

Wellbeing Region Sector Forum



16/03/2021



12:00 - 2:00



Online via Zoom

Dawn Lyle, from 4theRegion, opened the event. She explained the aim of the event was to discuss the concept of the wellbeing economy, what a wellbeing economy is and what it looks like. She said 4theRegion was fixated with the idea of South West Wales becoming the UK's first wellbeing region because our natural environment, quality of life, and the friendliness of our communities gives us a strong foundation to work from. This key strength needs to be central to how we develop the region.

Dawn explained that 4theRegion are members of the Wellbeing Economy Alliance, which is really involved in the region. Wales is part of the Wellbeing Economy Governments partnership, a collaboration between countries that put wellbeing at the heart of their decision making. The other members of the partnership are Finland, Iceland, New Zealand and Scotland. Wales is the first country with a specific act that addresses the wellbeing of future generations. New Zealand has had very few Covid deaths and has led the world in their response to the pandemic. Dawn suggested this may be due to the fact they are a wellbeing economy government, as well as the fact they have a great woman prime minister who has put the wellbeing of human beings foremost.

Dawn had met with Sophie Howe, the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales, who said that Wales has great legislation and has had a lot of success with things like the Economic Resilience Fund. Sophie Howe feels there have been real strides in Welsh Government policy, but there is still the implementation gap. This raises questions of whether the legislation is in alignment. She is concerned with how we

can make the idea of the wellbeing economy meaningful and implemented on the ground. In terms of how to be a wellbeing region, we already have assets like our way of life, natural environment and a lot of people who feel strongly about the primacy of wellbeing. There is already a huge amount of expertise in the region, so it's partly about just joining up what is already happening so that we can share good practice and learn from each other. One of the challenges is that the concept of a wellbeing economy is a bit opaque. There also needs to be a discussion about the differences between wellbeing and wellness.

Dawn said at the Wellbeing Economy Alliance they talk about the wellbeing economy. This is a move away from using the traditional metrics of economic growth as the only measure of development, with GDP or GVA as the be all and end all. These are purely economic measures which don't say if wellbeing has increased or not. GDP is a broken measure which counts bad things as indicators of economic growth, such as going to war or rebuilding after an earthquake. It also doesn't value things like leisure time, quality of life and unpaid caring (which has proved crucial during the pandemic).

Dawn explained that Kate Raworth has developed the theory of doughnut economics. In this model the "doughnut" is the safe and just space for humanity. The inner space indicates people living below the social foundations of the doughnut who experience a shortfall in terms of what they need to experience an adequate quality of life. However, outer space indicates people living beyond one planet's limits. Therefore we need to live within the doughnut, living decent lives but doing so within the limits of the planet. Businesses are deliberately designed to maximise economic growth, so they focus on this to the detriment of wellbeing. However, it's possible for businesses to benefit wellbeing by doing things like becoming a living wage employer or a force for good within their local communities.

Julie James, from Gower Gas & Oil, said she has been involved in a project looking at equality and fairness in the Valleys. The definition of the Valleys includes significant parts of this region. The report will be published at the end of March and proposes citizens juries on what people want for their communities. Julie feels the time spent thinking about the wellbeing economy has been done to exhaustion, and we now need to start putting ideas into practice. One key idea is the idea of a twenty minute economy, which means we need to plan for people working close to home. Everything we've achieved so far has been around travel, so we need to think about things like reducing carbon emissions and the need for childcare. The pandemic has shown we need to change the way we work. We need to think about how we address global needs by looking at micro-needs such as travel reduction and promoting local economies so that people can engage with their local communities and get work locally. Julie believes procurement should be based on the number and diversity of businesses given tenders, not just on convenience. We need to prioritise local businesses not entity providers who Hoover up everything, such as training opportunities, and then leave. Julie said people in the region are trained and skilled and need to trust a less paternalistic approach. It has been a terrible time, but

a crisis is also an opportunity for change. There needs to be more power to local SMEs.

