

02/08/2017

## Advice from the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales: Conwy & Denbighshire PSB

Dear Conwy & Denbighshire 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. I understand that you're at the point of identifying draft objectives and steps from common themes and proposed actions that have emerged from your well-being assessment and subsequent workshops. As such, I cannot advise you on the steps you might take to meet your draft objectives but I can give you general advice on the steps you might seek to take to improve well-being around the common themes you've supplied my team, which are:

1. To continue with the interim priority of ensuring the first 1000 days of a child's life is safe, healthy with the opportunity to develop to their full potential.
2. The potential to develop community hubs, to foster greater local community activity by bringing residents and key organisations / services together to improve the quality of life and creating more resilient communities (link to 1 and 6).
3. To further develop social/green prescribing across Conwy & Denbighshire that supports a wide range of social, emotional and practical needs enabling people of all ages to thrive.
4. Good mental health and well-being is experienced by all ages.
5. Preparing for and maintaining older people's independence and well-being.
6. The need to work alongside individual communities at a local scale to develop 'community plans', which would encompass elements of climate change adaptability (better designed buildings), green infrastructure for outdoor recreation, sustainability and other socio issues; Links to proposal 2 and 10.
7. The potential to further develop and promote the use of 'natural' solutions to water management and associated environmental issues e.g. natural flood risk management.
8. The idea of developing a bespoke 'environmental standard' across all PSB members, and its promotion amongst other organisations working in Conwy and Denbighshire.
9. The potential to explore different behavioural change approaches to support our citizens to make positive lifestyle changes & choices to become more resilient
10. To further develop community planning in terms of democracy to ensure our communities are sustainable, resilient and engaged (links to 2 and 6).
11. The need to improve access to efficient and affordable transport options (Links to proposal 12.)
12. Promoting Conwy and Denbighshire as a place to live, work and enjoy. (Links to proposal 11)
13. Creating aspirational & emotional literacy amongst young people.

My team have found talking to you regularly and attending one of your workshops has given them an understanding of how you work together as a Public Services Board (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.

I also wanted my response to your well-being assessment to be 'feed-forward', rather than 'feedback', helping you to consider how to approach continuous assessment and well-being planning. I have recently published '[Well-being in Wales: Planning today for a better tomorrow](#)', which highlights key findings and recommendations for PSBs on the key areas of change needed to make better decisions for future generations. I am drawing on these reports in providing my advice to you.

As you know, in setting draft objectives and taking steps to meet them, PSBs must use the five ways of working to challenge business as usual and maximise their contribution to each of the seven national well-being goals. My advice is intended to help you consider how you might do this effectively and how you could demonstrate through your well-being plan that you have used the five ways of working to shape your steps. Therefore, my advice to you is about adopting different ways of working and specifically on the topics you have identified from your assessments to focus on, plus seeking to connect you with others who may be able to help. As my team have explained, 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.

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

In setting your objectives and steps for how you will meet them, I would like to understand what that step means for you in Conwy and Denbighshire; and what local or national evidence you have drawn on to take that action. Achieving the ambitions of this Act is about the 'what' and the 'how' i.e. what are you doing to contribute to our shared vision of the seven national well-being goals? How you are applying the sustainable development principle to shape your actions for Conwy and Denbighshire?

As such, 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. Even now, despite the evidence in the assessments showing a range of alarming trends, it seems PSBs are only engaging in safe and non-contentious territory. To adapt your ways of working requires a fundamentally different approach and you need to give yourselves the time and space 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 would advise that for each of your objectives, you need to use a PSB meeting or create sessions to look at the five ways of working below and have an honest discussion about the tensions between policy issues

and current practice within your organisations in relation to each objective. This should then drive your discussions on how you can take new approaches together in the steps you will take to meet your objectives and maximise contribution to the seven national well-being goals.

