

GWENT PUBLIC
SERVICE BOARDS



GWENT
FUTURES

S|C|E|N|A|R|I|O|S

Scenarios Report
from Ash Futures

March 2018

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INTRODUCTION

Thinking about the future

Many organisations plan for the future – or, at least, for a future they believe or hope will happen. Often, this future is based on ‘best’ or ‘worst’ case projections of current trends and is an extension of the present. This approach can work for organisations that operate in stable, predictable environments but where businesses are facing uncertainty and change, they need an approach that helps them explore different ways that markets might develop and think about alternative strategies.

Scenario planning is a process that delivers this by identifying what’s driving change and building a set of stories that offer alternative views of what the future might look like and the different challenges and opportunities that the business might face.

The underlying principle of scenario thinking is uncertainty. The purpose of the scenario process is to identify important strategic uncertainties surrounding the business and to gather different thoughts and perspectives on their causes and possible outcomes. The scenario narratives are stories that explore what these outcomes might be and what they might mean for the business and the strategic decisions it might face.

Scenarios are not predictions. Some parts of the narrative may happen in the future and some may not; some actors may choose to behave in ways the scenarios depict, others may not. The only aspect of the scenarios that is certain is that the future will not look like any one of them – it will be a combination of some of the elements they describe and other elements that have not yet been thought about.

The Gwent scenarios

This report documents the Ash Futures process for developing the Gwent scenarios and provides linkages between the scenarios and the horizon scanning work and between the scenarios and well-being.

None of the scenarios is meant to be ‘right’. The combination is designed to offer interesting (and in some cases challenging, stretching or controversial) pictures of the future. They provide a space – a sandbox - for Councils and their public service partners to explore the dynamics and uncertainties of the market and think about and rehearse the strategic choices Gwent may need to make to achieve and sustain regional well-being.

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This section of our report details the process, intermediate outputs and main decision point that led to the creation of the Gwent scenarios. The process involved five stages:

- In **Stage 1**, Ash interrogated the horizon scanning output and identified a number of key drivers and uncertainties facing Gwent. The full list of drivers and uncertainties is set out by theme in Annex 1 of this volume of the report. Ash also identified 10 predetermined elements which have shaped the scenario narratives.
- In **Stage 2**, G-SWAG members reviewed the uncertainties and ranked them in order of importance for well-being in Gwent.
- In **Stage 3**, Ash identified a number of strategic themes emerging from the ranking process and used them to create two possible scenario frameworks. G-SWAG members reviewed the suggested frameworks and identified a preferred one.
- In **Stage 4**, Ash created outline scenario narratives and G-SWAG members reviewed and refined them in the scenario development workshop. Following this workshop, Ash adjusted a number of elements in the scenario narratives. Ash also created timelines for each scenario which G-SWAG members reviewed in the second scenario workshop.
- In **Stage 5**, Ash compiled the final scenarios, writing full narratives, adding timelines, postcards from the future and identified links between the scenarios and the horizon scan.

The detail of these steps is set out in this section of our report.

Stage 1: Predetermined elements shaping the scenarios

Predetermined elements are drivers which have a certain outcome and which will have a significant impact on the policy area. Ash have identified 10 predetermined elements from the horizon scan that will shape the future socio-economic context described in the scenarios:

- The balance of global economic power **is** moving south and east
- Brexit means that the UK **will** need to tackle new markets and invest in new skills
- Geographical distance **is** no barrier to market entry in an increasing number of sectors
- Securing market growth and defending against new market entrants in many sectors **will** require sustained investment in new skills and technology
- Climate change and resource scarcity **will** change economic geography and **will** need to be tackled
- New technologies **are** advancing rapidly and combining in ways that **will** create new opportunity for service improvement and cost reduction
- Technology **will** change most jobs. Jobs that require low skill and that are highly routine **may** be completely automated
- Technology **is** changing the relationship between consumer and supplier
- Governments **will** need to harness new technology to innovate in service delivery
- The ageing population means that the dependency ratio in the UK **is** rising

Stage 2: Important uncertainties facing Gwent in the future

In the first scenario workshop, G-SWAG members reviewed the full set of uncertainties identified in the horizon scan and, for each one of the ten themes, identified a primary - most strategically important - uncertainty. These are set out in the following table.

Theme	Primary uncertainty
Climate and Environment	Development or nature? Will the pressures for new housing and employment sites be dominant at all costs? Or will it be balanced with protecting biodiversity and managing river catchments to reduce flood risks?
Economy	Is Gwent able to anticipate how technology will change skills and invest in appropriate workforce retraining programmes? Or will it wait and follow best practice elsewhere?
Mobility	Will the uptake of new technologies and approaches to mobility in Wales happen more slowly or at the same speed as the rest of the UK?
Politics	Does local government have the capacity and will to innovate? Or not?
Population	Will the increase in illnesses such as obesity and diabetes result in increased pressure on public and social services? Or will society become more educated about long term health and be more well?
Resources	How will the behaviour of the population change?
Society	Will austerity impact on the affordability of public service organisations or will they find innovative ways to enhance service delivery?
Security	Does it matter if businesses, communities and public services in Gwent are cyber secure? Or not?
Spatial issues/ infrastructure	Will the Cardiff Capital Region use 'smart city' techniques to generate integration and added value?
Technology	What does Gwent need to do to be AI ready? Does it matter?

Stage 3: Creating the scenario matrix

When Ash reviewed the primary uncertainties, we noticed three broad themes emerging:

- **How citizens will choose to behave**, reflected in the uncertainties for population and resources
- **How quickly the region will adapt to new technology**, reflected in the uncertainties for the economy, mobility, security and technology
- **What choices and priorities public services will make**, reflected in the uncertainties for climate and the environment, politics, society and spatial issues/infrastructure

Building on these themes, Ash created three axes that characterise three strategic uncertainties for the region and asked G-SWAG members to identify which two were best for the scenario matrix.

The axis exploring **How citizens might choose to behave** describes two alternative outcomes. At one end of the spectrum, citizens are concerned about future health and wellbeing. This permeates their behaviours, purchasing decisions and general outlook. At the other end, the majority of citizens do not really care about the long term and live in a consumerist bubble where they expect to get what they want when they want it. Ash presented this axis graphically as



The axis exploring **How quickly the region might adapt to new technology** describes two speeds of adoption. At one end of the spectrum, the region is an early adopter. This reflects more than just the uptake of new technology, suggesting an overarching culture within society and government that values innovation and understands the imperative for change. At the other end of the spectrum, the region fails to act quickly which results in it losing early mover advantage and has consequences for long run competitiveness. Ash presented this axis graphically as



The axis exploring **What choices and priorities public services might make** works on the assumption that public services cannot do everything. So, even though central government and citizens may want to go full steam ahead to transform the region, local public services need to make choices about what to prioritise. At one end of this axis, the region chooses to invest heavily in the infrastructure it needs to succeed in 'Industry 4.0.' At the other end of the spectrum, government is less concerned about intelligent infrastructure and focusses instead on developing the skills that individuals need to compete and be successful. Ash presented this axis graphically as



The two axes that the group preferred and which offered most scope for the scenario framework were **How citizens might choose to behave** and **How quickly the region might adapt to new technology**.

G-SWAG members further reviewed these axes at the end of the scenario validation workshop and suggested that the **adoption of innovation** axis be modified to include wider social and cultural change. This axis used in the final version of the matrix, therefore, was **How quickly change happens in Gwent**. The scenarios were adjusted accordingly.

Stages 4 and 5: Creating the scenario matrix

The final scenario narratives presented in this report were developed in three phases.

In **phase 1**, Ash developed outline narratives that reflected how the world, the UK and Gwent might look in each of the scenario logics.

In **phase 2**, G-SWAG members worked with the outline narratives to test whether they were consistent, whether they contained any gaps and whether they were plausible.

In **phase 3**, Ash reviewed comments form G-SWAG and modified the narratives as required.

Postcards from the future

In January 1941, at probably the darkest point of the Second World War, Picture Post devoted a whole edition of its weekly magazine to "A Plan for Britain". Drawing on ideas, insights and knowledge from a range of experts, they put forward their thoughts on what Britain should look like once the war ended - and considered the world of work; social security; land-use planning; the design of homes; land distribution; education; health; and the needs of young people.

This was a bold, and at the time almost unique, attempt at futures work.

As an introduction to the edition, Picture Post printed a letter they had received from a Welsh miner - one B. L. Coombes. This poignant description of life for many in the country served as a reminder of the issues that needed to be tackled in Britain.

This felt like a solid place to ground our thinking about the future for Gwent. How might our different scenarios feel to B. L. Coombes and his descendants?

To answer that question, each scenario narrative has a 'postcard from the future', a message from an imagined descendant of B. L. Coombes - his great great granddaughter, writing to her great grandmother in 2035, the year the scenarios are set.

B.L. Coombes' original letter is reprinted in Annex 2.

