

Gwent Public Services Board

Introduction

Gwent Well-being Assessment

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SECTION 1 – WORKING TOGETHER TO IMPROVE WELL-BEING

1.1 The Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act

In April 2016 Welsh Government introduced The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act. This ground-breaking piece of legislation is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of our nation and the communities that make it what it is.

The Act sets out how public services in Wales need to think more about the long-term, work better with people and communities and each other, look to prevent problems and take a more joined-up approach. These are referred to as the five ways of working. By acting in this way we stand a much better chance of creating a place that we all want to live in, now and in the future.

To make sure that public services are all working towards the same vision, the Act puts in place seven well-being goals which you can see in Figure 1.

The individual public bodies that are bound by the Act need to set their own well-being objectives by 31 March each year. They must also come together in each local authority area as a Public Services Board (PSB) and set joint well-being objectives for that area as a whole. This is done every five years with the first produced in spring 2018.

The PSB is required to prepare and publish an assessment of the state of economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being in its area no later than a year before it publishes its local **Well-being Plan**. This assessment provided the evidence to identify key priorities and plan how to improve well-being both for now and for future generations. This is Gwent PSB's first Well-being Assessment and it is built from an extensive range of sources including census and statistical data, policy and research and qualitative evidence which captures people's opinions and perceptions as well as giving context to quantitative data and academic research.

In developing this assessment, we have kept in mind the Sustainable Development Principle, improving our social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being both now and in the future. We have used the five ways of working, **collaboration**, **integration**, **involvement**, **long term** and **prevention**, to guide our work. This means that while considering well-being in our communities now, we've also looked at how well-being could

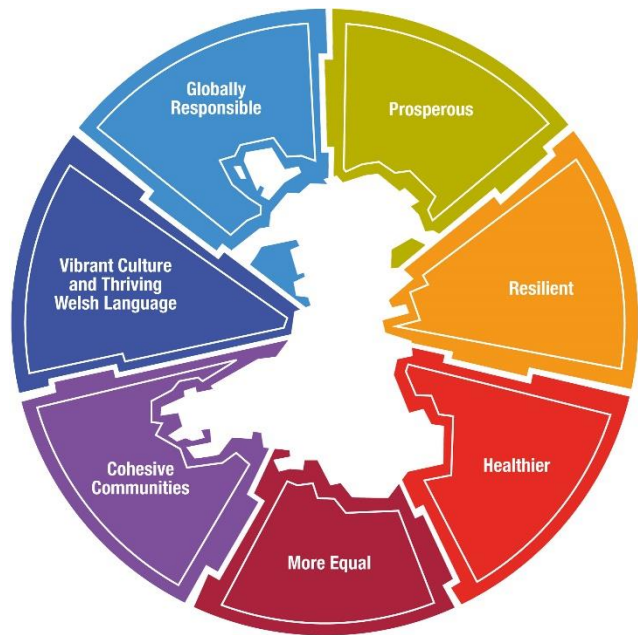


Figure 1: 7 Well-being Goals from the Well-being of Future Generations Act

be affected in the **future** and how we can **prevent** issues becoming worse. We've **worked together** to see what we're each doing in a community and how the information we have about a community affects what we do, individually and in partnership. Finally, but most importantly, we've **involved** our communities, professionals, businesses and others to identify the issues which are most important to them.






Figure 2: The 5 ways of working from the Well-being of Future Generations Act

1.2 Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act

The Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 established Regional Partnership Boards (RPBs) in each health board area. It requires the RPBs to produce a **Population Needs Assessment** (PNA) and Market Stability Report (MSR). The PNA focuses on the **needs of people requiring health and care support** in the local area. There are significant overlaps between the *Well-being* and *Population* assessments and, where we can we have worked collaboratively to give a holistic picture for Gwent. The principles underpinning the Social Services and Wellbeing Act – **voice and control, prevention and early intervention, promote wellbeing and partnership and integration** – are similar to the five ways of working set out in the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

1.3 About Gwent

Area 	The total area of Gwent is 158,500 hectares – approximately 7.6% of the total area of Wales.				
	Blaenau-Gwent	Caerphilly	Monmouthshire	Newport	Torfaen
	10,900	28,000	88,000	19,000	12,600
Population 	The estimated population of Gwent is 594,164 , approximately 19% of the total population for Wales ¹				
	Blaenau-Gwent	Caerphilly	Monmouthshire	Newport	Torfaen
	69,862	181,075	94,590	154,676	93,961

