

Gweithio gyda Chynghorau yng Nghymru: Llesiant, Atal a Chymdogaethau Cynaliadwy

Working with Councils in Wales: Wellbeing, Prevention, and Sustainable Neighbourhoods

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Today's Presentation



- About WLGA
- Legislative framework we are working within to promote prevention and sustainability
- The Future Generations Report 2025
- The Independent Working Group on Sustainable Local Government for the Future
- Examples of Practice in Wales – case study examples and links



What is the WLGA?

The WLGA's main aim is to promote, protect, support and develop democratic local government and the interests of councils in Wales.

This means:

- Promoting the role and prominence of councillors and council leaders
- Ensuring maximum local discretion in legislation or statutory guidance
- Championing and securing long-term and sustainable funding for councils
- Promoting and supporting sector-led improvement
- Encouraging a vibrant local democracy, promoting greater diversity
- Supporting councils to effectively manage their workforce

Legislative framework for long-term wellbeing



The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 essentially aims to:

- Improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales
- Protect the interests of future generations by ensuring that all public service bodies work towards a set of wellbeing goals enshrined in the Act

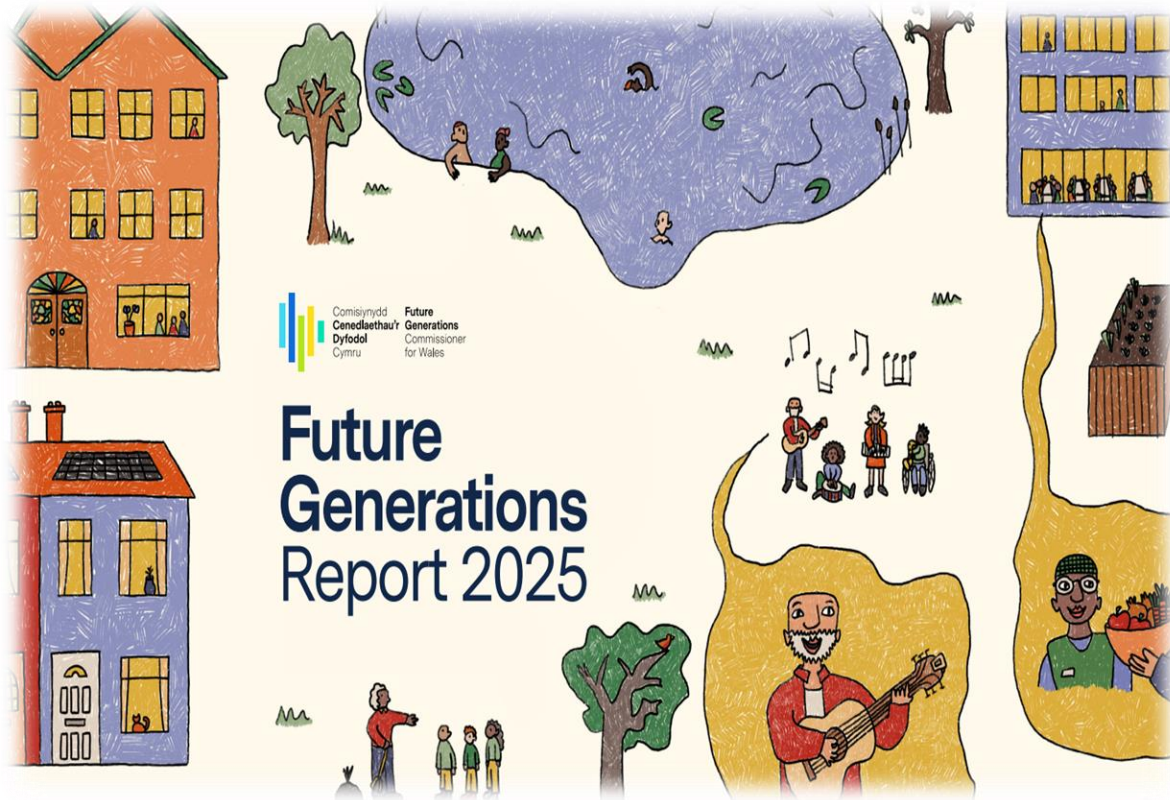




The 'Preventive' Approach

- The Act also refers to 'five ways of working' that should be considered when pursuing the Wellbeing goals. These are **collaboration, integration, long-term, involvement** and also **prevention**: where the WFG Commissioner states that:
“acting to prevent problems occurring or getting worse may help public bodies meet their objectives”
- For Welsh councils and the WLGA, prevention is the key in some of our service areas that are most linked to individual and community wellbeing, namely: Homelessness (prevention of which is a duty for LAs under the 2014 Housing Act), Children's Services (where early, preventative intervention for e.g Looked After Children is crucial for future life chances), and Social Care (where local government services can directly prevent escalation of individual problems from becoming a healthcare emergency).

