the community spirit and the heritage of the area. People often don't improve their health because they are told to do so by public services, but because they realise themselves the value of their own lives and the importance of staying healthy for longer. Only by continuously involving people to understand what matters to them can you begin to affect behaviour change. You have a role in considering what opportunities people might need to improve their own health, the services people need to recover well from ill-health and in creating the right built environments to maximise people's health and well-being.

The logic model for this objective sensibly suggests that this is about a whole life course approach, this draft objective is linked to your others of: having a good start in life, a resilient natural environments and community cohesion. I would advise you are more explicit in how you can make these connections and in critically assessing how integrated your services are, exploring the tensions between policies and delivery. The five ways of working are intended to provide you with a frame to consider such issues together. In terms of an ageing population and health inequalities, ask yourselves if current provision is appropriate to manage this growing issue? In what areas might provision need more collective action? Currently, social services and health are barely dealing with the

current demand and, unfortunately, many are looking at traditional models of resourcing 'crisis' intervention to deal with this. This is where the five ways of working should be challenging your thinking, how can you approach this issue creatively? The Social Services and Well-being Act provides a legislative opportunity here, so I would like to see a demonstrated influence by the PSB to the regional Social Services and Well-being Partnership Board to ensure they are taking steps to meet your objectives.

I am encouraged that you are seeking to understand what impact your own organisations can have on this priority through, for example, encouraging the workforce to maintain their well-being. I think PSBs are eager to move from talking to doing, so I would advise you look at the quick-wins you can achieve here and make some swift changes. The seven areas of change in the Act are a starting point for the impact you can have. They are corporate planning, financial planning, workforce planning, procurement, assets, performance management and risk, which are the core organisational activities where applying the five ways of working would ensure the sustainable development principle frames how you work. As public services, you employ a significant chunk of the population and many of your workers will have families living in the area also. I would also advise you to appreciate the influence you can have over other organisations too.

There are many different ways of taking steps to improve employee well-being and examples across the world of innovative approaches. This not only makes financial sense (the conservative cost of work-related ill health in Wales is £500m per year) but improves well-being for the residents of Swansea. The [Sunday Times compile an annual list of the 100 best companies](#) to work for; with the ability to filter by which ones are top for 'well-being', and countries such as [Sweden](#) have been ahead of Britain in how they ensure their staff are well and working to their best abilities. Closer to home, the collaboration between Welsh Government, Public Health Wales and Cardiff University, '[Healthy Working Wales](#)', is full of resources and guides to helping you collaborate in creating a well workforce. Public Health Wales have established a national '[Health and Sustainability Hub](#)' to co-ordinate their own work around the Act and, through your PSB representative, you might find it useful to link with the national team for further evidence and knowledge. Are there opportunities to start schemes that bring employees together and contribute to the well-being goals? For example, some organisations have introduced tree planting and bee-keeping, which contributes to a more globally responsible Wales, a resilient Wales and a healthier Wales. Change often 'sticks' when people are involved in wider social and cultural activities together; for example, the Nudjed 'Behaviour Change is a Team Sport' report found getting people together increased exercise patterns. Their work has included successfully working with young mums in the South Wales Valleys to get them involved in more physical activity.

Continuing to learn through life has been proven to have benefits for people's mental and physical well-being, as well as social well-being. There is a real opportunity here for you to consider how you maximise your contribution to the well-being goals. How can you encourage activities that promote art, culture, learning the Welsh language, caring for natural habitats, creating community food growing initiatives, for instance, that help improve people's well-being? Looking to the long term, how can these activities prevent some of the preventable ill-health people are suffering that compromises their independence? Collaborating with the national public bodies subject to the Act, such as the Arts Council, Sport Wales and Museum of Wales, could be of help here; please let my team know if you would like to connect with relevant individuals in these organisations. In terms of the older population, there are many good examples of projects that seek to bring people together to learn new skills, socialise and build their resilience in later life, like [Men's Sheds Cymru, happening across Wales that the PSB could encourage and support.](#)

The work of the [Older People's Commissioner](#) is particularly helpful in exploring the steps you could take to meet this objective and includes her recent guidance to PSBs, advising public services recognise how much of an asset the older population are in terms of caring, volunteering and contributing to the economy. Research [by Ageing Well Wales](#) has shown this and suggests that loneliness in people is both about how connected people are to their communities physically and about feeling purposeful in society. This [report by the Young Foundation](#) provides inspiration on 'Innovating better ways of living late in life', challenging the traditional siloes we are working in. Creating flexible and age friendly communities and environments can prevent people from needing social care, from becoming isolated, from suffering ill-health or having an accident at home.