THE SCENARIOS: OVERVIEW

The scenario matrix

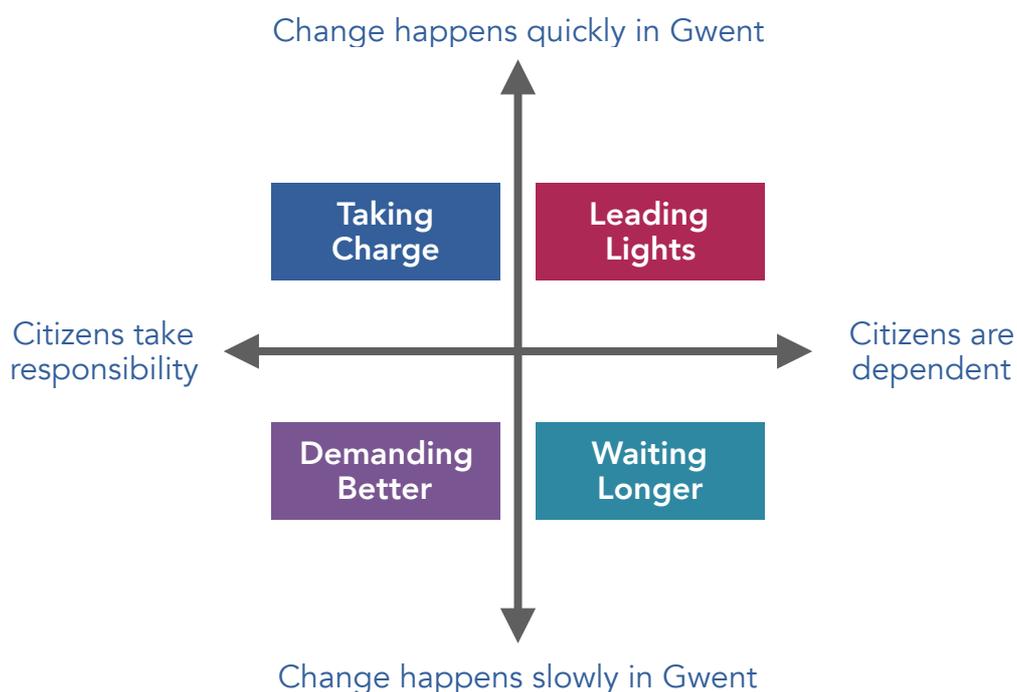
The scenario matrix explores two critical uncertainties for Gwent's future: **how citizens might choose to behave** and **how quickly change happens in Gwent**.

The horizontal axis explores **how citizens might choose to behave**. At one end of the axis, citizens' concerns about future health and well-being inform their behaviours, purchasing decisions and general outlook. Citizens don't just care about themselves but see a link between the personal choices they make and the collective good of society and the economy. At this end of the axis, individuals are informed about - and consider the long term implications of - the choices they make. They are deeply concerned that the well-being of future generations is not guaranteed. At the other end of the axis, the majority of citizens do not care much about the long term and live in a consumerist bubble where they expect to get what they want when they want it. Society is competitive, individualistic and selfish. Citizens are demanding of public services - which they see as a right - and are unwilling to accept responsibility or to pay for services, either directly or through increased taxation. They are concerned about their own well-being - however they choose to define it - and do not want to put off until tomorrow what they can consume today.

The vertical axis explores **how quickly change happens in Gwent**. At one end of the axis, regional actors are early adopters of change, quick to identify and pursue new opportunities for regional growth and wellbeing. Organisations across the region have a clear, shared insight into how the world is changing and move early and together to gain advantage. Both public and private sector value innovation and understand the imperative for change. At the other end of the axis, regional actors fail to act quickly due to a lack of foresight and little or no appetite for change. The region is consequently on the back foot, a late adopter of innovation and struggling to agree what it needs to do to in response to the changing economic and trade landscape. Retaining labour and attracting new jobs and opportunities are a continuing challenge.

Combining these two uncertainties creates a scenario matrix that defines four alternative futures:

All four scenarios are described in details in the following sections.



Taking Charge describes a future where citizens take responsibility for health and well-being and where change happens quickly in Gwent. Wales, like the rest of the UK, has invested heavily in technology and its government, businesses and citizens are connected to opportunities around the world. Employment is high. Low skill jobs have been lost entirely due to automation, but investment in new skills is significant - and essential for economic success. The region's current success is partly the result of a clear and shared ambition for well-being; and partly the result of a demanding electorate that utilises social media to track progress and hold public services to account against the plan to deliver it. Local taxation has increased to address social issues. Much of it goes into skills training but society also accepts that some people cannot get work and need to be looked after. More needs to be done to improve environmental well-being.

Leading Lights describes a future where citizens are dependent on public services and where change happens quickly in Gwent. The UK is working hard to adjust to life post Brexit and government and industry are working closely together to identify and build new trade relationships. Local government is an important partner but not all regions are responding effectively. Citizens in Wales are disenchanted with progress and some struggle to accept that old jobs are disappearing and that retraining is essential for future competitiveness. Government in the region is working hard to reverse this attitude and to build belief that social and industrial restructuring is necessary - but there are concerns it is running out of time. With limited funds and a lot to do, central government needs to plan public spending carefully. Regions that are slow off the mark risk being dropped further down the queue; and, with so many short term issues to tackle, long term needs such as the environment and living healthier lifestyles have fallen off the radar.

Demanding Better describes a future where citizens take responsibility for health and well-being and where change happens slowly in Gwent. UK citizens are frustrated; many of the the world's leading economies have concentrated on technology, innovation and environmental protection over the last 15 years and the electorate feels the UK government has taken its eye off the ball. Local communities have consequently focussed attention on circular economy practices, starting slowly but building momentum. People eat better, exercise more and demand healthier goods and services. Product leasing and sharing has increased and ownership has declined. Goods without inbuilt longevity and a traceable environmental footprint fail to sell. Wales, like other regions in the UK, has suffered a talent drain as those frustrated with the pace of change take opportunities overseas; but there are signs that this is changing and the region and wider communities increasingly look an attractive prospect for people seeking a higher quality of environmental life.

Waiting Longer describes a future where citizens are dependent on public services and where change happens slowly in Gwent. The UK is struggling to cope with a rapidly ageing population, with environmental degradation around coastal areas and with a legacy infrastructure in urgent need of upgrading. Rural areas have struggled with the loss of agricultural subsidy. People have flooded in to the cities looking for work, care and access to services. Migration from north to south, especially of the young, has increased. Government, in command and control mode and with limited options, focusses on regeneration of strategic cities. Wales is suffering outward migration and loss of jobs and its prosperity and cohesion are under threat. Local public services have limited money and little scope to make a difference. Many communities are severely blighted by drug use and related crime. Environmental degradation is getting steadily worse. Public services are devalued and public servants are not respected.

TAKING CHARGE

Taking Charge describes a future where citizens take responsibility for health and well-being and where change happens quickly in Gwent.

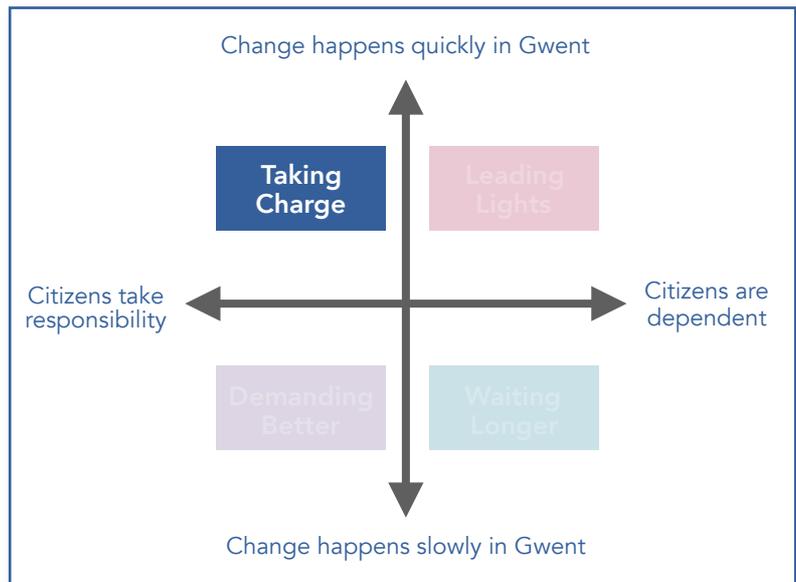
Overview

Wales has invested heavily in technology. Its government, businesses and citizens are connected to global opportunity.

Employment is high. Low skill jobs have been lost due to automation, but investment in new skills is significant. The region's current success is partly the result of a clear and shared ambition for well-being;

and partly the result of a demanding electorate that utilises social media to track progress and hold the local public services to account against the plan to deliver it.

Local taxation has increased to address social issues. Much of it goes into skills training but society also accepts that some people cannot get work and need to be looked after. More needs to be done to improve environmental well-being..



The global situation

- Growth is high, driven by open borders, global trade flows and rapid adoption of AI and robotics. Jobs and skills are changing across the globe; new opportunities appear constantly and develop rapidly. Inter governmental relationships are strong.
- The west has maintained its economic strength. The US economy is strong, driven by higher demand and increased investment in industry. Increased connectivity - between things as well as between consumers and suppliers - has improved productivity and boosted employment.
- China continues to perform well and its trade relationships with India (high technology and design) and Africa (minerals and land) mean it is a growing force in global manufacturing.
- Europe's growth is small but significant, facilitated by the wave of reforms that followed Brexit and delivered new economic and political stability across the bloc. Not only has the EU survived Brexit, it is stronger because of it - less bureaucratic and more accountable to its citizens.
- Russia is on a slow road to recovery, helped by a softer political stance that no longer seeks regime change around the world. There is a more open relationship with the west. Russia participates in technology and skills transfer.
- Overall, the world is enjoying a virtuous spiral of competition that is benefitting everyone.
- While there is a co-ordinated global effort to address the consequences of climate change, it has been slow to get going, held back momentarily by the recent focus on growth. The commitment is still there and efforts are being doubled.
- There are social challenges in areas where trickle down has not worked effectively. The most forward looking economies see deprivation as a shared problem caused in part by the

technological revolution. Some have raised local taxation to provide greater support to those in unpaid employment.

