

18<sup>th</sup> March 2022

Dear Councillor Lewis, Chair of Swansea Public Services Board

## Well-being Assessment Consultation Response from NRW

Thank you for providing us with the opportunity to respond formally to the Swansea Well-being Assessment. In order to provide targeted and co-ordinated support to all of our Public Services Boards, we have arranged our feedback into the following categories:

- (i) Items which are special or significant and distinct to place
- (ii) Assessment and analysis of Environmental Well-being
- (iii) Future trends
- (iv) Application of the Climate Change Risk Assessment for Wales (CCRA3)
- (v) Inequalities between communities and exposure to environmental risk

Beneath each heading we have considered our **recommendations** for the assessment, our **aspirations** for future development of the well-being plan and the NRW **contribution** to all of the above as an integral partner in the Well-being planning process.

The above categories have been drawn from [Welsh Government's Statutory guidance \(SPSF3\)](#) on the collective role of Public Services Boards. NRW will use these categories in combination with the framework for assessing Environmental Well-being provided by [SoNaRR2020](#) to inform all of our consultation responses. Where applicable, we will also draw on local information and evidence gathered as part of our Area Statements. For more information on how we will use this information and that which lies behind the categories listed below **please refer to the attached briefing note: Well-being Planning Framework for Approval**.

NRW will aim to provide formal written feedback on PSB products at three separate intervals during the development of Well-being Plans. This will include this round of **Well-being Assessment consultation**, again following the development of **draft Well-being objectives**, and for one final time during **Well-being plan Consultation**.

Each stage will allow NRW to involve as wide a range of technical specialists as possible within our own organisation. The process will also provide the NRW board with a documented story of Well-being Plan development in each place. This will be invaluable to them at the end of the process when they are looking to sign off each individual Well-being Plan.

Please contact your local PSB rep for information about next steps and NRW involvement.

Yours sincerely

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Croesewir gohebiaeth yn y Gymraeg a'r Saesneg

Correspondence welcomed in Welsh and English

## NRW Well-being Assessment Consultation for Swansea Public Service Board

### 1. Items which are special or significant and distinct to place

#### Findings: Meeting Expected

It is clear, particularly through key strategies and commitments supported by well-established as well as emerging / newer partnerships, that Swansea has many strengths and assets to call upon to respond swiftly to the growing challenges of climate change and biodiversity decline, and other environmental risks that impact well-being in Swansea now, and those which are predicted to intensify in future. This is reflected well throughout the document and in all chapters.

Overall, the Environment chapter of the draft Well-being Assessment does well in presenting information, data, and evidence to reflect the significance and value of Swansea's natural environment. However, **reference/s to natural resources** and the risks, impacts and opportunities associated with them **across all well-being dimensions could be more spatially specific** to better reflect important differences, inequalities, and the range of challenges and responses needed. Doing so will better inform and aid subsequent discussions and priority setting, helping ensure resources are committed where they are most needed for a green and just future. If adding this information to the final version of the assessment is not possible within timescales, it would be helpful to note that this will be sought and brought into discussions regards well-being plan objectives and priorities. A particular theme we would encourage the PSB to explore spatially is that of equality of access to and use of high quality, natural green and blue space, and equality of access to active and sustainable travel.

In addition to environmental well-being, our natural assets deliver preventative, cost-effective, and long-term nature-based solutions to some of our most complex social, economic, and cultural needs, e.g., preventative and therapeutic health interventions, and addressing socio-economic inequalities, a regenerative and net-zero economy. 'Integration' is a Topic sub-heading within each chapter and this has helped raise awareness and focus minds on making linkages within / between chapters and topics. It is recommended that the Assessment and evolving well-being planning process looks builds on these high-level linkages to ensure that well-being is considered 'in the round', key cross-cutting themes are identified, and the ground is paved for meaningful collaboration to tackle issues such as transformation of the food, energy, and transportation systems. In the absence of time to fully explore these, it would be helpful for the Assessment to commit the PSB to exploring the opportunities and conflicts / challenges of cross-cutting themes to inform the next phases of the Well-being planning process.