You have a collective responsibility around planning, housing, infrastructure and the environment. Wales has an opportunity to develop in a way that better meets demographic change, but we all need to be brave in challenging the way things are currently done. Programmes like the [World Health Organisation's Age Friendly Cities](#) initiative have encouraged and recognised those cities that have made themselves more age-friendly adapting buildings, transport and planning rules, which enable older people to stay healthy and connected to things that matter to them for longer. [Laguna woods, the first city exclusively for older people in the US](#), and the Marjala suburbs in Finland are examples of design suited to multiple abilities. As well as having responsibilities around planning and designing infrastructure, you could encourage co-housing, supported housing and homeshares. There are innovative global examples of these schemes, such as [students are living rent free](#) in nursing homes in exchange for socialising and providing basic care to the older residents; Australia and New Zealand have introduced ['HomeShare' schemes, and, as part of their national government's demography strategy, Germany has introduced intergenerational housing for older people and young families in need.](#) In Singapore, young people are given a \$50,000 grant if they move within 1km of their aged grandparents. These are all innovations that are proving to have an impact.

In our sharing economy, could there be other online technical solutions to preventing social isolation, around car-pooling or community transport connected to social media? The '[Hypervillage](#)' concept developed by FutureScape imagines villages connected by their assets, [encouraging people in rural communities to capitalise on technology.](#) How have you thought about the long-term possibilities of employing technological solutions for this issue? How can older people become more connected to social opportunities and volunteering? Are volunteers currently involved in the work of the PSB to help you consider how they can help you to meet your objectives? [Solva Community Council](#) in Pembrokeshire are an interesting example of how volunteers and older residents have benefited from a scheme to reduce isolation and improve well-being. Some research suggests that [just 5% of those over 65 years old](#) have any form of structured contact with younger people. [Intergenerational projects are shown to have benefits](#) for young and old, with both older and younger people taking on the role of mentor. How can you collaborate to create more opportunities for people to come together? How can increased involvement improve the health of older people in your area?

You have identified how economic well-being impacts on health and equality. The city deal clearly provides an exciting opportunity for the region and I am encouraged by the engagement of those involved with the sustainable development principle and the Act. You should seek to integrate this work with the work of the PSB as you play a central role in steering these opportunities as a place benefitting from the investment. I would advise that, as people in positions of leadership, you need to influence the current negotiations with the economic, environmental, social and cultural well-being of people across the region in mind. This is a positive economic opportunity but how can we balance our responsibilities to develop a city region that is sustainable and

puts people at the centre. My [letter to those involved in the Cardiff Capital Region](#) provides further advice and I [also recently commented](#) in response to Dr Mark Lang and Professor Terry Marsden's recent report "[Re-thinking Growth: Toward the Well-being Economy.](#)"

I am encouraging all PSBs to share ideas and collaborate with one another where they have set similar objectives. Other PSBs looking at this include Neath Port Talbot; Cardiff; Conwy / Denbighshire; Monmouthshire and Powys.

- **Objective 2: Early years – to ensure the best start for all children.**

Most PSBs have drafted objectives similar to this, recognising the importance of investing in future generations. I have asked each PSB setting similar objectives: what is going to change at all levels to make this happen? How will services aimed at prospective parents and families change locally? What local evidence will you use to understand the successful service models and the preventative interventions that work? How might focusing on preventing adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) as a PSB play out in reality for your organisations and services? Who might you need to involve to understand this better? Who needs to be around the table to make it happen?

Currently, services are often not set up in a way that would deliver this objective. We operate in siloes, preferring to chase our priorities than start with the person. We end up dealing with people in neat 'service-user' categories, such as 'domestic abuse victim', 'anti-social behaviour perpetrator', 'substance misuser', 'problem tenant', which often create barriers for people to have equality of opportunity or outcome. This approach means we fail to join up the dots, to integrate and to spot signs of a worsening situation. I have suggested that ensuring children have the best start is not just a 'health' or 'early years' issue. As your well-being assessment identifies, domestic abuse, mental ill health and substance misuse continue to be major challenges for services in Swansea. We know these impact on children with cycles continuing to the next generation, as illustrated by Public Health Wales' work on Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs).