The UK

- The UK has performed well post Brexit due to investment in new trading partnerships and new technology. Education and research - which underpin UK economic performance - are key economic sectors in their own right and both make significant contribution to exports. Manufacturing design, financial services and creative industries are doing well.
- Jobs have migrated up the value chain. Workplace productivity is high, supported by sophisticated deployment of AI and robotics.
- Providing access to jobs - rather than providing jobs per se - is what creates economic success. World class infrastructure means that many people can work for employers remotely. Portfolio working is increasing, driven by individuals with transactional power who sell their labour to the highest bidder.
- Self employment, particularly amongst the digitally native young, is rising. There is a high turnover of tech based service start ups.
- Migration out of the cities has increased slightly, although citizens still want to remain in touch. Lifestyle communities, where people have access to natural environmental resources such as coasts, lakes and mountains, are growing in popularity. Investment means that the quality of virtual services such as shopping and GP consultation are high. Access to physical services and transport links places limits on how far out people want to live.
- Central government is smaller, more efficient and much more intelligent. Regulation is light touch. Individuals are generally willing to share personal data with governments and service providers in return for better quality services.
- One unexpected benefit of the trade turbulence that happened post Brexit is that the UK is less complacent.
- All four home nations remain in the UK by choice. Devolved administrations meet regularly to ensure regulation and service provision are broadly aligned to meet the UK's needs in the global market place. Some tensions still exist between regional concentration of wealth generation and national sharing of tax revenues.
- Citizens are well educated and concerned about well-being. Local taxation varies in response to local social need. The percentage of national taxation allocated to environmental protection is not deemed to be sufficient. Calls for hypothecation continue.

Public services

- Local public services have invested strongly in the relationship with citizens over the last decade, utilising technology and effective communication tools to engage them in discussion about the challenges facing the region.
- Citizens are consequently well informed. They understand that the well-being of future generations is essential and that looking after society today will build the platform for their children to thrive.
- There is now a shared long term vision for the region and agreement on how to deliver it. Communities are actively engaged and beginning to do more for themselves. Differences remain, of course, around prioritisation and around the allocation of resources but discussions on these issues are reasonable and realistic.

- Gwent has the digital connectivity it needs to remain competitive. It is working hard to deliver the physical connectivity and the region is not disadvantaged. More can be done but opening access to digital public services and well as private ones has transformed citizens' experience.
- Despite many improvements, loneliness remains a significant challenge in a number of communities. The rise of digital service provision has meant much higher levels of access, but more people feel isolated and some find it harder to get out. One important public service is support for informal public meeting spaces.

Postcard from the future

Dear Gran

I remember you telling us about your great grandfather and the world he grew up in. Am so glad that you found the time to research the family tree and uncovered Bertie's writings.

Of course, he would hardly recognise life today. So many things would be completely strange - the internet, smart phones, drones, driverless cars; others would be horrifying - active policing, ocean pollution, loss of natural habitats. However, I do feel that, were he alive right now, he would be excited by the progress that we have made on worker's rights, on being active citizens and on breaking down class barriers.

Since we last spoke, our two little ones have both started at our local International School. The opportunities they have through immersive technologies is amazing. Joanie spent most of yesterday "in" the mountains of Oman finding out about the Arabian Oryx and local irrigation techniques; while Megan rehearsed with her percussion orchestra from across Europe. Their sights have been re-set and their ambitions are no longer confined by place or community.

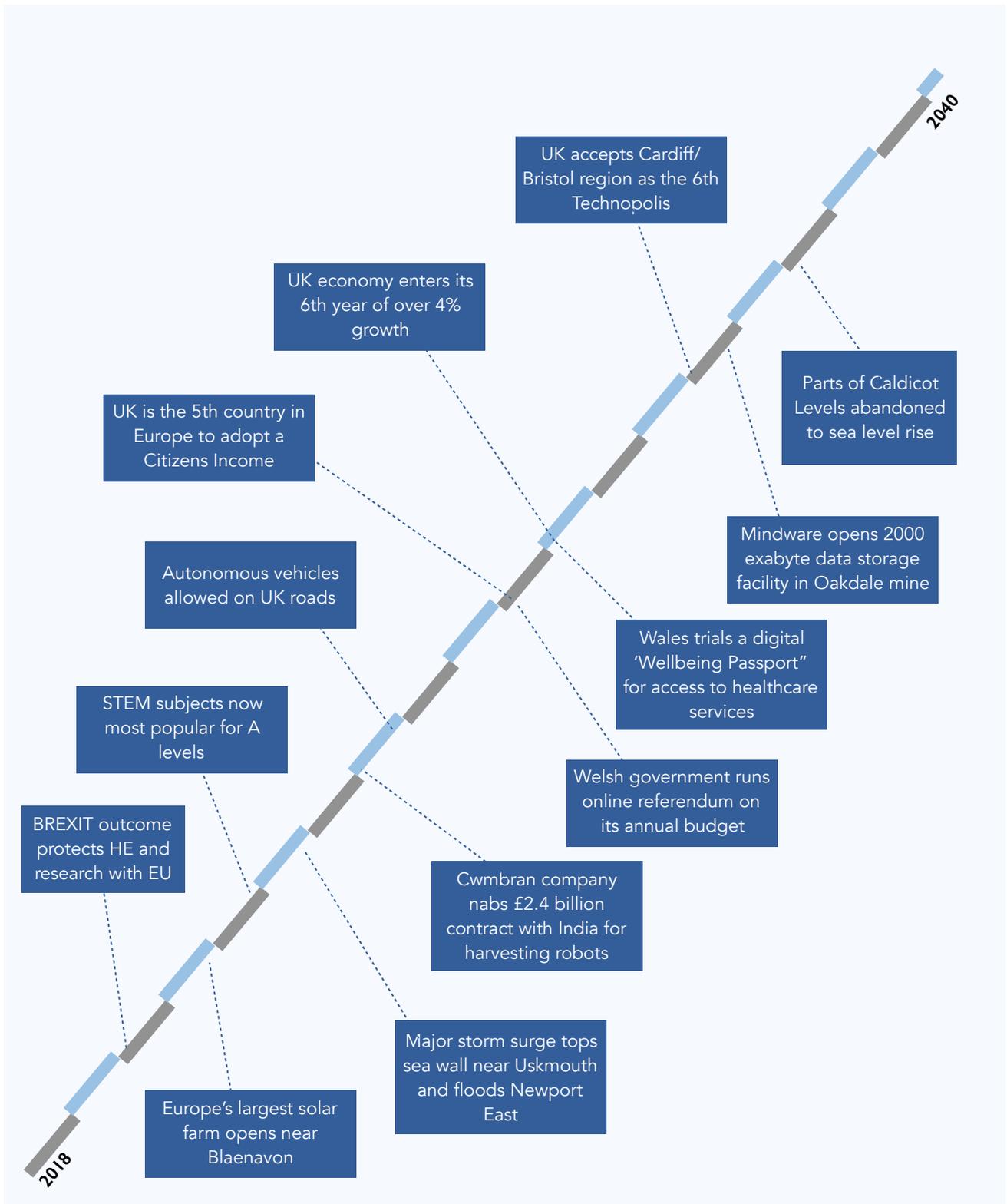
Despite the many environmental problems that we face, I can't help feeling a sense of optimism that our children will have the wit and wisdom to change things. Mind you, I guess you felt that back in the 1970s. 😊 At least you had better music!

We'll be up to see you over the Summer, if you are not on another over 80s sailing holiday!

Llawer o gariad, Beth XX

Scenario Timeline

The timeline sets out characteristic events that take place as the world moves from 2018 to 2035 and beyond in the **Taking Charge** scenario. Events above the timeline are at the global/UK level; those below the timeline are Wales/Gwent. This timeline is purely illustrative.



LEADING LIGHTS

Leading Lights describes a future where citizens are dependent on government and where change happens quickly in Gwent.

Overview

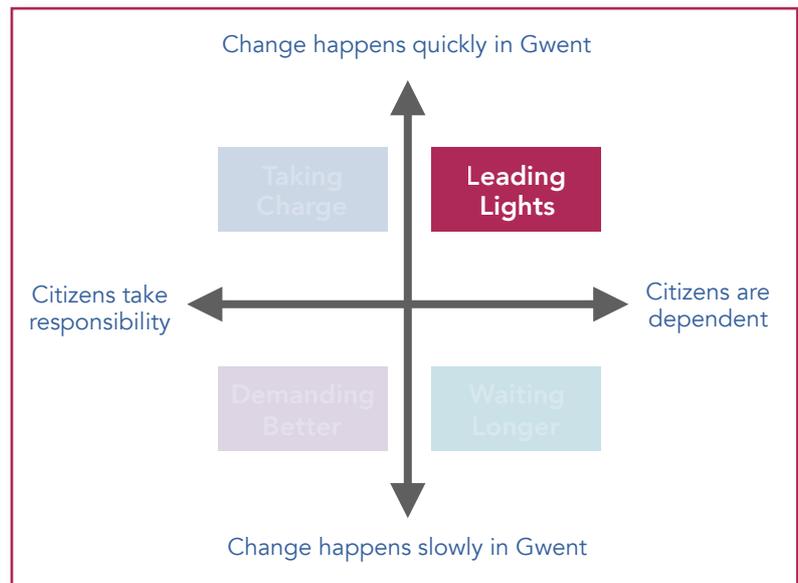
The UK is working hard to adjust to life post Brexit and government and industry are working closely together to identify and build new trade relationships, but the playing field is in a constant state of flux.

Public services are important partners but not all regions are responding effectively. Citizens in Wales are disenchanted with progress and struggle to accept that old jobs are disappearing and that retraining is essential for future competitiveness.

Government is working hard to reverse this attitude and to build belief that social and industrial restructuring is necessary - but there are concerns it is running out of time. With limited funds and a lot to do, central government needs to plan public spending carefully. Regions that are slow off the mark risk being dropped further down the queue; and, with so many short term issues to tackle, long term needs such as the environment and living healthier lifestyles have fallen off the radar.