Future Generations Report 2025 - Future Generations Wales



50 recommendations for public bodies in Wales

Calls to Action

- No more short-term fixes
- Supercharge actions with multiple benefits eg decarbonisation, nature, buying local
- Unlock private sector finance
- A Real Living Wage commitment
- Ringfence prevention funding
- A national food resilience plan
- Culture must be protected
- Rebuild trust in decision-making
- Invest in public services
- Simplify partnerships and funding
- Review and strengthen the WFG Act

July 2025: post-legislative scrutiny of the WFG Act being undertaken by the Senedd's Equality and Social Justice Committee

Oct 2025: every public body to respond formally to the Commissioner on their approach to the recommendations

Independent Working Group on Sustainable Local Government for the Future



Wales Centre for Public Policy
Canolfan Polisi Cyhoeddus Cymru

- The **Wales Centre for Public Policy (WCPP)** and the **Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA)** are conducting an independent review to enhance the sustainability of local government in Wales.
- This project builds on evidence, including the [2014 Williams Report](#), highlighting the need for change due to financial, demographic, and social pressures.
- The review aims to develop a **shared vision for the future of local government**, addressing issues such as **functions, regional interactions, accountability, finance, and leadership**.
- The group's proposals will be practical and deliverable, with actions to be implemented post-2026 Senedd election.
- The group will publish outputs and promote its findings to stakeholders.
- The WLGA intends to use the outputs to engage with the next Welsh Government.

Independent Working Group on Sustainable Local Government for the Future



Wales Centre for Public Policy
Canolfan Polisi Cyhoeddus Cymru



Cllr Mary Ann Brocklesby
Leader, Monmouthshire
County Council



Cllr Darren Price
Leader,
Carmarthenshire
County Council



Cllr Mark Pritchard
Leader, Wrexham
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Rob Thomas
CEO, Vale of
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Eifion Evans
CEO, Ceredigion
County Council



Emma Palmer
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Council



Martin Nicholls
CEO, Swansea
Council



Max Caller CBE
Lead Commissioner,
Birmingham City
Council



Simon Brindle
Welsh Government
(Observer)



Paula Walters
WLGA (Observer)



Prof Steve Martin
Chair

Independent Working Group on Sustainable Local Government for the Future



Research conducted by WCPP

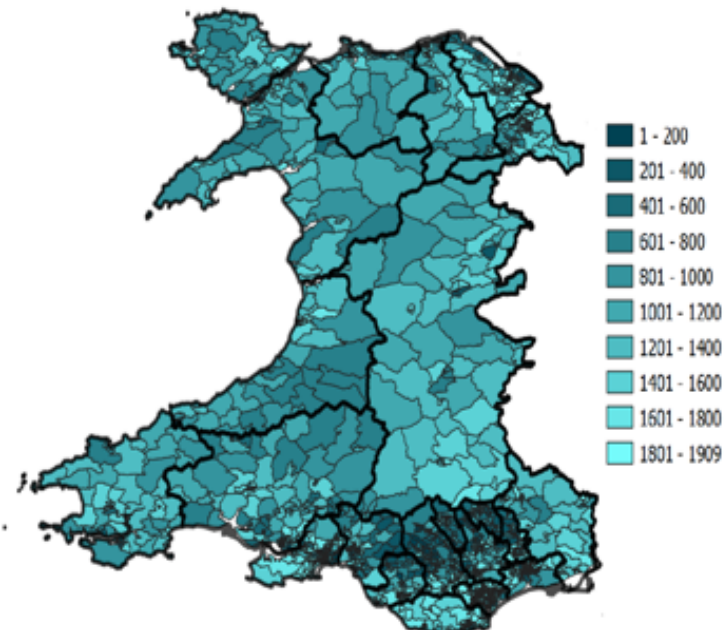


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Work of the group so far: Context



Index of Multiple Deprivation

Source: [Info Base Cymru \(2019\)](#)