Tackling ACEs must therefore be seen as a responsibility of the whole system, not just in terms of awareness but in terms of how the system operates. Your logic model begins to explain this, with one of your primary drivers being 'support services are high quality and well integrated'. I would advise that your steps to meet this objective follow suit. Information sharing and evidence based work is hugely important; [Nesta and the Alliance for Useful Evidence have published 'Using Research Evidence'](#) as a guide to public bodies to encourage a confidence in taking new approaches. short, sharp interventions by empowered individuals.

But although making people, and those who work with them, aware of the signs and able to adopt a trauma informed approach is important, I want to see how you intend to address services as a whole. It is important that you consider how well the services which currently respond to families where ACEs are a factor are responding and whether they are fit for purpose in terms of preventing on ongoing adverse experiences for children and families. Applying the five ways of working to this issue would mean that services for families in criminal justice, housing, social services, early years, substance misuse, domestic abuse and others would be integrated and effective in being preventative of a worsening situation as well as informed by peoples lived experiences and an understanding of what works for them and what doesn't.

Alyson Francis, Director of the ACE Support Hub, has recently worked with my office to write to you, outlining that ACEs are not another thing to do, but an opportunity to reconsider how we deliver services together that make sense for the families receiving them. The ACE Support Hub could also act as a central place for PSBs to

share practice, as almost all of the PSBs in Wales have discussed early years, children and ACEs in their draft objectives and steps. Alyson Francis and I are also on the panel of the [Good Practice Exchange Wales webinar on understanding ACEs on the 7th November, which may be helpful to you in considering your steps for this objective.](#)

The costs of the worst start in life are enormous, both to the individual's life and to public services. [Late intervention services for young people are estimated to cost England and Wales £17bn per year](#) (£6bn on child protection and safeguarding, £5.2bn on crime and anti-social behaviour, £3.7bn on youth economic inactivity, £680m on school absence and exclusion, £610m on child injuries and mental health problems, and £450m on youth substance misuse). I want to see that your organisations recognise it is part of all of their responsibilities to collaborate in preventing poor outcomes. The Public Health Wales' [First 1000 days](#) work shows how investing in a child's life from the very beginning can break cycles and have benefits to their long term well-being. How might local services have to change if you redirect investment?

Disadvantage in early life can have long-lasting effects on children and young people's well-being and can severely impact their prospects of securing a prosperous, healthy, safe and socially active future. Childhood is a key window of opportunity and I have been working with the [Children's Commissioner](#) to advise that public bodies and PSBs should give a greater focus to children's rights and well-being in their ongoing assessment work and well-being planning. You have already recognized this in your draft steps and I would encourage you to explore developing a children's rights policy focus, enabling children to learn about their rights and empowering them to play an active role in their communities. To support our work, a toolkit is being tested and will be available before the end of the year. The Children's Commissioner's office would be happy to advise on engaging with children and young people and taking a child-rights approach to securing well-being for future generations. Involving children and young people in understanding how you approach this should be central to your work.

One of the purposes of having a PSB is to challenge existing service boundaries. Children live within families, that live within communities and they access many services – families do not recognise the same differences between organisations as we do. Involving people and understanding is central to understanding and challenging the whole system; only by understanding the lived experiences of people can we design services that are fit for current and future generations. The case studies [contained in this report by Locality](#) demonstrate the financial and social costs of not taking this holistic and preventative approach to people's lives. Therefore, explore the opportunities that exist in challenging current service delivery with this objective as a focus and the seven national well-being goals as a guide.

Many things impact on the life chances of children and young people and it is important for the PSB to understand where they can have most impact. For example, a [2013 review carried out by the London School of Economics for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation](#) found that children in lower-income families have worse cognitive, social-behavioural and health outcomes. Crucially, this study demonstrated that it was in part because they are poorer, not just because low income is correlated with other household and parental characteristics. The [New Economics Foundation 'Backing the Future' report](#) highlights how we have a role in addressing both material well-being and external circumstances – such as housing, poverty, and schooling – as well as psychosocial well-being and inner resources, which links to the natural environment we grow up in, connected communities, high quality jobs and health. Your consideration has to be wider than what early years, education or health services can do. Linked to your draft objective on reducing social and economic inequalities, how can the PSB collaborate with others to improve the economic well-being of families across the region? Your well-being assessment

highlights inequality and deprivation in parts of the county. How can these communities, in particular, be focused on? If we know that by the time children in some areas reach reception class in school, the circumstances of where they live already affects well-being, then we need to be intervening at a much earlier stage in responding to these trends.