The global situation

- There has been considerable disruption in world markets over the last few years. This has been caused partly by concerns over continued protectionism between big trade blocs, partly by shifting political allegiances and partly by the emergence of new economic players who have utilised technology to acquire market presence.
- One of the main disruptors has been the rise of cryptocurrencies which has weakened the control of central banks. Another is the rapid deployment of blockchain technology in business and public institutions ranging from universities and schools to healthcare providers and local government.
- Power has moved away from governments to non state actors. Corporates operate online and move physical jobs around the world to be close to the right markets and take advantage of public finance incentives. They have invested heavily in new technology and are pulling away from legislators. Countries, regions and territories are less important to them than customer communities and loyalty groups.
- These changes have been rapid and have blindsided the many governments and primary industries that are continuing to struggle to free themselves from too many years of underinvestment and low productivity. Unemployment is rising across the US and Europe and the combination of declining tax take and higher public sector costs is challenging public service provision. China's growth continues, but its structural reforms have been slowed by the



shifts in economic power towards producers and webpreneurs. Russia has aligned itself to the middle east.

- Climate change and resource depletion are altering economic geography. Livelihoods in the less developed economies are being destroyed and migration has risen. The effects are being felt further away from the equator but governments remain too preoccupied with short term challenges. The global corporates want to fix climate change but are pursuing technological solutions in a race to discover and own the IP that will save the world. And make their fortunes.

The UK

- Brexit has been highly disruptive. Government and industry need to work together to secure the future and are trying hard to make it work, but the relationship is not easy. Political parties are finding it difficult to free themselves from ideologies that are no longer relevant to the UK's social and economic needs.
- The relationship between central and local government is complicated. City and growth deals are important instruments in transforming regional development and local government is an important partner in delivering economic opportunity. Or, at least, in delivering opportunity in regions deemed to be strategically important.
- Some decision making is more devolved but there is a lack of consistency, and policy from the centre can be changeable. The relationship between local government and big business has the potential for improving productivity and growth but relies on freedom to act and on the presence of business in the region.
- Global relationships are important. The UK has built on its historic strengths in inward investment to attract jobs to the UK and (perhaps more importantly in this new economy) to maintain channels of communication and knowledge exchange
- The route to employment and opportunity is costly and barriers can be high. There is growing concern that parts of the UK are not securing their share of future advantage and that failure to do so is straining the government/industry partnership. Government wants to sustain effort in regions that are performing less well, whereas industry wants to focus on areas of growth, rising performance and rising economic return.
- Short term challenges mean it is hard to prioritise the environment.

Public services

- Local public services have strong links with the regional and national governments but the shifting national policy environment makes it hard to deliver consistent long term change.
- Public service delivery is based on a clear understanding of how the economy and jobs are changing. Service providers work closely with their local business base and across borders to develop and provide skills training. Citizens mainly remain resistant to change, however. They are preoccupied with their own short term economic survival and are consequently very focussed on short term need.
- Helping citizens to see the future differently is a significant and critical challenge for public services. Citizens are mistrustful of government and believe that efforts to address well-being are tokenistic and less relevant than providing jobs.
- Central government wants to invest in the physical and virtual connectivity that regions needs to be competitive - but there are concerns that Gwent's performance may not be sufficient to get the funds it needs.

Postcard from the future

Hi Gran

In haste - although I know I promised you a proper letter this time. Sorry.

I'm just heading off to blockade the Severn Bridge. I know you hate me getting too involved in politics, but there really is no choice. It's one of those moments when we have to stand up and be counted. More than 20 of us are going from Treban Mawr, including several who have never even been on a march before.

With the distribution centre now full automated and even local retail jobs going to autosells, there is little hope of work for us, let alone the kids. The retraining on offer is wasted on me. I just feel so powerless, Gran. That's why I wanted to make a stand.

I was re-reading great, great grandad Bertie's book. A hundred years ago, almost to the day - and many of the same issues are still large as life. We might not be mining for coal, but we are still 'stuck' in the valley; things feel like they are done to us; we are a forgotten generation.

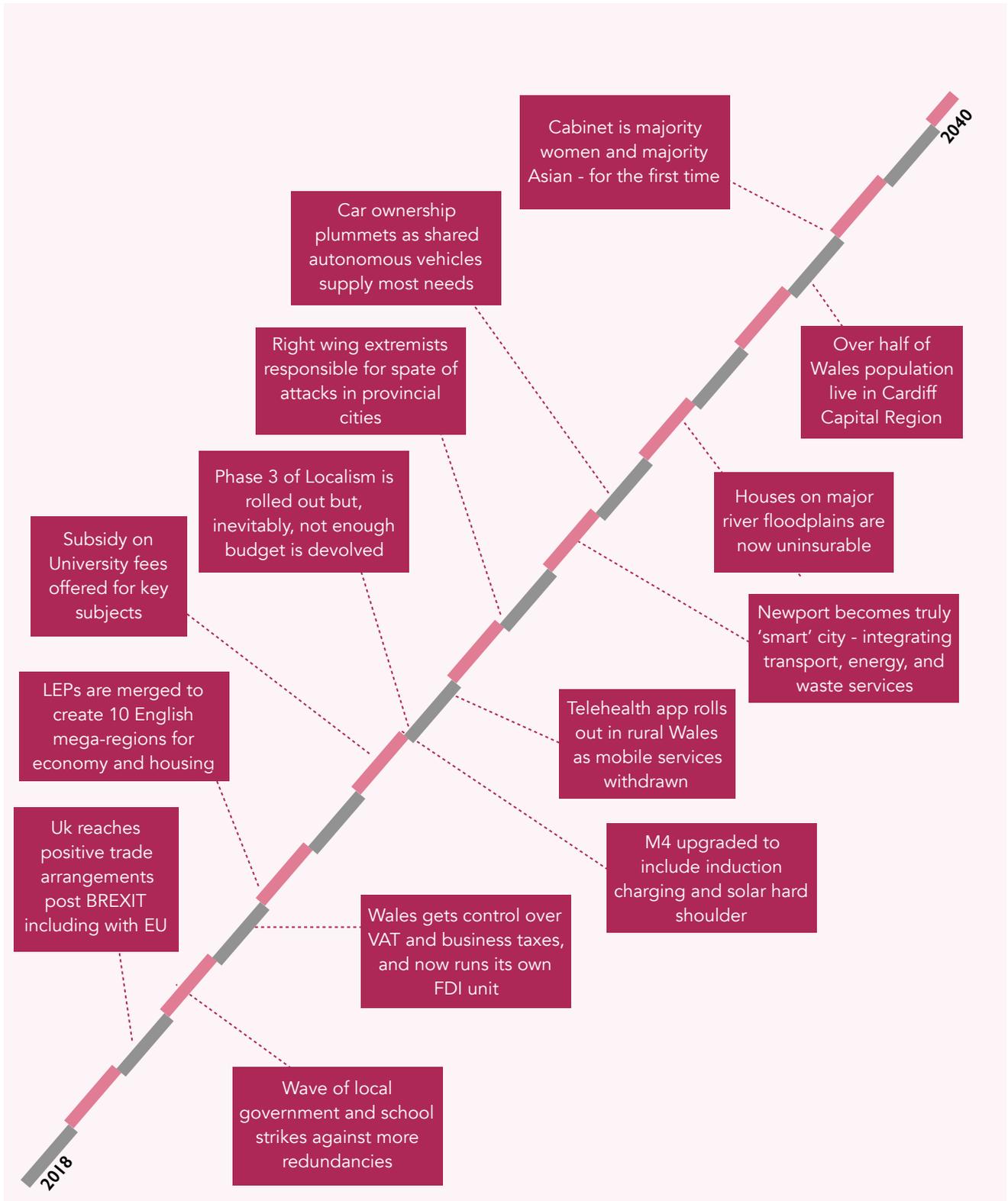
Do you think there are any opportunities in the Marches for our skills? Your Public Boards seem so much more focused than ours. Ours seems more interested in attracting more AI and ALM facilities than making sure that our health centres are properly connected to our Well Tabs.

Watch out for us on the news (if they bother to cover it!)

Bethany XX

Scenario Timeline

The timeline sets out characteristic events that take place as the world moves from 2018 to 2035 and beyond in the **Leading Lights** scenario. Events above the timeline are at the global/UK level; those below the timeline are Wales/Gwent. This timeline is purely illustrative.



WAITING LONGER

Waiting Longer describes a future where citizens are dependent on government and where change happens slowly in Gwent.

Overview

The UK is struggling to cope with a rapidly ageing population, with environmental degradation around coastal areas and with a legacy infrastructure in urgent need of upgrading.

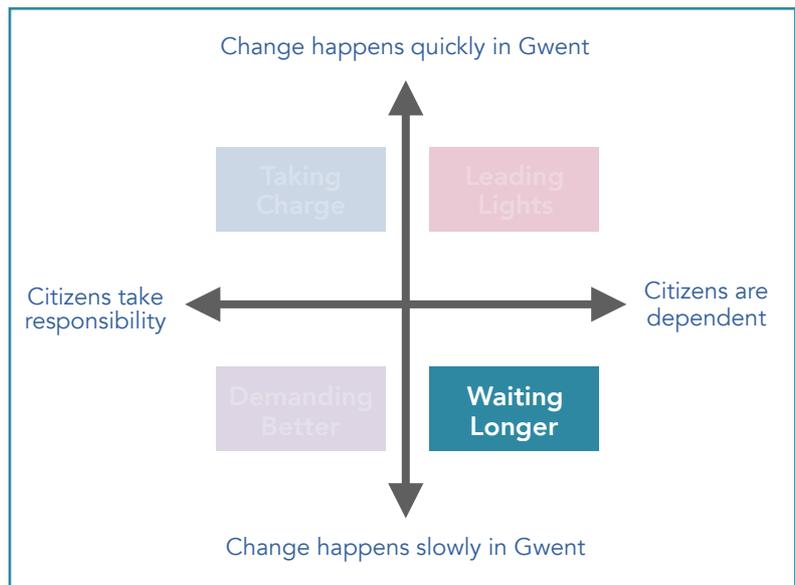
Rural areas have struggled with the loss of agricultural subsidy. People have moved in to the cities looking for work, care and access to services.