It is particularly heartening to see that young people (in response to a consultation exercise) have as their number one priority, ‘Protecting the Environment and Green Spaces’ (ref *Social Chapter, Listening to Children and Young People: Perceptions and Perspectives*); it will be paramount to ensure these conversations are continued with support for YP to be involved in decision-making about their future in Swansea particularly around this theme. Perhaps the PSB’s Human Rights City Steering Group may be in a position to take this forward?

If timings allow, it would be good to include any feedback from NRW and WG’s Natur a Ni project that has been received from people living / working in Swansea. We will be happy to coordinate this with our colleagues.

Recommendations for the Assessment	Aspirations for future Well-being Plan development	NRW Contributions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To set the scene and give important context from the start of this key assessment, and as Swansea’s outstanding natural environment is a major part of the county’s identity and a big draw to visitors, a ‘Place Profile’ giving a more detailed overview of landscape and natural assets could be added following the ‘Demographic Profile’ chapter that is already included. <i>NRW is happy to provide draft text for this – see <a href="#">Appendix A</a>.</i></li> <li>In the Cultural chapter, page 197, it is noted that, “Swansea’s key strength is its unique mix of city, coast and country offer within one destination. With award winning and globally recognised beaches, parks with green flag status and Britain’s first Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, it is important to recognise the vital role the natural environment plays in boosting residents and visitors wellbeing.”</li> </ul> <p><b>Recommendation:</b> The above statement to acknowledge that Swansea’s natural resources and resilience are at risk from overuse, the climate and nature emergencies, and these risks are likely to become more challenging to</p>	<p>As we move forwards into the well-being planning phase the assessment provides a good basis for PSB partners to consider in greater depth the factors and cross-cutting issues which are distinct to Swansea including the direct reliance on natural assets. Doing so will help us ensure the risks to and opportunities for our natural resources are recognised and better understood by stakeholders, and their maintenance, management, improvement and / or protection be appropriately resourced to improve the wellbeing of current as well as future generations.</p> <p>Linkages to be explored with NPT (and other?) PSBs, and within the context of the economically and culturally significant Swansea Bay City Region. The current joint consultancy exercise between Swansea and NPT may provide a good</p>	<p>NRW has offered the PSB an opportunity to be involved in hosting a focus group to jointly explore what citizens want for the future of the natural environment and the actions we can all take to safeguard it. This would form part of the national conversation (Natur a Ni / Nature and Us) being hosted by NRW with support from Welsh Government. The results of this focus group, together with the outputs from the national conversation specific to your PSB area, can be woven into longer-term planning through the development of the Well-being Plan.”</p> <p>Please contact <a href="mailto:NaturaNi@cyfoethnaturiolcymru.gov.uk">NaturaNi@cyfoethnaturiolcymru.gov.uk</a> for more information about this offer. This is a central team who will work closely with your regional contacts to ensure that we</p>

<p>address if not done so now, impacting the sustainability of the tourism offer and benefits to local economic wellbeing.</p>	<p>opportunity for this exploring links between these two areas.</p>	<p>are complementing and not diverting resources away from ongoing activity.</p> <p><b>Contact has been made with the Natur a Ni team, and participants invited from Swansea, with some further activity planned. Results from conversations in Swansea will be shared with the PSB in due course.</b></p>
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## 2. Assessment and analysis of Environmental Well-being

### Findings: Meeting expected

The Environment chapter provides a good summation of local and national data and evidence as they relate to environmental well-being in Swansea, and this detail is reinforced by remarks relating to climate change and natural resources throughout other chapters. For example, the positive reference to beaches and parks / green space as important natural assets for cultural and economic well-being, particularly tourism, but also as an amenity that innately enhances well-being. However, this could be strengthened by considering the risks / challenges and future trends for these assets and knock-on effects (the 'so what?') for longer-term and sustainable cultural and economic well-being.

Data sets are contextualised by using corresponding and complementary evidence from a range of sources including Water Framework Directive data, Climate Change Risk Assessment 3 (CCRA3) report, information and data on SINC condition, Local Nature Recovery Action Plan data and evidence, SW Area Statement, and SoNaRR 2020. Although use of this evidence is, in the main, limited to the Environment chapter, it should be noted that the findings of these key reports, particularly SoNaRR, CCRA3, and Area Statements are relevant to all aspects of well-being.