- Acute pressures and high cost areas of social services; education; and housing and homelessness.
- Placemaking is squeezed out
- Reduced LA capacity
- Unsustainable

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“The unique value of local government is local democracy: its proximity to and relationship with its local residents”



Elected members can **understand and represent residents' interests in decision making and be held to account**



Councils can **design and deliver services that are responsive to local contexts**



Councils have leadership role in their local areas and through collaboration aim **to improve outcomes for a local area and its population**

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Complex needs

- Linking up areas
- Individual focused

Collaboration between councils

- To be identified locally
- To come from local leadership and buy-in

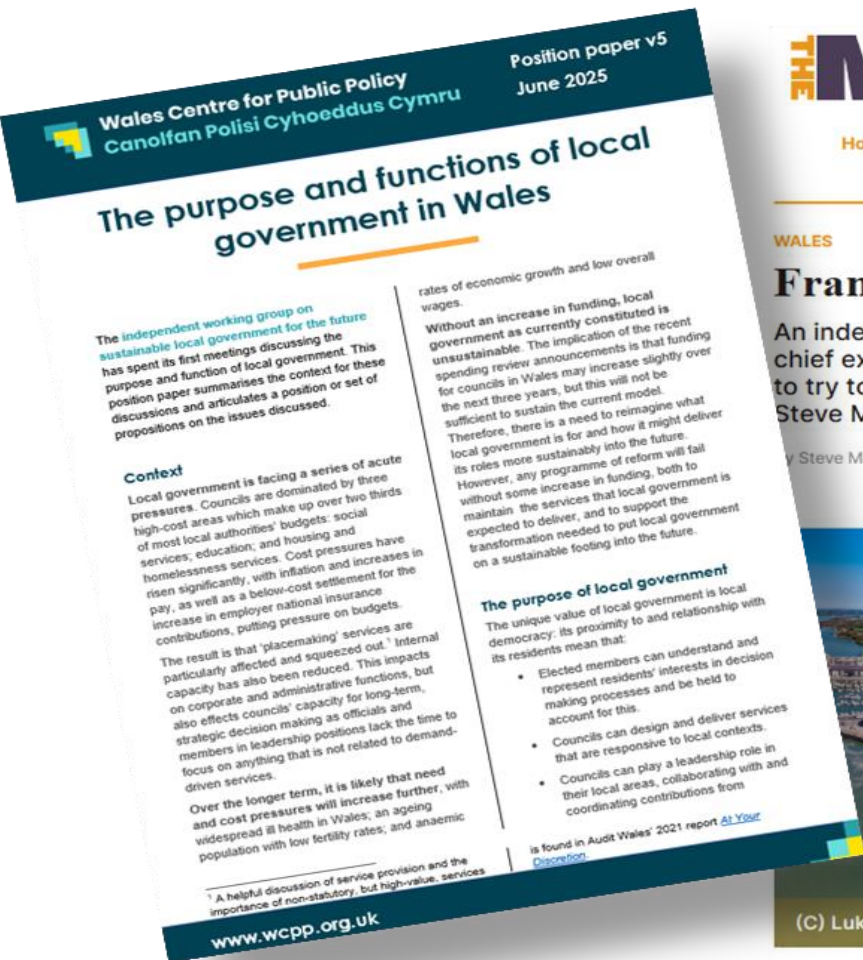
Simplification of structures

- Current regional landscape is complex and duplicative

Long term financial viability and planning

- Challenges with the funding formula and level of grant funding to deliver statutory and non-statutory services

Independent Working Group on Sustainable Local Government for the Future



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Local authorities in Wales are under huge pressure. We have not seen the Welsh equivalent of the 20-plus English councils that are teetering on the brink of bankruptcy. But, when researchers at the Wales Centre for Public Policy conducted a series of interviews with leaders from across the sector late last year, they found universal agreement that we cannot carry on as we are. Everyone thought reform was necessary but no-one was sure what it should look like.