Migration from north to south, especially of the young, has increased. Government, in command and control mode and with limited options, focusses on regeneration of strategic cities.

Wales is suffering outward migration and loss of jobs and its prosperity and cohesion are under threat. Local government has limited money and little scope to make a difference. Many communities are severely blighted by drug use and related crime. Environmental degradation is getting steadily worse. Public services are devalued and public servants are not respected..

The global situation

- Global economic growth is flat. Nation states profess to believe in capitalism - competition and entrepreneurialism are given plenty of lip service - but each global power has its own competing version.
- The US is still the world's largest economy, but not for much longer. China will overtake it by 2040. China's success is driven partly by its own investment in innovation - transitioning to industry 4.0 in double quick time - in double quick time; and western economies' inability to respond due to fiscal and economic systems.
- Governments in the US and Europe swing between widening political extremes, creating social division and economic inconsistency and sustaining uncertainty. The hard right is on the rise in Europe and allegiances are opportunistic and transient. Russia and the Middle East are fractious, isolated players in the global game.
- European governments, fighting a desperate rearguard action, have become hands on and protectionist. The regulatory burden is high and changes constantly according to the demands of the latest 'trade partner of the year.'
- Political instability and short termism has created space for a range of unwanted actors to strengthen their reach. Organised crime and radical terror organisations are more pervasive and influential. Sadly, these are the organisations which are innovating and which have the vision, energy and enthusiasm to grow their market share.



- The world has done little to tackle environmental instability. Millions in the developing world are watching their livelihoods erode. So are increasing numbers in the developed economies.

The UK

- The UK is struggling to cope with a perfect storm of issues: an ageing population, rapid environmental degradation around coastal areas and an old physical infrastructure in urgent need of upgrading.
- Britain's rural and coastal communities have been particularly badly hit by Britain's worsening weather and incessant winter storms and increasing numbers of people have moved to the cities. 95% of Britain's population now lives in urban centres. They are struggling to cope.
- The government, fighting on a number of fronts, is focussing its efforts on the regeneration of cities. Not all cities, but only the major conurbations that it sees as strategic to Britain's long term survival. London is a particular magnet for investment - which has done nothing to stem the flow of jobs, talent and youth towards the south.
- Britain's manufacturing sector has declined due to a lack of investment, the relocation of many businesses to Europe following Brexit and continuing difficulty in negotiating new trade arrangements.
- For those in work, hours are long and pay is low. High personal debt, much of it triggered by the collapsed housing market and the pension deficit mean that most people work on (and on) past retirement age. There is increasing inequality and polarisation of communities around ethnic origin, wealth, health and life expectancy.
- Citizens expect government to provide and are acutely aware of their rights.
- Scotland has voted for independence. London is debating the merits of its own referendum. Welsh nationalism has increased but its voice is weak.

Public services

- With little money to work with, public services are firefighting constantly and have been forced to prioritise public services.
- Well-being, it seems, belongs to the wrong people - those who have employment or savings. The people who need the most help to achieve it are in danger of being excluded completely.
- Citizens are disengaged and unhappy. Those with the opportunity to do so tend to move out of the regions for the big cities. Those who remain are demanding of - and permanently dissatisfied with - service provision.
- Local government feels like it is pushing water uphill. It has consequently moved into command and control mode as well, prioritising its limited resources. All non-essential services have been cut back and investment is targeted towards emergency services, work programmes and food banks.
- Housing remains a priority but new building is expensive and unaffordable for many councils.

Postcard from the future

Dear Granny

How lovely to see you looking and feeling well after such a long illness. You do seem to have made a real recovery. It was lovely, too, to bring the children. They hardly get out into the countryside these days and the opportunity to get up into the hills is exciting for them. I find it odd that so much of the farmland has become scrub and wild. The ElderCare community you have moved to seems ideal for you - with so much support and activity on site. The staff we met all seemed to genuinely care.

It is such a contrast to where we are now. We had to move into Abercwech as it was one of the few places that still offered some work opportunities to Alex and me. We're not earning much but we'd rather do something than have the 'bots' do everything. I think you'd hate it, Granny - even though you were always very tolerant of change. Most of the parkland has been built on for more BAMhaus estates, so there is precious little left for J and M to play on.

Mind you, sometimes I do feel they are safer at home with their BRIDGE pads than they are outside. At least the dangers are only virtual.

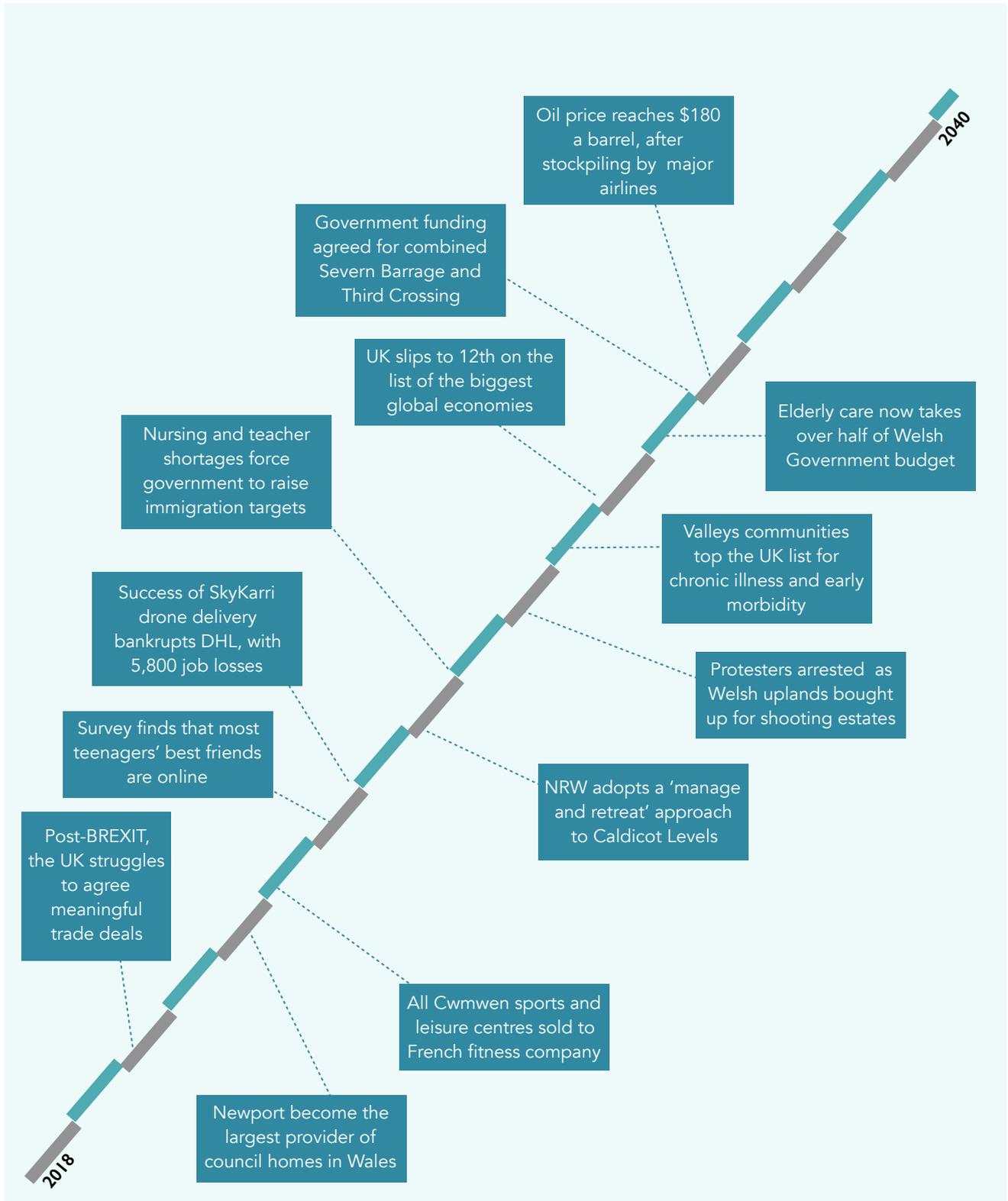
But really we are fine and I don't want to sound as if we are moaning. The main thing I think I want to ask is that you let us come and see you again before too long. It's so nice to get away and we all like hearing your stories of our old relatives - especially Old Man Coombes

Hope you enjoy the VR views that the kids sent last week

Your loving great granddaughter, Bethan X

Scenario Timeline

The timeline sets out characteristic events that take place as the world moves from 2018 to 2035 and beyond in the **Waiting Longer** scenario. Events above the timeline are at the global/UK level; those below the timeline are Wales/Gwent. This timeline is purely illustrative.



DEMANDING BETTER

Demanding Better describes a future where citizens take responsibility for health and well-being and where change happens slowly in Gwent.