As well as details on current and planned regeneration / development activity in Swansea, references to natural resources, in particular to climate change, decarbonisation, and green infrastructure, are made in the Economic chapter. In the next phase of the well-being planning process, this discussion could perhaps go further and ask itself the 'so what' question - what / how the the programme of regeneration will, for example, embed and respond to the need to adapt and mitigate for climate change in the longer-term, including implications for flood risk areas, and enabling active and sustainable travel into the city centre and other key employment hubs, attractions, and facilities.

High-level linkages are made between environmental and other dimensions of well-being in all chapters, which help highlight further discussions around opportunity for cross-partner collaborations.

It is noted that the Environment chapter rightly states the **climate and nature emergencies as being interwoven** and that they must be addressed together, and reference to this is made throughout the chapter. The assessment also includes information on the risks to environmental well-being, including competing land use, habitat loss and degradation, climate change, water quality and quantity, etc. The risks are multiple and relevant to all other dimensions of well-being. A broader and more integrated analysis of the social and economic drivers of sustainable natural resource management (aims three and four of SoNaRR2020) would be beneficial to make sure the PSB is **tackling the root cause of issues that are driving unsustainable management**.

Due to the acknowledged gap on (mental and physical) health in the Social section, there has not been opportunity to identify and discuss the **significant links between health and natural resources**, particularly active travel, air and water quality, access to green and blue space, flood risk, GI, etc... although there is mention of these associations within topics under the Environment chapter. We would welcome opportunity to work with PSB partners to input to health topics and / or **provide some narrative to acknowledge these important links** and commit to exploring them in the development of objective and priority setting for the Well-being Plan.

Recommendations	Aspirations	NRW Contributions
<p>Include narrative and refs to case studies / relevant research and policy on links between health and natural resources, and nature-based solutions for health and well-being.</p>	<p>Since the last round of Well-being planning, there have been a number of significant shifts in public discussion and understanding in relation to the environment, climate change, and natural resources in Wales. The <b>overwhelming message from SoNaRR is that societal transformation is needed in the Food, Energy and Mobility systems</b>, which are referred to within the assessment. The connections between all four dimensions of well-being are being made apparent in the playing out of everyday events, writ large during Covid and, now, with fuel, energy, and food supply and pricing being impacted, and recent inflation not seen for decades. So, it is important to <b>consider environmental well-being in this integrated way</b> so that we can ensure we are acting for the longer term and tackling the root cause of issues that are contributing towards the climate and nature emergencies.</p>	<p>Depending on the interest of PSB partners, NRW would welcome the opportunity to develop our shared understanding of how collective interventions may shape transformation in the food, energy and transport systems as recommended by SoNaRR2020. For an introductory overview please see:</p>

	<p>Accompanying this is an increasing appreciation of the need for co-ordinated public sector responses. As the Public Services Board moves from well-being assessment and into the response analysis phase, it will be important to identify how <b>collaborative public sector working can drive transformation in the food, energy and transport sectors</b> and identify what levers we have locally that can help shape and drive this transformation for the benefit of current and future generations.</p>	<p><a href="#">SoNaRR2020 Main messages Video - Welsh subtitles</a></p>
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### 3. Future Trends

#### Findings: Meeting expected

Under the 'Future Trends' sub-heading in each topic section, reference to future trends is made throughout the document indicating that consideration of them and their potential impact on well-being in Swansea has been made. The Environment chapter does this well particularly with reference to, and within the context of, the inherently longer timescales and timelags associated with climate change and biodiversity decline, and where there is much research and policy to refer to. However, in some other sections the **draft narrative could be strengthened by analysing the implications of the findings of the Future Trends Wales report** to greater depth.

As part of the response analysis and ongoing discussions leading to the next stage of the well-being planning process, it may be helpful to **draw out common 'challenges' or risks that should be addressed collectively through a futures thinking exercise**, which may help to identify joint priorities and objectives for the next well-being plan. Greater detail from more in-depth consultation and engagement with partners and stakeholders about potential future scenarios should provide additional, and in some cases more meaningful, insights as to how PSB partners could respond to any of the predicted future trends.

NRW would like to work with PSB partners to jointly review the future trend analysis over the remainder of the well-being planning process.

