



City and County of Swansea

## Minutes of the **Scrutiny Performance Panel – Public Services Board**

Committee Room 5 - Guildhall, Swansea

Wednesday, 3 October 2018 at 10.00 am

**Present:** Councillor M H Jones (Chair) Presided

**Councillor(s)**

P M Black  
P R Hood-Williams  
J W Jones

**Councillor(s)**

T J Hennegan  
P K Jones  
M Sykes

**Councillor(s)**

C A Holley  
L R Jones

**Co-opted Member(s)**

Cherrie Bija

**Co-opted Member(s)**

Martyn Waygood

**Co-opted Member(s)**

**Other Attendees**

Sophie Howe  
Jacob Ellis

Future Generations Commissioner  
Public Affairs Advisor

**Officer(s)**

Bethan Hopkins

Scrutiny Officer

**Apologies for Absence**

Councillor(s):

Co-opted Member(s): John Warman

Other Attendees:

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**1 Disclosure of Personal and Prejudicial Interests.**

- None

**2 Public Questions**

- None

**3 Notes**

- Approved

**4 Question and Answer Session - Sophie Howe, Future Generations Commissioner**

- Future Generations Commissioner Sophie Howe attended the Public Services Board to take part in a discussion and Q&A
- The Commissioner explained that we are two and a half years into the Well-being and Future Generations Act implementation
- The work has been ground-breaking, exciting and challenging
- The legislation should have the PSB aims first then the aims of the public bodies
- There has been a missed opportunity to regionalise the work and the Local Authorities need to consider whether there is an appetite to do this
- City Deals are not all clearly linked with the Well-being Plans
- The duties under the Act are about fundamentally changing how we do business
- Seeing this work as process or compliance will miss the intention of the legislation
- **Questions for the Commissioner**
- How do you feel Public Services Boards have been performing across Wales overall?
- It is difficult to respond with evidence as no annual reports have been submitted yet
- Not all PSBs are working as well as possible
- There are pockets of good practice
- The more inclusive the boards are (e.g. Chair, resourcing, participants) the more effective in theory
- Members are more engaged if they are involved in setting the agenda
- Noticed that roles are starting to be deputised which isn't as effective
- Workshop sessions are better than long agendas – sometimes people are invited in to tell stories and share lived experiences. Innovative approaches are more successful
- The local authorities were available to provide the support for example committee support, just because they do this doesn't mean it should dominate the PSB
- What is the added value of the PSB against what the Local Authority does anyway e.g. section 6 of the Environment Act?
- There are things which are outside of a single organisations capacity e.g. health, poverty air pollution etc we are missing opportunities to work together
- We are developing a number of future generations frameworks which will act as prompts to what should be considered when developing projects
- 'The Art of the Possible' has been set up with a number of organisations (Wildlife Trust, Sport Wales, Public Health Wales etc) with an aim of drawing out good practice
- Regarding the environment, we should be limiting grass cutting and planting wildflowers instead, it is money saving and better for the environment
- Housing left out as a theme
- Not involved in drafting the legislation, education was not included either, but housing associations are keen to work with us and we are looking at a specific framework for housing, agree that housing is so intrinsic
- Housing should be using new technology which is energy generating, using local businesses within green infrastructure and looking at no fuel poverty

- PSBs need to set out how they measure progress. Not all have measures or they have ineffective ones e.g. children's cases reviewed on time
- FG office has no duty to monitor or assess goals and the legislation isn't helpful here, there is an appetite to monitor progress with the auditor general
- There are good examples from Bridgend regarding adverse childhood experience (ACE) projects (police, social services, education), renewable energy across estates, community consultation and engagement
- There is often no intervention in ACEs until the situation is critical, there needs to be earlier intervention and more funding – 14% of Welsh people have experienced 4 or more adverse childhood experiences – we must intervene earlier to mitigate issues. Maybe think about the involvement of teachers and sports coaches
- The legislation is about process and raises expectation without resources. How do we fund the demand? The action plan implementation will be essential. If the action plans go awry what is the power to correct it?
- The power is judicial review of the action/decision taken e.g. the M4 tested judicial review and a school closure, we will start seeing the use of the legal framework ramping up, we need brave decisions e.g. the police funding the night time economy project in Swansea means everyone benefits
- FGC can review public bodies and PSBs – haven't used them yet but have threatened them
- Planning is a priority area now, trying to get policy and guidance in line with the Future Generations Act. Planning Policy Wales is now in line with the Future Generations Act
- The National Development Framework is now the next step, there are issues in terms of systems. Currently working closely with the Planning Inspectorate and there is a good relationship
- Last month, the Future Generations Act was used as a basis for refusal for planning for the first time, there are ongoing frustrations around funding to deal with this
- Do you have any advice for scrutiny Panels looking at Public Services Boards going forward?
- Will have much more after the framework feedback which is coming in
- Are there examples of good practice which you can share with the Panel?
- Examples have already been listed above
- What do you feel are the challenges facing Public Services Boards and their Scrutiny Panels?
- As above
- Do you think the lack of funding for the work of Public Services Boards is having a negative impact on their performance?
- The cost estimation was very mechanical, it focussed on processes not outcomes
- There was no resourcing of the cultural change, the FGC office has brought in an extra £650k in the last couple of years to help with this
- Money should be issued for research and to support leadership, in some circumstances, no head teachers had been consulted on 'Best Start in Life'
- This is the biggest cultural change Wales has seen
- Last year we scrutinised the budget and provided feedback, there is a lack of definition around 'preventative spend' but this definition has now been agreed

- There is a shift from health spend to Local Authority spend for prevention but there are political issues here too
- Social care/decarbonisation/skills/mental health – we have written to the Cabinet Secretary to ask what resources they have allocated to the sector
- Some issues with schools, sometimes parents and teachers know nothing of the Future Generations Act
- This isn't isolated but people on the PSB can change this, they can look at how they are raising awareness of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), public bodies have to take all reasonable steps to tackle this
- If the focus on bureaucracy then this is getting it wrong, the focus needs to be on outcomes, some of our mechanisms are wrong but our aspirations are great. We need to tackle bureaucracy and deliver
- You hold to account the PSB, we can come and support and intervene if needs be
- How do you feel individual ward members can have a positive impact in their communities taking into account the aims of the Public Services Boards?
- FGC was a local Councillor for years, the issues reflect the frustrations of local wards e.g. services not joined up
- The Future Generations Act can be used for community planning and by Community Councils – Llanelli currently have an interesting project using it
- Newport had ward profiles, this allows for advocating in wards because they can identify issues
- The reference to the Resilient Wales Goal is often misunderstood with specific reference to guidance from the Planning Inspectorate
- The goal name should have been different, the statutory definition is often misinterpreted e.g the 'Prosperous Goal' is often translated as increase of GVA. We highlight this whenever we see it, but it is difficult
- The environment is not as prominent as it should be. 'Skill's' needs to be looked at overall in relation to education and developing green goals etc
- Will go back to the Planning Inspectorate to discuss it
- Regarding judicial review, most people can't afford it. Once the issues have been reviewed, issue the guidance and other Local Authorities will know the outcome

## **5 Work Plan 2018/2019**

- Work plan reviewed
- Next meeting will look at 'Working with Nature'
- An update item has been added to every meeting

The meeting ended at 11.50 am

**Chair**