Population density	The population density of Gwent is 3.75 persons per hectare. The population density is 1.52 people per hectare in Wales.				
	Blaenau-Gwent	Caerphilly	Monmouthshire	Newport	Torfaen
	6.4	6.5	1.07	8.14	7.46
Dwellings 	The dwelling count in Gwent is 275,882 approximately 18.2% of the total number of dwellings in Wales ² .				
	Blaenau-Gwent	Caerphilly	Monmouthshire	Newport	Torfaen
	33,663	81,837	44,499	72,325	43,558

Gwent covers the five local authority areas in South East Wales: Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Monmouthshire, Newport and Torfaen, which prior to 1996 were borough councils within the county of Gwent. Since 1996, the five authorities have been unitary authorities, but a number of services and organisations still run on a Gwent footprint.

The geography of Gwent is varied and includes rural countryside areas, urban centres and the most easterly of the South Wales valleys.

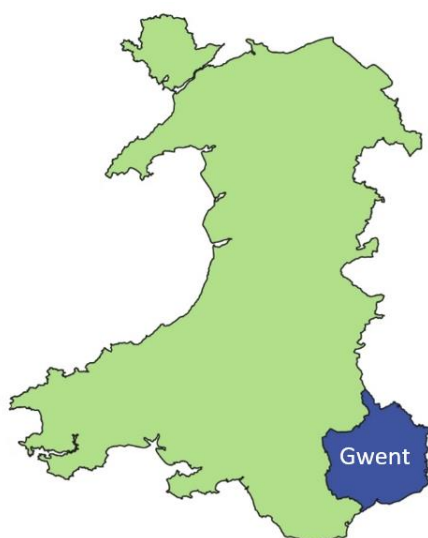


Figure 3: Map showing location of Gwent within Wales and Figure 4: Map showing the 5 Gwent local authorities ³

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Blaenau Gwent

Situated in the valleys of South East Wales Blaenau Gwent is defined physically by high hillsides dividing three main valleys. These valleys are home to towns and villages which give the county borough a busy, urban feel, but Blaenau Gwent is actually largely rural.

With the industrial revolution and the establishment of ironworks, coal mining and steel making, the population of Blaenau Gwent grew from around 1,200 to well over 120,000 by the early 20th century. The people of Blaenau Gwent had a strong work and community ethic, demonstrated by them campaigning for improvements to their quality of life, such as establishing the first ever Board of Health and campaigning for electoral reform. Blaenau Gwent has a rich cultural heritage which is reflected in monuments, buildings, landscapes and people.

In past decades the people of Blaenau Gwent have faced many challenges, the closure of all the coal mines in the late 1980s, and the Ebbw Vale Steelworks in 2002 leading to many job losses. In an attempt to reduce the effect of this, significant effort has been put into changing the focus of the local economy towards the manufacturing and services industries. However, despite this, there has been an overall loss of jobs and many of our young people and families have had to move away in search of further education and employment. This is highlighted by a 5% reduction in the population between 1991 and 2011. Many working residents commute outside the borough to work and commuting distances have increased more than any local authority in Wales. The area has high levels of unemployment and a high percentage of people who are dependent on benefits.

In more recent times, the area has seen significant structural and environment improvement, following major levels of capital investment, and the greening of our valleys as nature recovers from the long-term scarring caused through our historical industries.



Figure 3: (Left to right) Guardian of the valley at Six Bells, Tredegar Town Clock, Ebbw Vale General Offices and Coleg Gwent Campus.

Caerphilly

Covering an area stretching from the Brecon Beacons National Park in the north, to Cardiff and Newport in the south, the county borough is a little over 30km long and 17.5km wide. It is formed by the valleys of three rivers, the Rhymney, Sirhowy and Ebbw and is a mixture of urban and rural communities. Three quarters of the county borough is used for agriculture and forestry. There are five principal centres within Caerphilly county borough' Caerphilly, Blackwood, Risca, Bargoed and Ystrad Mynach, plus four local centres of Newbridge, Rhymney, Nelson and Bedwas. These are the major centres for employment and, retail, provision of services and centres of population.

People are widely dispersed amongst fifty small towns and villages with the main settlements largely reflecting the area's rich coal mining heritage.

Caerphilly has an expanding economy and benefits through good transport links to Cardiff but there are significant levels of unemployment and poor health.



