



CITY AND COUNTY OF SWANSEA

Dinas A Sir Abertawe

Councillor Rob Stewart
Chair of the Local Service Board

BY EMAIL

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30th March 2016

Summary: A Convener's letter to the Chair of the Local Service Board outlining the Panel's findings and recommendations following their work to look at "What difference is the Swansea Local Service Board making for citizens?"

Dear Councillor Stewart,

Thank you for your attendance at the Local Service Board Scrutiny Performance Panel on 22 February. We wanted to explore with you our findings so far around our work looking at Older People's Independence. We are writing to you in order to reflect on what we learnt from the discussion and share the Panel's findings, which we intend to be useful to help influence the development of the new Public Services Board.

Panel's approach

The Panel was set up to look at the effectiveness of the Local Service Board and in particular address the question: *'What difference is the Swansea Local Service Board making for citizens?'*

Over the past six months our approach has been to look in depth at one of the Local Service Board's priorities for 2015/16 in order to extrapolate findings on how well it is working as a whole. We selected the Older People's Independence Priority and

commenced our work with an overview of the priority from Chris Sivers (Corporate Director for Place) in July 2015.

Evidence gathered

We have gathered evidence from a range of sources, which included:

- Briefing on Older People's Independence and the Ageing Well Plan: Chris Sivers (Corporate Director People) and Euros Owen.
- Briefing on the Wellbeing & Future Generations Act: Tanya Nash (Sustainable Development Team Leader)
- Cllr Mark Child: Cabinet Member for Wellbeing & Healthy City. An overview of his portfolio's contribution to the Older People's Independence priority and the links to Healthy Cities.
- Healthy Cities (phase VI 2014-2018 specifically referring to the theme of Older People): Sharon Miller (ABMU)
- Premature mortality rates: Dr Nina Williams (Public Health Wales)
- Cllr Andrea Lewis: Cabinet Member for Next Generation Services. A briefing and overview of the Next Generation Services portfolio contribution to the Older People's Independence and independent living
- Written submissions from Local Service Board members providing their views on the effectiveness and achievements of the Local Service Board.

Our work has led us to a number of findings with some resulting recommendations which we hope will influence the development of the Public Services Board.

The Local Service Board has been successful in clarifying and promoting the top priorities for Swansea.

The Local Service Board is important because it has been effective in bringing key stakeholders together and agreeing joint priorities through the production of the One Swansea Plan and the Strategic Needs Assessment. This has encouraged organisations to align their priorities and focus on the same outcomes. Without collaboration some may be working contradictory to each other or duplicating work. Organisations who work separately may be missing out on opportunities to complement each other's work for similar activities.

Financial cuts across all sectors mean that the need to explore opportunities for closer collaboration is greater than ever. The key role of the Local Service Board, as we see it, is to focus on building on the strengths of organisations and allowing them to pool resources, avoid duplication and through this maximise their impact on improving outcomes for residents of Swansea. The evidence we have collected and our discussions with Local Service Board partners have indicated that it has had mixed success in doing this, we discuss this view further in the following paragraphs.

The Local Service Board has demonstrated its effectiveness in strategic planning.

The One Swansea Plan has been a useful tool to raise the profile of the Local Service Board's priorities for Swansea. In particular, examples provided to us by health representatives included: raising the profile of early years and premature mortality and contributory factors like smoking cessation; the profile of older people and premature mortality; the tobacco action plan, the benefits of exercise and early years programme under Healthy Cities is gaining momentum; and support from the cabinet lead as a champion has been excellent in reducing premature mortality and increasing prevention aspects of older people's independence. Health representatives told us that the Local Service Board has been able to disseminate a wider understanding of the Healthy City initiative and this is attributed to the partnership working that it has facilitated.

In terms of the Older People's Independence priority, the development of the Ageing Well Plan as the over-arching strategy for multi-agency work is a positive outcome which has strengthened the partnership working in this area, and the development of the five work streams has provided a clear strategic focus. However, we suggest that wider promotion of the Plan should take place, including a report to Council, following its agreement by Cabinet in November 2015. We believe that this will help to highlight the work of the Local Service Board.

We have found that the Local Service Board is less effective at monitoring outcomes.

We have been provided with some evidence of on the ground work where the Local Service Board has built on existing strategic developments such as making Swansea a Dementia Supportive City – for example as a result police officers are now fully aware of the issues and have now received dementia awareness training. The Local Service Board has also supported the work of Local Area Co-ordinators. However it is not clear to us how important a part it has had in the development of the role. Nevertheless, we were pleased to hear of further collaborative work with the Police in order to look at ways to expand this approach but within existing resources. We feel that this is a positive example of the partnership approach fostered by the Local Service Board.