<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>Aspirations</b>	<b>NRW Contributions</b>
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<p>With reference to Future Trends Wales report, build-on the draft narrative to draw out and add details across chapters / topics, as are relevant to Swansea.</p>	<p>As the PSB moves forward into response analysis it will be important to make sure that we work extensively with a wide range of partners and stakeholders to collaborate and co-produce an analysis of the “possible” future trends and their potential impact on Swansea.</p> <p>This work should include demonstrating the use of multiple relevant futures resources such as Go-Science UK trend deck, Future Trends Wales Report, plus things like private sector scenarios and other sources as needed. NRW would like to support the PSB to use future trends tools and resources to produce multiple scenarios and/or options for delivery. This work should help inform ongoing decision making at the PSB.</p>	<p>NRW would like to offer to run a ‘Three Horizons’ workshop, to help support the incorporation of future trends into the next phase of well-being planning.</p>
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#### 4. Application of the Climate Change Risk Assessment for Wales (CCRA3)

<p><b>Findings:</b> Meeting Expected</p> <p>Climate change, and associated risks or impacts, is mentioned many times throughout the document, and there is important acknowledgement that both the Climate and Nature Emergencies are inter-related challenges which cannot be tackled in isolation.</p> <p>The assessment contains narrative on climate change risk and impacts at a high-level, although does detail those communities at a greater level of flood risk. There is opportunity and need to enhance this assessment and its usefulness in informing further discussions through more detailed assessment of potential impacts on key assets, including infrastructure, protected areas/habitats, and communities. This could be done by identifying, as relevant across all four well-being dimensions, those <b>risks which the Climate Change Risk Assessment 3 (CCRA3) Welsh summary report lists as high magnitude and requiring action now, and what they mean for specific communities and aspects of well-being.</b></p>		
<p><b>Recommendations</b></p>	<p><b>Aspirations</b></p>	<p><b>NRW Contributions</b></p>



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include in the document, where most relevant, responses regards climate change that were received through well-being assessment survey, engagement activities, and consultation, particularly lived experience.</li> <li>• Add / update narrative with reference to the latest findings of the IPCC 6<sup>th</sup> Assessment report:   <i>“The cumulative scientific evidence is unequivocal: Climate change is a threat to human well-being and planetary health. Any further delay in concerted anticipatory global action on adaptation and mitigation will miss a brief and rapidly closing window of opportunity to secure a liveable and sustainable future for all.”</i> IPCC Sixth Assessment Report, 2022</li> </ul> <p>It is recommended to also refer to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Climate and Nature charter</li> <li>• The work Swansea Council is leading, with support from SEF and the WWN task group, and how this work will help to get a fuller picture of how identified impacts will be addressed, and how current policies and strategies link to the ability to manage risks.</li> <li>• It may be that the above warrants the addition of a climate change topic although, ideally, this should be addressed across and by all dimensions of well-being.</li> </ul>	<p>As the PSB moves forward into response analysis it will be important to undertake analysis (even if only qualitative) of all the CCRA3 risks relevant to the PSB area, and to better understand the degree to which they are already recognised and mitigated. Any place specific local risks should be identified.</p> <p>The PSB should detail potential impacts on communities and infrastructure along with impacts on habitats. To do this, it will be important to set out risk management approaches and opportunities to adapt to risks, such as opportunities for nature-based solutions to support coastal adaptation. The PSB should also set out opportunities for engagement with affected communities to enable delivery of the measures or at least to develop an approach for this.</p> <p>For all those risks relevant Swansea a prioritisation exercise should be undertaken to identify those requiring urgent action as informed by the CCRA3 risk classification i.e., more action needed/further investigation/sustain current action/watching brief. (This will require an assessment of the degree to which current policy and practice along with any existing adaptation and risk management measures are able to manage those risks.)</p>	<p>NRW would like to support the PSB to analyse climate risks and opportunities as they relate specifically to Swansea.</p> <p>NRW would also like to continue to support and actively participate in development and subsequent delivery of a climate strategy for Swansea.</p>
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## 5. Inequalities between communities and exposure to environmental risk