[Position-Paper-The-Purpose-and-Functions-of-Local-Government-in-Wales-.pdf](#)



Key Ingredients of a Sustainable Neighbourhood:

Some Examples of Practice Being Undertaken by Welsh Government and WLGA

Some key ingredients of a sustainable neighbourhood and Measures being taken



Ingredients	Measures being taken by WG and LAs in Wales
Environmental impacts and resource efficiency related to everyday activities in the neighbourhood are key considerations	Support for Active Travel (WG funding programme for councils with technical support provided by Transport for Wales - Active travel promotional toolkit Transport for Wales)
	Improvements in public transport (TfW control of / investment in rail services; Bill to introduce franchising going through the Senedd) Bus Services (Wales) Bill: overview GOV.WALES
	Household recycling collections (WG's Sustainable Waste Management Grant for LAs over many years has enabled councils to invest in systems – now being supplemented/enhanced via Packaging Extended Producer Responsibility funding / planned Deposit Return Scheme Environment: Wales second in the world for recycling rates - BBC News)

Some key ingredients of a sustainable neighbourhood and steps



Ingredients	Measures being taken by WG and LAs in Wales
Environmental impacts and resource efficiency related to everyday activities in the neighbourhood are key considerations.	Circular Economy support – WG support to establish re-use and recycling centres (most LAs now have re-use shops; some introducing equipment/tool hire shops) - Response from the Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs to the Chair in relation to.pdf
	Energy efficiency and low carbon heating support for households (via WG support for councils in maximising ECO take-up by low-income households; Optimised Retrofit programme in social housing). Also WG NEST scheme - Get help with energy efficiency in your home from Nest GOV.WALES
	Management of green spaces and biodiversity – Section 6 Environment (Wales) Act duty on councils to maintain and enhance biodiversity and promote resilience of ecosystems when carrying out <u>all</u> functions town project between Cardiff Councils and NRW) - The Section 6 Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty: reporting guidance GOV.WALES

Some key ingredients of a sustainable neighbourhood and steps



Ingredients	Measures being taken by WG and LAs in Wales
Environmental impacts and resource efficiency related to everyday activities in the neighbourhood are key considerations.	Sustainable drainage schemes required for new developments; use of 'rain gardens' etc in towns to reduce flood risk Natural Resources Wales / How to comply with Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) standards
	Use of green infrastructure to provide natural cooling and reduce water run-off (e.g. Greener Grangetown project between Cardiff Councils and NRW - greener-grangetown-2018.pdf greener-grangetown-2018.pdf

Some key ingredients of a sustainable neighbourhood and steps



Ingredients	Measures being taken by WG and LAs in Wales
Social and cultural norms encourage inclusivity, whilst also supporting diversity	Access to walking, cycling and green spaces (as noted above) encourages healthy lifestyles for community interaction (including e.g. pedestrian crossing provision - £1.2 million active travel improvements on Penrhos Road, Bangor Road Safety Wales)
	Support for community events and recreation (e.g. community space provision and upkeep (parks, town centres); road closures, recycling provision and promotion in community newsletters for events - e.g. Funding chances offered for community events - Swansea)
	Bilingual signage and information (Welsh Language Act)
	Work with and support for voluntary / third sector groups working with different communities in the neighbourhood, including signposting – e.g. Social Enterprise and Third Sector - Pembrokeshire County Council

Some key ingredients of a sustainable neighbourhood and steps



Ingredients	Measures being taken by WG and LAs in Wales
Local economic activity is supported, minimising need for unnecessary travel	Town Centre First policy of WG encouraging public bodies to consider town centre locations for offices to promote footfall and support efficient public transport provision (e.g. RCT relocation to Pontypridd; Conwy Council's office rationalisation to Colwyn Bay) – see Town centres: position statement [HTML] GOV.WALES
	WG's ' Transforming Towns ' programme (£314m allocated since 2020 - Transforming Towns: support to improve town centres GOV.WALES) to support regeneration projects by all 22 LAs (Has been supplemented using UKG's Shared Prosperity Fund over last 3 years)
	Support for the ' foundational ' economy (focused on meeting everyday universal basic needs) - The foundational economy GOV.WALES
	Affordable housing development – providing employment and skills opportunities during construction and helping to house local workforce for local businesses Affordable housing provision: April 2023 to March 2024 [HTML] GOV.WALES
	Support for local food initiatives - Sustainable Food Places - foodsensewales.org.uk

Some key ingredients of a sustainable neighbourhood and steps



Ingredients	Measures being taken by WG and LAs in Wales
Good governance encourages community involvement and integrated approaches	Established LA system of local Member representation
	Community budgeting exercises to enable residents to comment on local priorities – e.g. Participatory budgeting Newport City Council
	Good communications – electronic and printed newsletters enabling and encouraging two-way communication with residents which can support some of the above measures – e.g. Remember Ruthin Road Park & Ride - Wrexham Council News
	Co-ordinated planning of transport and land use, to support local economic and community activity

Diolch / Thank You

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