Robert Alexander, from EEESafe and LocalitEEE, said he had long been a supporter of the wellbeing economy, he's won an award for his work with the environment but until now he felt so lonely because he hadn't encountered many people who shared his views. He was delighted to finally be at this event where everyone was "speaking my language". After being homeless for a month, Robert had set up a computer business. The company managed to generate a £1m turnover, but was ultimately stung for money from other people. Robert then went into charity work and set up a charity organisation. He learnt a lot from his experiences and knew we needed to move away from a GDP economy, but couldn't find anyone who had put together a financial model to achieve this. He said it was important to think about individual people and the fact they haven't got the money to achieve the things they want. He is concerned about the companies that are taking away, fixing and selling our phones because of the lack of safety. Instead EEESafe is developing a community of competent repairers, so that people can work at home. As an example of where we can take charge as a community and can capture metrics they are creating an online community marketplace. There is already a suite of apps for people involved with the circular economy and waste prevention. There is also a business directory to show people how to work with their communities. The Doughnut model is shown on the LocalitEEE's website, and is part of their ideas and solutions for moving away from the GDP model, although Robert said the issue with the Doughnut model was that there wasn't a financial model to support how we get there. He told the other participants that he wanted to work with them and support what they were doing.

Valerie Wood-Gaiger said she started Learn with Grandma as a retirement project. She never expected it to become an international network with groups around the world promoting intergenerational learning and active ageing. The main aim is to share ideas of how to use the internet as a bridge to reunite the generations and help break down the digital age gap by sharing skills, love and knowledge across the generations. Good projects are happening in many countries. Valerie welcomes any suggestions for Learn with Grandma, all of which she said were achievable, affordable and sustainable.

Emily Bacon, from Swansea University, provided some information on the Circular Economy Innovation Communities project, which is supporting public sector organisations to develop service solutions and deliver circular economy benefits. It is underpinned by four key principles; the circular economy, innovation networks, knowledge access, and future generations.

Peter Rees-Jones and Eric Holliday, from NEI UK, said in addition to their work as tour operators they are now creating an Ayurveda wellness centre and spa.

Valerie was interested in Peter and Eric's project. In 2019 she spoke at a tourist conference in Poland about intergenerational holidays. She said more holidays are taking place involving three or even four generations.

Adam West, from Coastal Housing, told Peter and Eric his friend, Mike Williams, was a ashtanga yoga teacher based in Maesteg, who is looking for more opportunities locally. He is currently teaching online at Maya Yoga Wales.

Sally Gates, from Swansea University, said she was interested in providing all generations with a voice in the community, particularly in relation to health and wellbeing and providing a free space for people to use and socialise. For example, the Bishopston Skatepark Project is creating a pump track for people to meet, socialise and have fun in a safe, free to use environment.

Adam said France were already well ahead of the game on the wellbeing economy. The Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress was set up because then President Nicholas Sarkozy was unsatisfied with the state of statistical information on the economy. The commission's aim has been to identify the limits of GDP as an indicator of economic performance and social progress, including the problems with its measurement, to consider what additional information might be required for the production of more relevant indicators of social progress, to assess the feasibility of alternative measurement tools, and to discuss how to present the statistical information in an appropriate way.

Robert said LocalitEEE was being developed to look at wellbeing and was measuring many metrics to indicate and evidence how we can improve community cohesion.

Pippa Anderson said people may not be aware that Swansea University (including her) and the University of South Wales are in the middle of a four year programme to evaluate the Social Services and Well Being Act. The critical issue is being clear about what wellbeing is and how to measure it, as opposed to quality of life and determinants of wellbeing. Dame Sally Davies has been work on a Health Index that includes wellbeing as one of its outcomes.

Dawn said there were opportunities around the circular economy for self-sustaining local economies (micro-economies).

Robert said LocalitEEE is all about sustainable communities and developing a model that can become self-sustaining for businesses and communities.