As well as income, we know that maternal and familial health has a big impact on a child's life, linking to your other objectives. Between 10% and 20% of women develop mental health problems during pregnancy or within a year of giving birth. These illnesses are one of the leading causes of death for mothers during pregnancy and the year after birth. Despite this, women in around half of the UK have no access to specialist perinatal mental health services and in other geographical areas, services are inadequate. Considering the impact of services like this on young families is important if you are to take a cross-sector approach. The ['Mums and Babies in Mind' project in England](#) has given a focus to local leaders to create a pathway across sectors that provide expectant and new mothers with the right support at the right time. There are many services already in Swansea aimed at reducing smoking, obesity and inactivity and I have already advised you that applying the lens of the Act to these issues would assist in evaluating the effectiveness of services – celebrating success and sharing learning, but also realising where improvement might be needed too.

As I have said, most PSBs have identified draft objectives connected to early years, giving children a good start in life and preventing ACEs including Cwm Taf, Caerphilly, Anglesey and Gwynedd, Blaenau Gwent, Newport and Conwy / Denbighshire.

- **Objective 3: Working with nature – to improve health, enhance biodiversity and reduce our carbon footprint.**

Swansea has a beautiful natural environment and, as you have recognised in your well-being assessment, the green spaces, beaches, rivers and wildlife enhance people's mental and physical well-being, as well as providing vital resources to residents and visitors. You have clearly considered the long term trends affecting the resilience of our environment and I would advise you consider now what action you can take, as public service leaders, to maximise your contribution to the goals. This will include how you plan, design and locate future developments (as part of your Local Development Plan and your work with the city region), buildings, infrastructure and other public and community spaces. What can you do, as Chief Executive, Chair or Leader, now to mitigate the effects of our loss of environment and be more globally responsible? How can your procurement policies seek to support local business and focus on more than economic value? How can you be more globally responsible by procuring organic produce, Fair Trade and, where possible, cutting down on transportation in line with protecting your environment? [Forum for the Future](#) have published reports on this and my office are working with [Value Wales](#) to pilot new approaches to procurement in the context of the Act.

For instance, decisions made by public sector organisations around infrastructure can have an impact on emissions, air quality and health. Although the public sector only accounts for a relatively small amount of Wales' emissions, you are uniquely placed to influence emissions far more widely in areas such as transport, energy, land use and procurement. [Some studies](#) suggest that continuing to delay reductions in greenhouse gas emissions could result in a \$535 trillion bill to young people alive today and future generations. [The Welsh Government recently published](#) carbon emission levels subdivided by Local Authority and also released a [Call for Evidence](#) to explore the most effective mechanisms for achieving a carbon neutral public sector by 2030. You will have been invited to an event I am hosting on the 9th November, in partnership with Welsh Government and Natural

Resources Wales to: explore how the public services in Wales can involve people in collaborating and integrating their work, to take greater account of the long-term carbon implications of their activities, and help prevent the effects of climate change becoming even worse.

On the 2nd August this year, we started to use more from nature than our planet can renew in a whole year. We are currently consuming the [resources of 1.7 planets a year](#). [Zero Carbon Britain's recent 'Making it Happen'](#) report sets out what responsibilities we all have to future generations to acting on climate change now. I know you have been considering future scenarios and for each objective, I'd encourage you to think about how long term trends can impact on all aspects of well-being. For instance, what is the economic cost of our changing climate on Swansea? Many rely on agriculture and fisheries; some of your communities are coastal; tourism in Wales very much utilises our natural environment. How have you considered the long-term impact of extreme weather events on these resources? How can you use scenarios to imagine what preventative action you could take to protect critical infrastructure, agriculture, water supplies and transportation in the event of extreme weather? Expected annual damage [to residential properties from flooding is estimated to be £22 million](#), so, understanding how different weather events impact on different geographical and demographic communities is crucial to prevention. Flooding also impacts on people's physical and mental well-being long after the event itself, which is difficult for those involved and inevitably costs other services.