**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:** What do you understand about the long-term trends, opportunities, risks and likely scenarios for this issue? 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? My team are working with others to build capacity in this area and I would encourage you to use and add to the Welsh Government 'Future Trends' report resources, available through Objective Connect and by contacting David Thomas.
- **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 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. There are implicit messages in the data that need further exploration to better understand the causes and effects of key issues and trends to inform your steps.

- **Collaboration:** 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. Have you got the right people around the table, at the right level to make decisions around this issue? Who else might you need to be collaborating with to better understand this? As recommended in my report on the Well-being Assessments 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 this objective?

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 pooling resources.

- **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? 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 PSB 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 organisations, the strategies and plans at a regional or a national level, to connect with others on achieving this objective? In doing this, what barriers or tensions 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:** How are you going to demonstrate the way you have involved communities in defining the challenges and opportunities in meeting this objective? How are you taking steps to understand the lived experiences of people in your area and how is this shaping your actions? How are you 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?

I was impressed with the innovative approach you took to presenting your well-being assessment online and the ability to view information in different ways. This went some way to demonstrating 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. I suggested in my feedback to your well-being assessment that you could build on this by providing more detail on the integration and interconnections between issues, and more detail on how tackling these issues could contribute to the seven goals.

Your common themes also show this interconnectedness, and I would encourage you to demonstrate your thinking about this in setting your objectives and steps. This will be particularly important in thinking about the relative roles of your different organisations in maximising your contribution to the goals. My advice is that you must show your workings - your rationale, explanation and the specific context of your objectives and steps for Conwy and Denbighshire.

As a PSB, it is important that you understand each other's motives and feel that the well-being plan reflects your shared vision for the future of Conwy and Denbighshire PSB. In order to gain this mutual understanding and respect of each other's professions; in some areas, PSB meetings are now PSB workshop sessions, taking place in each of the member organisation's workplaces or in a place relevant to the topic for discussion. I would encourage you to explore all options which facilitate a better understanding of each other's work and opportunities for better integration and collaboration.

This leadership and mutual understanding at PSB permeates into the member organisations at all levels. I am keen to understand how different PSBs are supported across Wales and the impact that this has on well-being planning. Although not a 'water-tight' model, where support is multi-agency, this enables better resourcing of the PSB and, inevitably, allows easier integration between organisations, departments and issues. I am encouraged that your support team work regionally and that you have a collaborative PSB, but in order to truly own this plan and ensure the steps you take are understood and undertaken by the member bodies of the PSB, you may want to consider closer working arrangements or more formal secondments and co-location.

As above, you should also consider how to involve 'unusual suspects' and the people you serve in your work to gain a much richer picture of the effective steps you can take to meet your draft objectives. Across Wales, it is important that we move away from seeing PSBs as a local authority-led committee meeting and an opportunity to deliver services that are rooted in the reality of people's lives and that will benefit the well-being of future generations. This will require you, people in positions of leadership, to play your part in helping to drive the changes needed. I hope you continue to lead an intelligence-based approach to finding different solutions to how things have been previously done.

Many of the common themes you have drawn out are around building on community resilience and taking pride in your area; involving people in how you protect and enhance your natural environment; and enabling people to have a healthy start in life and be well throughout their lives into old age. I am encouraged to see that the actions identified in your workshops are around building on the strengths that already exist in these areas - the information, evidence and knowledge that services currently hold. However, I would advise that this extends to using the knowledge and lived experiences of people who live in your communities to help you find innovative solutions to improving well-being.

### [Enabling people to have a healthy start in life and be well throughout their lives into old age](#)

A few of your common themes are around health and well-being throughout the life course. I can see that you have already been focusing on the first 1000 days as a priority area and your assessment provides detailed evidence of why this should be a focus for you. Pregnancy and the early years of life are often seen as a 'health issue' but I would advise you to take immediate steps towards better integration of services, co-locating teams, pooling resources and working in a way that makes sense for that community, aimed at the early years and their families. In setting out your collective steps to give people the best start in life, I would advise you to be specific about what you intend to do in your area i.e. What local evidence have you used to understand the specific areas of successful preventative interventions in different parts of Conwy and Denbighshire? What local services will be impacted if you actively redirect investment to the first 1000 days of a child's life?

