



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Welsh Government Annual Report 2022

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Mark Drakeford MS
FIRST MINISTER OF WALES

Foreword

I am proud to be able to publish this first annual report of this Senedd term, which shows the progress we have made towards meeting our well-being objectives and the commitments in our Programme for Government.

We have achieved a great deal in the first year since the government was formed in May 2021, especially in a year which was dominated by the ongoing emergency response to the pandemic.

Thanks to the fantastic response of everyone in Wales and the success of our vaccination programme, we have been able to move beyond the emergency phase of the pandemic and are beginning to live safely with coronavirus. But we face a number of significant challenges as a country.

The pandemic has not gone away and continues to make its presence felt in our public services, including our NHS and care services. We continue to look to the future and have launched our plan to tackle long waiting times, which built up during the first two years of the pandemic. Our Renew and Reform Plan in education will ensure no learner is left behind.

The invasion of Ukraine has shocked us all and created a humanitarian crisis on our doorstep. Wales is proud to be a nation of sanctuary and we have been overwhelmed by the outpouring of generosity from people who have opened their homes to people fleeing the conflict. Thousands of people from Ukraine have found safety and sanctuary in Wales.

The cost-of-living crisis is having a real impact on everyone's lives. Every week, prices are rising. We will do all we can to help people in Wales through this unprecedented crisis. Our policies and programmes have been designed to help people meet everyday costs and put money back in people's pockets but we are now going further and taking targeted action to help those who need it most.

These challenges have not reduced our focus on the climate and nature emergency, which remains at the heart of everything we do. It has never been more important to stay focused on reducing our carbon emissions and restoring the biodiversity of our beautiful country.

The year ahead will be challenging for us all. Our Co-operation Agreement with Plaid Cymru means that we will be able to move ahead with a series of ambitious actions to improve the lives of people in Wales. In December that agreement will have been in place for its first year, and we will report in more detail on progress made, to coincide with that anniversary.

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Introduction

This is the first annual report of this Senedd term, setting out the progress we have made towards our well-being objectives under the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

We have made good progress towards meeting our well-being objectives, despite challenges posed by the continuing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the cost-of-living crisis, and the humanitarian disaster in Ukraine.

A number of commitments that contribute to delivery of our well-being objectives are part of the Co-operation Agreement between the Welsh Government and Plaid Cymru. We will report fully on the Co-operation Agreement later this year to mark its anniversary.

How this report is structured

The report is structured around our ten well-being objectives. The main body of the report highlights key achievements and actions towards meeting these objectives. The accompanying annex sets out progress towards the full range of commitments detailed under these objectives in the Programme for Government.

The ten well-being objectives are:



1. Provide effective, high quality and sustainable healthcare

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound influence on all of us. The Welsh Government has led our country's response and, although the immediate threat to our health has receded, we continue to monitor and track the incidence and prevalence of COVID-19 in our communities. We have supported the vital role of testing in keeping everyone safe and PCR testing levels reached over 200,000 a week in late December.

We know that the pandemic had a more significant impact on some communities and our Coronavirus transition plan, *Together for a Safer Future*, highlighted how equality will remain at the heart of our response to the pandemic. We have kept prescriptions free of charge, ensuring everyone in Wales has access to the medicines and equipment they need and helping some of our most vulnerable citizens manage the pressures they face as the cost-of-living crisis deepens.

We are driving a focus on prevention and preventative approaches through NHS planning and across policy areas, including mental health. This will focus on approaches such as *Healthy Weight, Healthy Wales* and delivering better lifestyle outcomes.

All of us are grateful to the Welsh NHS and what it did for us during the pandemic. In return, we will continue to do everything we can to support the NHS and those who work in it. We will continue to provide high-quality PPE to frontline health and social care workers to ensure they are protected.

We face a generational challenge to restore access to services and reduce waiting times to pre-pandemic levels. Our *Programme for Transforming and Modernising Planned Care and Reducing Waiting Lists in Wales*, which is backed by an extra £170m a year, sets out our ambitions to increase capacity and ensure people are seen by the right person, the first time.