In your well-being assessment, you have stated how communities appreciate that managing natural resources is a shared responsibility and would like to have a say or be involved. How can you get communities themselves involved in delivering this objective? Linked to your fourth objective, getting people involved around a place and a common cause can be extremely powerful. Getting people outdoors with some knowledge and the empowerment to take action can help to make the local environment more resilient. How can you facilitate this to happen and, using the definitions of the seven well-being goals, have a bigger impact? [NESTA has a guide](#) to working with communities to tackle climate change, including the 'Big Green Challenge', where participants changed their lifestyles to reduce their carbon footprint. Projects such as ['Rainscape' through Dwr Cymru](#) suggest ways that we can all mitigate the effects of floods, and an extreme example includes the [Isle of Eigg in Scotland](#), where the community are having a positive impact on their environment by introducing renewable community energy schemes, building sustainable businesses and improving biodiversity.

Collaborating with businesses in how you take steps to meet this objective will also be important to protect and enhance the land and halt declining biodiversity. The main causes of poor air quality are urbanization and associated deforestation, manufacturing, industry (particularly the burning of fossil fuels) and traffic levels. Transport and energy are two of the biggest things we can influence to effect climate change. Air pollutants have a significant effect on our health, including links to respiratory diseases, cancer and organ damage. For each of your steps, use the definitions of the well-being goals to think about how you can do something differently to achieve maximum impact, and look to integrate across many of your draft steps. For example, how can you encourage agile working policies, cutting down on the use of cars? Some PSBs themselves are introducing electric charging points and electric pool cars into their organisations to encourage this modal shift. How can you enable corporate volunteering opportunities that seek to enhance the resilience of the natural environment? As I have already advised, organisations themselves are looking to introduce tree planting, bee keeping and green infrastructure for their public estates in Wales. [Business in the Community](#) has a range of practical ways for businesses to work together and take action to help tackle some of the key environmental and social issues facing society.

How can you influence the work of the city region in this respect? [The Closing the Circle](#) report on the circular economy and the Welsh Environment by Constructing Excellence in Wales demonstrates a potential economic opportunity of an additional £1 billion per annum by 2035 through the practical application of circular economy principles and give practical examples in where the public sector can look to minimise waste and resources in future projects. This is an increase of 12.5 per cent in the turnover of the Welsh built environment sector and generates 7,300 jobs (gross). The [Good Local Economies website](#) suggests how public sector and community organisations can work together to have multiple benefits for their areas in housing, energy, procurement, finance and local economies.

How can planning infrastructure promote wider benefits, such as [‘solar roads’ generating renewable electricity](#) or roads made from [recycled plastic](#), such as those being trialed in Rotterdam? How can this be linked to creating green, connected community spaces to improve people’s health? The city of [Freiburg](#) is often held up as an example of urban development that has public and active transport integrated into the heart of its design. Besides prioritizing active transport and sustainable, affordable, reliable public transport, a traffic avoidance strategy means it is a city of short distances, where people’s needs are met within short distances. The [Shape My Town](#) tool from the Design Commission for Wales is an interactive resource for community place-making that prompts you to think through some of these possibilities.

You also have a large amount of public estate and should consider its efficiency, as well as how buildings and surroundings can impact on well-being. The [Wildlife Trust in Wales report into green infrastructure](#) outlines how green infrastructure delivers a wide range of proven, tangible, and cost-effective economic, social and environmental benefits. The [Design Commission for Wales](#) also has case studies and resources on design that focuses on users, maximises energy efficiency and has been shown to significantly improve patient recovery in health. In each of these areas my office can connect you to these people and organisations who may be able to assist you as you develop your work.

The UK has pledged to have zero emissions by 2050 and every Welsh Government has pledged for more green jobs. But despite Wales being a place of great potential in providing natural energy, only 10% of Wales' electricity in 2013 was provided through renewable energy. The PSB need to be engaging with projects, such as the Tidal Lagoon, to understand the multiple impacts and benefits. How have you considered the potential of other renewable energy as a PSB? Last year, the National Assembly for Wales Environment and Sustainability Committee produced '[A Smarter Energy Future for Wales](#)', with 19 recommendations for how Wales could transform its approach to energy. More recently, Smart Energy GB have produced a report on '[A Smart Energy Future for Rural Areas](#)', giving examples and case studies of rural areas across the UK who are making that transition. [The Policy Forum for Wales](#) keynote seminar takes place on the 7th December this year, with a focus on priorities for energy policy, growing the sector in Wales and increasing investment in renewables.

