

01/08/17

Advice from the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales: Vale of Glamorgan PSB

Dear Vale of Glamorgan 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, which currently are:

- To enable people to get involved, participate in their local communities and shape local services.
- Tackle deprivation and reduce poverty.
- To give children the best start in life.
- To protect, enhance and value our environment.

My team have found talking to you regularly 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.

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

For each of your draft objectives and steps, I would like to understand what this means for the Vale of Glamorgan and how this is different to what you have done before. 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, which 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? How you are applying the sustainable development principle to shape your actions for the Vale of Glamorgan?

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 one 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. Welsh Government have been adding to the '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 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 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 risen 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?

This advice should be taken by all PSBs, but I appreciate every PSB has taken a different approach to drafting their well-being objectives. As such, I was interested to hear that your local Public Health representatives had initiated an exercise with the PSB, with the purpose of 'self-assessing' an organisation's policy, leadership / governance, activities / services, resources and impact / monitoring on the four initial high-level objectives. I appreciate this

was only part of the work you have done so far to establish draft objectives and steps, but I have tried to connect other PSBs (Powys and Monmouthshire, for example) with this approach, as they were seeking to do similar. If you found this exercise informative, I would encourage the PSB to continue to reflect on their contribution towards the objectives and steps as part of ongoing well-being assessment.

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 the Vale of Glamorgan. I was pleased to hear that some members have taken their responsibility as a PSB member seriously and that you are trying to foster a culture of collaboration. In some PSBs, they have done this through giving members objectives they will lead on, which I advise you to consider as an option. As such, continuity of membership, as you seek to collectively take steps to meet these objectives is vital.

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. With credit to your support officers, I am pleased to hear that you have started to adopt this method of meeting and 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. Although I am encouraged that your support team work closely with officers in other organisations and have established an editorial group to work on the plan, 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.

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

You will be aware that your draft objectives are intrinsically connected to one another. There are steps you will be able to take that will have a positive impact on more than one objective. For example, enabling people to participate in their local communities is likely to have a positive impact on protecting and enhancing the environment. Tackling inequality and reducing poverty will have a benefit in giving children the best start in life. I am pleased to see from the information packs supplied for each objective that you are already considering this. I

would advise that you seek as many opportunities as organisations to directly encourage this to happen and reflect this in the steps you intend to take to enable better integration of your services.

To enable people to get involved, participate in their local communities and shape local services.

As an area with high levels of volunteering, I am encouraged that you are building on this asset and have identified this as a broader opportunity to improve well-being. I am keen to understand the rationale of how you have determined the steps you will collectively take to meet this objective and how you are using the five ways of working to shape these steps.

For instance, you are clearly considering how best to involve and engage people currently, but how are you thinking about how people might communicate in the future? 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? 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; and according to the 2017 ONS survey, 87% of all adults in Wales were recent internet users (meaning they had used the internet in the last three months). Although some people are currently offline, and there is clearly a need for a tailored approach, 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" (<https://monmouthshire.madeopen.co.uk/>) 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. You have also identified a growing population of older people, with a likely increase in the number of older females living alone by 2035. As loneliness was identified as an issue in your well-being assessment, 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/>). You may wish to contact the Older People's Commissioner to discuss these ideas further.

I am also interested how you have considered integration of your steps as a PSB to meet this objective across the national well-being goals and your individual organisation's well-being objectives. Whilst you have rightly identified in your draft steps that effective integration of engagement opportunities by the public sector is important to reduce 'consultation fatigue' and wasted resources, this step alone would not maximise your contribution to the seven national well-being goals. How might you use this exercise to explore the collective community intelligence you have as organisations to enable you to pool evidence and act together?

In considering how you approach this step, you may want to learn from the work of Cwm Taf Public Services Board, who established an online collaborative Community Engagement Hub in 2012 (www.cwmtafhub.com). The Hub serves as a 'one-stop-shop' for partner engagement activity and has reduced siloed consultations in the area. The PSB continue to improve this, so their past learning may be valuable to you. There is also a need to utilise the intelligence collected by the third sector that may shine light on topics we never think to ask about. For example, in a WWF survey last year, two thirds of the Welsh sample said they want more of their energy to come from renewables. If these opinions are listened to and acted upon, we are likely to prevent feelings of disengagement or feeling ignored, that you have identified as an issue through your well-being assessment.

