



FLINTSHIRE PUBLIC SERVICES BOARD
BWRDD GWASANAETHAU CYHOEDDUS SIR Y FFLINT

AN ASSESSMENT OF WELL-BEING IN FLINTSHIRE

JANUARY 2022



**LLESIANT
CENEDLAETHAU'R DYFODOL
WELL-BEING OF
FUTURE GENERATIONS**

Introduction

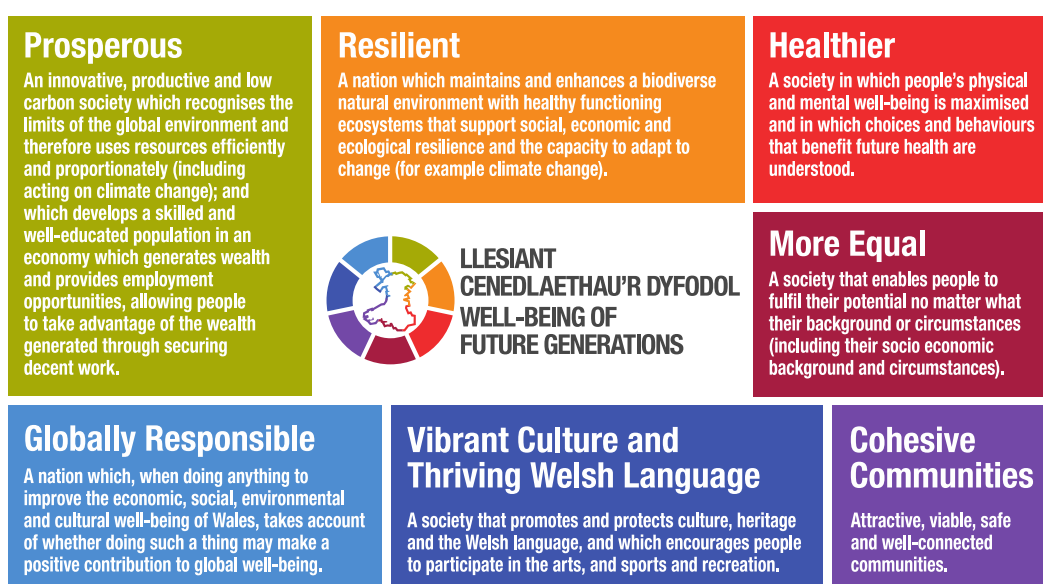
In Wales we have a law that requires public bodies to work together to improve our environment, economy, society, and culture. This requires consideration of the long-term impact of decisions: for people and the planet, now and in the future. This is called the **Well-being of Future Generations Act** (referred to as ‘the Act’ in this document).

The Act puts in place **seven connected well-being goals** for Wales (which can be seen in Figures 1 and 2 below).

Figure 1. Well-being goals



Figure 2. Descriptions of the well-being goals



Source for Figures 1 and 2: Welsh Government (2020d)

This is about ensuring that future generations have at least the same quality of life as we do now.

The Act provides for better decision-making by setting five ways of working:

- **Long-term:** Take account of the long-term
- **Prevention:** Help to prevent problems occurring or getting worse
- **Integration:** Take an integrated approach
- **Collaboration:** Take a collaborative approach
- **Involvement:** Consider and involve people of all ages and diversity

There are several public bodies who are subject to the Act, including Welsh Ministers, local authorities, local health boards, national park authorities, fire and rescue services, National Museum of Wales.

In addition, the Act also puts a duty on specified public bodies *to act jointly* to improve the economic, social, environmental, and cultural well-being of their area via **public services boards**.

Each public services board must assess the state of well-being in their area – a well-being assessment. This well-being assessment is then used as a basis to develop the area’s well-being plan.

In undertaking this well-being assessment we have taken a mixed-methods and analytical approach, which has involved:

- **Primary research.**
This is research that we have done ourselves for the purposes of the well-being assessment. This has included hosting physical spaces to hear community voices.
- **Secondary research.**
This is research that has been undertaken for other purposes and that has been used to help inform the well-being assessment. This includes a range of published and unpublished resources (reports, papers, quantitative data, qualitative research data, TEDxGWe conference).
- **Descriptive analysis.**
This is describing the data and uncovering any patterns or trends. It is looking at and describing what has happened in the past.
This has involved analysis by teams connected to the topic and by teams independent of the topic. As part of the latter, this has involved an independent analyst supporting the Public Services Board and citizens analysis, an innovative approach we have been piloting in partnership with the other North Wales Public Services Board (more information on this can be found in Appendix A).
- **Diagnostic analysis.**
This seeks to delve deeper to understand why something happened. This has been undertaken by an independent analyst supporting the Public Services Board.

A fuller explanation of the approaches that we have taken to help inform this well-being assessment can be found in [Appendices A-C](#) together with a list of the sources and references we have used (these can be found at the end of this document).

It is important to note that we have been working alongside our colleagues who are developing North Wales' Population Needs Assessment. Within this piece of work, they have been collecting and providing a narrative of each local authority area. This has ensured that we are not duplicating effort and that we have synergy across our local authority area and region. The draft Population Needs Assessment has informed our well-being assessment.

Whilst Wrexham and Flintshire Public Services Boards are currently independent in terms of their governance, we recognise that there is value in working more closely together. We have commenced some of this joint working, which is discussed further on. To facilitate joint working more easily in the future, we have developed a similar structure to our well-being assessments.

Here are the key things we would like to share with you.

We appreciate that not everyone will want to read the full well-being assessment so we have provided a summary of sections and an outline of the information they contain.

- [Section 1](#). Key findings – interconnections and root causes, providing an overview of interconnections and root causes for the assessed local well-being.
- [Section 2](#). Reflections on where we've come from, where we are now, and where we are heading. This section reflects on the previous well-being assessment and well-being plan 2018-2023, along with consideration of future trends.
- [Section 3](#). An assessment of well-being in Flintshire. This section contains the findings of the assessment of well-being considering the four well-being pillars, with summary information boxes for each, and three main areas of interconnections and root causes.
- [References and Appendices](#). Including a summary of limitations and opportunities.

Section 1: Key findings – interconnections and root causes.

The four pillars of well-being – society, environment, culture, and economy – are intertwined, they are not separate. Whilst we have presented the data in the main body of the assessment under each of the four well-being pillars (under section 3), there are inevitably interconnections. Some of these have been referred to ‘lightly’. However, for the purposes of the key findings, we want to tease out both the interconnections and the root causes and therefore preventative opportunities for Flintshire. Being evidence-informed, this will also help to bridge the well-being assessment and well-being planning stages.

With this in mind, we have highlighted three main areas: inequalities; social determinants of health; and Adverse Childhood Experiences.

Inequalities.

The impact of the pandemic has exacerbated inequalities. We have identified three areas that will have the most profound inequalities in a future Wales.

- **Future of work.**

The Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted entrenched labour market inequalities, particularly for young people, whose earnings were only just beginning to recover from the effects of the 2008 recession on wages and job progression.

In addition, women, disabled people, and ethnic minorities were more likely to be working in low-paid, precarious work in the sectors that were shut down, and were therefore the ones who lost jobs, working hours and earnings at disproportionate rates during the first lockdown.

- **Climate change.**

Climate change is one of the most defining problems of our time with implications for the health and stability of existing and future generations. The changes to the global atmosphere described by the term ‘climate change’ is caused by human activities that release greenhouse gases e.g., burning fossil fuels. In Wales, climate change has led to an increase in regional flooding, winds, drought, and temperature fluctuations, with direct effects on transport, agriculture, housing, business, and social and cultural activities.

The poorest and most marginalised populations are least responsible for climate change but are the most likely to be exposed to its negative effects, more susceptible to damage and have the least resources to respond, cope and recover.

Climate change mitigation could benefit marginalised communities if done well but could increase inequalities if the impacts on different groups in society are not factored in. It is important, therefore, that climate change does not become separated from equalities thinking and understanding.

- **Demographic change.**

Wales’ population is the highest it has ever been, but it is also ageing because of falling birth rates and migration. The population is expected to continue to grow

and then fall as we move to 2050, although this may be slowed by improvements in life expectancy. However, there is a growing understanding that such improvements are not evenly distributed across different population groups.

An ageing population will disrupt how health and social care, employment and education, and pensions operate, and these systems will need to adapt if they are to function in the long-term. Future challenges need to be tackled with the needs of all generations in mind or risk disadvantaging one at the expense of another and/or falling short of achieving ambitions. A 'care-led recovery' puts childcare and the care needs of older people on an equal footing with 'green jobs' in benefitting health, the environment and the economy.

Social determinants of health.

The social determinants of health are the non-medical factors that influence well-being. They are the conditions in which people are born, grow, work, live, and age, and the wider set of forces and systems shaping the conditions of daily life. These forces and systems include economic policies and systems, development agendas, social norms, social policies, and political systems. They have an important influence on inequalities in well-being.

Marmot (2020) identified five domains of ways in which to improve well-being:

- Give every child the best start in life.
- Enable all children, young people, and adults to maximise their capabilities and have control of their lives.
- Create fair employment and good work for all.
- Ensure a healthy standard of living for all.
- Create and develop healthy and sustainable places and communities.

Each of these domains could be viewed as the **root causes** to our communities' well-being outcomes. Recognising that some of the levers to change sit outside of the Public Services Board and our communities, **if we address these things together, in our own place, with our own communities we will set a path to improving well-being in a holistic way.**

Adverse Childhood Experiences.

Adverse Childhood Experiences are stressful experiences that children can be directly or indirectly exposed to while growing up. Given their nature, they are connected to all the social determinants of health and should be seen as part of this wider set of experiences - experiences that can directly harm a child (Adverse Childhood Experiences) or can indirectly affect a child through the environments they live (Adverse Community Environments).