Evidence suggests that enabling people to make healthy choices is linked to their economic status, their environment and how they connect with others. You have recognised this connection in your draft well-being plan, so take action to contribute to a more resilient Wales in contributing to the other goals too. How can improving staff well-being have wider benefits for the natural environment? Collaborating with other organisations to explore these links is the purpose of the PSBs. As I'm sure you've recognised there are opportunities for you to work with organisations such as the National Trust and Wildlife Trusts to develop a county-wide approach. The [Natural Resources Wales' 'Actif Woods'](#) project is an example of getting people outside, protecting their environment and enjoying the positive effects on health and well-being. Alternative ways

of improving well-being are growing and this [study, on social prescribing in Bristol](#), provides information on different models and gives some insight into the improvements in mental and general physical health. The recent BBC documentary, '[The doctor who gave up drugs](#)', showed several examples of how alternative approaches to prescribing pills can have a more holistic, long-lasting positive impact on someone's life – with people getting physically fitter and healthier mentally without the reliance on prescriptions. This is inherently a preventative approach, as the [University of Essex have shown](#) in research into volunteering with the Wildlife Trust – mental health improved for participants after three months. Collaborating with different organisations to understand and evaluate these methods could have a transformative effect on our current approaches to health.

There are many PSBs seeking to protect their environment including Blaenau Gwent; Caerphilly; the Vale of Glamorgan; Powys; Carmarthenshire and Ceredigion.

- **Objective 4: Strong communities – to empower communities promoting pride and belonging.**

It is a meaningful aspiration to have a vibrant, tolerant and welcoming Swansea where future generations have equal access to life opportunities and feel proud of their city. Achieving some of your other draft objectives would clearly contribute to this vision and I feel this change definitely starts with you. As I advised in the first part of this letter, the way you work together and deliver services eventually trickles down to the people of Swansea – through those in your workforce, your policies, your decisions and your attitudes. Building a shared future vision and a sense of belonging would enable you to move forward together to improve well-being for future generations.

As I advised in my response to your well-being assessment, doing anything as a PSB must be in the context of where and how people live. How are differences realised across communities in Swansea? What does this mean for people's well-being? You began to explore this during your well-being assessment and to take steps to meet all of your objectives, you should continue to explore the data and possible reasons behind the data for issues. Deepening your understanding of communities is best learnt from the lived experiences of people who live there. Involving your staff, getting out and about to speak to people and collaborating with them to deliver projects is a way of winning the trust of communities and seeing positive results. I advise each of your organisations to commit to the National Participation Standards and, as most of us lack the skills in meaningfully engaging with a range of people, you may wish to contact [Participation Cymru](#), who can support your officers in gaining the skills vital for effective and meaningful involvement. [Co-production Network Wales](#) could help you consider time banking schemes, provide examples of good coproduction and help you to identify and engage community leaders.

Locally, how can children and young people, schools, colleges and the Town and Community Councils and the third sector play an important role in connecting people? How are different voices represented at the PSB? [WCVA produced wider information](#) on how the third sector play a role in contributing to the Act including resources on the seven well-being goals. How have, or will, the assets of the area been explored beyond what public services exist and more about the heart and soul of the community? The [Centre for Regeneration Excellence Wales' 'Deep Place' study in Tredegar](#) gives evidence on how an understanding of place can have multiple benefits on well-being. Giving communities that small encouragement, through for example, schemes that reward volunteering, or small grants to create attractive community spaces can lead to much bigger outcomes - shown by the work that ['Nurture Development' do around Asset Based Community Development](#). Similar work is already being done through the Big Lottery funded [Building Communities Trust](#) across Wales. You may not know who the potential

community leaders and connectors are in some areas, so if you are committed to this, you should re-purpose your resources to do more work in communities, to begin to know a place as the people who live there know it.