Only by understanding the lived experiences of people can we design services that are fit for current and future generations. Seeking to take a much more holistic view of someone's life, focusing on their strengths and helping people to help themselves is crucial to preventing problems from occurring or worsening. The case studies contained in this report by Locality demonstrate the financial and social costs of not taking this preventative approach. At every opportunity, the people of the Vale of Glamorgan should be asked what matters to them. For example, as Cardiff and Vale University Health Board and its PSB partners are currently engaging on a dementia strategy and on a strategy for mental health in older adults, what opportunities are there to not just understand their 'service-user needs', but take a more rounded approach to understand the range of things impacting on their well-being? How might this change the way you collectively take steps to improve well-being as a PSB?

With regards to building capacity in less affluent communities, a member of my team recently attended the Council's Older People's Forum and I was not surprised to hear how much of an asset this group of people are – with a self-published magazine also promoting their achievements. I would advise the PSB 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 achieve this objective.

You may not know who the potential community leaders and connectors are in some areas, so if you are committed to this, re-purpose your resources to do more work in communities, to begin to know a place as the people who live there know it. No doubt that doing this will help you in understanding how tackling inequality might be approached on a place-basis, and give you an understanding of the environment in that locality too. Most people will only get involved in something that directly impacts them, their family or the place where they spend time. The Centre for Regeneration Excellence Wales' 'Deep Place' study in Tredegar gives evidence on how an understanding of place can have multiple benefits.

There is a real opportunity here for you to think about how you maximise your contribution to the national goals, particularly a Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language. How can ways of involving people and encouraging volunteering encourage celebration of culture in the Vale of Glamorgan, encourage people to learn and use Welsh and enable participation in sport, culture and creative activities? Across Wales pupils who 'always felt listened to' are more likely to be 'hooked on sport' and enjoy PE and sport at school. 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. The Welsh Language Commissioner's team are also considering how they best help PSBs to consider the role they can play in growing the Welsh language, as set out in '[Cymraeg 2050](#)'. Please let my team know if you would like to connect with relevant individuals in these organisations.

I can see you are aware of the National Participation Standards and I would advise each of your organisations commit to these. [Participation Cymru](#) can support your officers in gaining the skills vital for effective and meaningful involvement. [Co-production Network Wales](#) could help you to identify and engage community leaders, contact the Director, Mark John-Williams for further advice.

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 Ceredigion PSB; Carmarthenshire PSB; Newport PSB and Powys PSB, who have supplied me with similar draft objectives.

[Tackle deprivation and reduce poverty.](#)

As your well-being assessment identified, there are pockets of deprivation in your area inconsistent with the average wealth of residents. In speaking to your team, they identified that 'tackling inequality' is the unsaid long-term vision of your PSB for future generations. If this is the case, I would suggest that you take time at your next PSB meeting to consider what your contribution might be to achieving an equal Vale of Glamorgan by 2050 and what short, medium and long-term steps will get you there.

Although there will be multiple reasons for the deprivation experienced in some parts of the county and no easy solutions, there are steps you could take as a PSB to strengthen the resilience of these areas and prevent the adverse impacts of poverty. Firstly, I would advise you to look at the economic impact you can have as public sector providers in these areas across the seven national well-being goals. For example, how can a collective commitment to sustainable, local procurement benefit your local economy? What employment opportunities can you offer, such as collaborative apprenticeship schemes, to local people far removed from the job market? How can you encourage jobs in the foundational economy, around local care, retail and food industries? Farming is the cornerstone of the £6.1billion Welsh food and drink supply chain industry which employs over 220,000 people, making it Wales' biggest employer. Given the rich agricultural land of the Vale, what opportunities are there to grow expertise in the green economy?

Secondly, for the steps you might take to meet this objective, I would suggest that you need to collaborate with Cardiff and Vale College, the higher education institutions in the region and the businesses. What skills might our 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. What social responsibilities have the private sector adopted in the area? Can these be directed towards more deprived communities? How are businesses coming together to drive positive, long-term change?

I have previously spoken about the opportunity presented by the Cardiff City Region. I would advise that you influence these negotiations with your draft objectives for the Vale of Glamorgan PSB in mind. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation estimates that poverty costs the whole region £2.2 billion per year. Increasing GDP has little impact on reducing inequalities, and in eight out of the ten Local Authority areas in the region, child poverty is above the Welsh average. I would therefore advise you to encourage that value within the City Region is not just placed on economic growth but on developing patterns of employment and work that are fit for the future, investing in the most deprived communities to encourage skills in technology, creativity and problem-solving to break inter-generational patterns of poverty.

Re-purposing resources to truly listen to and involve the people who live in the more deprived areas of the Vale is important to gain an understanding of how they perceive the assets and deficits of their community. In many of the well-being assessments, I read that communities branded as 'deprived' or 'in poverty' by statistics rarely define themselves like that and many people took pride in their local natural environment, community buildings and the way people get along together. Identifying the assets of these areas and involving people in how you build upon them will help in coming up with solutions to reduce inequality together.