Overview

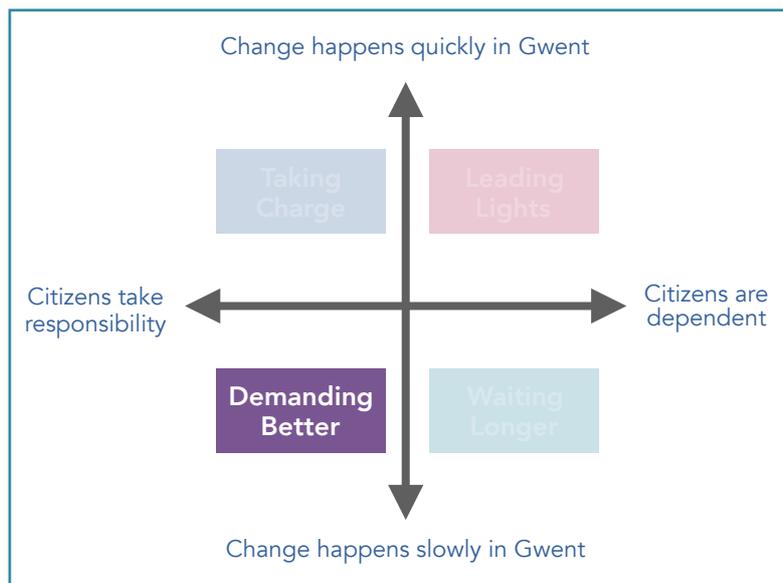
UK citizens are frustrated; many of the the world's leading economies have concentrated on technology, innovation and environmental protection over the last 15 years and the electorate feels the UK government has taken its eye off the ball.

Local communities have consequently focussed attention on circular economy practices, starting slowly but building momentum. People eat better, exercise more and demand healthier goods and services. Product leasing and sharing has increased and ownership has declined. Goods without inbuilt longevity and a traceable environmental footprint fail to sell.

Wales, like other regions in the UK, has suffered a talent drain as those frustrated with the pace of change take opportunities overseas; but there are signs that this is changing and the region and wider communities increasingly look an attractive prospect for people seeking a higher quality of environmental life.

The global situation

- China, recently enjoying growth of 7%, has steamed past the US and is the world's leading economy. Its success is driven by industrial innovation and investment in education. India is now the third largest economy. The Southeast Asian Nations have started to focus on achieving growth within environmental limits. They are already making good progress.
- The US is growing, but slowly. There is a degree of caution currently that stems from it dropping to number 2 in the world and from investor concern about the speed of its response to growth within environmental limits. Any failure to make the transition speedily may have an impact on trade.
- On that score, Europe is way ahead, having adopted circular economy practices that have unlocked innovation and created value.
- Sustained global wellbeing is pursued through a co-ordinated approach to tackling global warming, poverty and resource scarcity. Security is a global issues that demands a global response.
- China is the new "New World", attracting migrants from the west and other parts of the southern hemisphere. Scientists and technologists are in particular demand.



The UK

- The UK is not doing enough to create opportunity and growth post Brexit. People are concerned in particular about their - and the planet's - health and well-being following environmental blights in the oceans, melting icecaps and raised morbidity linked to high levels of nitrogen pollution.
- The population outside the main financial and industrial centres is frustrated that government appears to be doing too little too late and is taking matters into its own hands. Circular economy practice has taken off in some communities, supported by public service organisations that are keen to develop better solutions to waste management, over consumption and environmentally poor corporate and personal behaviours. Car sharing has reduced the number of cars by over half. There is, overall, an increased sense of well-being and purpose in these communities..
- Central government has arrived late, pushing clean growth. It aims to provide clean energy to drive clean and competitive industry. This is politically popular but there are concerns that government has left things too late. Some are also worried that it is a political response to the mood of the times rather than a deep seated and ideologically driven change.
- Not everyone is happy with the change of direction. Many people prefer making money to caring for the environment and are frustrated with with the focus and pace of change in the UK. They see opportunities elsewhere and some regions in Britain are consequently suffering a talent drain.

Public services

- Citizens demand that public services are organised around environmental concerns and that local government works in partnership with local businesses and communities to adopt environmentally strong practice.
- Central government remains distant but its clean growth policy provides the right framework. Local government powers are limited in scope but they and other public service providers do everything they can. Procurement, working practice and service delivery are organised around circular economy principles. This is viewed positively within local government and is likely to remain even if national policy shifts away from clean growth again.
- The relationship between citizens and public service organisations is strengthening, benefitting from the visible shift in approach towards long term sustainability. Citizens scrutinise local government and other local providers carefully to ensure they sustain the focus on sustainability. Citizens are concerned to broaden the approach the sustainability principles to all aspects of well-being.
- Staying the course is essential. The transition to a sustainable future is not always clear and can feel uncertain. Most regions - and particularly those beyond the major urban centres - are optimistic.
- Change is, anyway, in the air - and it is not expensive. Local taxation may rise, but citizens are willing to pay for the sustainable services they want.

Postcard from the future

Granny

We've finally managed to book the CommCar for a long weekend - so we are all coming up to visit, if that's still OK with you?

If you are well enough, could you take the girls foraging. They are always amazed at how you manage to find so much food in unexpected places. I remember you teaching me once but I don't think I was a very good pupil. I was far more interested in leaving Pen Cerrig and exploring the world than understanding its own beauty.

Joanie is part of a Growers Group at School which have set up a hydroponic salad business in one of the old mine shafts. They supply the school itself as well as some of the estates round about. All very entrepreneurial - which is just as well because we wouldn't get much fresh food if we didn't grow it ourselves.

Now that we are less worried about having to work full-time, we have been wondering about whether we could make a go of it nearer you. We could probably be self-sufficient in energy, water and much of our food. I've been selling my music world-wide as background to MiniMovs - it seems many people are getting fed up with the lack of creativity of most AI music. So maybe life really would be greener up your Valley, Granny.

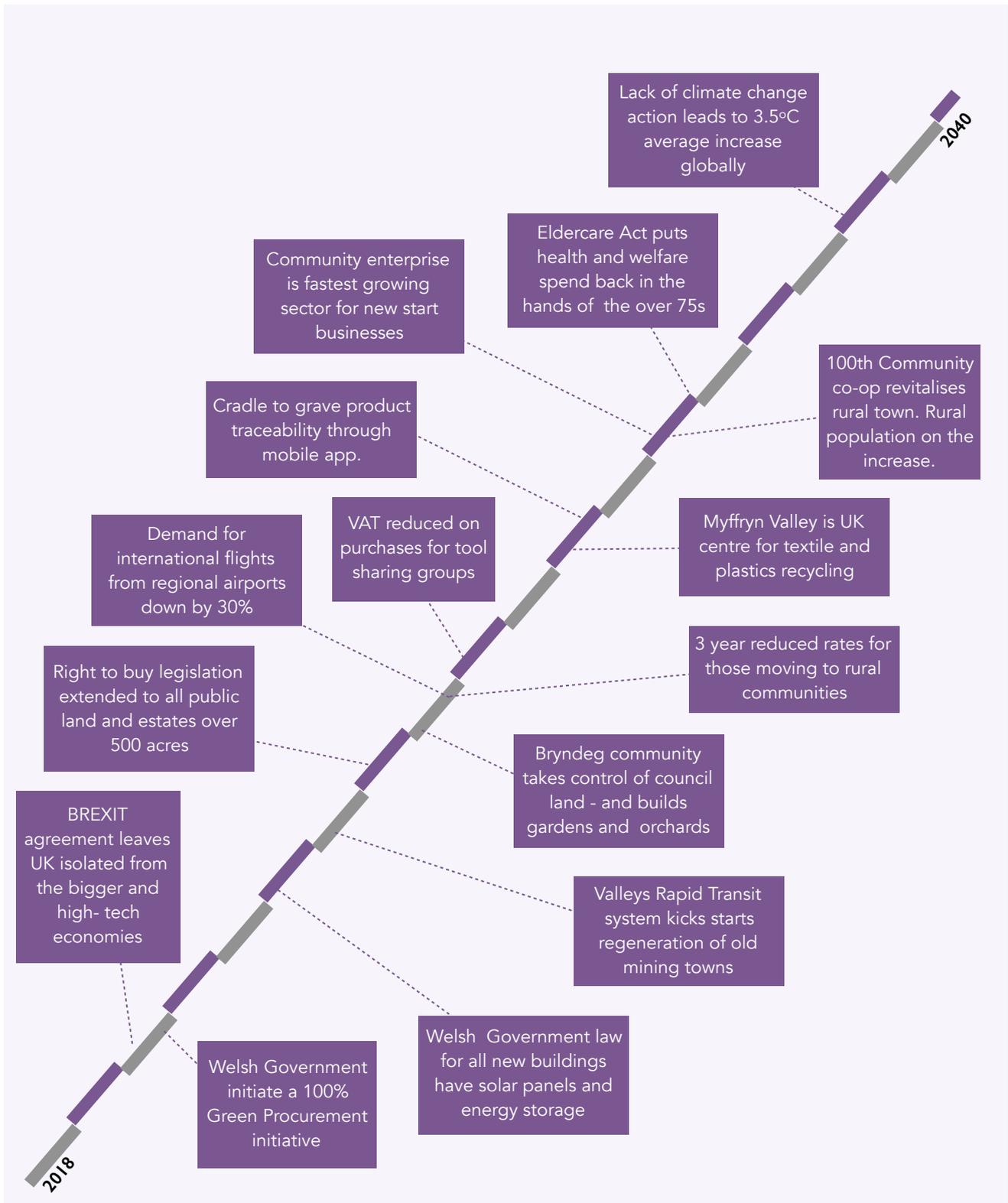
What do you think? Is it a crazy idea?

So looking forward to seeing you. And please put on a pot of your best cawl.

Dwi'n cari ti X

Scenario Timeline

The timeline sets out characteristic events that take place as the world moves from 2018 to 2035 and beyond in the **Demanding Better** scenario. Events above the timeline are at the global/UK level; those below the timeline are Wales/Gwent. This timeline is purely illustrative.



LINKS TO THE HORIZON SCANS

Introduction

The table in this section sets out how the individual horizon scans contained in the report play out in the different scenarios and what they mean for public service provision.