As part of our commitment to increase NHS capacity and reduce the length of waiting times we have set up rapid diagnostic centres across Wales to speed up cancer diagnosis and treatment by reducing the time from the initial GP appointment to receiving a diagnosis. Clinical urgency will take priority, while we continue to plan and reduce the length of waits for more routine treatments.

To help provide help to people at the earliest opportunity, we have rolled out the **111 service** across Wales. Help, advice and signposting to the right service is available 24-hours-a-day, seven-days-a-week wherever you live in Wales.

We have committed to develop an **HIV action plan** and tackle the unacceptable stigma still experienced by those living with HIV. In June 2022, we published a consultation on the draft plan which has been co-produced with organisations, experts and people with lived experience.

In November, we completed a **review of hospice funding** and made an additional £2.2m available to Welsh hospices, including nearly £900K for children's hospice provision.

The pandemic has had a significant impact on people's emotional and mental wellbeing as well as their physical health. We **prioritised mental health and wellbeing in the 2022-23 budget** and in this year alone, the ring-fenced mental health budget provided to local health boards will be over £760m. We are also investing almost £16.5m to roll out the child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) school in-reach pilots across Wales.

The refreshed young person's mental health tool kit is now available via the educational website Hwb. The national digital learning platform features links to a range of websites, apps and helplines designed to support young people's mental health and wellbeing.

2. Protect, re-build and develop our services for vulnerable people

The people who help us to look after our most vulnerable family members have been on the front line of the pandemic. We believe that their contribution should be fully recognised. That is why, in Wales, we will be **paying care workers the Real Living Wage** from April 2022. This will apply to registered workers in care homes and domiciliary care for adults and children that are registered with Social Care Wales and to Personal Assistants employed by someone in receipt of a local authority direct payment.

In addition to this, we announced a one-off payment of £1,498 (gross) to social care workers, who are eligible for the Real Living Wage, to demonstrate our commitment to improving the status, terms and conditions, and career pathways for social care workers.

We are also pressing ahead strongly with investing in how we deliver social care. We have already put in place a **Social Care Recovery Framework** and accompanying £65m Social Care Recovery Fund. For the longer term, we have launched the Housing with Care Fund a capital programme with an annual budget of £60.5m to fund specialist low carbon social homes and accommodation for people with care and support needs. It will focus on older people, people with dementia, people with a learning disability, people with mental health challenges and helping unpaid carers. We aim to increase our stock of care housing by up to a third over the next four years.

Looking to the future of social care in Wales, we have **established an Expert Group** that will report this summer. It will provide advice to support our ambition of creating a National Care Service, free at the point of need, continuing as a public service.

When it comes to our children and young people, we know that our highly successful Flying Start programme makes a real difference. From the beginning of next term, we will start to expand Flying Start services to a further 2,500 children under the age of four as part of our commitment to deliver early years provision to 2 year olds throughout Wales, with a particular focus on ensuring equity of access for our more deprived communities and our goal of achieving one million Welsh speakers by 2050. In addition, we expanded our **Childcare Offer** to benefit parents on adoption leave from April 2022 and will be further expanding it to support parents in education or training from September 2022.

We have honoured our commitment to offer all children in Wales the same protection from assault as adults. In March 2022, legislation came into force and Wales joined more than 60 countries in making the physical punishment of children illegal.

We are pressing ahead with our commitment to **eliminate private profit from social care** and developing our wider strategy to keep families together wherever possible and to reduce the number of children and young people looked after away from home. We have supported the development of 6 regional centres in 2021-22 to meet the needs of children with complex needs as close to their home communities as possible.

Care leavers often face exceptional challenges as they make their way in the world – they do not always have the network of support to help them that many young people have as they enter adulthood. This is why we will be **piloting a basic income** for a group of young people leaving care. Our approach has attracted considerable international interest and we are looking forward to welcoming our first young people into the scheme in the next few months.

3. Build an economy based on the principles of fair work, sustainability and the industries and services of the future

A strong Welsh recovery fit for the long term must be based on the principles of fair work and sustainability, with investment in the industries and services of the future.

