



Swansea Public Services Board Joint Committee – 15 October 2020

## Community Impact Analysis

<b>Purpose:</b>	To note the survey questions circulated following the PSB COVID-19 recovery planning workshop (August 2020), and circulate an initial draft 'PESTLE' analysis of the main community impacts of COVID-19.
<b>Link to Well-being Objective:</b>	Cross cutting
<b>Recommendation(s):</b>	It is recommended that:  1) The report be noted;  2) The Board consider the draft PESTLE analysis of community impact and note any gaps or potential scope for improvement; in terms of issues, their key impacts, evidence sources and policy implications;  3) The Board use this analysis to help guide its work programme in the year ahead; and to assist in preparing for the next Assessment of Local Well-being (2022).

### *Introduction*

On 13 August 2020, the regular Board meeting was followed by a COVID-19 recovery planning workshop; which aimed to share partners' experiences of the impact of COVID-19, focusing (at that time) on the shift from response to recovery. Following this session, questions were sent to partners seeking views on:

- What do you feel are the priorities that should be addressed by the PSB?
- What would be the overarching milestones you can identify to address that priority over the next 1, 2 and 3 years?
- Have your organisations been undertaking any analysis of community impact, whether directly related to your service or more generally? (please attach any results or reports)
- Would your organisations have any resource to contribute to any analysis or impact assessment undertaken? (If yes please detail)
- Do you know of any other organisation that have undertaken any analysis of community impacts?

### *Response to questions*

Over the following weeks, a limited number of responses to these questions were received from partners – South Wales Police, Swansea Bay Health Board, Swansea Council (People directorate), M&WW Fire Service, and Natural Resources Wales. The email responses to the survey questions, in aggregate summary and original form, will be circulated separately.

### *'PESTLE' analysis*

Also circulated after the session was an informal table-top paper outlining a potential approach for Swansea including initial proposals to undertake a high-level 'PESTLE' (Political-Economic-Social-Technological-Legal-Environmental) analysis of the main community impacts of COVID-19. In this earlier paper, an annex was initially populated with a summary of content submitted by the Council to the Welsh Affairs Committee enquiry (May-20) – which primarily focused on the economic consequences for Wales of the pandemic.

The responses to the post-workshop survey questions also drew out a number of themes and issues which have been added to another summary version of the 'PESTLE' analysis table. Following this table, these points have been expanded on as far as possible using statistical or research information as available, based on the format outlined in the previous paper, namely: Issue – Impact – Evidence – Policy or other implications – Actions (*not completed at this stage*). With the resources available, the work undertaken so far should be viewed as a starting point and does not represent a full Community Impact Assessment, as attempted elsewhere in Wales.

Inevitably, not all of the issues and significant impacts arising from the pandemic would have been captured in this exercise; for example some sections of the PESTLE are currently empty when there are likely to be 'Political' and 'Legal' implications arising from COVID-19. However, this initial analysis could be used to help identify key themes to help the PSB to develop its work programme in the year ahead.

**‘PESTLE’ Table: items raised by partners following workshop**

Political	Economic
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduction in household income and finances</li> <li>• Workforce – employment and unemployment</li> <li>• Education and employment outcomes and prospects for young people</li> <li>• Local businesses and economy</li> <li>• Connectivity and transport</li> </ul>
Social	Technological
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impact on well-being of vulnerable, e.g.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Domestic abuse</li> <li>• Online crime</li> <li>• Substance misuse</li> <li>• Homelessness</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Impact and recovery of cultural activities (theatres, music, drama, etc.)</li> <li>• Impact on families from BAME backgrounds</li> <li>• Poverty – impact on families from disadvantaged backgrounds*</li> <li>• Health inequalities</li> <li>• Impact on early years development</li> <li>• Loneliness and isolation</li> <li>• Health and lifestyle change</li> <li>• Building resilient communities – people working together to help each other</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Digital connectivity</li> </ul>
Legal	Environmental
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impact of natural environment on people’s health and wellbeing</li> <li>• Engaging children and young people with the natural environment</li> <li>• Green Infrastructure and access to local, high quality, natural green space</li> <li>• Active travel</li> <li>• Climate change</li> </ul>

**NOTES**

- i. Some of the topics listed are not covered by more detailed analysis at this stage, due to availability of appropriate research or statistics and time/resource constraints.
- ii. \* For the purpose of analysis, this topic is included within analysis of household income and finances (Economic section).