The resulting trauma can continue to affect people as adults, long after it has happened. It is for these reasons that we wanted to specifically highlight this in our well-being assessment.

We know that if we do nothing, Adverse Childhood Experiences can lead to:

- disruptive nervous, hormonal, and immune development
- social and emotional and learning problems
- adoption of health harming behaviour and crime
- non-communicable disease, disability, social problems, low productivity
- early death.

Whilst the focus should be on preventing Adverse Childhood Experiences (and Adverse Community Environments), we must also provide support to those who have already been impacted by Adverse Childhood Experiences. Part of this could be helping to develop children's resilience.

Section 2: Reflections on where we've come from, where we are now, and where we are heading

This well-being assessment is a line in the sand of where we are in January 2022. In articulating this, we have reflected on:

- **where we've come from** – our reflections and learning from both the 2017 well-being assessment and our well-being plan and what we are doing
- **where we are now and where we're heading** – what do we know about how things look and feel now and what are the future trends and dynamics that are likely to affect Flintshire

Where we've come from

This is the second well-being assessment we have produced as a Public Services Board. The first one was in 2017 when the Act was still in its infancy (if you would like to have a look at our 2017 well-being assessment, it can be found [here](#)).

For us, the previous assessment:

- was largely an academic exercise
- it was very large in size and the format could have been friendlier
- a lot of work was put into collecting and collating data, which was useful. However, we recognise further analysis of the data would have assisted in the production of Flintshire's well-being plan
- the assessment was primarily led by the local authority.

This is contextual. To some extent it reflects the infancy of the Act and our working with it. We did recognise, however, that as a Public Services Board we needed to develop ourselves as a strong strategic partnership for Flintshire, to tackle the complex issues that we face, and to develop our thinking together. We have made some significant developments in this area since.

Whilst Flintshire and Wrexham Public Services Boards are currently independent in terms of their governance, we recognise that there is value in us working more closely together. Indeed, to commence this joint working, we have been developing our understanding of systems leadership and how we can apply this to our work as Public Services Boards.

As part of the area's Covid-19 recovery planning, a situation analysis was undertaken and from it four strategic themes were identified:

- Health (Track, Trace and Protect) – *led by Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board*
- Health and social care – *led by Public Health Wales*
- Economy – *led by the North Wales Ambition Board*
- Community resilience – *led by Flintshire and Wrexham Public Services Boards*

It is an important step in our development as Public Services Boards that the community resilience work should be led jointly by Flintshire and Wrexham Public Services Boards. Together we work on the sub-regional themes of:

- Children and young people
- Environment
- Mental health and well-being
- Poverty and inequality

Current projects under these themes include:

- Children's University – a partnership with Wrexham Glyndwr University, schools and learning destinations. We encourage and celebrate participation in extra-curricular activities inside and outside of school (e.g., sports, art, culture, STEM, outdoor learning) to raise aspirations and develop a love of learning.
- Social Prescribing Community of Practice – a dynamic learning community made up of people with a shared passion for delivering social prescribing across North Wales reflecting and working together on the things that matter.

We have also been at the forefront of advocating and supporting the development of the *North Wales Research and Insight Partnership* (for more information on 'the Partnership' please see Appendix D). The Partnership came to fruition in 2021 with a vision to collaboratively shape the North Wales we want to live in now and in the future by using evidence, insight, and two-way engagement to understand the challenges and opportunities, and co-produce approaches to address and harness them locally and regionally.

The Partnership embodies new ways of working to:

- **Integrate** our approaches, evidence, and resources across all 'systems' working together to understand the challenges and opportunities at a local and regional level
- **Involve and work alongside our communities** engaging all groups in two-way meaningful and co-produced approaches to achieve our well-being goals
- Meet the needs of the current and future generations by taking a **long-term, preventative** approach
- Focus on understanding **root causes of key challenges**, and how these are **interconnected**, to inform our approach to tackling them
- Develop leaders' ability to be **evidence and insight informed**

Alongside this, as a North Wales Public Services Board collective, we have recently been successful in becoming one of the 'projects' to receive support from the Co-production Network for Wales for the next five years through the National Lottery Community Fund. This is to ensure we miss no opportunity to add value to our work through the effective application of the values, principles, and tools of co-production.

Co-production is about sharing power and responsibility between those who receive and those who deliver services: a shift from doing things *for* people, to *with* people – working together as equal partners. It is closely aligned with the 'involvement principle' of the Act, and

integral if we are to make a lasting and sustainable impact to well-being outcomes for people and communities across our region.

There are synergies between these. As such, the Co-production Network for Wales are working alongside and with the Partnership.

Although still embryonic, through the Partnership we have enabled a couple of pieces of work for the benefit of all the North Wales Public Services Boards.

Seldom heard voices. We are keen to hear from and involve citizens in the work of the Public Services Board. We recognise, however, that there are still some voices that are seldom heard. We have been harnessing the knowledge and experience of the North East Wales Community Resilience Team to capture community voices through their day-to-day activities with people and groups. This insight has been fed into this assessment. Working with existing teams and networks is key for us going forward, not just because it's more efficient and connected, but it is asset driven.

Citizen analysis. Public involvement, engagement and co-production are not new in Wales. The analysis and interpretation of research data or consultation data is, however, still largely left in the hands of 'the experts'. This is problematic if it means some perspectives and ways of interpreting data are not available to those making policy or service decisions. An additional issue with most current public involvement work is that the voices most often heard are those of people who self-select to become involved. This is problematic democratically as most of the population remain unheard and disengaged. It also presents difficulties in treating the findings as evidence.

Through the Partnership, we are piloting 'citizen analysis'. This involves testing an approach using intersectional purposive sampling to expand whose voices are heard, and then using a combination of individual work and collective online workshops, support citizens to work with data about the climate emergency and North Wales. We have chosen the climate emergency as a topic area for several reasons: it is something that every Public Service Board is interested in; we have a range of data from different sources; and most people will have a view on.

The pilot commenced in January 2022. At the time of writing the well-being assessment, we have only been able to reflect on the initial findings. What it does demonstrate is our intent to explore different methodological approaches in the spirit of the Act. This a method that we intend to develop further.

Our Well-being Plan 2018-2023

In 2018, we produced our first well-being plan. We acknowledged that the plan was not about 'business as usual' that we were at the start of a long-term journey that will shape our future for the next 25 years or more. We agreed 5 priorities:

- Community Safety
- Economy and Skills
- Environment

- Healthy and Independent Living
- Resilient Communities

They can be seen within our well-being plan [here](#).

As you will see in the forthcoming section, whilst these themes resonate with the key findings from this assessment, when it comes to the well-being planning stage of our work, the priorities and action may well differ.

We recognise that **this well-being assessment is a line in the sand of where we are now, in January 2022**. Our intention as both a Public Services Board and an active member of the North Wales Research and Insight Partnership, with the support of the Co-production Network for Wales, is that our understanding of well-being in Flintshire through data, analysis, and involvement is both iterative and innovative.

Where we are now and where we are heading

The megatrends and drivers that are likely to shape Flintshire's future

A key aspect of our assessment is to understand the big trends and drivers that are likely to shape Flintshire's future, and to provide insight into how we can best prepare for the future. Welsh Government, in their 2021 *Future Trends Report*, have identified four megatrends which are most likely to pose risks or opportunities for Wales. These are:

- People and population
- Planetary health and limits
- Inequalities
- Technology

Given the contribution that the public services make to the well-being goals, Welsh Government have also identified two public service drivers that are important to consider:

- Public finances
- Public sector demand and digital

Figure 3, on the following page, shows these 6 trends and the drivers that sit within them.

Figure 3. Future trends and drivers



Source: Welsh Government (2021a)

These megatrends and drivers will manifest themselves in different ways, in different communities, across different geographies, and across the well-being goals. They have been used as a frame for our assessment. It is important to note that whilst these are the megatrends and drivers that have been identified, they are not the only things that are important to assess in Flintshire.

The Government Office for Science (2017) has identified four stages to embedding long-term strategic thinking in the planning and strategy process. They are:

- Gathering intelligence about the future
- Exploring the dynamics of change
- Describing what the future might be like
- Developing and testing policy and strategy

The first stage (gathering intelligence about the future) is this well-being assessment. For us, the other stages best sit within the well-being planning phase. We intend to use the tools on offer to have *evidence-informed* conversations about what the dynamics of change are and what the future might look like. This will be a co-produced with our communities and our partners.

Section 3: An assessment of well-being in Flintshire

In providing a picture of what well-being in Flintshire looks and feels like now, we have been guided by what data is available. Appendices A-C provide an overview of this, together with our reflections on limitations and opportunities with data, which can be found in Appendix E.

In terms of the Act, there are four pillars of well-being – **society**, **environment**, **culture**, and **economy**. These are intertwined, they are not separate. Sustainability is a paradigm for thinking about the future in which these four pillars are balanced in the pursuit of an improved quality of life. In this section, we have included data, analysis, and discussion under each of the four well-being pillars. This is one of the challenges of presenting data and analysis about interconnected topics. We have tried to overcome this in the discussion that follows.

Society

People and population

To help illustrate in broad terms the people and population of Flintshire we have utilised the ‘**Flintshire as a village of 100 people**’ concept. This has been developed as part of the North Wales Population Needs Assessment (North Wales Social Care and Well-being Services Improvement Collaborative, 2022) and can be found at Figure 4 below. It includes demographic information, lifestyle behaviours, health and well-being, and the wider determinants of health.

This is supplemented by Flintshire’s profile from the Thriving Places Index¹ (you can see this in Appendix F) – a place-based tool which measures how well a place is doing at growing the conditions for equitable, sustainable well-being.

Trends affecting people and population in Flintshire, like anywhere else, are being driven by changing demographic patterns, including reducing fertility rates and increasing life expectancies. Changing population structures, and developments in the ways people want to live, work, and travel, are reflected in trends towards an ageing population and associated health trends, changing housing need, and changing work and life patterns.