### Findings: Developing

The well-being assessment explores inequalities between different demographic groups and communities in Swansea mainly from a social and economic perspective. Although this provides critically important insights, environmental inequalities resulting from different levels of exposure to environmental risks are only partially addressed. The links between all well-being dimensions and their causal relationships on inequalities are not fully considered and therefore remain unclear. **A more integrated perspective and understanding of this topic should be developed as this would generate valuable additional insights.**

Recommendations	Aspirations	NRW Contributions
<p>Refer to and include, where relevant, findings and recommendations from the FGC for Wales report: <a href="#">Inequality in a Future Wales: Areas for action in work, climate and demographic change</a>.</p> <p>This may help highlight priority areas (topical, soci-economic, spatial) in Swansea for further discussion.</p>	<p>As the PSB moves forward into response analysis it will be important to identify environmental and socio-economic inequalities between and within communities. This would include <b>reference to specific communities which are more vulnerable to environmental risks and hazards</b>. This includes but is not limited to flood risk, poor air quality, noise pollution, water quality (water supply and bathing waters: public health impact) and INNS (public health impact).</p> <p>The PSB should work together to evidence an understanding and analysis of the socio-economic demographics of the communities within Swansea, e.g., poor water quality areas should be</p>	<p>NRW would like to support the PSB to develop a more integrated understanding of inequalities in Swansea and to explore nature-based solutions to alleviate certain aspects and manifestations of inequalities. Our support could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online training webinar to support PSB to link health, education, and nature.</li> <li>• NRW Health Impact Assessment (HIA) guidance and tools to support integrated thinking about natural resources and health, for example a training session on Wider Determinants of Health and outline of HIA with focus on environment.</li> <li>• Use of the Welsh Information for Nature-based Solutions' (WINS) data and maps to identify priority areas for nature-based solutions to air quality, pluvial flooding, noise pollution and</li> </ul>

	<p>identifying the socio-economic impacts on people and communities.</p> <p>Further data sets such as the <a href="#">Welsh Information for Nature-based Solutions</a> could also be referenced to highlight some of the potential opportunities to tackle inequalities arising from different levels of exposure to environmental risks and benefits within the PSB area</p>	<p>access to green space. This data combines environmental mapping, population density and deprivation to identify priority areas for nature-based solutions. It is a good example of how to tackle health and wider inequalities.</p>
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**Please also see Appendix A for further suggestions of text amendments or additions that may enable the relevant linkages and cross references across chapters/themes.**

## Appendix A

- Proposed text for section on Swansea's landscape following 'Demographic Profile' on page 10.

The Gower peninsula is renowned for its scenic quality, particularly the coastline and prominent open hills such as Rhossili Down and Cefn Bryn, its attractive sea and coastal views and strong sense of place. A large part is designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), the UK's first. The Swansea area has spectacular geology and geomorphology, which is internationally important, with 20 geological Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), 9 regionally important geological and geomorphological sites (RIGs) and more. The well-visited south Gower coast is indented, with rocky cliffs, headlands and sandy bays backed by dunes; the coastline of north Gower is noted for its broad estuarine marshes, part of the internationally important Carmarthen Bay and Estuaries Special Area of Conservation and boasts views across the Loughor estuary. Inland Gower has open rolling farmland fields and hedges with picturesque and tranquil rural villages. Historic interest is evident throughout rural Gower, including the medieval field system of the Vile at Rhossili and prehistoric features of the uplands. Gower is extremely important for coastal recreation, including surfing, sailing, and swimming and for walking along the coast and uplands. Tourism, in particular camping and caravan parks feature strongly. Around the edges of Swansea, commons, small wooded valleys and farmland provide opportunities for walking, cycling and horse riding. Crymlyn Bog is a nationally important nature reserve, and parkland and forest at Penllergaer provide informal recreation. Away from the M4 corridor, these areas can be peaceful. Mumbles Head and the sweeping beach of Swansea Bay define the city's coast and provide the focus for coastal recreation, walking and cycling routes. Open upland rolling hills and valleys dominate the northern part of the area, with extensive views over Carmarthenshire and the Black Mountain. The uplands are also important areas for recreation. Settlements, woodland, and pasture dominate the valleys, which are important routes for walking and cycling, often associated with historic infrastructure such as canals and disused railways as in the Tawe Valley.