Hugh Evans explained that Transport for Wales, where he works, is a new organisation. Before the Welsh Government created it he was working for Keolis Amey. He feels Transport for Wales is quite extraordinary for the public sector. He's found the focus on wellbeing is really encouraging and is pleased an organisation like Transport for Wales has taken this stance. He is Head of Community Rail, where Transport for Wales is trying to do a lot more on community wellbeing, for example working with South West Wales Connected to identify green spaces. Once we're allowed back out, Transport for Wales are going to run a lot of programmes on confident travel in order to get people who are isolated and have never really used the railway and take them on purposeful journeys, for example to the beach or a

community centre. Transport for Wales is opening up disused spaces for social enterprises and charities, in order to provide opportunities for disadvantaged groups such as people with learning disabilities and unemployed people. Hugh said Transport for Wales' strategy was very much linked to the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act.

Toni Cardew, from 4theRegion, said she was very interested in how we measure wellbeing in organisations. She said there are obvious benefits to addressing wellbeing, for example if the majority of supermarkets start tracking food waste then the rest will want to do the same.

Dawn said the Wellbeing Economy Alliance did research on how different organisations and companies create new metrics for wellbeing.

Adam said the Carnegie Trust had published proposing Gross Domestic Wellbeing (GDWe) as more holistic and relevant alternative measure of wellbeing. Using framework and data from the Office of National Statistics, they have developed a powerful single figure for GDWe in England and mapped it against GDP for the last five years.

Zoe Antrobus, from 4theRegion, said EFT Consult are creating a certificate of wellbeing to monitor the whole experience of working in an office. She said a lot of research has been carried out on the effect that things like lighting and air quality have on the wellbeing of office workers. She feels what EFT Consult are producing will be a fantastic contribution to this discussion.

Sinéad Murphy, from WRAP Cymru, said procurement is seen as a key tool in terms of a lot of the ambitions we have around a circular economy. If procurement is used positively we should always be looking at the benefits it can bring. Sinéad said WRAP works on developing more sustainable procurement with a lot of public bodies. They will look at measuring this effectively next year in order to assess when public sector bodies need intervention. Sinéad feels public sector procurement has huge potential to drive the ambitions of a wellbeing economy.

Dawn said procurement was a key issue. She said everyone has a tale of woe about procurement, despite the rhetoric about bringing benefits to the local economy. She said procurement professionals aren't trained in local economy development and are under huge pressure to maintain skills within an organisation. It is really important to help resolve and measure what is good procurement.

William Mansfield, from Natural Resources Wales, said he understood in the EU public sector procurement accounts for around 15% of GDP. Focussing on the circular economy and decarbonisation in procurement will genuinely have a huge impact. Natural Resources Wales' Carbon Positive Project looks at decarbonisation within public sector agencies and includes methodology for looking at procurement from a carbon perspective.

Julie said the EU, through OJEU regulations, had actually impeded the procurement model in favour of massive organisations, but she believes we have an opportunity for change and getting a fit for purpose procurement model.

Annie Tubadji, from Swansea University, said wellbeing economics comes from a long tradition in utilitarian economics. Amartya Sen has argued that wellbeing should be defined as a list of ever extending capabilities that should be accessible to everyone. Annie has lived in many places but she loves living in South West Wales. She believes you can love a place but also wants to tackle the inequalities you see there. Some people in the region are living the good life, while others are destitute and have no hope. Annie never saw poverty that sucked out people's souls to such an extent until she moved here. She believes people should not have services and a quality of life that is less than others. Wales deserves the best. We should ask for exactly the same as others have. This should be a human right.

Annie pointed out that the idea of the twenty minute economy actually started out as the fifteen minute economy, which is what they're still trying to do in Amsterdam.

Dawn absolutely agreed that we need to improve equality and the quality of life for everyone. We have the means to do this.

Sally said she had to leave the meeting. She regretted she couldn't stay to discuss grassroots community level engagement, particularly for those who are young and old, who are frequently left out of these conversations. She is keen to discuss this further.

Robert said surely consumers were the chief procurers. A lot of them don't have a lot of money. Robert feels we should have a local currency that can also be used globally and to generate revenue. Research looking into getting the value of goods back into communities has suggested trialling local currencies. Local currencies enable poorer people to engage with their communities and the benefits the currency brings to local communities can be measured on a day by day basis. Robert has worked with volunteers who wanted services, but they wouldn't do anything without being given something in return, which meant they weren't engaging with things like waste reduction. A local currency means money goes out to these people immediately, and should be considered if you want to do something sustainable that benefits the local community.