**COVID-19 Community Impact PESTLE:** September-October 2020.

### **Political**

*No specific issues identified at this stage.*

### **Economic**

#### **Household income/finances and poverty**

*Impact:* Within the overall fall in national income and prosperity, the impact on individual and household finances has been felt through the loss of income and earnings and the secondary effects of these events. This is likely to have exacerbated poverty among those at most risk.

*Evidence:*

1. By way of context, the latest Households Below Average Income (HBAI) data (2016-19 period) suggests that 23% of people in Wales (UK 22%) live in relative income poverty (where total household income is less than 60% of median UK household income). It will be some time before HBAI data will reflect 2020. Source: DWP, March 2020.
2. The COVID-19 crisis has led to abrupt falls in employment, earnings (including hours worked) and incomes in the UK. Whilst the effect on households varies widely, the greatest impact is on the earnings of the poorest households. Source: Institute for Fiscal Studies: *The effects of coronavirus on household finances and financial distress*, June 2020.
3. By April 2020, an estimated 250,000 people in Wales (17% of the workforce) had seen their hours cut, been laid off, or were made redundant as a result of the pandemic. 42% of people have lost household income, with 25% having applied or expecting to apply for benefits as a result of the outbreak. Source: Citizens Advice Wales, April 2020.
4. There has been a sharp increase in Universal Credit claimants in Swansea, rising from approx. 14,000 in March 2020 to 18,400 in April, and to 22,000 by August. This general pattern is repeated nationally. Source: DWP, September 2020.

*Policy or other implications:* The worsening outlook for many Swansea citizens will require appropriate, targeted actions; however the situation on the ground is constantly changing. Local indicators of relative and absolute poverty that reflect the time period since the pandemic are difficult to identify, with only proxy measures providing some indication of the potential impact of COVID-19, including benefits statistics. Most established data sources in this area remain pre-COVID, due to data time lags.

#### **Employment and unemployment**

*Impact:* National and local data suggests that a far lower number and proportion of people are in employment post COVID-19, with an associated increase in unemployment. Labour market prospects in the short to medium term are a cause for concern.

*Evidence:*

1. Early indicators for August 2020 suggest that the number of employees in the UK on payrolls (including furloughed workers) was down around 695,000 compared with March 2020. However, this particular data source is not more locally disaggregated. Source: ONS, September 2020.  
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/bulletins/uklabourmarket/latest>
2. Whilst local survey-based employment and unemployment data is subject to time lags, claimant count unemployment trends show a sharp recent increase; in Swansea rising

- from 5,320 (rate 3.4%) in February 2020 to 9,485 in August (rate 6.1%). However, current analysis is complicated by the inclusion in the count of both people not working and those working with low income or hours. Source: ONS, September 2020.
3. In the UK, the number of people who are estimated to be 'temporarily away from work', including furloughed workers on the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) was still more than 5 million in July 2020. In Swansea, 28,800 people were furloughed as at 30 June 2020, an estimated 29% of eligible employments (Wales average 31%). However, in Wales the number and proportion of people furloughed more than halved by 31 August (*note: local data not in latest release*). Source: HMRC, September 2020.
  4. Up to 31 July, there were 6,200 claims in Swansea (total value £16.1million) made to the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS), which provides support for self-employed individuals whose business has been adversely affected by COVID-19. This represents a take-up rate (potentially eligible population) of 78% (equal to Wales). However, these figures had fallen in all areas by 31 August (Swansea: 4,800 claims; take-up rate 61%). Source: HMRC, September 2020.
  5. Nationally, there were 1.4 vacancies per 100 employee jobs in the three months to August 2020, down from 2.7 at the same time last year. The ratio of vacancies to jobs has risen slightly since the height of lockdown (April to June), but it remains lower than anything seen during the financial crisis of 2008-09. Source: ONS, September 2020.