- Recommended adjustments in Cultural chapter:

In the Cultural chapter, page 197, it is noted that, "Swansea's key strength is its unique mix of city, coast and country offer within one destination. With award winning and globally recognised beaches, parks with green flag status and Britain's first Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, it is important to recognise the vital role the natural environment plays in boosting residents and visitors wellbeing."

**Recommendation:** The above statement to acknowledge that Swansea's natural resources and resilience are at risk from overuse, the climate and nature emergencies, and these risks are likely to become more challenging to address if not done so now, impacting the sustainability of the tourism offer and benefits to local economic wellbeing.

## Climate Change – Cultural Heritage

The effects of Climate change will be felt across society, including by our built and tangible heritage assets. The relevant risks and opportunities are outlined in the third UK Climate Change Risk Assessment (CCRA3).

The main current risks to cultural heritage relate to extreme weather fluctuations including increasing temperatures (heatwaves or fires), precipitation and flooding, coastal processes, and from unintended consequences of climate mitigation and adaptation measures within the heritage sector and across other sectors. In particular, coastal heritage sites are at threat from a combination of hazards; sea level rise leading to increased flooding and coastal erosion; driving rain and landscape character changes.

Examples of how climate related pressures impact heritage assets include waterlogging of archaeological sites, damp problems and water ingress issues at historic properties, changes in groundwater levels affecting historic gardens, new pest species threatening heritage landscapes, damage to assets caused by wildfires and flooding and heat risks to collections and archives. It is important that we are of these risks and put in place preventative measures to protect our heritage assets where we can.

However, it is inevitable that we will not be able to save all our assets. Risk management of cultural heritage sites may need to include consultation and engagement with affected communities to accept inevitable loss of heritage sites to climate change hazards.

While our cultural heritage faces large risk from climate change, there are some potential opportunities for cultural heritage through the indirect effects of climate change, such as rising temperatures leading to increased visitor footfall and boosting the local economy.

Although we must also recognise that increased visitors can also lead to erosion of heritage sites.

- Recommended additional narrative for Economic chapter:

## Circular Economy and Covid 19

We know that in Wales we are not using our natural resources sustainably. If everyone consumed the same amount of resources as we do in Wales, then we would need two and a half planets to support us. The consequences of this overshoot are already being felt in the shape of climate change and biodiversity decline. In response, the Welsh Government has set out its ambitions for a circular economy, supporting a green and just recovery, in its [Beyond Recycling](#) strategy.

A circular economy keeps resources and materials in use for as long as possible and avoids all waste. This will mean moving away from a 'linear economy' which assumes a constant supply of natural resources or the take-make-use-dispose culture based on the extraction of resources, the production of goods and services, and the disposal of post-consumer waste.

The circular economy offers an approach which can work to reduce consumption. Taking a circular economy approach is a key pillar of a green and just recovery, helping not only to address the climate and nature crisis, but also driving better and more equitable economic outcomes for Wales.

We already have a strong foundation for a circular economy here in Wales, with a strong track record in recycling. Wales is a world leader when it comes to recycling and is currently ranked third best in the world. The Welsh Government's £1 billion investment since devolution in household recycling has helped see recycling rates increase from just 4.8% in 1998-1999, to over 65% in 2020-21. This high rate of household recycling in Wales saves over 400,000 tonnes of CO2 per year from being released into the atmosphere and is a key contribution to tackling the climate and nature emergencies.

We have learned a lot through the Covid-19 pandemic, our recovery from which represents a once in a generation opportunity to reset our individual and collective values and priorities, realigning them with those required to create a more sustainable future. The consensus across Wales, UK, Europe and beyond is that recovery from Covid-19 must address the underlying nature and climate emergencies. The calls for individuals, businesses, governments and global institutions to refocus and accelerate the response to the pandemic along a pathway which both restores nature and decarbonises our economy have been increasing in strength. This integrated approach would consider nature and climate together as the foundation of economic, social and political renewal and regeneration in Wales, reflecting the focus of the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

It would be helpful also to include reference to the suite of projects under Swansea Bay City Deal that contribute to the low carbon / net zero ambitions of the region, in particular Homes as Power Stations, Supporting Innovation and Low Carbon Growth, Skills and Talent.