Population projections consist of four components of change (births, deaths, international migration, and internal migration). Natural population change will decrease when there are more deaths than births. Migration also influences population change.

The population of Wales is projected to increase by 2.7% to 3.22 million by 2028, and by 3.7% to 3.26 million by 2043. The rate of growth is not expected to be equal. In Flintshire, during the period up to 2028, our population is expected to increase by 2.1%. (Welsh Government, 2021c, North Wales Social Care and Well-being Services Improvement Collaborative, 2022).

Following the global trend, Wales is projected to have an ageing population up to 2043. While dependent on future health improvements, it is likely an ageing population will increase the

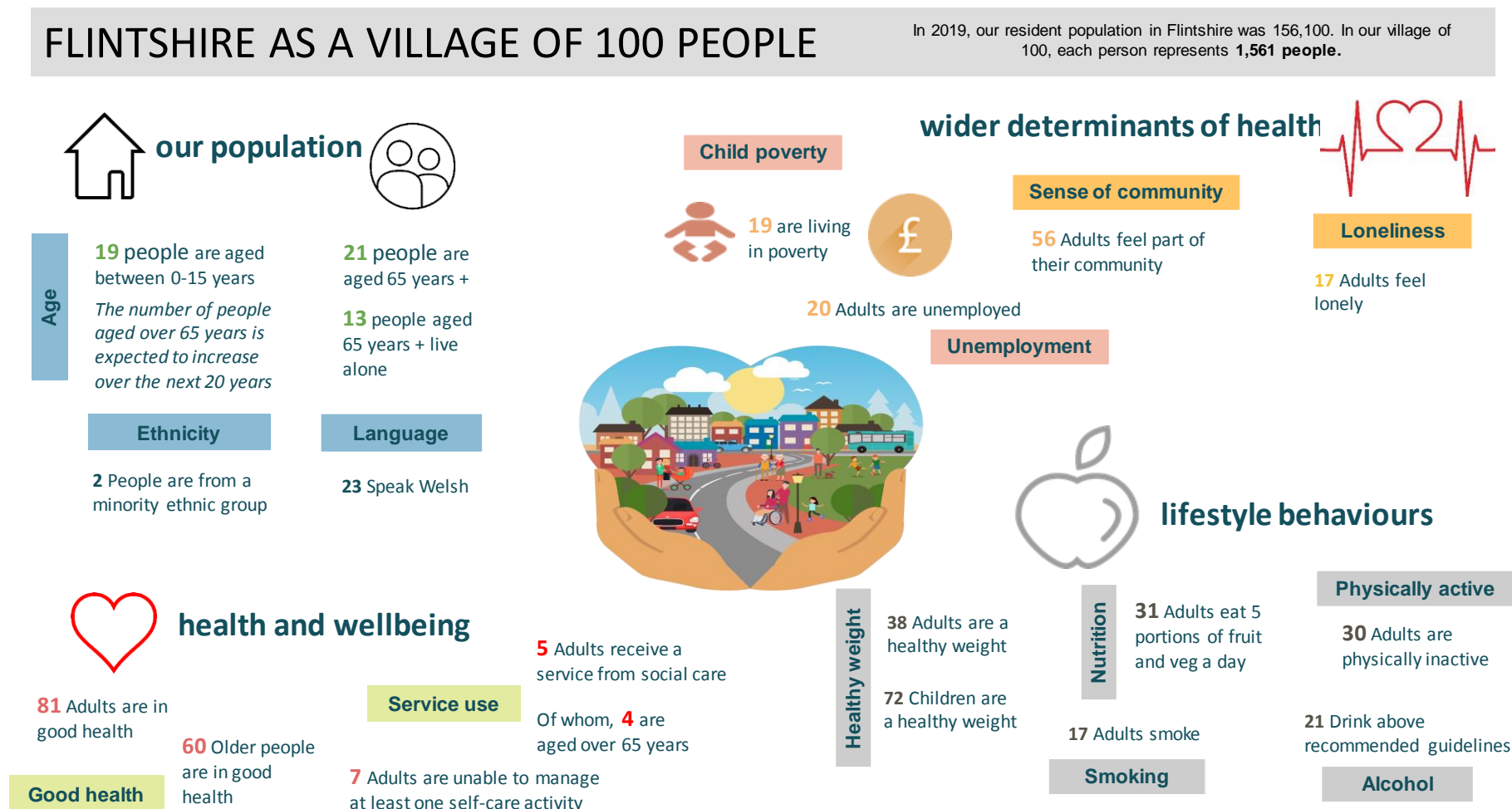
¹ Measures are grouped into 3 dimensions – local conditions, equality, and sustainability – and then into a raft of domains and subdomains. Z-scores are created and turned into a scale of 0-10.

amount of ill-health with more chronic conditions and multi-morbidities. Demand for health and social care will therefore increase, at a time where there are fewer people of working age to fund these services.

Unpaid care, which is disproportionately taken up by women, may become more important if adaptations to current services cannot be provided and subsequent social and economic problems might arise from this. The success of the economy will become increasingly tied to the ability of older workers being able to continue to work for longer.

Other trends, such as the adoption of new technologies in work, may facilitate longer working lives. Housing needs will also change as the population ages, with an increased need for housing that can adapt to people's changing needs as they age.

Figure 4
Flintshire as a village of 100 people



There is a growing demand for respite for all ages. Sourcing respite for children and adults with complex needs, including health needs, remains an ongoing challenge (Flintshire County Council, 2019). In addition, local building-based respite opportunities were severely impacted by the pandemic, with only emergency places being offered.

The number of children becoming looked after is increasing in Flintshire, following regional trends (Welsh Government Children Looked After Census as in North Wales Population Needs Assessment, 2022). Increasing foster care and reducing out of county placements are also priority areas (Flintshire County Council, 2019).

Childcare in Flintshire is well-located and meets the needs of most parents; childcare is generally reliable, and most parents believe childcare is of good quality. However, there are clear areas of pressure, and gaps, which have been identified through the childcare assessment of demand and supply (Flintshire Council, 2021).

During the period up to 2028, Flintshire will see a small decrease in the number of children and young people, 0–15 year olds, across Wales. For the working age population, we will also see a decrease in Flintshire. And we will see an increase in the number of people aged 65 and over (Welsh Government, 2021b).

Life expectancy is increasing in Wales, although in recent years improvement has slowed, with a decline in the most recent period reflecting the impact of COVID-19. The most up to date data available (2010-2014) for Flintshire shows that females have a higher life expectancy than males (82.4 and 79.0 respectively). This is broadly comparable with the Wales average (82.3 and 78.2). In terms of healthy life expectancy, despite women living longer, their healthy life expectancy is similar to that of men (68.9 – females, 67.7 – males). Meaning that they are in ill-health for longer – women are in ill-health for 13.5 years and men 11.3 years (StatsWales, 2016).

There is a relationship between the level of self-reported health and the level of deprivation experienced by adults in Wales. The gap between those in the most and least deprived quintiles reporting good health has widened very slightly in the past few years. The overall trend however remains fairly stable with little change in those living in good health across each of the groups (Welsh Government, 202b).

For Flintshire, as for the rest of North Wales, hypertension, asthma, and diabetes remain the main chronic conditions that the population experiences. The rates of these conditions do, however, vary across the local authority area (see Figure 5, the red text denotes where the rates are above the Wales average. We have used the areas that the Population Needs Assessment works with).

Figure 5 Chronic conditions experienced by Flintshire’s population

Area	% living in the most deprived areas	Hypertension	Asthma	Diabetes
North East Flintshire	12.7%	15.5%	6.8%	5.7%
North West Flintshire	19.3%	17.3%	6.9%	6.2%
South Flintshire	3%	15.9%	7.2%	5.8%
Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board	-	16.8%	7.2%	6.1%
Wales	-	15.8%	7.1%	6.1%

Source: North Wales Population Needs Assessment

Mental health

The World Health Organisation (2004) defines mental health as: *a state of well-being in which every individual realises his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community.*

Between 2016/17 and 2018/19 people over the age of 16 in Flintshire have seen an increase in their mental well-being² from 51.9 to 53.5. In Wales as a whole, there has been an increase in people’s mental health over the same period. Comparable data for the period during the pandemic is not yet available.

For North Wales, 19% of children ages 10 or over have mental health problems. This is higher than the Wales average of 14% (North Wales Social Care and Well-being Services Improvement Collaborative, 2022).

A small local survey indicates that young people in Flintshire feel that the pandemic has negatively affected their mental health, particularly worsening levels of anxiety, loneliness, and depression. (Flintshire County Council and Wrexham County Borough Council, 2021).

Summary

- Flintshire’s population is expected to increase by 2.1% up to 2028.
- Flintshire will experience a decrease in the number of children and young people (0-15 years old) and those of working age.
- Flintshire will experience an increase in the number of people who are 65 years or older.
- Life expectancy is increasing.
- In Flintshire, women are in ill-health for 13.5 years, compared to 11.3 years for men.
- Older people in Flintshire are presenting with more advanced deterioration of conditions.
- Demand for health and social care is going to increase.
- Unpaid care is disproportionately taken up by women.

² This is measured using the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale. The 14-item scale has 5 response categories, summed to provide a single score. The items are all worded positively and cover both feeling and functioning aspects of mental wellbeing.

- There is a growing demand for respite and support for parent carers.
- 19% of children in North Wales who are 10+ years old have mental health problems. This is higher than the Welsh average of 14%.
- Childcare in Flintshire is well-located and meets the needs of most parents; childcare is generally reliable, and most parents believe childcare is of good quality. However, there are clear areas of pressure, and gaps.
- In Flintshire, young people feel that the pandemic had negatively affected their mental health, particularly worsening levels of anxiety, loneliness, and depression.