*Policy or other implications:* There has been a period of (relative) stability since initial labour market shocks, and some impacts have been mitigated by government interventions. However, the effect of the changing support environment, including the imminent closure of the current CJRS scheme (31 October), together with the potential impacts on employers and employees from any second wave or local lockdowns could be substantial.

### **Outcomes and prospects for young people**

*Impact:* The pandemic has disrupted child and student education and those transitioning to higher education or the early years of work.

*Evidence:*

1. From March to June, schools were closed to all but the children of key workers and specific vulnerable groups, with provision for most pupils moved online. However, access to provision was unequal, due to issues of technology/internet availability, access to support and differences in school resources. This risks the further widening of existing attainment gaps, with the impacts felt the most by those from the poorest backgrounds. Source: The Sutton Trust, April 2020.
2. 43.7% of learners in Wales were awarded A\* or A in the revised 2020 A level results, whereas in 2019 the figure was 27% (in itself the highest for the period 2015-2019). Comparable AS and GCSE results were also higher in 2020 than 2015-19. However, there have been adverse impacts for some students due to grade revisions and some resulting loss of university places. Source: Qualifications Wales data, September 2020.
3. The potential disruption caused to students in the final months of their degrees is currently hard to quantify via available data. Welsh Government will normally publish aggregate HE degree statistics for 2020 in January 2021.
4. In August 2020, there are 2,065 aged 16-24 claimant unemployed in Swansea, 21.8% of all claimants. Estimated claimant rates for young people aged 16-24 have increased from 3.0% in February to 6.0% in August. Source: ONS, September 2020.

*Policy or other implications:* Short-term prospects (at least) for children and young people will inevitably be affected by events during March to June 2020, and any subsequent disruptions. However, these effects remain difficult to quantify with certainty at present.

### **Local business sector and economy**

*Impact:* Impacts have been generally negative for business prospects and the economy.

*Evidence:*

1. Gross domestic product (GDP) – in Quarter 2 2020, the UK economy shrank by 20.4% following a fall of 2.2% in Quarter 1 (January to March) 2020 and is 17.2% smaller than in February 2020 (GDP output measure). Source: ONS, August 2020.
2. UK Retail Sales data – despite total levels of sales recently increasing to slightly above pre-pandemic levels, not all retail sectors have experienced this bounce back, including non-food (e.g. clothing) and fuel sales. Source: ONS retail sales data, September 2020.
3. Nearly half (46%) of currently trading UK businesses reported that their turnover had decreased below what is normally expected for the time of year (Aug-Sep) and 11% said that they were at moderate or severe risk of insolvency. Source: ONS Business Impact of Coronavirus (COVID-19) Survey (BICS), 24 Aug-6 Sep 2020
4. Swansea city centre footfall (August 2020) remains down, by 18.5%, on the equivalent period a year ago (Aug-19); however this gap has narrowed since April 2020, when city footfall was 86.8% lower than 12 months previously. Source: Springboard retail data.

*Policy or other implications:* Whilst some recent data indicates elements of recovery, longer-term prospects for the local economy are from secure, due in part to the potential reintroduction of restrictions via later COVID-19 waves, compounded by ongoing uncertainty around the impacts of Brexit, supply chains and future overseas trading arrangements.

### **Connectivity and transport**

*Impact:* Since lockdown more employees are working from home and many organisations and businesses have been forced to change ways of working, for example moving to online sales. These changes will have impacts on connectivity and transport.

*Evidence:*

1. Car traffic remains below the levels seen pre-lockdown, but over the last few months it has increased from around 30 percentage points below February traffic levels to around 7 percentage points below. Early September bus traffic in the UK (excluding London) is around 50-60% of the February 2020 figure, with national rail traffic at around 35-40% below. Source: Department for Transport (DfT), September 2020. [www.gov.uk/government/statistics/transport-use-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-pandemic](http://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/transport-use-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-pandemic)
2. The gradual return to work for some employees over the summer provided challenges for the public transport system, with social distancing requirements limiting the number of commuters who can use it. Data from ONS' Opinions and Lifestyle Survey for 9-13 September stated that 62% of UK working adults reported they had travelled to work (either exclusively or in combination with working from home) in the past seven days, while 20% had worked exclusively at home. Source: ONS, September 2020. [www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/healthandwellbeing/bulletins/coronavirusandthesocialimpactsongreatbritain/18september2020#work](http://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/healthandwellbeing/bulletins/coronavirusandthesocialimpactsongreatbritain/18september2020#work)
3. Local issues relating to car, train and bus transport could emerge from further research and analysis of local monitoring and usage data.