Ben Reynolds is from Urban Foundry, which he explained was Swansea's only BCorp. He started out in the third sector. When we set up Urban Foundry he knew he needed to make enough to make ends meet, but he still wanted to try and behave like a social enterprise. He searched for something which would show Urban Foundry was a purpose driven company even though it was being run for profit. He saw Liam Black, who ran Jamie Oliver's former restaurant 15, who said enterprise is a verb not a noun, and if you want to be good, just do it. He was introduced to the idea of BCorps. BCorps are a legal form of company in the US, but in the UK it's more like a kitemark where the business' impact on society, the economy and the

environment etc is accredited. It takes a while to go through all the documentation needed to become accredited. Being a BCorp is not just about maximising shareholders value, it's about being actively good.

Ben said Urban Foundry has always tried to be ethical. He feels the problem is that many companies treat social responsibility as a “bolt on” to look good. He said if you believe social responsibility is more than this you should consider making your business a BCorp. The standard shareholder model says you must maximise the value for your shareholders. The BCorps model says you can still do this but not at the expense of wellbeing goals, for example you are expected to commit to be a living wage employer. There are so far only about seven BCorps in Wales. Ben wants to show people you don't need to be a multinational to become a BCorp. He feels your benefits to wellbeing will carry more weight if you're not for profit, but if you're a private company you can still show you're bringing benefits to the planet, and can prove it and measure it by becoming a BCorp.

Dawn said it was important to look at business models. She said existing business models were set up to be destructive, and that it would be interesting to see what structures there were that could get to the crux of the problems we face like BCorps.

Adam thanked Annie Tubadji for a dose of realism. He recommended people read Amartya Sen's excellent book “Development as Freedom ” and Martha Nussbaum's work on the capabilities approach. He said lots of people have been discussing wellbeing for a very long time. Even Adam Smith, the hero of the right, worried about how the division of labour would affect peoples' wellbeing. The problem is that we're up against economic liberalism and the requirements to make more money for people who already have money. Research by the London School of Economics has shown tax cuts that give rich people more money won't solve the problems we face. Adam believes if we do want to solve these problems we need to get past Westminster, which is very right wing. He feels we're already standing in the shadow of countries like the US and China, where the model is economic growth at all costs.

Dawn said people seem to just accept our current economic model is the only way things can be done. People have been talking about how we could change things for hundreds of years, so the question is how our small region can do things differently. We do very badly out of neoliberalism, so we need to find a way to build resilience locally, so that we can unhook ourselves from it. Dawn said change is already happening, even if we don't hear about it in the mass media. We need to be part of this change and work with communities. Dawn said businesses exist that are run by people who care about the wellbeing of their communities. We need to amplify them and connect them.

Adam thanked Dawn. He said he agreed with her but/because “hope lies in the problems”. He said in terms of addressing inequality now, we should think about how the First and Second World Wars led to real change because people realised they could change things, and this led to the establishment of the welfare state and social housing. We need to get everyone on board and deal with the feelings that

come with rampant inequality. We need to give ordinary people hope again so they know life can be better than working in an Amazon warehouse or doing other menial work. The power is in the hands of all of us, but we need to change how disadvantaged people see the world.

Annie very much agreed with what Adam said. She said people should know what to ask for, and sometimes disadvantaged people don't have the information.

Adam agreed with Annie. He said saw this everywhere. The extreme case is that they're drawn to populist politics as has happened in Brazil, Hungary, the US, and even the UK. Adam said climate change demands a new model, but most crucially it demands hope.

Annie said it was a normal reaction for disadvantaged people to embrace populism, even if it ends up hurting them.

Adam agreed with her, citing Trump's corporate tax cuts, blocking Covid recovery packages, and unwinding what universal healthcare Americans already had. But people were so disillusioned with the status quo they felt Trump would serve them better than the politicians.