Economy

Economic prosperity influences an individual's well-being through its effect on communities and local areas, as well as its effect on personal finances and circumstances. Research has shown that people's level of well-being can be associated with changes in aspects of economic prosperity or deprivation at the local level (WCfPP, 2021a).

For Flintshire, the 2011 Census data (albeit quite out of date) shows the most employment activity is in manufacturing (18.9%), followed by wholesale and retail trade (16.3%), human health and social work (11.1%), education (8.6%), and construction (7.7%) (Nomis, 2012).

Since the 2008 financial crisis, productivity growth has dropped well below the historic trend. In Wales, the highest productivity is in South Wales, and Wrexham and Flintshire (Welsh Government, 2021b). The slow growth in productivity has also been reflected in slow growth in living standards.

Job creation has occurred unevenly across local authority areas in Wales. Most experienced a positive change in the number of jobs between 2001 and 2019. In Flintshire we saw a 2% increase in the number of jobs during this period.

There has been some growth in temporary and zero-hours employment, over the long run, the share of employment accounted for by permanent employees on full time contracts is broadly unchanged.

Increasing employment may provide more opportunities for people in Wales to improve their economic well-being, however there are still high rates of in-work poverty. Increasing employment also does not necessarily equate to improved economic outcomes. Those in employment may still experience poor outcomes if the quality of employment is poor and other challenges to getting out of poverty remain because of economic policies (Public Health Wales, 2021c).

While the overall qualification profile is increasing in Wales, an educational attainment gap remains. The increasing opportunities that may be driven by improving qualifications will not be felt equally if groups facing barriers to educational achievement are not reaching the same level.

Impacts of Covid-19 and Brexit.

Both COVID-19 and Brexit have resulted in negative economic shocks for the Welsh economy that will exacerbate inequalities. COVID-19 and Brexit will both have short-term, medium-term and long-term negative implications for the Welsh economy, and in turn, for well-being.

The negative effects of COVID-19 and/or Brexit are being felt differently by different sectors. Among sectors shut down because of COVID-19 related restrictions, the accommodation and food sector has probably been the most negatively affected. The agricultural and food, automotive, steel and manufacturing and tourism sectors have been particularly hard hit by Brexit (WCfPP, 2021a).

A recent report prepared by Flintshire County Council and drawing on multiple external sources of data highlighted that:

- One in five businesses had stopped trading or reduced trading, with some sectors having been hit harder.
- In North Wales the most redundancies notified following COVID-19 were in the manufacturing, accommodation and food services sectors, with Flintshire and Wrexham the most significantly affected.
- Unemployment however has fallen in North Wales, with the proportion of people unemployed in Flintshire as of October 2021 being 3.9% - lower than the Wales figure of 4.3%.
- Manufacturing, which is now reported to make up 28.2% of Flintshire's employment, seems to be making a strong recovery.
- Other sectors severely impacted by COVID-19 and/or Brexit include construction; food and farming; health and social care; and tourism and hospitality. Whilst some of these sectors are showing signs of recovery, issues remain around supply chain, recruitment and growing demand. Some of these may place long-term constraints on the sector(s).
- It would seem there is a mismatch between the aspirations and skills of young people and the needs of the labour market, which may become a long-term issue.

Source: Flintshire County Council (2022)

A number of financial support packages have been made available by Welsh and UK Governments to support businesses during COVID-19 and Flintshire County Council have played a key role in delivering local grants. There are also regional and local multi-organisation/agency economic recovery groups working on targeted action (Flintshire County Council, 2022).

A key issue here for the well-being assessment is that much of the evidence available currently pre-dates the COVID-19 pandemic and Brexit. Further insight on the impact of these on the local economy, both now and into the future, will need to be considered as it becomes available.

Poverty

According to the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation³ (2019), three Lower Layer Super Output Areas⁴ in Flintshire feature in the 10% most deprived in Wales – Shotton Higher 2, Holywell Central, and Sealand 2.

For four of the types of deprivation (employment, education, health, and community safety), there is a clear relationship between being in a low-income area and being in areas with other worse outcomes. Areas with worse housing and physical environment domain outcomes are more evenly spread across the income domain deciles, while access to services is worse in higher income areas, perhaps reflecting such areas being more likely to be rural, while areas of low income are more likely to be urban (JRF, 2022).

Almost 1 in 4 (23%) people are in poverty. This is driven by the relatively high proportions of working-age adults out of work (25%), working typically lower-paid 'routine' jobs (32% of in-work adults) or in receipt of Universal Credit or equivalent (legacy) benefits (20%) (JRF, 2022).

While income poverty is decreasing overall in Wales, this trend is not experienced equally across all population groups. Households in Wales with a disabled person in the family, for example, are far more likely to be living in relative income poverty (28 per cent) than those without (20 per cent). And those from Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups are also at a higher risk of being in relative income poverty. While both rates of poverty have decreased marginally over the last five-year period, the poverty gap has consistently remained at around 8 percentage points (Public Health Wales, 2021a).

Poverty manifests in children's attainment too. In Wales, there is a gap of around 30 percentage points between children on free school meals and those not on free school meals in attaining five passes at GCSE level including maths and English or Welsh. The primary aged attainment gap in Wales has seen some improvement with narrowing in recent years (JRF, 2022).

The past nineteen months have presented unprecedented challenges for families all over Wales. The Bevan Foundation's Snapshot of Poverty series has demonstrated that not everyone has been affected equally by the pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis. Nearly four in ten Welsh households (39 per cent) do not have enough money to buy anything beyond everyday items.

³ Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation is a measure of **multiple deprivation** that is both an **area-based measure** and a measure of **relative deprivation**. It currently made up of eight separate domains (or types) of deprivation. Each domain is compiled from a range of different indicators – income, employment, health, education, access to services, community safety, physical environment, housing.

⁴ Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs) have an average population of 1500 people or 650 households. They are useful geographies in providing the structure for collecting, processing, storing and aggregating data, as well as being a great unit to show comparison. However, they do have big drawback and that is people do not tend to relate to them, at all. They cut across neighbourhoods rather than aligning with real communities on the ground.

Their latest data suggests that the situation could deteriorate further. The key findings are set out below:

- **Incomes are still falling but not for everyone** - more than three in ten households with a net income of less than £40,000 have seen their income drop since May 2021. For households with a net income of more than £40,000 more than one in five have seen their incomes increase.
- **Living costs are still rising** - households across Wales have seen their living costs increase. More than half have seen the cost of food increase with more than six in ten seeing the cost of their utilities increase.
- **Living standards are being squeezed** - thousands of households are having to cut back and ration their use of the essentials we all need to live with dignity. Low-income households, renters, disabled people, lone parents, and adults aged between 25 and 64 more likely to have had to cut back on everyday essentials than other groups.
- **The impact on children is getting greater.** More than one in five families with children have had to cut back on items for children including books, toys, nappies and clothing, whilst one in ten families with two children have had to cut back on food for children.
- **Personal debt is a major problem** - since May 2021, 25 per cent of Welsh households have borrowed money whilst 12 per cent of Welsh households are at least one month behind on a bill. Low-income households, renters, disabled people, lone parents, and adults aged between 25 and 64 are more likely to be behind on a bill or to have borrowed money than others.
- **Many people are worried about losing their homes** – more than one in twenty households are worried about losing their home over the next three months. Six per cent of households have already been told that they will lose their home. This is equivalent to over 80,000 households forced to seek a new home.

Summary

- Manufacturing, retail trade, and human health and social work are the sectors which employ the most people in Flintshire.
- There is a slow growth in productivity and living standards.
- Between 2001-2019, there was only a 2% increase in the number of jobs.
- There are high rates of in-work poverty.
- Whilst the overall qualification profile is increasing, an educational attainment gap remains.
- The accommodation and food sectors have been most negatively affected by Covid-19.
- The agricultural and food, automotive, steel and manufacturing, and tourism sectors have been hardest hit by Brexit.
- There are 3 Lower Layer Super Output Areas in Flintshire that are in the 10% most deprived in Wales.

- For four of the types of deprivation (employment, education, health, and community safety), there is a clear relationship between being in a low-income area and being in areas with other worse outcomes.
- Households with a disabled person in the household, and people from Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups are at risk of income poverty.
- Living costs are rising.
- Living standards are being squeezed.
- Personal debt is a major problem.
- Many people are worried about losing their home.

Culture

One way to understand cultural well-being is to distinguish between cultural well-being outcomes for individuals and cultural well-being as a feature of communities.

Participation in cultural activities and subjective well-being

Sport. Participation in sport can positively support people's physical and mental health and develop cohesive communities. In Flintshire, the percentage of people (16+ years old) taking part in sporting activities on three or more occasions a week⁵ has increased from 28% in 2017/18 to 35% in 2019/20 and is above the Welsh average (32%) (Welsh Government, 2020).

In terms of children and young people, however, those living in Flintshire are slightly more active compared to the Wales average. 48.3% of children and young people (Years 3-11) take part in sport three or more occasions a week (Wales, 47.6%) and 27.4% undertake no sporting activity at all (27.6%). Nearly a third of children and young people in Flintshire volunteer or help with sport in their community (Sport Wales, 2018).

Arts. In 2017/18, 49% of adults attended an arts event less than once a month, but at least 3 or 4 times a year, and a further 21% attended less than once a week, but at least once a month (Welsh Government, 2018). 52% of adults participated in some form of arts activity at least once a week. 74% of adults in Flintshire attended or participated in arts, culture, or heritage at least 3 times a year.⁶

At a community level, there are geographical variations in attendance at, or participation in, cultural activities across Wales. There is need of further study in this area as this may reflect a lack of access to local opportunities or other factors such as local deprivation. We do know, however, that geography and/or the availability of events locally appear to play a factor, with 51% agreeing (strongly or tending to agree) that they would attend more frequently if events were closer (Welsh Government, 2020b).