*Policy or other implications:* There are potential positive impacts from increased home-working, including environmental benefits from reduced congestion and improved work-life balance, although there will be impacts on trade in retail centres or shops near workplaces.

## **Social**

### **Domestic abuse**

*Impact:* New living and working arrangements arising from COVID-19 and lockdown have exacerbated the risk of domestic abuse and violence on sections of the community.

*Evidence:*

1. Early evidence from China, as well as learning from other global pandemics, shows potential increases in violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence (VAWDASV), with observed increased tension and domestic violence in lockdown due to forced coexistence, economic stress, and fears about the virus. Source: *Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on Violence against Women and Girls, VAWG Helpdesk Research Report*.
2. 91% of respondents currently experiencing domestic abuse in the UK said the pandemic had negatively impacted them in at least one way, and 61% of women living with their abuser during lockdown said the abuse had worsened. Source: *A Perfect Storm – The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on domestic abuse survivors and the services supporting them*. Women's Aid, August 2020.
3. In England and Wales, there has been a 6% rise in domestic abuse incidents (brought to the attention of police) on the same time last year (the 4 weeks to 5 July), despite an overall crime reduction of 14%. Source: National Police Chiefs Council, July 2020. <https://news.npcc.police.uk/resources/demands-on-police-17-july-2020-v2-final-version>
4. Data from the 'Live Fear Free' initiative, or other local/national agencies could provide a more recent indication of trends.

*Policy or other implications:* Changing living conditions and circumstances can seriously affect those at risk of abuse and violence, which could have significant impacts for support services. There is currently limited local, timely data available on the impact of COVID-19 on VAWDASV and associated services, e.g. support networks, refuge provision.

### **Online crime**

*Impact:* COVID-19 has increased the vulnerability of certain people to on-line crime, including internet, phone and postal fraud and scams.

*Evidence:*

1. An increasing number of malicious cyber actors are exploiting the current COVID-19 pandemic for their own objectives. In the UK, the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) has detected more UK government branded scams relating to COVID-19 than any other subject, with a growing use of COVID-19 related themes by criminals. Source: NCSC Advisory: *COVID-19 exploited by malicious cyber actors*, April 2020.
2. The number of calls answered by the Action Fraud Contact Centre increased from around 19,500 in March 2020 to 28,300 in June. Source: Action Fraud.
3. Identification and analysis of local and national data would help build a picture.

*Policy or other implications:* This type of crime, which evidence suggests is increasing during the pandemic, can have considerable impact on individuals and families. Levels of fraud are also likely to be underestimated due to under-reporting of cybercrime. The growth in

homeworking has increased the risk of fraud from workers spending more time at home and use of potentially vulnerable services, such as Virtual Private Networks (VPNs).

### **Substance misuse**

*Impact:* People may be turning to substances to cope with the different stresses that may have occurred during the pandemic, including employment and money worries, health concerns, relationship tensions and breakdowns, and family worries; all of which can cause negative impacts on physical and mental health.

*Evidence:*

1. One in five (21%) current and former drinkers said they were drinking more often during lockdown, while just one in ten (9%) drank less often. 38% of those who typically drank heavily on pre-lockdown drinking days (seven plus units) said they drank more during lockdown, compared to just 23% of those who typically drank two units or less. 19% drank alcohol as a way to handle stress or anxiety during lockdown. Source: Alcohol Change UK – *Drinking in the UK during lockdown and beyond*, July 2020.
2. “People who misuse or are dependent on drugs and alcohol may be at increased risk of becoming infected, and infecting others, with COVID-19. They may also be more vulnerable to poor health outcomes due to underlying physical and mental health conditions, as well as mental health issues associated with lockdown.” Source: DHS/PHE guidance COVID-19: guidance for commissioners and providers of services for people who use drugs or alcohol, September 2020.