For such a complex issue, integration across the seven well-being goals is particularly important in how you take steps to meet this draft objective. For example, housing quality is consistently an issue that arises out of deprivation, which has an impact on health, social cohesion and personal finances. As your assessment found, older people are more vulnerable to fuel poverty and the health risks associated with cold and damp conditions; and your assessment highlights the high number of older people living alone in owner-occupied properties. Recent statistics from Fuel Poverty Coalition Wales show that 1 in 3 households in Wales live in fuel poverty, with an estimated cost of cold-related admissions amounting to over £100 million and causing 475 deaths per year. Fuel poverty is currently a bigger killer than alcohol related deaths in Wales. Taking steps to ease fuel poverty and generally improving housing quality will have benefits elsewhere in the public sector. So, collaborating with registered social landlords and private landlords to take action on how new and existing homes could become more energy efficient might be a step the PSB wish to explore. The Passivhaus Standard is one such way of building and refitting homes for the future (www.passivhaus.org.uk).

I am pleased to see in your information pack for this objective that you have looked beyond the economic aspect of reducing inequality and deprivation, in considering the issue that those living in poverty are also most at risk of environmental impacts. Here, this objective directly impacts on your other objective to enhance the environment. As such, I would be interested in how you might seek to shape your steps to meet this objective across the seven national well-being goals.

You have identified that air emission scores are higher in the deprived areas of your county. As your assessment identifies, in these communities, respiratory diseases and long-term illness are also high. Your assessment has

also shown that land quality is poor in the majority of these deprived areas, they are in close proximity to waste disposal and industrial sites and that they are at risk of flooding. What steps can you take to reverse some of these effects or prevent future generations from having to deal with the situation worsening? You have identified a draft action under this objective of increasing access to green space, perhaps there are opportunities to open up public land for this purpose? I was also interested to read that the tree canopy is low in the Vale of Glamorgan, what opportunities are there to encourage green infrastructure across the area, involving communities in benefitting the 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. The Wales Coastal Path, for example, attracted nearly three million visitors and was worth an estimated £16m to the Welsh economy between 2011 and 2012. Furthermore, the health benefits of living with a view of green space are worth up to £300 per person per year.

Again, draft objectives around reducing inequality are common across Wales, including Caerphilly PSB, Monmouthshire PSB, Powys PSB and your neighbouring Bridgend PSB.

[To give children the best start in life.](#)

For each of your draft objectives and the steps you seek to take, I would advise you to be clear about what this means for the Vale of Glamorgan in your well-being planning. What local evidence have you used (or will you use) to understand the specific areas of successful preventative interventions in the Vale? What local services will be impacted if you redirect investment to the first 1000 days of a child's life? How might taking an adverse childhood experience (ACE) informed approach play out in reality for your organisations?

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. The costs of this 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).

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. As you have already identified, I would advise you to use the knowledge gathered by Public Health Wales on the 'First 1000 days' of a child's life and the benefits that can be realised from investing in the early years to determine what steps you can take now to improve the well-being of our future generations. 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.

As public services, we often treat the symptoms of ACEs, rather than the root causes. Therefore, I would advise that you look at the whole life cycle of your population in meeting this draft objective, as children are part of

families, who are part of communities. Understanding the experiences of people who have been through trauma in their lives through involving children and families in shaping services might help you as a PSB to establish the root causes and take action on place-based approach. For instance, a draft action under your objective to tackle deprivation is around a pilot preventative programme for meeting the needs of those with complex needs, like mental health, domestic abuse and substance misuse. I would seek to integrate this work with this objective and echoing my earlier advice, seek to understand people holistically – rather than as a 'substance misuse service user' or a 'domestic abuse victim'.

I have been interested in some work an organisation have done in Newcastle. Social Finance are a not-for-profit organisation who specialise in in-depth analysis and looking at social return on investment, and were commissioned by Newcastle City Council to do some deeper digging for them to help them address the problem with NEETs (Not in Education, Employment and Training). Whilst traditional focus looks at GCSE attainment, what this analysis shows in reality is that academic achievement is not the most significant factor at all, instead showing that 67% of 17-19 year olds who were NEET had come from the 25% of 17-19 year olds who had had during their childhood, multiple contacts with social services. The research showed that those who had had as little as six interactions with social services spent almost three times longer out of education or training.

I also advise you look at the [New Economics Foundation work](#) on investing in children, 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. This twin-track approach encompasses the child, their family, and their community.