We have found it difficult to gather information on the effectiveness of outcome monitoring and we were advised the work is on-going to develop qualitative measures in order to more robustly monitor progress on the outcomes for the Older People's Independence priority. As a result we believe that when the annual review of the Ageing Well Plan takes place in July 2016 the scrutiny panel should be consulted as part of the process in order to help us understand how effective the Local Service Board is at monitoring outcomes.

The low level of response to the Panel's request for information from Local Service Board partners is disappointing and we hope it is not indicative of the level of their

engagement with review and evaluation generally. We expect that the enhanced statutory role for scrutiny as part of the Well-being and Future Generations Act will encourage a greater level of engagement in the scrutiny process from all partners.

The Public Services Board must ensure that it sets clear tasks with tangible outcomes and a robust monitoring plan. Going forward, regular progress reports should be made to the scrutiny panel, so that we can develop an active role in performance monitoring. We recognise that developing meaningful, robust outcomes is not an easy task therefore we would be prepared to assist and be consulted on the development of any performance monitoring framework.

We are concerned by the failure of the Local Service Board to agree pooled funding for activities.

Pooled funding is a key area which will demonstrate the commitment of partners to achieving the outcomes; therefore we consider that a lack of funding commitment shows a lack of commitment to the partnership working process. We were advised that work is on-going to try to address this issue, both in terms of small contributions to administrative costs and pooled funding to work on objectives. Going forward we recommend that addressing the issue of pooled funding should be a priority for the Public Services Board. Partners need have shared and clearly defined outcomes, objectives and strategies that enable them to sign up to a clear formal agreement, which sets out the activities to be delivered via the pool. Therefore it will be important for the Public Services Board to gain an understanding what partners feel are the barriers to this.

We believe that work needs to be done to develop a wide understanding of the Public Services Board's purpose and role.

Positive steps have been taken to improve the transparency and accountability of the Local Service Board by opening its meetings to the public and publishing its agendas and minutes on-line. However, we were unable to establish evidence to show how well individual organisations are cascading information about the work of the Local Service Board internally. The work of the new Public Services Board will be more effective if staff are aware of its aims, objectives and outcomes.

We believe that communications plan needs to be established for all partners of the Public Services Board to ensure that its work, objectives and outcomes are widely understood within all organisations. All partners need to report regularly on the efforts they are making to ensure this information is disseminated.

Recommendations

Following the discussions and evidence gathered by the Panel to date, we have made the following recommendations which we intend to assist the development of the Public Services Board. Some relate specifically to the Older People's Independence Priority and some relate to the development of the Public Services Board:

Older People's Independence Priority

- a) Ensure wider reporting of the Ageing Well Plan, including a report to Council, in order to highlight the successful partnership approach.
- b) Consult with the scrutiny panel as part of the review of the Ageing Well Plan (due July 2016).

Public Services Board

- c) The Public Services Board needs to clearly state how it will address the issue of pooled funding to tackle priorities.
- d) Clear arrangements need to be put in place to monitor the outcomes of the Public Services Board's work.
- e) Consult with the scrutiny panel about the format of future performance monitoring reports for the work of the Public Services Board and ensure that the panel receives regular performance monitoring reports.
- f) Develop a communications plan for all partners of the Public Services Board to ensure that its work, objectives and outcomes are widely understood within all organisations. Ensure that all partners report regularly on the efforts they are making to disseminate this information.

Next steps

Whilst we are now happy to conclude our work looking at the Older People's Independence priority, we plan to meet with Councillor Jane Harris (Cabinet Member for Adults & Vulnerable People). This is because her portfolio covers the issue of Older People's Independence and she also sits on the Local Service Board, therefore we feel our work would be incomplete if we did not take the opportunity to discuss our findings with her and to gather her views on the effectiveness of the Local Service Board.

Aside from this, going forward, our main focus will be to monitor the development of the Public Services Board and to develop the role of scrutiny within this. We also plan to address the issue of our own membership in order to ensure that we reflect the new make-up of the Public Services Board.

Your response

In your response we would appreciate your comments on any of the issues raised in this letter. We would be grateful however if you could specifically refer to the recommendations outlined above. As part of our work plan for 2016/17 we plan to review progress on the recommendations we have made.

Please could you provide your response by 21st April 2016.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mary Jones". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Councillor Mary Jones
Convener, Local Service Board Scrutiny Performance Panel
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