Since the start of the pandemic, we have invested more than £2.6bn in support of businesses with the aim of helping them to survive and to protect people's jobs. The main economic support packages were delivered via the Economic Resilience Fund (ERF), the Cultural Recovery Fund (CRF) and the Non-Domestic Rates linked grants (NDR) which were overseen by us but paid to qualifying business properties via local authorities. Our economic assistance was a vital addition to UK Government schemes in safeguarding employment here in Wales.

We are working with trade unions, public sector employers and others to promote and enable fair work, address labour exploitation and tackle modern slavery. **The Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Bill** was introduced to the Senedd in June. Once passed into law, it will create a statutory Social Partnership Council and place new social partnership duties on government and public bodies in Wales.

The Shadow Social Partnership Council (SSPC) helped us shape our response to the pandemic. It met frequently over the last two years and has provided a vital channel through which we have shared information, sought advice and expertise from social partners, including Trade Unions and employers' representatives, to achieve a better understanding of the pressures facing Welsh businesses, workers and public services.

The pandemic changed the way we all live, work and travel and whilst it has been a difficult time for us all, these changed working patterns have also indicated some potential social and environmental benefits. In March, we published our Remote Working Strategy setting out our plans to support a 30% target for working remotely. In Welsh Government we will lead by example and aim for no more than 50% of our workforce to be working from a central office at any one time. A network of 25 pilot remote working hubs is now open providing spaces to work remotely in local communities.

Our local high streets are important and in December we confirmed that Monmouthshire Building Society, working with the Welsh Government and Cambria Cydfuddiannol Ltd (CCL), had announced its intent to develop its approach of delivering a **community bank** in Wales, which will aim to provide everyday retail banking services in communities across Wales.

Building on the success of the Social Care Forum, which helped us to deliver the Real Living Wage for care workers, we are establishing a Retail Forum, which is working to embed fair work in our vision for retail.

We are committed to providing the skills and opportunities people need to secure good quality employment in a net zero economy. Our **Plan for Employability and Skills** includes five key areas of action – young people realising their potential; tackling economic inequality; championing fair work for all; supporting people with a long-term health condition to work and nurturing a learning for life culture.

4. Build a stronger, greener economy as we make maximum progress towards decarbonisation

We published our 10-year **Wales Infrastructure Investment Strategy** to support a zero carbon economy alongside the draft budget in December 2021. This shows just how closely we are aligning our investments to support our 2050 net zero target.

We continue to deliver our ambition for sustainable integrated regional transport networks in Wales through our Metro programmes. Fflecsi bus pilots are delivering bus services to people across Wales at a time and place that suits them. Station improvements are progressing across the Metro programmes, supporting better active travel facilities at key interchanges so people can choose more sustainable ways to get around.

To reduce our reliance on the private car, we need a public transport system that works for everyone in Wales. This has to include a bus service that prioritises providing a decent, reliable service above private profit. Our **One Network, One Timetable, One Ticket: Planning Buses as a Public Service** consultation sets out our plans to redesign bus services in Wales and create a more joined up service that meets people's needs.

We are promoting the use of public transport more widely and are taking forward the recommendations of the **Burns Commission** report into the M4 Newport Corridor. In March 2022, we launched a scheme that provided free bus travel in Newport. This was trialled to encourage the use of public transport and greener travel. We have also provided £1m to encourage greater uptake of cycling through trialling electric bike loan schemes, which offer a range of battery assisted electric bikes on medium-term loan to residents at no cost.

Active travel of this sort can also contribute to improved physical and mental health. To encourage cycling over car use for short journeys, we are investing £50m in cycling routes and new cycling facilities.

Reducing unnecessary travel for work also requires investment in the digital infrastructure in Wales. We have provided future-proofed gigabit broadband to nearly 30,000 premises through our own full-fibre roll-out with Openreach and provided extra funding to top up the UK Government gigabit broadband voucher scheme. To date, this top-up has supported more than 2,000 homes and businesses to get connected.