Prevention is clearly at the centre of this draft objective and this begins with your organisations understanding the long-term effects of the worst start in life and how it affects your own organisation, whether you are Local Authority, Fire and Rescue officers, Police officers or third sector. The costs of not intervening early 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).

Many things impact on the life chances of children and young people. 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. How can the PSB collaborate with others to improve the economic well-being of families across the region? Your well-being assessment highlighted differing levels of wealth across the eleven community areas. 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. Other themes emerging from your well-being assessment included good mental health and increasing community resilience. 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. As you identified within your well-being assessment, a cross-agency approach to mental health services is needed and one such example is the '[Mums and Babies in Mind](#)' project in England, which 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.

Enabling people to have a healthy start in life is not just down to you, but the families that children grow up in and the communities they live in, as well as the families they then start of their own. So, in considering what steps you might take, the [New Economics Foundation work](#) on investing in children might be helpful, which highlights the need to address both material wellbeing and external circumstances – such as housing, poverty, and schooling – as well as psychosocial well-being and inner resources. I have been working closely with the Children's Commissioner, to produce a toolkit on taking a child's rights approach to maximising contribution to the seven national well-being goals. This toolkit is in development and testing and will be available soon. The Commissioner's office would be happy to advise on engaging with children and young people and taking a child centred approach.

I would advise you to see this cost through the eyes of someone who has not received the early help that could have sent them on a different path. Only by understanding the lived experiences of people can we design services that are fit for current and future generations. One of your draft actions is around reviewing the thresholds of when people receive help and I would advise you to be brave in taking steps to shift resources to providing help

earlier. This demands a more integrated approach, as often we treat the symptoms of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), rather than the root causes. This means involving people in how they help themselves and taking a more holistic view of the people your organisations serve, instead of categorising people as a 'mental health patient', 'criminal', 'substance misuser' or 'domestic abuse victim'. The case studies [contained in this report by Locality](#) demonstrate the financial and social costs of not taking this holistic and preventative approach.

Alyson Francis, Director of the ACE Support Hub, has also 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.

Mental health and well-being and social / green prescribing have emerged as common themes for Conwy and Denbighshire. This links to your other themes of maintaining older people's independence, helping citizens to make positive behavioural changes and developing community hubs. Your analysis shows that Conwy experiences the highest rate of suicide in North Wales, at 14.4 per 100,000 population, and that Denbighshire is also higher than the Wales average (11.2) – compared to the Wales average of 9.2 per 100,000. The well-being assessments highlight a number of alarming trends, such as this one, which I would encourage you to question whether you are taking the right approaches and what needs to change. As currently drafted, I don't believe your draft actions are indicative of the step change needed and I would suggest that the draft actions that have come from your workshops to date on mental well-being are focused on business as usual. Although raising awareness of mental health issues is important, I urge you to think about how you challenge yourselves to make real service changes and demonstrate that you are maximising your contribution towards each of the seven national well-being goals.

This issue calls for earlier intervention and prevention, with approximately fifty percent of people with enduring mental health problems displaying symptoms by the time they are 14 years old, and many at a much younger age. If the symptoms are there at such an early age – what can be done to prevent the problems at later life? If we know that on average, the NHS spend over £21 million on the prescription of anti-depressants, how can we act earlier? As you have identified, social prescribing may offer an alternative and it is encouraging to see you identify this. 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.