Figure 4: (Left to right) Caerphilly Castle, Cyclists at Cwmcarn Forest, Sultan at Penallta Park

Monmouthshire

Occupying a strategic position between the major centres in South Wales and the South West of England and the Midlands. The main settlements are Abergavenny, Chepstow, Monmouth, Caldicot, Usk and Magor/Undy, with approximately half of the total population living in wards defined as being in urban areas. Monmouthshire's distinctive settlement pattern arises from its historic market towns and villages and their relationship with the surrounding rural areas. A good road network connects Monmouthshire to major population centres such as Cardiff, Newport and Bristol and many of the population take advantage of these links to commute out of the area for employment opportunities.

The county is predominantly rural and has a rich and diverse landscape stretching from the coastline of the Gwent Levels in the south, and the uplands of the Brecon Beacons National Park in the north, to the picturesque river corridor of the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Beauty in the east. The county contains some good quality agricultural land and has a high proportion of farming land. Monmouthshire is generally a prosperous area offering a high quality of life for its residents. However, Monmouthshire does have hidden pockets of deprivation starker when they are compared with areas of relative wealth.



Figure 5: (Left to right) Abergavenny Food Festival, Autumn in the Wye Valley, from Eagles Nest, and Caldicot Castle

Newport

Newport City is the third largest urban centre in Wales and is a multi-cultural city with its own unique atmosphere, where traditional industries sit alongside new electronics and financial service sectors. It is a vibrant, forward-thinking city steeped in a rich industrial heritage, dating from the 19th century when its important strategic location was first recognised. The first settlers in the Newport area arrived during the Bronze Age and evidence of this has survived to present day, particularly on the coastal levels. During the Roman occupation, Caerleon became a principal military base and substantial excavated remains can be seen, including the amphitheatre, baths and barracks occupied by the Roman Legion. During the Industrial Revolution of the late 18th and 19th centuries, the city grew substantially, firstly with the development of the canal network and then with the railways, enabling vast quantities of coal to be exported, along with iron and steel products. In more modern times, steelmaking was a mainstay of the economy through the 20th century, along with its port. However, much of the heavy industry went into decline towards the end of the century as steelmaking at Llanwern Steelworks, for example, ceased in 2001, resulting in the loss of 1,300 jobs.



Figure 6: (Left to right) Southern Distributor Road Bridge in Newport, Beechwood Park, Newport, and the Transporter Bridge.

Torfaen

Torfaen is the most easterly of the South Wales urbanised valleys. Geographically the area runs from the Heads of the Valleys in the north to the M4 corridor in the south with three main settlements, Blaenavon, Pontypool and Cwmbran. Pontypool and Blaenavon were originally established to exploit the abundant non-renewable charcoal, coal and iron resources in the area. As those heavy industries declined over the past 100 years, so did the prosperity of those areas.

The World Heritage Site town of Blaenavon has a population of around 6,500⁴ is furthest north in the borough and is famous for the Big Pit Coal Mining Museum and Europe's best preserved 18th century ironworks. The former industrial town of Pontypool with its traditional indoor and outdoor market is the next largest settlement located in the heart of the borough, and with the various communities that surround it, has a population of around 37,700⁵. In the south of the borough, Cwmbran is unique in being the only New Town in Wales, being designated in 1949 and designed as a distinctive, progressive and modern town offering new opportunities for its residents. Much of the southern parts of

the county borough are now urbanised around Cwmbran, which has the largest population of each of the three settlement areas with around 49,800⁶. Cwmbran Shopping Centre attracts large numbers of shopping visitors from the wider area of Gwent and the M4 corridor.






Figure 7: Aerial photo of Cwmbran, The Folly at Pontypool, The World Heritage Centre, Blaenavon.

1.4 About the communities

Understanding how the population might change in the future can help us think about key well-being challenges and opportunities.

Population projections

Overall population 	The overall population in Gwent is projected to increase by 6.2 % between 2019 and 2043, roughly similar to the Welsh average (5.2%). For Gwent this would mean 36,987 extra people ⁷ .				
	Blaenau-Gwent	Caerphilly	Monmouthshire	Newport	Torfaen
	-415 people (0.6 %)	3,645 people (2.0%)	6,789 people (7.2%)	22,103 people (14.3%)	4,865 people (5.2%)
Aged 16-64	The number of people aged 16-64 living in Gwent is projected to slightly rise by 0.7% by 2043, similar to the Welsh average (-0.5%). For Gwent this would mean 2,367 extra people in this age range ⁸ .				
	Blaenau-Gwent	Caerphilly	Monmouthshire	Newport	Torfaen
	-2,568 people (-5.9%)	-3,487 (-3.1%)	-1,723 (-3.1%)	10,125 people (10.6%)	19 people (0%)
Aged 65 and over 	The number of people aged 65 and over living in Gwent is projected to increase by 31.2% between 2019 and 2043, roughly similar to the Welsh average (29%). For Gwent this could mean an extra 37,263 people in this age range ⁹ .				
	Blaenau-Gwent	Caerphilly	Monmouthshire	Newport	Torfaen