*Policy or other implications:* Further local, timely data may enable a fuller understanding of impacts of COVID-19 on the different aspects of substance misuse, and the implications for support service providers. The changing rules for the hospitality sector and alcohol sales may also have local and national impacts and effects.

### **Homelessness**

*Impact:* People experiencing homelessness, particularly those who are rough sleeping, are severely vulnerable during the pandemic. They are more likely to experience chronic ill-health including respiratory conditions such as COPD and other pre-existing medical conditions, and are more likely to have specific barriers to following public health advice and to self-isolate.

*Evidence:*

1. Of deaths involving the coronavirus (COVID-19) in England and Wales registered up to 26 June 2020, 16 were identified as people who were homeless. Of these, all 16 were identified in England and none were identified in Wales. Source: ONS, July 2020.
2. In April 2020, Welsh Government statutory guidance for local authorities stated that a person who was either street homeless, or faced with street homelessness, during the pandemic should ordinarily be regarded as vulnerable and therefore in priority need. WG’s current £50m programme (*Phase 2 – Planning Guidance for Homelessness and Housing Related Support Services, 2020-21*) aims to give people in emergency accommodation a clear route to permanent, settled housing. Source: WG.
3. During the period from 13 April to 28 June, 407 rough sleepers and (at least) 1,859 people (excluding rough sleepers) were reported to have been moved into emergency accommodation in Wales. Source: WG – management information reported by local authorities, July 2020.
4. In Swansea, a Pobl-managed project recently brought Ty Tom Jones (The Foyer) in Alexandra Road back into use to accommodate up to 20 single homeless people.



*Policy or other implications:* Welsh councils feel that current funding must continue beyond 2020-21, especially as fears are growing that any deepening UK-wide recession may force many more people on to the streets, despite extra protections against eviction for renters.

### **Impact on families from BAME backgrounds**

*Impact:* The risk of death involving the coronavirus (COVID-19) among some ethnic groups is significantly higher than the risk to those of white ethnicity.

*Evidence:*

1. When taking into account age, Black males are 4.2 times more likely to die from a COVID-19-related death and Black females are 4.3 times more likely than those of White ethnicity. People of Bangladeshi and Pakistani, Indian, and Mixed ethnicities also had statistically significant raised risk of death involving COVID-19. Source: ONS – Coronavirus (COVID-19) related deaths by ethnic group, England and Wales: 2 March 2020 to 10 April 2020  
[www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/articles/coronavirusrelateddeathsbyethnicgroupenglandandwales/latest](https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/articles/coronavirusrelateddeathsbyethnicgroupenglandandwales/latest)
2. Minority groups are over-represented in hospitalisations and deaths from the virus. In the short term, ethnic inequalities are likely to manifest from the COVID-19 crisis through exposure to infection and health risks, including mortality; and through exposure to loss of income. Source: Institute for Fiscal Studies – ‘Are some ethnic groups more vulnerable to COVID-19 than others?’ (Public Health England inquiry)  
<https://www.ifs.org.uk/inequality/chapter/are-some-ethnic-groups-more-vulnerable-to-covid-19-than-others/>

*Policy or other implications:* Further research is ongoing to determine the extent to which the impact on BME communities is related to health, social and economic factors.

### **Health inequalities**

*Impact:* COVID-19 impacts on people depending on their overall underlying health. Analysis of deaths by area of multiple deprivation also indicate differing experiences in communities.

*Evidence:*

1. The most deprived areas in Wales (from WIMD 2019) had a mortality rate for deaths involving COVID-19 of 121.4 deaths per 100,000 people between 1 March and 30 July 2020, nearly twice as high as in the least deprived areas (65.5 deaths per 100,000). Source: ONS – Deaths involving COVID-19 by local area and socioeconomic deprivation.  
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/bulletins/deathsinvolvingcovid19bylocalareasanddeprivation/deathsoccurringbetween1marchand31july2020>
2. For non-COVID-19 deaths in this period, the differences between high/low quintiles was proportionately lower, at a rate of 482.8 deaths per 100,000 people in the most deprived quintile and 320.5 in the least deprived quintile; suggesting a relatively greater impact from COVID-19 deaths in the more deprived areas.
3. NHS research draws out the link between COVID-19 and other health conditions, from people at high risk (previously subject to shielding) to those at moderate risk, for example the over 70s and/or with diseases or conditions related to lungs, kidneys, the heart, diabetes, and so on. Clearly the number and proportions of people potentially affected will vary by local area, and this will compound local health inequalities.