As with other areas in Wales, there are inequalities in health, wealth and access to amenities, including green spaces identified in your assessment. I have regularly spoken about the lack of understanding we have as public services of people's lived experiences. Many people do not see themselves as 'deprived' or 'in poverty', and, this links to my advice on your objective on ensuring a best start in life. As public services, we need to take a more human approach to providing services and the Act (and Social Services and Well-being Act) provides a common sense lens for doing so. The recent [Dying from Inequality](#) report from the Samaritans highlighted the increased suicide risks for those in lower-skilled jobs and living in areas of deprivation. Many could be identified at a young age, as those with low educational attainment are often at higher risk, drawing links with your first objective around giving children and young people the best start in life. This example of ['Why poor people don't plan long-term'](#) provides an insight into the barriers people face in overcoming inequality and how they are often overlooked. Your neighbouring PSB, Bridgend, are looking at how poverty affects different parts of the population and I feel it will also be useful to you. The Royal Town Planning Institute's report on ['Poverty, Place and Inequality'](#) includes several recommendations around why place-based approaches are key to tackling inequality between and within communities.

As leaders of local agencies, you have a key role to play in promoting and supporting community cohesiveness. The potential for your role in this area goes beyond building community capacity through facilitating networking and coordination and providing training for community groups and employees. These aspects of community support can only go so far in addressing the problems that people and communities face. How are you tackling some of the systemic barriers that stop people, communities and employees from using their training or knowledge or prevent them from accessing services that can help? Have you considered how you could reform current services so they could deliver a preventative approach- stopping problems such as ACEs before they happen- through commissioning these services differently? The research documented in ['What Works in Community Cohesion'](#) provides a useful reference for PSBs on the different dimensions of community cohesion.

The City of Culture 2021 bid is an exciting opportunity for your city and, as with the city region, using the seven well-being goals can help you to see how everyone could benefit from the investment. As a catalyst for regeneration and economic growth, it is a reason to grow equality across the city and bring people together around something they care about. Culture, sport and language can be incredibly powerful in bringing diverse groups of people together to share in a common goal and create a sense of belonging. Sport Wales are keen to work with PSBs on how they can maximise their contribution to the seven well-being goals. [The Arts Council for Wales' strategy, which](#) outlines some of the benefits involvement in creative activity can have on the health, cohesion and skills of the population could help you recognize how projects can have multiple benefits for your organisations. The [Cultural Commissioning Programme, funded by Arts Council England](#) seeks to help commissioners of public services understand how they can improve outcomes by integrating arts and cultural activities into a range of services, including mental health and well-being, older people and place-based commissioning. ['Cymraeg 2050'](#) is also our common vision to growing the Welsh language. Alun Davies AM [announced funding for growing bilingual small businesses](#) recently to increase visibility of Welsh in our communities. Can these initiatives be connected by you as a PSB?

How are you considering how people might want to contribute to their communities in the future? This recent report on [Digital Childhoods](#) from Barnados shows the pace at which technology is moving and the way children now consume information. How are your organisations harnessing the power of technology to help you meet this objective? Currently, research shows that children aged between five and 16 years spend an average of six and a half hours a day in front of a screen; [28% of young people use social media](#) as their primary news source; [43% of 'millennials' are driven to make financial donations through social channels](#). What sort of changes might you need to make to your organisational systems and policies to enable people to get more involved in communities and shape local services? There is a real opportunity to engage with people that is most convenient to them and is part of their daily life, not an additional chore. "[Monmouthshire Made Open](#)" is an example of an online platform that has anticipated how people might contribute to improving their area in the future, with opportunities to share ideas, ask the community, start a project and seek volunteers or resources. Matthew Gatehouse, working with Monmouthshire PSB, would be able to share their learning with you on establishing this website.

A number of PSBs are drafting objectives to encourage safer, more cohesive and connected communities including Flintshire; Cardiff; the Vale of Glamorgan; Newport; Powys; Cwm Taf; and Monmouthshire.

I hope you have found this advice helpful in moving forward towards publishing a well-being plan for formal consultation. Please get in touch with my team if you want further contact details for any of the organisations and reports mentioned in this letter.

I am also learning the best ways to advise, support and monitor how public bodies are seeking to apply the five ways of working and maximise their contribution to the seven well-being goals, so I would welcome any feedback from you, supporting officers and the Swansea PSB Scrutiny Committee on how I have chosen to approach this statutory duty and the advice I have given.

I look forward to receiving further drafts of your well-being plan and please keep in touch with me and my team.

Kind regards,



Sophie Howe