	3,250 (23.2%)	9,653 (27.2%)	9,161 (38.4%)	9,810 (36.8%)	5,389 (28.0%)
Aged 85 and over	<p>The number of people aged 85 and over living in Gwent is projected to increase by 74% between 2019 and 2043, slightly higher to the Welsh average (69.5%). For Gwent this could mean an extra 10,615 people in this age range¹⁰.</p>				
	Blaenau-Gwent	Caerphilly	Monmouthshire	Newport	Torfaen
	860 (57.0%)	3,145 (82.6%)	2,993 (91.5%)	1,895 (57.5%)	1,722 (69.9%)

1.5 Gwent Public Services Board



In 2020 Wales Audit Office published their Review of Public Services Boards¹¹ which looked at operational arrangements and which partners were involved in the work. The report concluded that “Public Services Boards are unlikely to realise their potential unless they are given freedom to work more flexibly and think and act differently”.



Welsh Government and the Welsh Local Government Association also highlighted the role of PSBs in simplifying and aligning strategic partnerships¹².

The five PSBs in Gwent currently have **24 well-being objectives** between them, many of which are similar in theme, but are being delivered separately from each other. With a new cycle of well-being assessments about to begin, the Leaders and Chief Executives of the five local authorities plus the Chairs and/or Chief Officers of the five other major public services in Gwent, identified an opportunity to **simplify** and **strengthen** existing partnership arrangements by bringing all the public services together into one **regional PSB for Gwent**.

With collective responsibility for improving well-being, the move to a regional PSB makes it easier for partners to actively get involved, to add value and avoid duplicative activity. By enabling better **integration** and **collaboration**, the PSB can evolve, building on good practice, to make better use of **resources** and increasing **capacity** – so the focus is on doing more of what matters – **improving well-being**.

Central to the new arrangement is a recognition that the communities that make up Gwent are all unique with different sets of conditions that have an influence on the well-being of the people living and working there. Alongside building a regional, integrated picture of well-

being, we will reflect on well-being challenges and opportunities at the local level, accounting for the strengths of both individuals and communities.

The establishment of a regional PSB brings a more strategic direction and overview to the local partnership arrangements that are already in place. Each area has its own local operational and strategic structures in place for delivery and accountability and Local Delivery Groups are being established to ensure that local priorities and activities continue to be delivered.

1.6 Current regional and local priorities

As part of planning for the next 25 years and beyond, the first cycle of Well-being Plans set out how we are collectively responding to some of the key issues identified when we assessed local well-being in 2016/17.

Our existing priorities set out how we are working together to improve well-being for people and places both now and for future generations, so that we can deliver our long-term vision.

PSBs are soon to come to the end of the first cycle of assessing, planning and delivering their local well-being objectives. Work will continue to deliver these existing plans until 2023, with progress being reported annually.

This Well-being Assessment is an opportunity for us to determine if our well-being objectives are still the right ones, if we need to be doing more of some things and less of others, and how we can best work together through the new Gwent PSB in a way that positively builds on what has gone before.

Gwent Well-being Assessment

Blaenau-Gwent	Caerphilly	Monmouthshire	Newport	Torfaen
To look after and protect the natural environment.	Enabling our communities to be resilient and sustainable.	Protect and enhance the resilience of our natural environment whilst mitigating and adapting to the impact of climate change.	Newport has healthy, safe and resilient environments with an integrated sustainable travel network.	Develop a functional, connected network of natural areas that support the current and future well-being needs of local populations. Develop mitigation and adaptation responses to the impacts of climate change.
Safe and friendly communities.				Create safe, confident communities and promote community cohesion.
The best start in life for everyone.	Giving our future generations the best start in life.	Provide children and young people with the best possible start in life.		Provide children and young people with the best possible start in life.
To encourage healthy lifestyles.		Respond to the challenges associated with demographic change.	Everyone belongs to resilient, friendly, connected communities and feels confident and empowered to improve their well-being.	Support healthy lifestyles and enable people to age well.
To forge new pathways to prosperity.	Empowering and enabling all our residents to achieve their own potential.	Develop opportunities for communities and businesses to be part of an economically thriving and well-connected county.	Everyone has the skills and opportunities they need to develop, prosper and contribute to a thriving, sustainable city. Everyone feels good about living, working, visiting and investing in our unique city.	Tackle the inter generational patterns of poverty and develop economic resilience. Improve local skills through work-force planning, training, apprenticeships, and volunteering opportunities.
	A shared commitment to improving the way we work together.			