We have set out our ambition to reform the way agriculture is supported in the future, with a greater emphasis on high-quality and sustainable food production and rewarding farmers for broadening the delivery of environmental and associated social outcomes. To deliver this, engagement continues with the farming community on the Sustainable Farming Scheme and we will introduce an Agriculture Bill later in 2022.

We have reinforced our commitment to extending the Basic Payment Scheme, the main source of direct farming support, and extending Glastir contracts until the end of 2023. We are also committed to implementing a period of transition towards the Sustainable Farming Scheme of the future.

5. Embed our response to the climate and nature emergency in everything we do

Following our declaration of a climate emergency in 2019, we published **Net Zero Wales**, in October, which sets out how we will meet our carbon budgeting commitments. This forms part of our legally binding target of reaching net zero by 2050.

In November 2021, the global climate conference COP26 was held in Glasgow and Welsh Government was well represented within the UK delegation. This put Wales on the world stage in the fight against climate change and meaningful progress was made on methane, global finance, and the shift to more renewable and low carbon forms of energy. Welsh Government provided international leadership by becoming the only UK nation to sign up to the *Beyond Oil and Gas Alliance*.

COP Cymru ran alongside COP26, with a week long programme of virtual events looking at the climate action being taken across Wales.

The public sector will continue to lead the way. For example, from January 2022 all new school and college buildings are required to meet net zero carbon targets. Welsh Government funding has enabled Morriston Hospital, in Swansea, to create its own solar farm, which has already surpassed expectations by providing enough electricity to not only contribute to its daily power needs, but to also cover 100% of its demand for 50 hours. Electric vehicle charging points have also been installed across the NHS estate to increase the use of electric vehicles and cut carbon emissions.

We are investing in the future of renewable energy to move away from the use of coal, oil and gas for energy production. We are providing £31m to the Morlais project, a **major tidal energy scheme** off Anglesey. It aims to develop tidal power generation technologies by providing grid connectivity. This will benefit the environment by providing more sustainable forms of energy, whilst also creating jobs.

We are prioritising solar energy and have awarded almost £2.35m for the expansion of community owned renewable energy. Three schools, a care home and a crematorium in Newport will be the first buildings to have solar panels installed as part of this project. This is projected to save 3,700 tonnes of carbon and result in lower energy bills.

The effects of climate change are already beginning to have an impact on Wales with the risk of flooding increasing. In response to this we announced our largest ever **flood programme**, investing over £214m over three years. This will fund flood and coastal erosion risk management and mitigation measures across Wales.

Coal tips are a legacy of Wales' mining past and in May we published a White Paper, setting out our plans to provide a consistent approach to spoil tip management, monitoring and oversight. This followed the Law Commission's report published in March 2022. We continue to work with our Task Force partners to provide a consistent approach to the current inspection regime. The inspections programme has already identified maintenance works needed to ensure the stability of sites, and we have committed £44.4m over the next three years to take forward this work.

Preserving the natural environment and protecting biodiversity are vital to the future health of the planet. We launched **My Tree, Our Forest**, offering every household in Wales a free tree in March 2022. Three commemorative woodland sites have been announced, in Wrexham, the Tywi Valley and Caerphilly to remember all those who died during the pandemic, and we launched the Woodland Investment Grant to improve existing woodlands and create new ones as part of our ambitious plans for a **National Forest** in Wales.

6. Continue our long-term programme of education reform, and ensure educational inequalities narrow and standards rise

We know that children and young people were particularly badly affected by the pandemic, including educationally. We published our Renew and Reform plan in June 2021 to support learners' wellbeing and progression in response to COVID-19 and this was supported by £278m of funding in 2021-22.

We have appointed and retained over **1,800 school staff** to support learners as part of the response towards recovery and progressions since the pandemic to ensure no learner is left behind.

We are looking to the future too by exploring ways of **modernising the school day and the school year** so it works better for learners, their families and the education workforce. We have run pilot projects in 13 schools and one college to trial an extended school day. More than 1,800 learners participated in a 10-week trial providing five additional hours per week for learners.