*Policy or other implications:* The impacts of COVID-19 clearly differ at both an aggregate area level but also for individuals and households. Undertaking (and acting on) this analysis remains a current, ongoing priority for national and local health services in particular.

### **Early years development**

*Impact:* The economic and public health consequences of the crisis are threatening to deepen existing patterns of vulnerability and under-achievement for young children and families, especially those living in poverty and disadvantage.

*Evidence:*

1. Whilst 68% of parents of 2-4 year olds reported accessing formal early education or childcare (preschool/nursery, childminder or school) in the period before March, just 7% of children (who had formal arrangements) continued to attend throughout the lockdown period. Source: The Sutton Trust COVID-19 Impacts: Early Years, July 2020.
2. Many parents, including 53% of those who had been unable to return to their provider, reported a particularly negative impact on their child's social and emotional development and wellbeing. Source: Sutton Trust.
3. Providers have suffered significant financial pressures, and needed to access a variety of government support during lockdown, including the furlough scheme and business rates holidays. 34% of settings in the most deprived areas reported they were unlikely to still be operating next year (24% in the least deprived areas). Source: Sutton Trust. <https://www.suttontrust.com/our-research/coronavirus-impacts-early-years/>

*Policy or other implications:* The long gap in accessing provision earlier this year is likely to have a profound impact on many children's early learning and development. The impact on the poorest will be greatest, and early identification of need and help will also be affected. The risk of closure of (all or parts of) settings in 2020-21 may compound these issues.

### **Loneliness and isolation**

*Impact:* The pandemic is likely to increase social isolation and loneliness, with more remote living leading to greater stress, anxiety, depression and associated health impacts. The pandemic is already occurring during a time of increased prevalence of mental health issues in the UK; and the risks are also greater for people who are already vulnerable.

*Evidence:*

1. 5.0% of people in Great Britain (an estimated 2.6 million adults) reported that they felt lonely often or always ('Chronic loneliness') between 3 April and 3 May 2020, about the same proportion as pre-lockdown. Of those asked, 30.9% (7.4 million adults) reported their well-being had been affected through feeling lonely in the past seven days ('Lockdown loneliness'). Working-age adults living alone, in bad health or in rented accommodation were found to be at greater risk of chronic and lockdown loneliness. Source: Coronavirus and loneliness, GB: 3 April to 3 May 2020 (ONS Opinions and Lifestyle Survey).
2. To demonstrate progress towards Wales' seven well-being goals, a measure of loneliness is included within the 46 National Indicators, with data collected through the National Survey for Wales. Based on a series of questions which assess levels of loneliness, 15% of people in Wales considered themselves lonely in 2019-20.
3. In Wales, 10% of people felt lonely 'often' or 'always' in early September; and the same proportion felt isolated. In that period, 47% of people in Wales worried about their

mental health and well-being 'a lot' or 'a little'. Source: Public Health Wales - *How are we doing in Wales?* Public Engagement Survey, 7-13 September 2020.

4. Whilst living alone and loneliness are conceptually different, household estimates and projections continue to show a rising trend in single adult households. In Swansea, the estimated number of one-person households increased from 33,300 to 38,600 (35% of all households) between 2009 and 2019 (+16%), and is projected to increase further to 43,300 by 2030 (37% of all households). Source: Welsh Government, Aug-Sep 2020.

*Policy or other implications:* Increases in loneliness and/or isolation, whether caused by enforced separation from family or support networks through lockdown, social distancing or self-isolation, is likely to expand demands on mental health and well-being services. Rising mortality within households (and resulting grief from bereavement) will compound this.

## **Technological**

### **Digital connectivity**

*Impact:* As living and working arrangements, and business operations, fundamentally change – potentially for the long-term – digital connectivity and reliability issues are likely to become more important for people in their working and general lives.