In general, participation is higher in families with children (aged 5–10) and in households where one member already engages in cultural activities (Lakey et al., 2017). However, participation varies according to age (with those over 75 least likely to participate, but rates steadily increasing until then); financial status (with those on low incomes least likely to

⁵ Future Generations Indicator 38

⁶ Future Generations Indicator 35

participate); and ethnicity (with people from Black or Asian backgrounds least likely to participate).

Again, a key issue here for the well-being assessment is that much of the evidence pre-dates the COVID-19 pandemic, which has had known impacts on the arts, culture, and heritage sectors. Some providers are likely to have closed permanently during the pandemic, and many workers are likely to have left the industry, particularly in areas overlapping with the hospitality and live events sectors. In addition, people may feel apprehensive returning to venues and/or participating in arts and cultural activities.

Volunteering. Volunteering can aid social cohesion and connection as well as improve the subjective well-being of volunteers. The well-being effect of volunteering seems to be related to a sense of purpose, confidence in one's own abilities, and the social connections formed through volunteering (WCfPP, 2021b). However, this will depend on how the volunteer experience is managed, as if volunteers do not feel that their work is valued or effective, they will not receive the same well-being benefits.

Across Wales, in 2019/20, 74% of people volunteer formally and informally⁷. This has increased slightly since 2016/17 when it was 72% (Welsh Government, 2020).

In terms of local communities, whilst certain contextual characteristics have been found to be associated with the propensity to volunteer, the characteristics of the residents tend to be stronger predictors of whether someone volunteers or not (Higgs et al, 2021).

In Wales, the experience of community groups during the COVID-19 pandemic suggests that place- and interest-based groups can help to alleviate loneliness and provide a sense of purpose (WCfPP, 2021b).

Welsh language and cultural well-being. The Welsh language forms an important part of Wales' cultural well-being. The number of Welsh speakers remains relatively stable at around one-fifth of the population, but there has been a recent increase in those who have 'some' speaking ability (Welsh Government, 2020; Stats Wales, 2019). The latest figures for Flintshire show that 22.8% of the population speak Welsh (Welsh Government, 2021d).

The ability to speak Welsh is associated with higher subjective well-being. Welsh speakers are more likely to participate in arts and sports events.

Summary

- Participation in cultural activities increases subjective well-being.
- 35.0% of adults in Flintshire participate in sport on 3 or more occasions a week.
- When it comes to sports participation, children and young people in Flintshire are slightly more active compared to the Wales average (48.3%, 47.6% respectively).
- 27.4% of children and young people do not take part in any sporting activity.
- 74% of adults in Flintshire attended or participated in arts, culture, or heritage at least 3 times a year.

⁷ Future Generations Indicator

- Participation is higher in families with a child (5-10) and where one member of the household already engages in cultural activities.
- 74% of people volunteer formally or informally.
- Place and interest-based groups provide a sense of purpose.
- 22.8% of Flintshire's population speaks Welsh.

Environment

Wales's natural environment is our most precious inheritance, pivotal to our identity as a nation and, as has come into sharp focus over the couple of years, central to the health and well-being of our people and our economy. Protecting the environment for future generations is one of the greatest challenges of our time.

The North-East Wales Area Statement, produced by Natural Resources Wales (2019), outlines the key challenges for localities and how natural resources could be better managed for future benefit. There are five themes in the Statement, and these reflect the qualitative findings from the young people's TEDx event, and the citizens' analysis. The data also drew out an additional three connected areas – food, energy, and transport systems.

In addition, within the State of Natural Resources Report for Wales 2020 (Natural Resources Wales, 2020), proposes a transformational approach using the ecosystem, economic and social spheres as ways to redesign our society and economy. Three areas for transformative change have been prioritised: the food system, the energy system, and the transport system.

Climate emergency: resilience and adaptation

From shifting weather patterns that threaten food production, to rising sea levels and the prospect of catastrophic flooding, the impact of climate change is global in scope and unprecedented in scale.

North East Wales can expect to see more intense rainfall and flooding in low-lying, as well as hotter, drier summers. The projections also foresee more extremely warm days together with milder, wetter winters (Natural Resources Wales, 2019).

Adapting to the impact of climate change and building resilience requires action across all levels of society – this is the cornerstone of our area's assessment on the climate emergency and cuts across the other four themes in terms of aiming to deliver wider outcomes.

For instance, increasing woodland cover next to a community not only enhances biodiversity, social health, and well-being, but also enables trees to act as 'carbon sinks', soaking up excess water and reducing the 'urban heat island effect', something that occurs when an urban area becomes significantly warmer than surrounding areas due to human activity.

Citizens and stakeholders have made it clear that they are concerned about flooding and coastal erosion. Managing the existing and future risk within the Dee catchment is key.

Flood risk

In Wales 2,199,132 total properties are at risk of flooding and there are 15,797 properties at risk of flooding defended/present day flood risk in North East Wales (Welsh Government, 2022b).

The Communities at Risk Register (Welsh Government, 2022a) shows there are a number of communities at risk of flooding in Flintshire. These include Connah's Quay and Shotton, Sealand, Talacre, Bretton, Flint, Bagillt and Mold. With Lache, Queensferry-Sandycroft-Manor Lane, Garden City and Deeside Industrial Estate, and Connahs Quay and Shotton identified as preliminary significant flood risk areas.

Urban and rural green infrastructure.

Parks, open spaces, playing fields, woodlands, wetlands, road verges, allotments and private gardens are examples of green infrastructure while sustainable drainage systems, swales, wetlands, rivers and canals and their banks, and other water courses are often referred to as blue infrastructure. Greening of our urban areas can make them more resilient to the impact of a changing climate. Access to, and engagement with, the natural environment is associated with positive health outcomes, including improved physical and mental health, and reduced risk of cardiovascular disease and other chronic conditions. Access to recreational infrastructure, such as parks and playgrounds, has been found to be associated with reduced risk of obesity among adolescents and increased physical activity levels. Living near, and using green spaces, can improve health, regardless of social class. (State of Natural Resources Report 2020)

Woodland cover for social, environmental, and economic benefits.

Flintshire's woodland cover is 9.8%. Of that, 0.4% is Welsh Government Woodland Estate predominantly made up of Coed Moel Famau, a large forest situated in the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) straddling the border with Denbighshire, along with Coed Nercwys (also in the AONB) near Mold. Farm woodland and rural estates make up Flintshire's private woodland.

Trees help regulate our climate, reduce noise, store carbon, safeguard soils, improve air quality and reduce flood risk. They create jobs and income from timber and other activities. They play a major role in pollination, soil formation, nutrient cycling, water cycling, and oxygen production.

According to the Tree Cover in Wales' Towns and Cities Update Report 2020 (Natural Resources Wales, 2020b) the majority of urban tree canopy in Flintshire has reduced.

'The true meaning of life is to plant trees whose shade you do not expect to sit' - Nelson Henderson. Let's make Wales the greenest country in the world, as one day we may not have any choices left.⁸

⁸ TEDxGwE, 2021

Ecosystem resilience and biodiversity enhancement

In Flintshire, there is pressure on how we use our land. It comes from industry, farming, housing, rural land use, renewable energy schemes, and transport. We know that there is a direct relationship between poor environments and more deprived communities.

Freshwater ecosystems provide important ecosystem services including water supply, renewable energy production, flood management, waste disposal, fisheries and recreation. Balancing the use of these services with one another and the sustainable management of catchments is a significant challenge

Flintshire supports a rich variety of ecosystem types which form the essential building blocks to a resilient, natural environment. Our urban areas are also important havens for wildlife. Despite this, our wildlife is in decline, with some species at risk of extinction.

Protected sites in the region include the River Dee and the Dee Estuary/Aber Dyfrdwy. The majority of the protected sites are in unfavourable condition which means, although still of immense ecological value, the condition of these sites are below standard.

Farming and sustainable land management

Almost 60% of North East Wales is classified as enclosed farmland, making it the most dominant type of habitat in the region.

At Natural Resources Wales' engagement events, farming and sustainable land management was discussed under several different guises, including land management, protecting our soil and water, landscape scale (this is a holistic approach to land management), and agriculture. Farming is the bedrock to a resilient food production industry in Wales and along with the sustainable land management, felt that this needed to be specifically referenced.

We need more sustainable agriculture. Avoiding meat every now and then will make a difference. We don't have to go completely plant based; small changes can make a big difference. Eat plants for the planet.⁹

Food system

A well-functioning food system is crucial to our nation's future. There are however systematic problems that need addressing urgently. Many people in Wales cannot afford access to a healthy diet, and the food system has negative impacts on the environment, public health, and economic well-being. This hinders our ability to prosper as a nation both now and in the future (WWF, 2021).

The global food system has a significant impact on the environment. Land use is identified by the UN IPBES report (2019) as one of the big drivers of the nature emergency. Emissions of pollutants, depletion of resources, biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation are consequences of the current system in Wales and beyond.

Rising demand for food is driven by population growth, changes in dietary preferences, and income growth. By 2050, the global population is expected to exceed 9 billion people, with

⁹ TEDxGwE, 2021

trends in economic development suggesting that individual calorie consumption will increase despite rising food prices, largely due to the average person having more income to spend on food (Welsh Government, 2021b).

Options for making the existing food system more efficient are limited within the ecosystem and economic spheres. It is in the social sphere, with the broad range of action civil society organisations can take, that Wales has the most options for transforming its food system.

We need to change our way of thinking. We can all make changes but the biggest thing we can change is our mindset.¹⁰

A wider focus on the social sphere would target other actors in the supply chain of producers, manufacturers, processors, and retailers. This could help accelerate progress towards sustainability, as retailers, such as the large supermarkets, have a large influence on the food industry.