Models of social prescribing can have multiple benefits, such as taking part in exercise classes can reduce older people's social isolation, as well as helping to prevent falls. [Natural Resources Wales' 'Actif Woods'](#) project has shown the range of positive effects taking regular walks in a group can have on health and well-being, with projects in Wrexham and Angelsey. What opportunities might there be to introduce similar programmes in Conwy and Denbighshire, which have positive outcomes for the maintaining the natural environment also? 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 also offers an opportunity to contribute to a Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language, through encouraging people to take part in cultural activities to help manage their illnesses. [The Arts Council for Wales' strategy](#) outlines some of the benefits involvement in creative activity can have on the population and 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 wellbeing, older people and place-based commissioning. As such, there are benefits to collaborating with the national public bodies subject to the Act, such as Sport Wales, Arts Council for Wales, National Museum and National Library of Wales, who may be able to work with you on how your steps to meet this objective could maximise contribution to the goals. Please let my team know if you would like to connect with relevant individuals in these organisations.

Your well-being assessment outlines Conwy and Denbighshire is home to higher than average numbers of older people. As with many other parts of Wales, the future projections suggest that there will be more older people living in the area. I would encourage you to see these older people as an asset and consider how you might encourage their participation in community life. The [Older People's Commissioner](#) has provided examples of how we can all support people to age well in Wales. Much of this is around understanding and valuing the lived experiences of the older population, integrating services with an older person in mind and collaborating – breaking down barriers between your services to do things that make the most sense for older people.

I was interested to hear about an example local to you, where Betsi Cadwaldr staff took 'five days in a room' to consider how services for older people could be improved. I've heard that this forced focus on an issue broke down misunderstandings between services and enabled good changes to be made to service pathways. What have your PSB learnt from this exercise and how might it be replicated for other issues?

### [\*Involving people in how you protect and enhance your natural environment\*](#)

[The recent Wildlife Trust Wales report](#) on green infrastructure examined the links between green infrastructure and economic growth, emphasising that it attracts inward investment, creates tourism opportunities and increases visitor spend. You have rightly identified that your two counties are areas of outstanding beauty and heritage. Snowdonia National Park, the Dee Valley, Conwy Castle, the coast and the rolling countryside of both areas are home to diverse wildlife and need to be seen as assets. Several of the themes you have identified link to protecting and enhancing your environment, involving people in a place-based approach to planning for the future. This is encouraging to see, but I would ask that you seek to understand your own roles and responsibilities as large organisations in protecting the environment for future generations, being clear in demonstrating how you have applied the five ways of working in the steps you will take to meet whatever objective is drafted. This will



include how you plan, design and locate future developments (as part of your Local Development Plan), buildings, infrastructure and other public and community spaces.

Conwy and Denbighshire have already witnessed the impact of extreme weather events, with Prestatyn becoming flooded a fortnight ago; the devastating floods four years ago in St Asaph and Ruthin; and flooding last year in Conwy Valley and Llanrwst. You have rightly recognised in your assessment that the long-term impacts of our changing climate pose particular risks for your area including coastal erosion and loss of habitat for many of your species. You must demonstrate that you have used the seven national well-being goals to consider what action you can take to mitigate, manage or resolve these risks over the short, medium and long-term. This document produced a few years ago – [Working with a Changing climate](#) – published for the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty may help you consider how to take action to adapt to climate change. It is a great example of how to communicate the impacts, including possible solutions, in a way that is easy to understand and I would encourage you to use this approach with wider communities.

As your draft actions suggest, collaborating with communities to reduce the likelihood and impact of flooding is crucial. Projects such as ['Rainscape' through Dwr Cymru](#) suggest ways that we can all mitigate the effects of floods. As one of your draft actions is 'Re-connecting people with the water environment', I think involving people in why this is such an important issue is critical if you are to affect change. Other communities are having a positive impact on their environment by taking charge and introducing renewable community energy schemes, building sustainable businesses and improving biodiversity. An extreme example includes the [Isle of Eigg in Scotland](#), where the community are almost self-sustaining. Understanding the untapped potential of different communities might involve redirecting resources together to enable staff to spend more time on the ground, engaging and understanding the communities in different parts of the region to make positive changes to how the community plans together and anticipates climate change risk. As 75% of land is maintained by farmers, what support might they also need to better prepare and protect their land from flooding? How can collaborating with them encourage responsible land use?