Our new Curriculum for Wales, introduced from September 2022, will ensure learners gain the knowledge and skills they need to reach their full potential in life.

As part of our commitment to reduce inequalities, all primary school pupils will receive **free school meals** by September 2024. No child in Wales should ever go hungry and we will make sure that every primary aged child will receive at least one healthy meal per day.

This year, we delivered 139 **School Holiday Enrichment Programme (SHEP)** schemes and provided 7,740 places for children. The Programme delivered up to 185,760 healthy meals and 92,880 hours of physical activity.

Our international reputation for music making is part of who we are in Wales, and we want to make sure everyone has an opportunity to be part of that great cultural tradition. To ensure money is not a barrier to young people in pursuing an interest in music, we have launched the **National Music Service** and published the *National Plan for Music Education*, in which our schools will play a central role, supported by £13.5m over the next three years.

We introduced the **Tertiary Education and Research (Wales) Bill**, which was passed in June 2022, bringing together, for the first time, all post-compulsory education sectors. This will ensure learners of all ages across all settings are supported with the knowledge and skills needed to succeed through their lives and careers.

Key to this will be delivery of our **Young Person's Guarantee**, which will provide everyone under 25 with the offer of work, education, training or self-employment. By the end of March 2022, more than 2,700 young people had accessed the service. The ambitious programme will help ensure there is no lost generation in Wales following the pandemic. Between 2021-2023 we are investing £2.8bn in the guarantee.

This includes spending £366m over the next three years towards delivery of **125,000 all-age apprenticeships**. This will help support the national milestone of at least 90% of 16 to 24-year-olds in Wales being in education, employment, or training by 2050, and to eradicate the gap between the employment rate in Wales and the UK by 2050.

Alongside this, we have launched a £1m fund to support up to 500 unemployed people and young people not in education, employment or training to start their own business.

7. Celebrate diversity and move to eliminate inequality in all of its forms

We published the ***Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan***, which was co-produced with people from black, Asian and minority ethnic communities, and is designed to tackle systemic and institutionalised racism. The actions are focused on the next two years, set against the vision of becoming an Anti-racist nation by 2030.

To improve the availability, quality and accessibility of evidence needed to inform future policy making and to provide an informed view of inequalities across Wales, we have established three distinct evidence units on Equality, Race and Disability within Welsh Government.

We have made it **mandatory to teach black, Asian and minority ethnic histories** and experiences as part of Welsh history in the new Curriculum for Wales. We have also funded pilot projects to help improve representation in the culture sector and museum network and supported Amgueddfa Cymru - National Museum Wales and the Arts Council of Wales to develop their Widening Engagement Action Plan, which was published in February 2022.

Everyone in Wales should feel safe and we are committed to ensuring the victims of domestic violence are supported when giving evidence in domestic abuse cases. In May we published our strengthened ***Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence strategy***. We have invested more than £400K in 13 new facilities across Wales, which are the first of their kind in the UK. This will ensure victim's voices are at the centre of the justice process and foster a secure environment for giving evidence.

Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) play an important role in building trust in communities and preventing crime. We have retained the 500 PCSOs we already funded in Wales and by the end of this calendar year, the further 100 PCSOs will be recruited and in post across Wales.

Along with the LGBTQ+ Expert Panel, we have continued the development of the **LGBTQ+ Action Plan** which will be published this year. This plan sets out a number of radical steps that will seek to make Wales the most LGBTQ+ friendly nation in Europe.

In response to the *Locked Out: Liberating disabled people's lives and rights in Wales beyond COVID-19*, the First Minister established the **Disability Rights Taskforce**, which brought together disabled people with lived experience, government and representative organisations to look at how we can tackle the issues and remove the barriers that affect the lives of many disabled people in Wales.

We have upgraded train stations to make them more accessible to disabled people and ensured new and existing rolling stock complies with mobility requirements. £10m has helped provide step free access at 11 stations across the network including Caerphilly, Cathays, Treforest, Barry Town, Flint, Cwmbran, Abergavenny, Tenby, Newtown, Llanelli and Ludlow.