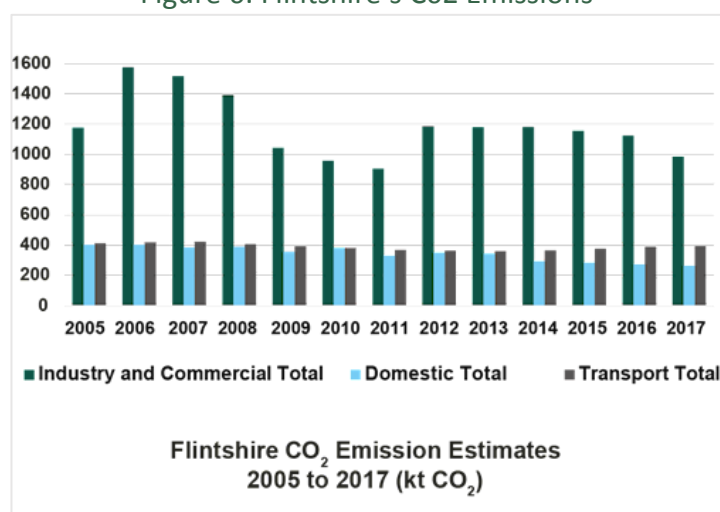
Options to enable changing land use practises, mitigating climate change and securing increased woodland cover and biodiversity, include changing diets, reducing food waste, and increasing food production from a smaller area of land (Natural Resources Wales, 2020).

Energy system

The global energy system is one of the main drivers of the climate emergency. Wales’s current energy production and consumption creates many pressures for ecosystems and public health here and across the planet.

Emissions in Wales have been decreasing since 1990, although over recent years the rate of this reduction has slowed (Welsh Government, 2020a). This pattern is mirrored in Flintshire. Most of the reduction in CO₂ emissions has come from the industry and commercial activity. There has been very little change in emissions from domestic and transport activity (see Figure 6).

Figure 6: Flintshire’s CO₂ Emissions



Source: Natural Resources Wales (2019)

¹⁰ TEDxGwE, 2021

The proportion of energy consumed in buildings and by the agriculture sector has remained relatively consistent between 2005 and 2017, the industry sector is now accounting for 6 per cent less of Wales' total energy use, while transport now accounts for 6 per cent more.

Despite the overall reduction in energy use, electricity demand in Wales will likely double by 2050 due to new demands within buildings, and from the transport and industry sectors as they move to renewable electricity sources of supply.

At the end of 2019, 51% of Wales' electricity consumption came from renewable sources (Welsh Government, 2020b). Renewable energy technologies are also contributing to environmental pressures on land, ecosystems and human health, and depletion of resources. These pressures are greatest when local and regional conditions are not properly addressed during the project design and implementation phases (Natural Resources Wales, 2020).

Wales needs to increase its use of renewable and sustainable energy sources, reducing the current dependence on harmful fossil fuels.

The centralised, 20th century model of energy generation and provision is now transforming to become flexible, sustainable and user focused. This transition involves more stakeholders acting across many non-energy specialist sectors. The way energy is used, and the interactions energy users have with the energy system is constantly evolving.

The rise of 'prosumers' highlights one of the most exciting trends in energy transition and renewable energy. Prosumers are energy users who produce energy through, for example, solar panels installed on or around their houses and using innovative equipment such as heat pumps, energy storage devices (such as batteries) and electric vehicles that will interact with the energy market through different pricing mechanisms such as time variable tariffs.

Transport system

The transport system has an impact on ecosystems and health.

Transport is the third largest source of greenhouse gas emissions in Wales. Road transport creates air pollution in the form of particulate matter and oxides of nitrogen which present a major threat to human health in urban areas. Transport also creates indirect impacts by stimulating demand in a range of other economic sectors, including extraction of raw materials, production of infrastructure and vehicles, electricity generation, petroleum refining, and recycling and disposal of materials.

Owing to the cost of driving increasing at a slower rate than wages and the cost of living, road transport demand in Wales has continued to rise over the past decade. Bus travel is the only form of transport to experience a drop in percentage demand between 2010 and 2019 (33 per cent). Vans again experienced considerable proportional growth during this period, rising 38.5 per cent, while cycling demand more than doubled (107.7 per cent).

According to Natural Resources Wales (2020), converting current modes of transport to use low carbon fuels is not a sustainable solution. A systemic change is needed to how and why people travel and what is transported.

The 20-minute neighbourhood concept is about designing an urban society in such a way that residents can meet most of their daily needs within a short walk from home (for more information on this, please see Appendix J). Given that 22% of households in Flintshire do not have access to a car or van, this could help with the inequalities that this presents. Safe cycling and local transport options are key to this, as well as high quality public spaces, community services and housing densities that make the provision of local services and transport viable.

Citizens' sense making

Through citizens' analysis and sense making of the data on climate change, identified several cross-cutting themes were identified:

- Think big
- Think long-term
- Think land management
- Think travel
- Think local
- Above all, think ACTION

Through analysing the data, citizens had 10 key messages that they wanted to share. These can be seen in Figure 7.

Figure 7: Ten key messages from our citizens' analysis pilot

10 key messages

- Change how we give the green message to business. Not 'must' but 'it will save you money' - show how it will benefit the business.
- Clear plans and actions from those in authority. Clearly see what everyone's responsibility is- from individual to organisation levels.
- Combine scary statistics with actions we can all do. Water is a visual part of climate change so easy to see, but it needs to be paired with what we can do about it.
- Consumerism. Change people's habit of buying things they don't really need and buying things that last.
- Decision-makers not deciding for tomorrow, next week, or next year (apart from emergencies and urgent things of course) but making strategic decisions for the next 10, 25, 50, 100, 500 years' time.
- Educate the future, to make sure the same situation doesn't carry on. We don't want the next generation, and the next having this same conversation year after year.
- Engi local - local green generators, no car policy even if travelling North to Mid Wales. Company will pay time/costs but not allowed to use a car.
- People power can force large travel providers to use more efficient vehicles, therefore cutting emissions and in the long term, making more profit, due to cheaper power sources, i.e., electric vs diesel, may cost more in the short term, but long term its better all-round, short-term pain, long-term gain.
- The root of the problem is the global temperature rising due to emissions of greenhouse gases. Addressing this should be prioritised.

- Without a critical mass organization of Welsh citizens; any meaningful effect isn't realistic!

Source: Wrexham Glyndwr University (2022)

Flintshire County Council: Decarbonisation and Net Zero

Flintshire County Council have been active in efforts of decarbonisation and during the life of the Council's Decarbonisation Strategy 2009-2021 the Council have achieved approximately 60% reduction in carbon emissions from energy sources (Flintshire County Council, 2021b).

This position is set to be further enhanced as the Council, through its new Climate Change Strategy, sets its ambitions to decarbonise Council operations and protect Flintshire's natural environment. This will be achieved through focus on Council assets and services in buildings, transport and mobility, land use and procurement (Flintshire County Council, 2021b).

Summary

- Climate change is one of the defining issues of our time.
- North East Wales can expect to see more intense rainfall and flooding as well as hotter and drier summers.
- Climate emergency should play a central role in all our activities.
- 9.8% of Flintshire has woodland cover – well below the national average (14%).
- Developing green infrastructure to mitigate the effects of climate change and support improved well-being outcomes.
- In Flintshire there is pressure on how we use our land.
- Flintshire supports a rich variety of ecosystem types.
- Wildlife is in decline and some species are at risk of extinction.
- Almost 60% of North East Wales is classified as enclosed farmland.
- A well-functioning food system is crucial to our nation's future.
- Wales' current energy production and consumption creates many pressures for ecosystems and public health.
- Emissions in Flintshire have decreased since 1990, although the rate of this reduction has slowed.
- There has been very little change in emissions from domestic and transport activity.
- Electricity demand in Wales is likely to double by 2050.
- The rise of prosumers is one of the most exciting trends in energy transition and renewable energy.
- Road transport demand continues to rise.
- The 20-minute neighbourhood concept could help to reduce inequalities in accessibility.

Interconnections

As we mentioned earlier, in terms of the Act, there are four pillars of well-being – **society**, **environment**, **culture**, and **economy**. These are intertwined, they are not separate, so whilst we have presented the data under each of the four well-being pillars, there is inevitably interconnections. Here, we tease out both the interconnections and the root causes and

therefore preventative opportunities for Flintshire. Being evidence-informed, this will also help to bridge the well-being assessment and well-being planning stages.

With this in mind, we have highlighted three main areas: inequalities; social determinants of health; and Adverse Childhood Experiences.

Inequalities

The impact of the pandemic has exacerbated inequalities. For example, older people, men, and people in ethnic minority groups were more at risk of becoming seriously ill with COVID-19. In the labour market, there has been a disproportionate impact on groups that were already disadvantaged, including people in low paid jobs, in less secure employment, young people and people reaching the end of their working lives. At the highest GCSE grades, the school performance gap has widened between those who are eligible for free school meals and those who are not. There has also been a widening of inequalities in sports participation (Welsh Government, 2020b).

In contrast, however, the gender pay gap is now at its lowest rate ever recorded and community cohesion has seen substantial improvements. (Welsh Government, 2020b).

This section, we will delve into three areas that Public Health Wales (2021a) have identified as having the most profound inequalities in a future Wales and what those opportunities for change might look like to achieve the outcomes that we want. Those areas are: future of work, climate, and demographic change.

Future of work

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted entrenched labour market inequalities, particularly for young people, whose earnings were only just beginning to recover from the effects of the 2008 recession on wages and job progression. In addition, women, disabled people, and ethnic minorities were also more likely to be working in low-paid, precarious work in the sectors that were shut down (retail, childcare, hospitality, accommodation etc.), and were therefore the ones who lost jobs, working hours and earnings at disproportionate rates during the first lockdown.

Unless addressed, predicted growth in science, technology and 'green jobs' will advantage the already advantaged because of an existing lack of diversity in relevant education, training and jobs.