KEY	
→	No change to demand for public services
↗	Slight easing on pressure for public services
↑	Considerable easing on pressure for public services
↘	Slight increase on pressure for public services
↓	Considerable increase on pressure for public services
↓↓	Public services under threat

The first scan in the table is 'Welcome home', taken from the Population section of the scan and looking at Migration. The table shows that, in a future resembling **Taking Charge** the pattern of migration is likely to ease pressure on public services. This is also the case for **Leading Lights**, but if the future more closely resembles **Waiting Longer** the pattern of migration will increase pressure on public services slightly.

Reviewing all the scans - and all the themes - against the scenarios allows the reader to rehearse strategic decisions for each of the themes.

	Taking Charge	Leading Lights	Waiting Longer	Demanding Better
Population	↑	↗	↓↓	→
Migration – 'welcome home'	↗	↗	↘	→
Growing – 'the more the merrier?'	↑	↗	↓	→
Ageing – 'healthy, wealthy and wise?'	↗	→	↓↓	→
Rural depopulation – 'flight from the countryside'	↑	↗	↓↓	↓
Generation Y and Z – 'handle with care'	↑	→	↓	↘
Spatial – 'Cityscapes'	↑	↗	↓	↘
Smart cities – 'everything will be connected'	↑	↗	↓	↘
Urban density – 'the big squeeze'	↗	↗	↓	↘
Green cities – 'it ain't easy being green'	↑	↗	↓	↗
Land Use – 'a pressure cooker'	→	→	↓	→
Housing – 'home is where the heart is'	↗	↗	↓	→

Construction – ‘an eye on design’	↑	↗	↓	↗
Construction – ‘material world’	↑	↗	↓	→
Construction – ‘new techniques’	↑	↗	↓	→
Mobility	↑	↑	↓	↓
Shared transport – ‘need a lyft’	↑	↑	↓	↓
High speed trains – ‘what’s better than HS2?’	↑	↑	↓	↓
Autonomous vehicles – ‘are we nearly there yet?’	↑	↑	↓	↓
Electrical vehicles – ‘charging ahead’	↑	↑	↓	↓
Transporting goods – ‘freight trains’	↑	↑	↓	↓
Air Transport – ‘change is in the air’	↗	→	→	→
Infrastructure – ‘staying connected’	↑	↑	↓	↓
Mobility as a service – ‘better than a car’	↑	↑	↓	↓
Politics	↓	→	↓	↓
Austerity – ‘austerity runs on’	↓	↓	↓↓	↓
BREXIT – ‘divided we fall’	↓	↓	↓	↓
Trust - Trust in government	↗	→	→	↓
Participation - Changing politics	↓	→	↓	↓↓
Devolution/localism – ‘Independent thinking’	↗	↗	→	↗
Public/private provision - ‘Carillion ripples’	↓	↓	↓	↓
Innovation in public services	↑	↑	↓	→
Economy	↑	→	↓	↓
Equity – ‘unequal and divided’	↑	↓	↓	→
Protectionism – ‘closed borders’	→	→	↓	↓
Low growth – ‘a new, lower speed limit’	↓	↓	↓	↓
Moving East – ‘power shifts’	→	→	↓	↓
Disruptive business models – ‘4th industrial revolution’	↑	↑	↓↓	↓
Skills and learning – ‘continuously creative’	↑	→	↓	↗
Employment – ‘lovely jobs or lousy jobs’	↑	↗	↓	→
Circular economy -	↑	↗	↓	↗
Society	↗	→	↓	→
New social networks – ‘antisocial media’	→	↓	↓	↓
Welsh language - Hey Siri	↗	↓	↗	↓
Wellbeing – ‘assisted dying’	↗	→	→	→

Caring and sharing – ‘who cares’	↑	↗	↓↓	↗
Community Activism – ‘co-living’	↑	→	↓	↗
Wellbeing - The doctor will alert you now	↑	↗	↗	↑
Wellbeing - Legalise drugs? What's the harm?	↑	→	↗	↑
Religion – ‘religious movement’	→	↓	↓	→
Wellbeing – ‘snowflakes’	→	↓	↓	→
Security	↗	↓	↓↓	↘
Cyber security – ‘from IoT to loSecurity nightmare’	→	↓↓	↓↓	↓
Cyber-crime – ‘the dark web’	→	↓↓	↓↓	↓
Cyber security - (In)secure services	→	↓	↓	↓↓
Global relationships – ‘Home alone’	↗	↗	↓	↓
Global relationships – ‘America first’	→	→	→	→
Surveillance – ‘safety or intrusion?’	↗	→	↓	↗
Surveillance – ‘predictive policing’	↗	↗	↓	→
Technology	↑	↗	↓	→
Automation – ‘jobs lost, jobs gained’	↑	↗	↓	→
Big data – ‘betting on the numbers’	↑	↑	↓	→
Cryptocurrencies – ‘following the money’	↗	↗	↓	↓
Additive Manufacturing	↗	↗	→	→
Artificial intelligence – ‘securing a slice of the AI pie’	↑	↑	↓	→
Adopting blockchain – ‘transforming public service’	↑	↗	↓	↓
Augmented reality – ‘making the leap’	↗	→	→	→
Connectivity – ‘finding the right space’	↑	↗	↓	↗
Antibiotics and drug resistance – ‘use with care’	↑	↓	↓↓	↓
Resources	↗	→	↓	↘
Resources – ‘peak everything’	↓	↓	↓	↓
Resources – ‘and not a drop to drink’	→	→	→	→
Resources – ‘mud, mud, glorious mud’	→	→	↓	↓
Energy – ‘renewables’	↑	↗	↓	↗
Energy – ‘distribution’	↑	↗	↓	↗
Energy – ‘cost and security’	→	→	↓↓	↓
Natural systems	↘	↘	↓↓	↓
Climate – ‘a taste of what’s to come’	↓	↓	↓↓	↓

Climate – ‘it’s not just about the weather’	↘	↘	↓↓↓	↓
Climate – ‘international action’	↘	↘	↓↓↓	↓
Climate – ‘public mood’	→	↘	↓	→
Climate – ‘economics’	→	↘	↓	→
Biodiversity – ‘ecosystem services’	↑	↗	↓	↘
Biodiversity – ‘impacts of species and habitat loss’	↘	↘	↓↓↓	↓
Food – ‘we are what we eat’	→	↘	↓↓↓	→

ANNEX 1: DRIVERS AND UNCERTAINTIES

Introduction

In the first workshop, G-SWAG members reviewed key drivers and uncertainties in each of the ten categories of the Ash horizon scan and added any important uncertainties that Ash had missed. They then ranked key uncertainties in order of strategic importance for the region's future.

The drivers, uncertainties and rankings are set out in this annex. Uncertainties are ranked in the order of importance that G-SWAG members gave them; the top uncertainty in each category is presented in blue.

Population

Key drivers

- Population in Wales will continue to increase – rising by 4.6% by 2041
- The number of people aged 65+ will increase by 36.6% by 2041 and the number of people aged between 16 and 64 will decrease by 4.2%. The dependency ratio will therefore increase
- Following an initial rise to 2026, the number of children under 16 will decrease by 1.5% to 2041
- Lower migration into Wales and a slowing of increases in life expectancy may mean population growth is slower than previously expected
- Health factors will place a burden on public services
- There may continue to be a developing generational fault line between the 'baby boom' generation and Generations Y & Z

Key uncertainties

- **Will the increase in illnesses such as obesity and diabetes result in increased pressure on public and social services? Or will society become more educated about long term health and be more well?**
- Will over 65s be fit and remain in the workforce?
- Future job market skills needed - will our older people be able to keep up skills and knowledge to adapt to changes in jobs?
- Will Gwent (and Wales) be able to attract the number of skilled migrants it needs to overcome any deficiencies in the domestic labour market
- Will Gwent be able to look after its older population? Or not?
- Will the UK become a more diverse society in generational terms?

Spatial issues/infrastructure

Key drivers

- Population in Wales will continue to increase – More people will be living in cities
- Cities will use data analytics to manage transport, energy, waste and other services
- Many more homes will be needed - of all tenures
- New construction techniques may make building cheaper
- Reducing CO2 will become a key driver of planning policy
- Rural communities may see a continued decline in services

Key uncertainties

- **Will the Cardiff Capital Region use 'smart city' techniques to generate integration and added value?**
- Will communities in the valleys and uplands struggle economically and socially? Or will physical and virtual infrastructure improve their viability and attractiveness?
- Will public bodies invest early to exploit new technologies or will they have to play catch up?
- Will urban managers prioritise high density living or improved liveability?
- We need to understand who the people are who are living in cities: are they from the area or from further afield? What affects their migration?

Mobility

Key drivers

- Ride sharing may increase
- Electric vehicles will replace diesel and petrol vehicles
- Connected and autonomous vehicles will be more important
- Mobility as a Service may become the dominant business model
- Infrastructure requirements will need to change
- The legislative environment is likely to drive change

Key uncertainties

- Will the uptake of new technologies and approaches to mobility in Wales happen more slowly or at the same speed as the rest of the UK?
- Will future regional competitiveness depend on the speed of uptake of new technologies?
- Will public services be positively or adversely affected by developments in mobility?
- Will new approaches reduce or amplify social and economic divisions?

Politics

Key drivers

- Trust in government is declining
- Government may become less Westminster centric
- Increased youth engagement and self interest will change the political agenda
- Innovation in public service delivery will drive competitive advantage
- Post Brexit, the UK may devolve powers to all regions in the UK
- Local services need not be delivered by local service providers

Key uncertainties

- Does local government have the capacity and will to innovate? Or not?
- Will greater devolution of power throughout the UK strengthen Gwent or weaken it?
- Will declining trust in national government be a problem locally? Or an advantage?
- Is politics in Wales dividing along generational lines? Or are political divides familiar and understood?
- Will local government reform impact well being plans or not?