Many of the more deprived areas in the counties are most at risk from flooding and erosion. Your assessment has rightly identified that rising sea levels put many areas of the region at high risk. [Current expected annual damage to residential properties in Wales is estimated to be £22 million](#). In contrast, extreme weather could also cause droughts in the summer, meaning a shortage of water, declining bio-diversity and a knock-on effect for agriculture – one of the pillars of economic well-being in your area. The UK Climate Change Committee report predicts that the deadly heatwave of 2003 will be a normal summer by the 2040s, tripling related deaths with older people particularly at risk. How are you considering these links to your emerging theme of enabling older people to live independently and healthily? How are you using long-term scenarios to model what might happen to these communities if their streets, towns and parks are no longer there or struggling with reduced natural resources? What actions might you take now to contribute towards preventing these occurrences? [One example of investment in flood defences is the Lower Swansea Vale](#), a £6.7m project which provides protection to 284 businesses and industrial premises employing more than 10,000 people.

People have told you that they would like to see Conwy and Denbighshire become carbon neutral in future and more use of renewable energy. [The Welsh Government recently published](#) carbon emission levels subdivided by Local Authority. The highest emissions in Conwy and Denbighshire are due to road transport. One of your emerging themes is around more accessible and affordable transport options – how can this be informed by a need to reduce emissions from road traffic and improve walking, cycling and public transport infrastructure? How can you better listen to resident and staff motivations for using their cars, rather than active travel? Collaborating with people, including local transport providers, is needed to demonstrate how you are addressing each of the seven goals in tackling this.

I am really encouraged to see an emerging theme and actions around your collaboration as public sector leaders to develop an 'environmental standard' as a PSB. Change starts within your power, so I am hopeful that you seriously consider 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 as a PSB. 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. I am encouraging all PSBs to look at how they can become more globally responsible and, in particular, their role in reducing emissions and using more sustainable. This is an opportunity to work across North Wales and nationally, as the Welsh Government recently made a commitment for the public sector to be carbon neutral by 2030 and have released a [Call for Evidence](#) to explore the most effective mechanisms for achieving this ambition. As a PSB already identifying commitments in this respect, I would urge you to consider and contribute before the deadline of 13th September.

This commitment recognises the work Natural Resources Wales (NRW) has undertaken through its Carbon Positive Project. Through calculating the organisation's net carbon impact, it found that over 80% of their emissions were indirect (i.e not due to energy use in its estate or its fleet) with 55% from the procurement of goods and services alone. This is an area which all organisations should be investigating further and I would expect to see the PSB actively pursuing opportunities to make carbon and cost savings through an invest to save approach. However, NRW also identified feasible options to reduce emissions and protect and enhance carbon stocks. For example, it found it could achieve up to 27% emissions saving from its vehicle fleet through adopting low emission transport options. This is an area you should also be considering and I am encouraged to see a draft action around electric public sector vehicles.

Together, you also have a large amount of public sector estate and a say in how public buildings are designed and refurbished. Having a consideration of how 'green' these buildings are, both in terms of energy efficiency and sustainable construction, is a quick win for you as a PSB. 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.

Many other PSBs in Wales are seeking to make a difference in this way such as, Ynys Mon and Gwynedd PSB, the Vale of Glamorgan PSB, Powys PSB; Ceredigion PSB and Blaenau Gwent PSB.

### [Building on community resilience and taking pride in your area.](#)

Many of your themes highlight community ownership, building resilience, celebrating assets, fostering pride in your area and improving opportunities for people to stay, live and work in the region. Setting objectives and steps around these themes will require collaborating with partners you have not have engaged with before and making sure those around the PSB table have the right intelligence and insight to affect change.

