



To: Chairs of Public Services Boards

8th June 2020

Dear Chairs

I am writing to you regarding the vital role I see Public Services Boards playing over the coming months as we enter the recovery phase of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Firstly, I would like to thank you for all the hard work you and your colleagues have been doing during this pandemic. I have been speaking to many of you regularly over recent weeks and I know the efforts you have been putting into the response to Covid-19. I appreciate for many the normal work of PSBs has been put on hold while you focus on the immediate response.

However, in all parts of Wales, public sector organisations are now looking ahead to the recovery phase of the pandemic and it is important that this recovery is approached as a shared endeavour – building on the way public services have come together and worked together in the immediate response to Covid-19.

Covid-19 and its effects on communities in Wales has revealed some stark contrasts and public services will need to consider the social, economic, environmental and cultural impact of the pandemic which in many places could be felt for years to come.

You and your Boards will have an important role to play in considering, and co-ordinating, this longer term response to the impacts of Covid-19 on communities, and I know that many of you are already reflecting on this. This should be seen as an opportunity to drive transformation in how services are delivered, seeking to achieve environmental, social, cultural and economic benefits in the new ways of working that responding to Covid-19 has required. For example, considering collaborative decisions on digital transformation, safe active travel, housing infrastructure and place-making. The response will require increased collaboration and sharing of resources; as well as recognising that in many service areas there has needed to be a fundamental change in how they operate.

It must be emphasised that this should not be considered as a new or additional role for PSBs. This is a continuation of your core work in improving the well-being of your areas; but done in a way that recognises the positive and negative impacts of and responses to Covid-19.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

With this in mind, it would make sense to reflect on whether the well-being objectives and priorities set in your Local Well-being Plan are still the right focus for your Board or need to be refocused. Our view is that, unless there are significant changes in the overarching objectives, there would be no need to formally review your plans and consult on them at this time.

Whilst we want to be clear about our vision for the role we see for PSBs during the recovery phase, I should add that it is not Welsh Government's intention to be prescriptive about the aspects of recovery planning you should focus on, other than to say that it is our expectation that PSBs should step into this space.

The Well-being of Future Generations Act should be at the heart of all recovery work. The Future Generations Commissioner's recently published Future Generations Report sets out her recommendations on how you can apply the Act to your work including: in setting and meeting well-being objectives, in providing advice, case studies and 'Big Ideas' from Wales and across the world on new and innovative ways of working. This will assist you in how you approach recovery. I have shared this letter with the Commissioner, who is supportive of this approach, and is keen to collect positive or negative stories emerging from the crisis in order to share practice and would like to support you as you refocus your collaborative work.

There will be some areas of the recovery that would not sit with PSBs and would be picked up by, for example, those dealing with health and social care issues (where Regional Partnership Boards would lead) and economic recovery (which would largely be the focus of the city and growth deals). PSBs should work in collaboration with these partnerships and involve other stakeholders to enhance integration, avoid any gaps or indeed to avoid duplication in the recovery effort.

I would encourage you to consider doing this work on wider regional/sub-regional levels rather than working individually. The immediate response has been co-ordinated, to good effect, on a Local Resilience Forum footprint and you will be aware that Strategic Coordination Groups are keen to move onto the next phase of recovery and are already talking about establishing Recovery Coordinating Groups on the same footprint. It would make sense for PSBs to consider how you engage with these structures to ensure that your work aligns with the wider recovery planning underway.

I would welcome your views on how your board intends to approach its work over the coming months.

Yours sincerely



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Y Gweinidog Tai a Llywodraeth Leol
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