The **Disabled People's Employment Champions** have engaged with a range of organisations and businesses and worked closely with the Business Wales service. The champions were crucial in ensuring that the Young Person's Guarantee and other employability programmes have been designed and implemented with an awareness of the barriers experienced by disabled people.

We care about each other in Wales and resilient and supportive communities are the bedrock of our society. We continue to support **Wales' voluntary sector** and will invest almost £30m over the coming three years.

In collaboration with the Third Sector Partnership Council, a Third Sector Covid Recovery Plan has been co-produced and set joint priorities. In August 2021, the third phase of the Third Sector Resilience Fund was launched, making £6.5m available to help viable voluntary sector organisations develop the sustainability and resilience needed for the long-term.

8. Push forward towards a million Welsh speakers, and enable our tourism, sports and arts industries to thrive

The development of a **Museum of North Wales** forms part of a larger programme of activity relating to the redevelopment of the National Slate Museum at Llanberis. In 2021-2022, Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales consulted with local communities, undertook a feasibility study and developed a vision for the new Museum.

In the performing arts, **Theatr Clwyd** is known for world class theatre and attracts over 200,000 visitors a year. We have made up to £22m in capital funding available to support the transformative redevelopment that has an industry-leading zero carbon target and dedicated theatre-making, learning, family and wellbeing spaces.

We provided funding to allow free entry to the Urdd Eisteddfod in this its centenary year to ensure as many people as possible could access our distinctive culture and share in the celebration.

Our industrial heritage has shaped the landscape of Wales and we supported the bid to make the **slate landscape of North West Wales a world heritage site** and were delighted when it was added to the UNESCO World Heritage List last year, making it the fourth World Heritage Site in Wales.

Our language has helped to shape us as a nation and in March we published *Cymraeg 2050: Welsh language strategy action plan 2022-23*, setting out the action we will take to move towards our target of a million Welsh speakers and doubling daily use of our language by 2050.

To expand **Welsh medium education**, we have announced 11 capital projects in nine local authorities. The projects include establishing new Welsh-medium primary schools, increasing capacity at existing Welsh-medium primary schools, establishing new Welsh language immersion centres and extending existing Welsh language immersion.

Funding will also be provided to the **National Centre for Learning Welsh**, for projects which include creating on-line taster courses for refugees and asylum seekers to learn Welsh, without needing to be fluent in English.

Our **Welsh Language Communities Housing Plan**, which we consulted on earlier this year, will play a crucial part in our thinking as we develop a package of interventions to support and protect our distinctive communities.

In February 2022, we set out our initial plans for a **visitor levy** – giving powers to local authorities to raise funds locally to re-invest in local services and infrastructure that encourage a more sustainable approach to tourism. A consultation on these plans will be launched in the coming months.

9. Make our cities, towns and villages even better places in which to live and work

We are committed to ensuring that the people of Wales have access to safe and affordable housing.

We have launched plans to tackle the complex issues surrounding **second home ownership**, including addressing the issue of unaffordable housing affecting many local communities. Our three-pronged approach: addresses the affordability and availability of housing; amends the regulatory framework; and ensures second home owners make a fair contribution to the communities in which they have second homes.

We have increased the maximum level at which local authorities can set council tax premiums on second homes and long-term empty properties to 300% (up from 100%) from April 2023. Other actions include funding to bring long-term empty properties back into use.

Our homes should be a source of security for us and not the cause of anxiety. We have a twin-track approach towards building safety – remediating existing multi-occupied buildings with fire safety defects and reforming the safety regime in Wales.

We have made £375m available over the next three years to **deliver our building safety programme** and have established the Welsh Building Safety Fund, which is carrying out detailed surveys of buildings to identify defects.

The **Leaseholder Support Scheme launched in June 2022**, will help leaseholders who cannot sell their properties and who are in significant financial hardship as a result of fire safety issues.