Annie said she agreed fully with what Adam had said, and said he should come and talk to her about polarisation.

Babs Lewis, from the People Powered Results Team at Nesta Cymru, said there was a question around how as well as what we measure. We've discovered during the pandemic many of things we thought were essential, such as the daily commute, weren't. There were things already in our communities that we hardly recognised, never mind valued, like the ability to respond to need when people see it. For example there was a business that started feeding NHS workers, because they could. Maybe we need to map what we have already that we value as part of our thinking around building a new metric and responding to the needs of businesses, for example by recognising the qualifications they need.

Annie said we already had certain things that were evolving, such as corporate responsibility, even if it's just bolted onto businesses like Ben said. She said we need to use GDP because we need more money. People using GDP as a measurement will discard you if you aren't using their language and you'll lose your bargaining power. She said a lot of people were trying to push ideas from the other direction, for example they're looking at developing a different economic model in Sheffield.

She invited everyone to some digital inclusivity events at Swansea University, which are being run as a success story. They are looking for five to ten minute presentations on projects. The event Annie has in mind will showcase how new technologies, such as Blockchain, can be used to empower communities to benefit more efficiently in the modern digital world.

She was very interested in the work Robert was doing, asked him to speak at the events, and asked him whether he was using Blockchain technology for the procurement work he described.

He said the app was Blockchain to protect community members, but the currency was not. They chose not to have a cryptocurrency because of the risks and links with gambling. They renew their currency after it's used and purchase it with the money donated from the EEESafe and LocalitEEE marketplace activity. They aim to engage every retailer to use the EEECoin so that the community can use it everywhere, and it would keep raising local money, ringfenced to each community. Robert was happy to share the details, although the currency has only just been designed. It's gradually being built into a Back End Online CRM, so they can segregate each community with its own server.

They're still in the start up stage, although Robert wants to avoid investors so that they can give the money to the community, who are the real investors. They will start with their training programme for people who want to become registered community repairers. This is why Robert believes their plan lets ownership of LocalitEEE go to the community. LocalitEEE just lets them use their tools and apps. Robert doesn't believe they need to become a BCorp, because what they're doing is essentially just about shareholders. He believes things should be up to the community, who are doing the right things and evidencing them. They see businesses engaging through a business directory that evidences their social value. It's no longer Corporate Social Responsibility, but Community Social Responsibility. Robert believes we need a transition model, which is how he's designed his system, so that the citizen and business partner work together. The model EEESafe and LocalitEEE are developing has already attracted interest from countries including China, Sweden, Germany and Ireland, and Robert would hate it to happen that Wales loses out. They even had Centrica offering them £2m to scale up a few years ago, but Robert declined because they wanted to be able to turn EEECoin back into cash. As the principal investor, he informed them he thought the citizens were the real investors. He didn't want to sell out.

Julie said she was very interested in Adam's perspective, but said there was a lot of civilian action taking place despite politicians. She gave the example of her work as part of a cross-party project looking at using citizen's juries to resolve the multiple crises we face. She said the will is there and we can amplify it. Things have been pessimistic, but we can take bad experiences and use them to make something. Julie is very interested in BCorps, which she said sounded like what Gower Gas & Oil has always done. She said her company had never been about shareholder gratification and had also tried to share wellbeing with their staff and do lots for the community. She said there was a big reservoir of goodwill. We need to shout about it and come up with our own plan. She feels now is a good time because of the upcoming election. The IPPR Climate Fairness & Equality Report, which she was involved in, is still embargoed, but she said it was a fascinating read and said to check it out when it comes out.

Ben said the evidence shows being a BCorp means a company's workforce is more productive because the added value to processes means they have more purpose. He feels having a standard people can use will bring benefits to other people. He recommended "Be More Pirate" by Sam Conniff, as a "good fun read" about how pirates tore up an extremely unequal socio-economic system. They were the first people in the world to have a social security system, and put women into leadership roles. The book explains how we need to be civil lawbreakers. Lots of pirates came from Wales and there are a lot of similarities between their ideas and those of Robert Owen, which Ben said shows they were clearly based on Welsh values.