*Evidence:*

1. In terms of internet connectivity, in September 2019 on average 98% of households within Swansea were able to access speeds of 30Mb/s (99% in urban areas, 89% in rural). 65% of Swansea residents are able to access 300Mb/s and 13% can access fixed fibre broadband. Swansea figures are higher than Wales on all measures, largely due to the effect of rural areas on averages (Wales: 93% can access 30Mb/s; 31% 300Mb/s; 12% fixed fibre). Source: OFCOM Connected Nations report, December 2019.
2. For commercial premises, 91% in Swansea can access 30Mb/s, 51% 300Mb/s and 17% can access fixed fibre (Wales: 86%, 22%, 10% respectively). Source: OFCOM.
3. Indicator data from WIMD 2019 measures local access to digital services – the proportion of homes and small businesses unable to receive fixed line broadband of at least 30Mb/s (superfast broadband). There are 5 LSOAs in Swansea where more than 20% of premises (approx.) cannot access this speed: Clydach 5 (39.7%), Mawr, Gower 1, Gower 2 and Landore 4. Source: WIMD 2019 indicator data, Welsh Government.

*Policy or other implications:* In response to lockdown more people are working from home and many businesses have been forced to adapt and increase online sales in an attempt to develop or even continue trading. Working from home is more challenging for people with inferior access to high quality broadband. This will also have a negative impact on parents who are home educating their children during any school closures and the situation may be worsened by competing demand for a limited supply of bandwidth among larger households.

## **Legal**

*No specific issues identified at this stage.*

## **Environmental**

### **Impact of natural environment on health and well-being**

*Impact:* The natural environment not only defines and shapes the character of a place but also delivers multiple benefits for biodiversity and people's health and well-being. During COVID-19 lockdown, many people experienced increased awareness of their natural surroundings (hearing bird song, seeing clearer views due to cleaner air, experiencing easier breathing due to less pollution, and so on).

*Evidence:*

1. Analysis of air pollution data up to 30 April 2020 suggests that the most pronounced changes in UK air quality during lockdown have been in the urban environment, notably for nitrogen oxides (NOx). Once weather effects are accounted for, mean reductions in urban NOx averaged over the lockdown period considered have been typically 30-40%, with mean NO2 reductions of 20-30%. However, availability of activity and emissions data for the lockdown period is still limited. Source: DEFRA Estimation of changes in air pollution emissions, concentrations and exposure during the COVID-19 outbreak in the UK, July 2020. <https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/>
2. Findings of a recent UK poll revealed that 68 per cent of adults either agreed or strongly agreed that spending time noticing the nature around them made them feel happy during lockdown. More than half (55%) also agreed or strongly agreed that they plan to make a habit of spending as much time in nature once things go back to normal. Findings also revealed that since lockdown interest in nature has risen by a third (33%), with interest growing the most in the 25-34 year old age group (40%). Source: National Trust/YouGov. [www.nationaltrust.org.uk/press-release/uk-values-nature-more-as-a-result-of-lockdown-according-to-summer-solstice-poll-](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/press-release/uk-values-nature-more-as-a-result-of-lockdown-according-to-summer-solstice-poll-)
3. The Council and Natural Resources Wales (NRW) have been working together with Green Infrastructure Consultancy to develop a draft Swansea Central Area Green Infrastructure Strategy - Regenerating our City for Wellbeing and Wildlife. This identifies multiple green well-being benefits for Swansea City Centre. Source: [www.swansea.gov.uk/greeninfrastructurestrategy](http://www.swansea.gov.uk/greeninfrastructurestrategy)

*Policy or other implications:* Healthy and resilient natural resources underpin our health and well-being, as well as being an important part of our culture and economy. A county-wide Green infrastructure Strategy and activities to protect biodiversity and its habitats should underpin development plans.

### **Access to green space**

*Impact:* 'Green space' includes both parks, community gardens, trees, woodlands and hedges, informal spaces, allotments and food growing sites and areas of 'blue space' (water), such as rivers, canals, lakes, ponds and the sea shore. The network created by all these spaces is vital for well-being in our villages, towns and cities, and this became even more apparent during lockdown as people accessed local green space for daily exercise.

*Evidence:*

1. Studies have also shown a correlation between levels of mental health and other factors, including access to greenspace. The prevalence of these factors is higher in more deprived areas, compared to less deprived areas. Source: NRW South West Wales Area Statement – Area Profile.