I would suggest that you need to collaborate with Glyndwr University and other nearby higher education and further education institutions in the region. Collaborating with the businesses across North Wales would also be of benefit. What role can the North Wales Economic Ambition Board help in gathering intelligence and taking action with the PSB? What social responsibilities have the private sector adopted in the area? How are businesses coming together to drive positive, long-term change?

Your engagement highlighted a growing worry of young people leaving the area and a gap between the skills they have gained and the jobs that are available. Consider what skills students need now to equip them for the future? The [Future of Work report](#) suggests that creativity, connectivity, communication and problem-solving will be far more important than specific knowledge, with more project-based work in the future – rather than set employment. Furthermore, the report predicts that 65 percent of the children who are now starting school will find themselves working jobs as adults that don't even exist yet. [And, according to McKinsey](#), technology could automate 45 percent of the tasks people are currently paid to do. Some rural parts of Japan and Canada have also experienced a decreasing young people's population, with many moving to the cities for more opportunities. [This World Economic Forum article](#) suggests that some of the answer may lie in bottom-up community initiatives that spark tourism for the area. Young people take a sense of pride and ownership in telling others about their heritage and in starting some scale business that benefit from flocks of tourists.

You have also identified a growing population of older people, with loneliness affecting males living alone, over the age of 50. How might you seek to tackle this over the long-term in the steps you are taking to improve people's involvement in community life? How can you use the collective resource of your 'staff on the ground' to help you identify social isolation? [Research by Ageing Well Wales](#) has shown that loneliness in older people is closely linked to poor mental and physical health, how can you maximise the benefits of increased involvement to improve the health of older people in your area? Solva Community Council are an interesting example of how volunteers and older residents have benefited from a scheme to reduce isolation and improve well-being (<http://solvacare.co.uk/>).

Most people will only get involved in something that directly impacts them, their family or the place where they spend time. I praised your well-being assessment for looking at community profiles, building on this intelligence will help you to understand the assets, opportunities and barriers of people helping themselves and improving their surroundings. The [Centre for Regeneration Excellence Wales' 'Deep Place' study in Tredegar](#) gives evidence

on how an understanding of place can have multiple benefits. Often, people becoming involved in something they care about leads to much bigger outcomes – as is shown by the work that ['Nurture Development' do around Asset Based Community Development](#).

Some of this is about encouraging behaviour change in your population, which many reports have found '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. Again, this is an opportunity to improve access to cultural activities and promote heritage, use of the Welsh language and encourage people to get together around local food and drink. I would advise the PSB to find and involve these existing networks, build on these successes and encourage existing community activists. In this respect, you should consider what role your local Town and Community Councils play in taking steps to help you.

Sometimes, we create the barriers to people accessing services and getting involved. As Conwy is a pilot for the Welsh Government funding flexibility on tackling poverty programmes, I would advise you to take this opportunity to see the services from the perspectives of people who use them. Do the way things currently work make sense for someone accessing services? Your draft actions include use of community assets to create 'hubs' and involving the community in plans around the environmental and social aspects of their area. Although having 'somewhere to go' is very important to most communities, consider how people may communicate and congregate in the future. 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?

I would advise each of your organisations to commit to the National Participation Standards and note that [Participation Cymru](#) can support your officers in gaining the skills vital for effective and meaningful involvement. I would also advise you to look at the work of [Co-production Network Wales](#), to help you identify and engage community leaders.

You will not be surprised to note that other Public Services Boards are also considering setting objectives around engagement, developing / sustaining strong social networks, fostering belonging and shaping services. In particular, you may wish to share ideas with Cwm Taf PSB; Carmarthenshire PSB; Newport PSB and Powys PSB, who have supplied me with similar draft objectives.

**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 PSB Scrutiny Committee on how I have chosen to approach this statutory duty and the advice I have given.

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

Kind regards,



Sophie Howe