Preparations for a changing future of work should focus on job redesign and training, rather than mass job displacement. Job redesign decisions must involve those effected and support must be made available, so training is accessible to all.

And new policies, such as Universal Basic Income (UBI) and remote working, need to consider equality.

Where we are now

- Increasing task automation across all occupations and skill levels without sufficient attention on upskilling/reskilling workforce.
- Existing occupational gender segregation is reproduced in new digital and 'green' jobs.
- Low-skilled jobs decrease creating unemployment for those over-represented in low-paid and precarious work: women, some minority ethnic groups and disabled people.

Opportunities for change

- Employers supported with job redesign and employees engaged throughout.
- New training in 'green' and digital jobs designed to be accessible to all, with support to move to non-traditional job roles.

Where we want to be

- All careers are accessible to everyone with equal pay for equal work.
- A diversity of people to design new technology and benefit from it.
- People have the support to train and re-train throughout their lives.
- Automation of tasks improves job safety and quality, with employees redeployed/retrained or involved in new job design.

Climate change

The changes to the global atmosphere described by the term 'climate change' is caused by human activities that release greenhouse gases e.g., burning fossil fuels. In Wales, climate change has led to an increase in regional flooding, winds, drought, and temperature fluctuations, with direct effects on transport, agriculture, housing, business, and social and cultural activities.

The poorest and most marginalised populations are least responsible for climate change but are the most likely to be exposed to its negative effects, more susceptible to damage and have the least resources to respond, cope and recover.

Climate change mitigation could benefit marginalised communities if done well but could increase inequalities if the impacts on different groups in society are not factored in. It is important, therefore, that climate change does not become separated from equalities thinking and understanding or limited to decarbonisation when it is just one part of achieving sustainability and well-being for people and planet.

Where we are now

- Climate change action is focused on decarbonisation priorities.
- Limited collaboration between public and private sector.
- Reduction in emissions from the transport sector is not fast enough and some communities are 'left behind'.
- Wales' homes are not energy efficient, and many households are in fuel poverty.

Opportunities for change

- All climate change strategies seek to reduce future inequality and balance future benefits to the well-being of people and planet.

- Role of production and consumption in Net Zero is addressed with redistribution of costs and efforts to ensure equity.
- Extra insulation in social housing is reducing heating cost and energy use; transport change improves access to work, care and play for the poorest people, disabled people and women.

Where we want to be

- Quality, future-proofed homes, transport, jobs, and places to live, which improve health and the environment for communities and regions throughout Wales and create a more equal Wales.
- Net Zero being achieved through coordinated commitment across the public and private social care, health, and environmental sectors, with those most affected central to decision-making and planning.
- Businesses, public services, the voluntary sector, and government working together to avert a climate and biodiversity crisis by prioritising the reduction of inequality.
- Coordinated approach to tackling flood risks through decision making and planning.
- Clear messages in how climate change will impact communities of Flintshire and the actions that are and can be taken.

Demographic change

Wales' population is the highest it has ever been, but it is also ageing because of falling birth rates and migration. The population is expected to continue to grow and then fall as we move to 2050, although this may be slowed by improvements in life expectancy. However, there is a growing understanding that such improvements are not evenly distributed across different population groups.

An ageing population will disrupt how health and social care, employment and education, and pensions operate, and these systems will need to adapt if they are to function in the long-term. Future challenges need to be tackled with the needs of all generations in mind or risk disadvantaging one at the expense of another and/or falling short of achieving ambitions. A 'care-led recovery' puts childcare and the care needs of older people on an equal footing with 'green jobs' in benefitting health, the environment and the economy.

Where we are now

- Increasing demand for public healthcare services and uncertainty around the financing of it.
- Growing polarisation and division within generations, e.g., home ownership, digital literacy, and attitudes to the environment.
- Improvements in healthy life expectancy stalling and widening of health inequality gap.

Opportunities for change

- Healthcare services refocused on life-long care pathways (integrating workforce and users, older and younger needs).
- Design of care system and built environment works to bring communities and need together, reflecting changing needs through a life course.

Where we want to be

- Public services promoting the long-term well-being of people and planet.
- Young and older people have the means and opportunity to live long, healthy and fulfilling lives.
- People are part of cohesive communities.

Social determinants of health

Connected to the inequalities piece where we have focused on three themes (future of work, climate change, demographic change), in this section we want to explore the social determinants of health more broadly to help us understand well-being more holistically.

The social determinants of health are the non-medical factors that influence well-being. They are the conditions in which people are born, grow, work, live, and age, and the wider set of forces and systems shaping the conditions of daily life. These forces and systems include economic policies and systems, development agendas, social norms, social policies, and political systems.

The social determinants of health have an important influence on inequalities in well-being. Here are examples of the social determinants of health, which can influence well-being in positive and negative ways:

- Income and social protection
- Education
- Unemployment and job insecurity
- Working life conditions
- Food insecurity
- Housing, basic amenities and the environment
- Early childhood development
- Social inclusion and non-discrimination
- Structural conflict
- Access to affordable health services of decent quality.

Exploring the social determinants of health, the updated Marmot Review (2020) made recommendations in five domains of ways in which to improve well-being.

Give every child the best start in life. This covers things like inequalities in childhood health, inequalities in development outcomes in early years, child poverty, fundamental movement skills, Adverse Childhood Experiences.

Enable all children, young people, and adults to maximise their capabilities and have control of their lives. This covers things like inequalities in educational attainment, youth crime.

Create fair employment and good work for all. This covers things like rates of pay and in-work poverty.

Ensure a healthy standard of living for all. This covers things like wage and health inequalities, poverty, welfare reform, fuel poverty, food insecurity, household debt.

Create and develop healthy and sustainable places and communities. This covers things like the built environment, housing and housing conditions, cohesive communities, accessible and sustainable green space, pollution, climate change, sustainable food system.

Each of these domains could be viewed as the **root causes** to our well-being outcomes. Recognising that some the levers to change sit outside of the Public Services Board and our communities, **if we address these things together, in our own place, with our own communities we will set a path to improving well-being in a holistic way.**

Adverse Childhood Experiences

Adverse Childhood Experiences are stressful experiences that children can be directly or indirectly exposed to while growing up. As such, this usually sits within the ‘giving every child the best start in life’ domain. Given their nature, it is important to recognise that they are connected to the other domains and should be seen as part of wider set of experiences, which includes adverse community environments.

Public Health Wales (2021b) identify the experiences that can directly harm a child (Adverse Childhood Experiences) as including: domestic violence; substance misuse; emotional and sexual abuse; maternal depression; physical and emotional neglect; divorce; mental illness; incarceration; and homelessness. They identify Adverse Community Environments that can indirectly affect a child as including: poverty; discrimination; community disruption; and poor housing quality. The resulting trauma can continue to affect people as adults, long after it has happened. It is for these reasons that we wanted to specifically highlight this in our well-being assessment.

Adverse Childhood Experiences are everyone’s business. For every 100 people in Wales, 50 have experienced one Adverse Childhood Experience, and 14 have experienced 4 or more.

We know that if we do nothing, Adverse Childhood Experiences can lead to:

- disruptive nervous, hormonal, and immune development
- social and emotional and learning problems
- adoption of health harming behaviour and crime
- non-communicable disease, disability, social problems, low productivity
- early death.

To provide a spotlight on the health harming behaviour and crime, North Wales Police have explored the risk factors that draw an individual into committing serious and organised crime. A cohort of 25 individuals from Wrexham and Flintshire were selected to draw information concerning their background, criminal history, health, and social networks, to identify trigger points, escalation in offending and any missed early intervention opportunities which could be built upon to prevent/reduce entry points into serious and organised crime of future individuals. The findings of this analysis show the pathway to committing serious and

organised crime involved certain characteristics and factors within an individual and their upbringing which were found repeatedly across the nominal data set. These can be seen in Figure 8.

Figure 8: Pathways into serious and organised crime

Pathways into serious and organised crime

- These individuals were raised in households experiencing on average 4 Adverse Childhood Experiences.
- Parental separation was common, and they are very likely to have witnessed domestic violence during their childhood.
- At least one of their parents or siblings will have been criminally active.
- Some may have addictions to heroin and crack.
- Cannabis use will often be present within the family.
- School truancy and expulsion, ADHD diagnosis and poor educational attainment was common.
- Progression into drug dealing through drug debt or more likely a cannabis drug addiction was often noted.
- Their early offending led to a criminal record.
- And few/no qualifications or skills made gaining employment difficult.

Intervention points could be identified from the data, primarily from work needed in existing households to prevent or minimise the effect of Adverse Childhood Experiences in young children who are being raised in households where parents have themselves grown up in chaotic backgrounds with poor living standards.

Source: North Wales Police (2020)

Local action has commenced to help prevent Adverse Childhood Experiences, and support those who have been affected, as demonstrated through the establishment of an Early Help Hub. It is recognised that there may be further options to enhance partnership work across all sectors for the benefit of future generations.

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APPENDIX A

Citizens' Analysis

Public involvement, engagement and coproduction are not new in Wales. The analysis and interpretation of research data or consultation data is, however, still largely left in the hands of 'the experts'. This is problematic if it means some perspectives and ways of interpreting data are not available to those making policy or service decisions.

An additional issue with most current public involvement work is that the voices most often heard are those of people who self-select to become involved. This is problematic democratically as most of the population remain unheard and disengaged. It also presents difficulties in treating the findings as evidence.

The 'citizen analysis' pilot involved testing an approach to intersectional purposive sampling to expand whose voices were heard, and then using a combination of individual work and collective online workshops to support citizens to work with data about the climate emergency and North Wales.

The eleven citizens ranged in age from 17 to 80, with a broad spread of geography, education, work, socio-economic status, and stance on the climate emergency. Among the six men and five women, people's experiences and characteristics meant all categories of protected characteristic were represented. The workshops were bilingual in an English context.