Creating more sustainable housing is a priority – we have invested an additional £250m in 2021-22 towards the delivery of **20,000 new low carbon social homes for rent**. All new social homes will now be built to quality and environmental standards that will reduce the energy they use, addressing housing demand in Wales and tackling the climate emergency.

Last autumn, we launched the second round of funding for the Optimised Retrofit Programme to test innovative approaches to **decarbonisation of Welsh homes**. £50m a year for the next three years will improve energy efficiency of housing.

In November 2021, we published our **Ending Homelessness Action Plan** which focuses on early intervention and prevention. The pandemic radically changed our approach to homelessness and since the beginning of lockdown in March 2020, we have taken a ‘no-one left out approach’.

Leasing Scheme Wales was launched nationally in January and is worth £30m over the next five years. It will increase access to good quality affordable housing in the private rented sector.

Reducing speed limits to 20mph will improve safety and help make our streets a more welcoming place for everyone and in particular children, pedestrians and cyclists. Eight settlement areas are testing proposals for making 20mph the default speed limit across Wales in residential areas. We published our response to the consultation in March 2022.

10. Lead Wales in a national civic conversation about our constitutional future, and give our country the strongest possible presence on the world stage

The experience of the pandemic has shown what we can do for ourselves in Wales when important decisions are taken close to home. In Wales, we know better what works for Wales. This is why we have set up an **Independent Commission on the Constitutional Future of Wales**.

The commission has two broad objectives – to consider and develop options for fundamental reform of the constitutional structures of the United Kingdom and to consider and develop all progressive principal options to strengthen Welsh democracy and deliver improvements for the people of Wales.

On **Senedd reform**, we will be progressing legislation in response to the Special Purposes Committee on Senedd Reform. The Senedd voted to endorse the Committee’s recommendations in June 2022, and we have committed to bring forward legislation within 12 to 18 months.

Beyond the work of the commission, we have extended the franchise in Wales to include 16 and 17-year-olds at both Senedd and local government elections. Four local authorities took part in flexible voting pilots in the May 2022 local government elections. The pilots were designed to make it easier for people to vote by offering flexibility on when and where votes can be cast by bringing the ballot box closer to people’s day-to-day lives.

At national and at local level, we want to ensure that we manage our civic affairs fairly and openly. We have announced plans to consult on a package of reforms to make **council tax fairer**. This will include a range of potential changes, including revaluation and a review of our Council Tax Reduction Scheme. Our Council Tax Reduction Scheme is continuing to support around 270,000 households, which has become increasingly important during the cost-of-living crisis.

Taith, our **International Learning Exchange Programme** will give learners the opportunity to travel. We have invested up to £65m in this programme and education organisations can apply for funding so that students have the opportunity to spend time abroad.

Review of Well-being Objectives

We set our 10 well-being objectives in our initial Programme for Government in June 2021 and added further steps in the updated Programme for Government published in December 2021.

These objectives will allow us to deliver a stronger, fairer and greener Wales in line with the sustainable development principle, addressing the extraordinary challenges Wales faces and creating a sustainable foundation for future generations to build from.

The revised Programme for Government expanded, and in some cases refined, the steps we are taking to deliver the objectives in practice. These revised steps will allow us to drive further progress against the objectives and create better outcomes for people in Wales, now and in the future. They take a radical and progressive approach to the pressing challenges ahead of us, ensuring we will make a real difference for people across Wales.

The three-year spending review, undertaken as part of our 2022-23 Budget prioritised the Programme for Government (containing our well-being objectives) and concluded with publication of the Final Budget in March 2022. The Programme for Government will continue to be the focus of investment in this government term.

Our well-being objectives and the corresponding steps are collectively owned by Cabinet. They are interconnected and draw on the areas that are devolved to us under the Government of Wales Act 2006. Each well-being objective contributes, either directly or indirectly to the seven well-being goals and they should be viewed as mutually reinforcing each other as a closely aligned set. Many of the steps also contribute to multiple well-being objectives.

A year into this Senedd term, we have reviewed our well-being objectives and consider that they remain the areas where we can make the biggest contribution to the well-being goals.