Economy

Key drivers

- By 2050 the global economy may have doubled
- The major emerging economies are likely to grow at twice the rate of advanced economies. Six of seven largest economies likely to be emergent.
- Countries such as China, India and Indonesia will represent export opportunities for UK businesses
- UK productivity – and therefore growth, wages and income - are likely to remain low until 2025 and will sustain pressure on public spending
- The economy will experience technology-driven disruption; more sectors/markets will be disrupted by new entrants and business models
- Technology developments mean that two thirds of the workforce are in jobs that are likely to need redesign and workforce training
- Regional differences within Gwent will affect key drivers and the impacts

Key uncertainties

- Is Gwent able to anticipate how technology will change skills and invest in appropriate workforce retraining programmes? Or will it wait and follow best practice elsewhere?
- Are businesses in Gwent outward and forward looking? Or internally focussed?
- Can Gwent counter the long-term slowdown in productivity improvement through local policies? Or is there little it can do directly?
- Will protectionism in the global economy prevail? Or will markets be open and collaborative?

Society

Key drivers

- Austerity may continue to disadvantage communities
- Innovative housing solutions may have a positive impact on communities
- Technology will empower citizens in all aspects of their lives
- ...and will be outside the reach of government to influence
- Social media may divide rather than unite society
- Trust – and trustworthiness – will become a critically important differentiator in all societal transactions

Key uncertainties

- Will austerity impact on the affordability of public service or will local government find innovative ways to enhance service delivery?
- Will technology bring society and local government closer together? Or will it drive it further apart?
- Will communities and friendships be stronger in the real world or the virtual world?
- Will new approaches to communal living be a driver of social change? Or is it not relevant
- Would a universal basic income lead to improvements in social cohesion or further polarise communities?

Security

Key drivers

- Cyber security will be a significant threat to organisations
- Cyber security may be a significant threat to service provision
- Crime and criminal behaviour – nationally and internationally - is likely to stay one step ahead of policing
- ...but technologies such as predictive policing will reduce crime in areas that deploy it
- ...and increased surveillance and monitoring may be essential in the real and virtual worlds
- Brexit may isolate the UK

Key uncertainties

- Does it matter if businesses, communities and local government in Gwent are cyber secure? Will austerity impact on the affordability of public service or will local government find innovative ways to enhance service delivery?
- Can Gwent utilise new technologies such as surveillance and predictive policing to counter crime and keep people safe - while also maintaining civil liberties?
- Will Brexit have any impact on the future security of Gwent and its communities?
- Is policing the dark web important?

Technology

Key drivers

- Artificial intelligence (AI) will transform economic opportunity and public service provision
- Blockchain is likely to give citizens control of their personal information
- Augmented reality might change how key sectors in the local economy use information to create opportunities and improve customer satisfaction
- Imaginative uses of technology will allow remote communities better access to the web
- Two thirds of the workforce are in jobs that are likely to need redesign and workforce training
- Effective use of big data will improve services and make them more cost efficient

Key uncertainties

- What does Gwent need to do to be AI ready? Does it matter?
- How can Gwent use big data to improve services and governance? Can it commit to early investment in the data science skills and capacity it needs to do so?
- Are there lessons from other areas' approach to connecting communities that Gwent might wasn't to know more about?
- Should local government ensure business and communities can utilise augmented reality content?

Resources

Key drivers

- Several key resources are likely to become scarce and/or expensive
- Renewable energy will become the main source of electricity
- Energy and resource management will become more important
- Substitution of resources may lead to some industrial disruption
- How land is used is likely to become increasingly political

Key uncertainties

- **How will the behaviour of the population change?**
- Will land become more useful for providing strategic resources (such as energy and water)? Or will housing and employment be a priority?
- Will the Cardiff Capital Region plans include a resource reduction plan or are they based on 'business as usual' resource usage?
- Will the Severn ever become a major producer of energy? Will a barrage ever be built or will less intrusive technologies be deployed at scale?

Natural systems

Key drivers

- Average global temperatures will increase by more than 2oC
- Average global temperatures may increase by as much as 4oC
- Popular mood is likely to shift away from fossil fuels, and those who invest in them
- Gwent's environment may see new pests and diseases that will thrive in warmer conditions
- People are likely to eat less meat and dairy products
- New technologies will enable food to be produced in new areas

Key uncertainties

- **Development or nature? Will the pressures for new housing and employment sites be dominant at all costs? Or will it be balanced with protecting biodiversity and managing river catchments to reduce flood risks?**
- Will Gwent secure the investment needed to make the Valleys and uplands more productive for food, energy and as carbon sinks? Or will it not?
- Will public bodies have a role in encouraging and supporting low carbon lifestyles? Or will the choice be left to the markets?
- Will increased investment be needed to protect the coastline? Or should parts of it be allowed to flood?

ANNEX 2: LETTER TO THE PICTURE POST

THIS IS THE PROBLEM

by B. L. Coombes

January 4th, 1941

I am in the middle forties - old enough to have seen many things and formed a few opinions. All my working days have been passed in two of the great industries - agriculture and mining. So my living has come off the land, or from under it.

I thought agriculture should be important, because the beginning of all industry is the land. We worked hard - all the hours of daylight. Yet we couldn't get a decent living. Heavy rents, tithes, and market conditions beat us. It came to the point where the price for swedes wouldn't cover the cartage to the station. So, one day in late autumn, when the apples were killing the grass in the orchard, I went eighty miles away to work in the mines. It was the beginning of a new life.

That night, in my new house, I found that apples were dear and scarce; so were swedes. The people would hardly believe that I had seen them left to rot. Yet I found straight away that the coal we had valued so highly - in the country - was of no account here. It was left behind in the workings, thrown over the tips and buried - wasted just as badly as the crops.



Now, for more than twenty years, I have seen this black mineral torn from the heart of the earth and used as if it was of no value. Even in the middle of the war, at this very moment, it seems that no-one wants it. For here I am, not working myself, hundreds of my mates are idle and the inside of the great mountain of coal towering over my home is at rest. We are not allowed to go under the earth. And we must be careful where we walk the surface. It seems that the palsied hand which made our farming derelict has stretched over the mountains into the coalfield and made that derelict too.

I ask myself how can it be that no-one needs coal? Near here is a disused mine and some of my mates are trying to find bits of coal in the rubbish. For there is no coal to be bought, and even as I write, we have no coal in this home. Yet from this window I can see the mountain so full of coal that the seams crop out to the daylight.

There are collieries close to this spot equipped and able to bring out more than six thousand tons of coal a day between them. Their engines are not moving and the workers are waiting, shivering before their empty grates.

As I look out of the window, I think of my own life. I married young, and our only daughter did likewise. Snow, out in the backyard, I can hear the voices of our little grandsons. They come to visit us often because we have a little space out the back and, after all, children must play sometimes.

Our only son, aged 15, is out there too. He is a natural mechanic, and now, so it seems, he is trying to make an aeroplane out of two old bicycles. For he is 'idle' too; the country doesn't want his skill or his labour.

This sounds very gloomy, I know. This country, at war, seems to have no need of my string and mature middle-age, no encouragement for my boy's inventive youth. So will there be any place for the grandsons, the youngest generations? I'm sure there will be. But to get a better world, somebody must go pretty deep into the evils of the old world - see just which way we have been going and which way we ought to be going.

I have no war aims except to win it in such a way that really peace terms are possible and to banish the shadow of war forever from our lives. Before we can do that we must look at the origins of this war. It seems to me something like this.

We claim to be a nation that plays the game, and “that’s not playing cricket” is a national reproach. But have you ever seen a cricket team win when its batsmen crouched over the wicket and refused to use the bat no matter what was sent along? That is the sort of game we’ve seen our leaders playing in the past, and what is the result? We are left alone on the field and in a war that we must now fight and win.



We of the working class play cricket too, but our hands are hard and our leisure time is short. Therefore we develop more hitters and those are men to deal with crooked stuff such as a dictator sends along. We want more sledgehammer users in our Government and fewer umbrella carriers. More than half my mates saw what was coming when Spain was sacrificed, and we collected from our small earning to help what we know was the first lone of the defence; then Czechoslovakia was betrayed and moan of sorrow went through the mines. Since then, we have always wondered whether they who governed us were wilfully blind or incredibly stupid.

Those blunders have finished forever the tradition of a class that were born to govern; and educated to believe that only the best was good enough for them. Almost alone amongst the great nations we still worship the idea of the family crest - the idea that we should look up to a man on account of his birth. For my own part, I feel I can say I have never sought easy work or shrunk from soiling my hands. There are thousands - no, millions! - like me, who are willing to do hard and dangerous work as long as they get a fair reward for it. But this one thing angers us - the idea that a man is a dolt if he does work which dirties his hands or his clothes! The fact is that men like us have got to be efficient at our jobs - because we can’t get promoted for muddling things!

I feel there must be great changes in the men and women who run this country. There must be new ideas and new methods. Then when our own land is shaped we can invite the spectators from all over the world and tell them “Now we are really playing the game. Do you like it?” They might find something worth copying.



Hallo! There is a commotion out the back. It reminds me that my thoughts have been running away with me.

The coal man has arrived and the boys - the sons and grandsons of unemployed miners - are clapping because there are hopes of being warm.

“Only a hundredweight,” the coal man tells us, “and it was a job to get it. Poor stuff it is, too, but I’ve got to charge two and sevenpence.”

A month ago we were cutting much better coal for two shillings a ton. Between the dear coal and the cheap cutting, the scarce apples and those that rot, I think I can see the peace aim I would like to achieve. It is security - security against war and exploitation, by man or country. And what I ask for ourselves should be granted to the whole world.