The reporting was not a consensus. Each citizen brought their own perspective and sense making to the information.

In addition to the provision of findings to the North Wales Public Services Boards, there were three learning goals for this pilot:

- to see if it was possible to use an intersectional purposive sampling approach to recruit and engage with a broad diversity of citizens as citizen analysts
- to learn more about how to support citizens to reflect on, interpret, respond, and analyse packs of information both in workshops and individually
- to understand the potential value of this approach compared to approaches to engagement already being used by Public Services Boards.

The pilot commenced in January 2022. At the time of writing the Well-being Assessment, we have only been able to reflect on the initial findings. What it does demonstrate is our intent to explore different methodological approaches in the spirit of the Act. This a method that we intend to develop further.

APPENDIX B

TEDxGwE: Countdown to COP26 event, Theatr Clwyd, 1st November 2021

The TEDxGwE: Countdown to COP26 was organised through a partnership between GwE (North Wales school improvement service), Wrexham Glyndwr University, Natural Resources Wales, Renew Wales, and Do-Well (UK) as part of the UN's Countdown to COP26 series. And as such was registered with the UN.

The event aimed to bring partners and community leaders from across the North Wales region together to listen to children and young people present their own TEDTalks about climate change. The event was compered by Iolo Williams.

The children and young people received public narrative training/mentoring to help them frame their presentations to engage, inspire, influence, and create a call for action. Nearly 100 children from both Welsh and English medium primary and secondary schools across North Wales were involved.



APPENDIX C

Seldom heard community voices

The North Wales Research and Insight Partnership worked with the North East Wales Community Cohesion Team to an interactive forum with people representing seldom heard community voices. The forum took place on Tuesday 5th October 2021.

The Community Cohesive Team were very keen to ensure that although this forum was hosted specifically inform the Public Services Boards' well-being assessments (and future planning), it was convened in a natural way and supported the on-going relationships that the Team have built and are building with people from across our communities.

APPENDIX D

North Wales Research and Insight Partnership

Background

Over recent years, the research and analytical capacity and capability within Public Services Board partner organisations to undertake the assessment work has diminished; that being said, many Public Services Boards have strong well-being assessment foundations already in place.

Building on the already established trusted working relationships across the region, there is appetite from North Wales' Public Services Boards to work together on research and insight.

A key partner within this is Wrexham Glyndwr University. The University is an important anchor institution across the region. A key principle of its Civic Mission is to harness the expertise and knowledge within the university for civic good. Wrexham Glyndwr is already a trusted and active contributor and connector across North Wales' civic society, and there are synergies between the Public Services Boards' key well-being themes and the University's Civic Mission.

The collaborative partnership model enables best utilisation of everyone's assets for a common good and be useful in the work everyone does.

Importantly within this, it will be an opportunity to build on the existing regional approaches to systems thinking, leadership and collaboration that the University have been supporting – to think and act more broadly and work in *a whole system way*.

The North Wales Research and Insight Partnership therefore brings together data, insight, and engagement work, maximising and connecting resources and expertise. It has been driven by the statutory requirement for Public Services Boards to deliver well-being assessments and well-being plans as part of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

The vision

To collaboratively shape the North Wales we want to live in now and in the future by using evidence, insight, engagement and involvement to understand the challenges and opportunities, and co-produce approaches to address and harness them locally and regionally.

Mission and principles

Co-create an innovative North Wales Research and Insight Partnership that embodies new ways of working to:

- **Integrate** our approaches, evidence, and resources across all 'systems' working together to understand the challenges and opportunities at a local and regional level
- **Involve and work alongside our communities** engaging all groups in two-way meaningful and co-produced approaches to achieving our well-being goals
- Meet the needs of the current and future generations by taking a **long-term, preventative** approach

- Focus on understanding **root causes of key challenges** and how these are **interconnected** to inform our approach to tackling them
- Develop leaders' ability to be **evidence and insight informed**

What will the partnership do?

The Partnership will **support and enable using evidence and insight to understand the challenges and opportunities, and co-produce approaches** to improve well-being across the region.

The partnership provides the basis for an on-going mutually beneficial relationship. The focus will be to:

- Make connections between research and engagement activity
- Provide a safe space for conversation
- Enable a community of system leaders
- Supporting innovative exploration and active intervention for positive change through co-produced critical enquiry, applied research, and impact evaluation

APPENDIX E

Limitations and opportunities

Limitations.

There are a range of limitations with our well-being assessment. These include:

- **Community level data.** Statistical geographies are useful in providing the structure for collecting, processing, storing and aggregating data, as well as being a useful unit to show comparison. They do, however have a big drawback and that is people do not tend to relate to them at all. They cut across neighbourhoods rather than aligning with real communities on the ground. We have not used statistical geographies within our assessment for this reason, plus this community level data is primarily only available through the Census, which is a decade out of date. Instead, and given that this is a line in the sand, we will be looking to develop community narratives with communities – these will be far more meaningful and useful.
- **Local authority level data.** This is not always available, and particularly for the megatrends and drivers. We're therefore reliant on either regional or Wales level data which may or may not reflect the experiences in Flintshire.
- **Census data that is a decade old.**
- **Most of the data is pre-pandemic.** This potentially skews and shapes our understanding of what the picture looks like during the pandemic.
- **Time-series data is patchy,** and particularly at a local authority level.
- **Disaggregated data,** particularly at a local authority level and by those with protected characteristics.
- **Qualitative data.** Whilst we have information from the seldom heard voices work and the TEDxGwE event, it would be beneficial to supplement this with qualitative data across all pillars of well-being.
- **Data available to analyse is dependent on connections within and across organisations,** and the knowledge of within those networks.
- **The Act specifies that the well-being assessment must consider some statutory reviews and assessments.** We have found that many of these were being produced within the same timeframes, and as such, the most up-to-date information and analysis was not always available. Whilst there is good partnership working sharing draft information, some areas are stronger than others.
- **COVID-19 has affected the nature and amount of engagement activities.** For the most part, we have had to rely on online methods, but recognise that this creates bias in the data. With the support we have across the region from the Co-production Network for Wales, we will be developing our confidence, capacity, and toolset for using

involvement techniques like co-production as we move into our well-being planning phase.

- We have had a **shortfall in resource to support the Public Services Board** for a period, which has hindered development of our well-being assessment, limiting capacity for some areas of work.

Opportunities.

The North Wales Research and Insight Partnership presents a very significant opportunity for use to address both data gaps and explore specific research questions. Some of the ideas that have fallen out of this exercise include:

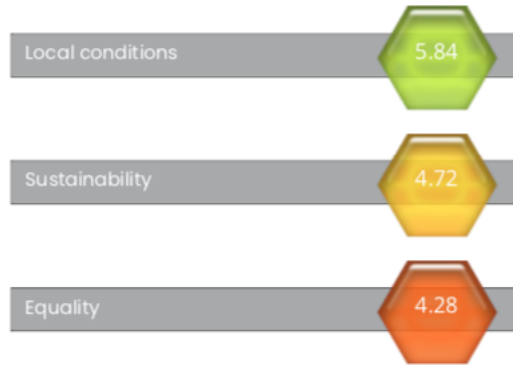
- **Co-producing community narratives.** Work with our population to define what and where their community is. Using a variety of methodologies work with those communities to provide a narrative of their community – this could involve a range of media (written, photography, video, artwork) as well as more traditional forms of quantitative and qualitative data analysis. This would provide us with a more nuanced understanding of places, and what matters to those who live there. As well as addressing the gap we have in community data, it will provide us with a tool to work with communities as part of the well-being planning.
- Continue to **build on our Citizens' Analysis pilot** as a way of helping citizens to make sense of data.
- **Map local area characteristics** (such as demographics, industries, infrastructure) to their associated risks from Covid-19 and/or Brexit – to better understand the likely effects and to inform policy decisions.
- Continue to **develop our network of people and organisations**, to better connect our areas of interest, harness opportunities to collaborate on data and insight activities, and as a result, develop more holistic insight.
- **Use the Lleisau Bach methodology** to develop young researchers.
- Supplementing the community narratives, work with citizens to develop **individual narratives** that help our understanding of how the social determinants of health look and feel like for individuals. Potentially adding in a longitudinal element to this to get a sense of how these change over time.
- The 5-yearly cycle has placed pressure on the Public Services Board. With the North Wales Research and Insight Partnership, we aim to move to more iterative, developmental assessments, where we are using data and insight from all scales to shape our activities.

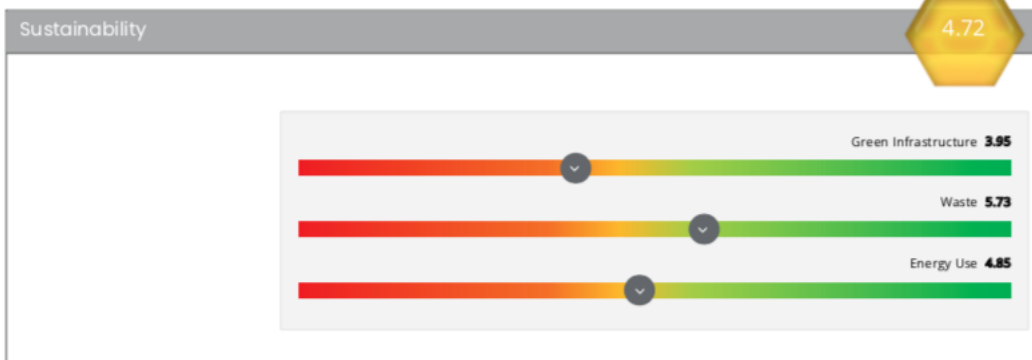
Having a central platform for our data and insight will enable us to work more efficiently and transparently, and work on a real-time basis.

APPENDIX F Thriving Places

Thriving Places Wales

Flintshire - 2020





APPENDIX G 20-Minute Neighbourhood



Source: Victoria State Government