Figure 6: The current (2018-23) well-being objectives of the 5 Gwent PSBs

In addition to the local well-being objectives, the five PSBs in Gwent have been working together on a small number of regional work-streams that are more likely to be achieved on a regional rather than local area basis. These include exploring future scenarios that are likely to impact our communities and working together through Climate Ready Gwent.

Gwent Strategic Wellbeing Assessment Group (GSWAG) brings together key officers from Natural Resources Wales, South Wales Fire & Rescue, Gwent Police, Aneurin Bevan University Health Board, Public Health Wales and the five local authorities. Originally set up to help prepare the first Well-being Assessments, GSWAG has continued to work together, identifying and co-ordinating these strategic priorities.

1.7 How this Well-being Assessment has been undertaken

This joint Well-being Assessment draws on the knowledge and experience each of the Public Services Boards gained when producing the last assessments in 2017. We've learnt from each other about what worked well, and what didn't, so that the assessment is as good as we can make it.

Producing a joint assessment is a bit different from producing one for each of the council areas. There are aspects that are best considered at a regional (Gwent) level, and others that are more local, affecting individual communities or areas.

The assessment has been produced around the four well-being themes set out in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act; Social, Economic, Environmental and Cultural. Under each of the themes you will find regional information, followed by Community Area Assessments. Maps and links within this assessment will help you to find your community, or area of interest.

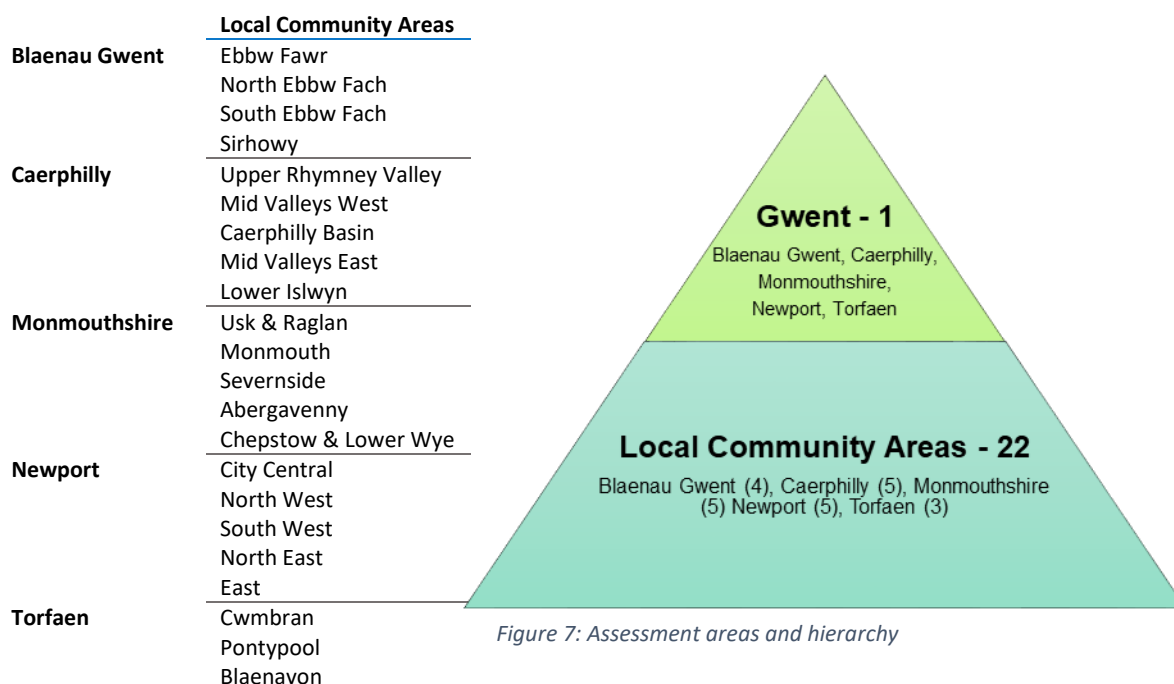


Figure 7: Assessment areas and hierarchy

The assessment brings together a range of information to help explain what Gwent and its communities look like and what is important in planning for the future. We've used data collected at both national and local levels, spoken to many of those working in the organisations providing services, as well as to people and communities living and working in an area.