Adam suggested we read about Twm Sion Cati, the Welsh Robin Hood.

Helen Grey, from Swansea Council, shared an article from the New Yorker in the chat, which discussed how we can have prosperity without growth.

Adam asked Helen if the ideas in the article had anything to do with the book "Prosperity Without Growth" by Tim Jackson.

Paul G Davies, from Swansea University, said he was interested in the idea of shared value, which looks at ways of complimenting and linking together stakeholders. This might be a hook to see how different business models are being used in the region, in order to develop a useful framework to do more. He said there were already frameworks like the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act, but we needed to go further than that. simple hooks and labels would be really good to get people thinking about that.

Dawn said we need to take everyone with us, so we need to make sure we don't use language that doesn't alienate certain groups, such as businesses. She told the people at the event 4theRegion wanted to hear their thoughts on how we take this forward. 4theRegion will be watching the Welsh Government and Swansea Bay City Deal's upcoming procurement events to see if there's any progressive procurement in action. Dawn welcomed economists and researchers who can give an insight into a regional economic framework.

Ben said we can all make an impact on how we move around cities. He acknowledged getting around without a car was difficult, but said we need to grapple with one of the worst contributors to climate change. He said social media was out of control and has become a place for high levels of abuse and malcontents that has become a massive issue in terms of having a negative effect on wellbeing. He said this was a huge area to grapple with, although he's not sure how. He himself has been on the receiving end of abuse from "nimbys" on social media. However, he believes we should also use social media as a force for good, as it can apply an unbelievably large megaphone to what we're already doing.

Adam said we hadn't really talked about the foundational economy at this event. He said Coastal Housing was already doing a lot of work on the foundational economy, for example with Manchester University. He said there is also political will on the

foundational economy, for example from Lee Waters and Adam Price, so we just need to connect up the dots.

Robert said a big takeaway for him from this event was that we are all of like mind and networking was good. However, we still have different ways of getting there.

Ben said a signal of our commitment to wellbeing we can all send is to become accredited Living Wage Employers (even if you're already paying the living wage). It sends a signal out that workers are valued and this is our way of doing business here. Becoming an accredited Living Wage Employer is easy to do and the fee is only about £50 or £60 a year.

Helen said, assuming we haven't already done so, she would like to discuss what our shared vision is for the wellbeing economy in South West Wales, what we already have that fits the vision, what work we need to do, and how we work together. She would also like to discuss the climate emergency, the need for longer term thinking to address this, and the place of the green recovery agenda.

Julie said this had been a great session, but the most positive thing to come out of it was the imperative towards improved circumstances for local ethical businesses to flourish. With all the talk of pirates, she wanted to add her own take on the rules; "you can't make an omelette without breaking a few eggs." She said she was recently invited to participate in the Regional Economic Framework brainstorming event, which she said gave a fascinating insight to the work being done and the work that still needs doing.

Helen talked about the idea of the twenty minute neighbourhood model and the recommendations of the Future Generations Commissioner. She asked whether working from home during the pandemic has given us the opportunity to do things differently and whether our needs for localised businesses and services have changed and presented an opportunity for us to live and work differently to improve wellbeing.

Ben said Urban Foundry had done work with Wood Knowledge Wales and was also developing Meanwhile Space projects too, which were useful for a discussion in the context of the foundational economy as well as the wellbeing economy. He wants to see five minute neighbourhoods, not twenty minutes.

Dawn said 4theRegion wants to be a forum for progressive discussions and breaking down silos.

Resources & References:

- [Wales Beckons](#)
- [Bishopston Skate Park](#)

- [Report by the Stiglitz Sen Fitoussi Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress](#)
- [Carnegie Trust's Gross Domestic Wellbeing plan](#)
- [eftConsult - PAS 3003](#)
- [Natural Resources Wales - Carbon Positive Plan](#)
- [Living Wage Foundation - What is the real living wage?](#)
- [Future Generations Wales - How 20-minute neighbourhoods can help us fight the Climate Emergency and save our towns and cities](#)