I work closely with the Children's Commissioner, whose office would be happy to advise on engaging with children and young people and taking a child centred approach. Alyson Francis, Director of the ACE Support Hub, has also recently worked with my office to write to you outlining the work of the Hub and offering support to PSBs to translate knowledge and policy into practice. 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. We are working with the [Good Practice Exchange Wales to run a webinar on understanding ACEs on the 7th November](#), which may be helpful to you.

As Alyson stated, 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 PSB might want to consider:

- How do we prevent ACEs from occurring? Are we making the most of our opportunities to identify risk, are we using our knowledge about ACEs to inform risk assessments, are we effectively sharing data to spot potential risks? Or can we increase protective factors (a trusted/stable adult-child relationship, feeling involved and connected, feeling able to overcome hardship, understanding emotions and how to deal with them)?
- How do we stop the impact of ACEs on an individual getting worse? For example, are there opportunities to provide early intervention, to support individuals before they reach a crisis point, or a threshold for

statutory intervention? Do we have systems to capture those who might need early help, which are multi-agency in approach to avoid several professionals working with the same individual?

- How do we stop ACEs being repeated? For example, how do we break intergenerational cycles and build up resilience and work with people in an ACE-informed (or trauma informed) way?

To protect, enhance and value our environment.

I can understand why, as an area with outstanding agricultural land, a beautiful coastline and beaches, and access to green space, you have chosen this draft objective as a PSB. Importantly, seeing your own roles in protecting the environment for future generations will need to be clear in the steps you will take to meet this objective. You have rightly recognised in your assessment that the environment is a major asset for the people of the Vale of Glamorgan but, the long-term impacts of extreme weather events through our changing climate pose particular risks for your area. The seven national well-being goals provide you with a framework to consider what action you can take to mitigate, manage or resolve these risks over the short, medium and long-term.

For example, much of the poorer communities of the county are most at risk from flooding and erosion. Your assessment has rightly identified that rising sea levels put many areas of the Vale of Glamorgan at high risk. Current expected annual damage to residential properties in Wales is estimated to be £22 million. On the flipside, 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. 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.

You also have issues around CO2 emissions and air quality across the county. Air quality is also a significant issue for parts of your county, disproportionately affecting deprived communities. I was saddened to read that the Vale has one of the highest levels of man-made air pollution in Wales and is higher than the Welsh, Scottish and Northern Irish averages, with this estimating to contribute to approximately 50 deaths each year in the county! Acknowledging that this is not directly in your control with Aberthaw Power Station surely affecting air quality, the PSB needs to find ways to collaborate with heavy industry now and in the future to reduce their harmful emissions. In Sweden, where close to 100% of household waste is recycled, half of this waste is burned to produce energy at incineration plants. The appropriate use of filters at these plants results in 0.01% of toxic fumes emitted.

Improving air quality and sustaining your natural environment also requires the involvement of residents. How can you better listen to their motivations for using their cars, rather than active travel? How can you link your first draft objective to the small contribution their involvement might make to mitigating the effect of CO2 emissions

and improving the environment? [The Welsh Government recently published](#) carbon emission levels subdivided by Local Authority.

Your assessment noted that more investigation is needed into use of agricultural land in the area and its impact on other aspects of well-being. Taking a collective step to collaborating with land owners and, just like private business, investigating how they approach their business responsibly might provide you with valuable actions to be able to make a positive impact on the environment. As the only county in Wales with an international airport, you may also want to collaborate as a PSB with Welsh Government on the environmental impact of the economic actions taken in the future if the enterprise zone is expanded.

More widely, I would advise you to consider how you encourage sustainable tourism in Wales. The environmental assets of your area are fantastic, so how can you connect the beaches, parks, sites of special interest and historical significance with active travel opportunities, public transport and, at the same time, benefit local business? This involves a place-based focus on planning and a wider focus on the environmental, social and cultural well-being of an area – rather than pure economic gain. As such, I am encouraged to see that one of your identified draft actions is in lobbying public transport providers.

I would advise you to truly collaborate and influence one another as public sector leaders in the steps you take to meet this objective. What can you do, as Chief Executive, Chair of Leader, now to mitigate the effects of our loss of environment and be more globally responsible? 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. 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 and the appropriate strategic actions required. 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. As part of the Project, NRW has 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.

I will be hosting an event in November, in partnership with Welsh Government and Natural Resources Wales to: explore how the public service 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. There is a good example from Swansea, whose community owned solar panel project started from a point about how do we build social capital/asset sustainably by using an asset based approach.

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.

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 Vale of Glamorgan 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