Working together the public bodies in Gwent have collected, analysed and tested this information to produce this assessment. We've involved our communities to get a better understanding of people's experiences and appreciate how we can all work together to improve well-being, focusing on the strengths of our people and places.

1.8 Covid pandemic context

Covid-19 affected all of us. Many of us will have had Covid-19, or known people who did, and sadly some of us will have known people who passed away because of it. Lockdowns and furlough have led people to home school, stop using public transport and drive more, or even to lose their jobs. Everyone's opinions will have been coloured in some way by the pandemic.

In a similar way some of the data has been affected by the response to the pandemic. Hospital waiting lists is an obvious example, as staff and resources were diverted to treat people with Covid-19. But there have been economic and social impacts too, businesses have been closed

or working at limited capacity, people haven't been able to travel, meet friends and family or have days out.

In developing this assessment we have considered how the pandemic, as well as other factors, may impact on well-being in the future. Many of the issues we've identified are likely to become far more serious as we recover from the effects of the pandemic. There is risk that inequality in our communities will widen which has the potential to influence every aspect of our well-being.

As a result, some of the information in the assessment may not be what we would have expected before the pandemic, and so we've had to think about whether data has been changed because of the pandemic before considering what it means for an area or community.

Because of the ongoing Covid-19 restrictions we have had to involve our communities in different ways. When we were preparing the last assessment we were able to meet with people face-to-face. This time we have had to rely on far more on the internet, social media and other remote methods of engaging with people. While this may suit some people, we accept that it doesn't suit everyone and we have tried to find ways of engaging people where they live or work wherever possible. For more information about how we involved people in the production of this assessment see the Engagement Section ([hyperlink](#)).

1.9 Future Gwent

The Welsh Government produces a Future Trends Report every five years, to help public bodies in Wales think about the long-term challenges and opportunities facing Wales. We have considered this report while producing this assessment and used it to help us think about how these trends will affect the well-being of our communities in years to come, for the better and worse. It has also helped us to identify those parts of our communities that are most vulnerable to negative changes. This allows public services to plan together accordingly, identifying cost effective and preventative local actions that are fit for the future.

We have developed a shared understanding of the inequalities that exist in, and within our communities and how these might change in the future. We understand the importance of ensuring children and young people have the best start in life and the need to tackle patterns of poverty that continue from one generation and the next so that these differences get smaller over time.

We have considered future changes to the population of our area. For example, while more older people in our communities may increase the demand for services it may also mean that more people are able to support their communities through volunteering.

We have thought about what sustainable, local economic growth will mean to Gwent, what skills future workforces might need, and the impact of technological advancement on our communities. Covid-19 has seen more of our services moving online, and we know this is predicted to continue. Although this brings various benefits, we also understand that there is a risk of people being left behind by this shift, so we will be mindful of this when looking at future service delivery.

We have reflected on wider planetary health and environmental limits, issues like food supply, habitat loss and clean air, and what using only our fair share means to providing the resources that future generations will need to support themselves. We have also thought about our readiness for a changing climate.

We have also looked at how these trends might interact with each other, recognising that everything is connected and influenced by a range of social, economic, environmental and cultural factors.

1.10 National indicators

The [50 national well-being indicators](#) help to measure Wales' progress towards improving well-being. We have used these indicators, where relevant local data is available, along with other data and information, to tell us about well-being in the local authority areas that make up the Gwent. **Appendix 1** is a summary of the locally available national indicator data.

References

- ¹ ONS mid-2019 population estimates
- ² Gwent Authorities dwelling data. GeoPlace 2021
- ³ Reproduced from Ordnance Survey with permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationary Office (C) Crown copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution/civil proceedings. LICENCE No LA 100023426 2007
- ⁴ ONS mid-2019 population estimates
- ⁵ ONS mid-2019 population estimates
- ⁶ ONS mid-2019 population estimates
- ⁷ Local authority 2018-based population projections, Welsh Government
- ⁸ Local authority 2018-based population projections, Welsh Government
- ⁹ Local authority 2018-based population projections, Welsh Government
- ¹⁰ Local authority 2018-based population projections, Welsh Government
- ¹¹ Review of Public Services Boards, Auditor General for Wales. 08 October 2019
- ¹² Review of Strategic Partnerships. Welsh Local Government Association. June 2019