2. The green space sub-domain of WIMD specifically looks at proximity to accessible, natural green space and has been developed to capture deprivation arising from its absence. In Swansea, 16 of 148 local areas (LSOAs) have less than 50% of households able to access natural green space (Swansea average 79%). Source: Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) 2019 indicator data – Physical Environment, Welsh Government.
3. Almost 90% of local authorities experienced increase in demand for allotment plots as a result of COVID-19, showing their public value and a desire to reconnect with nature. Source: APSE State of the Market Survey 2020 – Local Authority Allotment Services.
4. Anecdotal evidence from projects across Swansea suggests a rise in interest in green spaces, from allotments to community parks. The local benefits from several Swansea sites are detailed at <http://swanseacommunitygreenspaces.weebly.com/case-studies.html>

*Policy or other implications:* Green fairness in ensuring equality in access to green space assists in community building and creating high quality neighbourhoods.

### **Active travel**

*Impact:* The Active Travel (Wales) Act (2013) places a legal duty upon local authorities to map, plan for and promote active travel – the undertaking of regular journeys on foot and bicycle. Investment in active travel infrastructure can result in significant economic benefits, and for health and biodiversity, which has become even more apparent following lockdown.

*Evidence:*

1. Active travel is measured as walking for at least 10 minutes or cycling to get to a particular destination. In 2018-19, 6% of adults cycled at least once a week, and 57% of adults walked more than once a week. These figures have changed little in recent years. Source: National Survey for Wales, Welsh Government.
2. In the latest survey (2019-20), 61% of adults in Wales walk at least 10mins or cycle as a means of transport, up from 58% in 2018-19. Source: National Survey for Wales.
3. In May 2020, Welsh Government made funding available for temporary measures to improve the safety and conditions for sustainable and active travel modes in their area, both to protect public health and safety and to address potential increases in car use – an indication of policy shift in response to COVID-19.

*Policy or other implications:* With social distancing measures likely to remain in place for some time in response to the pandemic, governments are likely to prioritise schemes which create more space for pedestrians and cyclists, and which also recognises the restrictions on the capacity of local public transport.

### **Climate Change**

*Impact:* Increase in extreme weather, earlier and warmer spring and summer, high winds and extreme rainfall causing flooding in summer. Increase in perceived impact of climate change locally.

*Evidence:*

1. Climate change was one of the two most frequently mentioned responses when asked about the UK's most important issue in the next 20 years (second only to Brexit). Only three years ago, climate change was ranked as the 13th most important national issue. At the same time the proportion of people who express high levels of concern about climate change has doubled. The current survey finds that 40% of respondents are now very or extremely worried and many ascribe a high level of urgency to dealing

- with climate change. Source: British Public Perceptions of Climate Risk, Adaptation Options and Resilience (RESIL RISK) <http://orca.cf.ac.uk/129452/1/resilrisk-FINAL-ONLINE.pdf>
2. “During the crisis CO2 emissions fell by 17% and we know that new behaviours such as home working, increased use of technology and digital delivery of services, amongst others, have helped to achieve this.” Source: WG ministerial statement, July 2020 <https://gov.wales/team-wales-approach-tackle-climate-change>
  3. The Climate Assembly UK, is a group of 108 members of the public chosen to be representative of the UK population and to help shape future climate policy by discussing options to reach net zero carbon emissions. Nearly eight in ten of the members said the measures taken by the government to help the economic recovery from Covid-19 should be designed to help reach net zero, and an even bigger proportion (93%) said that, as the lockdown eased, the government and employers should encourage lifestyle changes to cut emissions. Source: [www.climateassembly.uk](http://www.climateassembly.uk)
  4. Floods engulfed some streets in Swansea during Storm Francis with winds reaching 70mph in some places. In the last 12 months there’ve been three other storms that caused flooding and disruption in the area, a spate of events that some in the Council’s highways team say they’ve not seen in 35 years of experience. Source: Swansea Council - Chief Executive’s Blog.

*Policy or other implications:* There is popular support for a Green recovery which prioritises a low carbon society and climate change adaptation.