



Report of the Chair

Scrutiny Programme Committee – 15 December 2020

Scrutiny of Swansea Public Services Board

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| Purpose: | This report provides background and advice to the Committee in support of its scrutiny of the Public Services Board. |
| Content: | The report outlines the purpose of scrutiny and relevant advices, and includes the Public Services Board Annual Report 2019/20 as the main item for discussion with lead members of the Public Services Board and lead Council officer(s). |
| Councillors are being asked to: | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consider the information provided, ask questions, and make comments and recommendations as necessary. |
| Lead Councillor: | Councillor Rob Stewart (Leader / Joint Chair of Public Services Board) and Councillor Andrea Lewis (Leader's Representative / Joint Chair of Public Services Board) |
| Lead Officer: | Adam Hill, Deputy Chief Executive |
| Report Author: | Brij Madahar, Scrutiny Team Leader Tel: 01792 637257 E-mail: brij.madahar@swansea.gov.uk |
| Legal Officer: | Debbie Smith |
| Finance Officer: | Paul Cridland / Paul Roach |

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Swansea Public Services Board (PSB) is the overarching strategic partnership of public service providers in the area. It is a partnership of public service agencies who work together to improve local services. The four Statutory Members of the Board are Swansea Bay University Health Board, Natural Resources Wales, the Mid & West Wales Fire and Rescue Service, and the Council. The four Statutory Members are the formal decision makers who are responsible for the functioning and activities of the Board. As a statutory member both the Leader and the Chief Executive of the Council (or their representatives) are required to participate by law.

- 1.2 Every local council area in Wales is legally required to have a PSB whose purpose is to work collectively to improve local social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being. This requirement is set out in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. Each PSB is required to carry out an Assessment of Well-being to understand current levels of well-being and what matters most to local communities and to produce a Local Well-being Plan in order to improve well-being.
- 1.3 The PSB also involves ‘invited participants’, who will participate in the same way as a Statutory Member except they will not be involved in formal decision making. They are entitled to make representations to the PSB about the assessments of local well-being and local well-being plan, take part in Board meetings and provide other advice and assistance.

The participants who must be invited are:

- The Welsh Ministers
- The Chief Constable of South Wales Police
- The South Wales Police and Crime Commissioner
- Probation Service Representative
- Swansea Council of Voluntary Services

In addition, the PSB has chosen to invite a representative of Registered Social Landlords in the area.

However, the Board will not and cannot work in isolation. ‘Other Partners’ in the area have a significant contribution to make. These are bodies and organisations from the public, private and voluntary sectors.

- 1.4 Following a governance review in 2019, Statutory Members and Invited Participants now formally meet together in a ‘Joint Committee’ meeting bi-monthly. The Minutes of the last PSB Joint Committee meeting held on 15 Oct 2020 are **attached** for Committee awareness. The main work of the PSB is discharged via Objective Delivery Task and Finish Groups, each led by a Statutory member. Wider involvement of partners takes place through an informal ‘Partnership Forum meeting every six months with other organisations that have an interest in the well-being of the area e.g. Universities, business forum, environmental forum.
- 1.5 Scrutiny of the local Public Services Board (PSB) has a statutory basis - required by the Well-being of Future Generations Act - but with exact arrangements a matter of local choice. We are required to discharge our statutory role in relation to PSB scrutiny: receiving and acting as a statutory consultee for the PSB Well-being Assessment and Well-being Plan, and considering the PSB’s annual progress report.

- 1.6 The Local Well-being Plan and other information about the Public Services Board can be found online here: <https://www.swansea.gov.uk/psb>.

2. Scrutiny Arrangements

- 2.1 Although the Scrutiny Programme Committee is formally designated as the Council Committee for statutory scrutiny of the PSB, scrutiny was previously delegated to a multi-agency standalone Scrutiny Performance Panel. The Committee however agreed in September to carry out future scrutiny of the PSB via Committee Meetings instead of via Performance Panel.
- 2.2 The former Performance Panel was chaired by the chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee and involved the Committee vice-chair and all Performance Panel conveners. All of whom are involved in Committee meetings. The Panel, through local choice, also included in its membership co-opted non-executive partner representatives to reflect the 'core' PSB members. The Committee agreed to continue this arrangement for any Committee meetings where PSB scrutiny is taking place. Any such co-optees should not be acting in an executive capacity for any of the PSB partner agencies.
- 2.3 The Committee will need to discharge its statutory role in relation to PSB scrutiny and allocate sufficient meeting time accordingly. As well as being consulted upon on the PSB's Well-being Needs Assessment and Well-being Plan, it should each year receive the PSB Annual Report, and consider progress against agreed PSB Well-being Plan objectives in order to consider the effectiveness of the PSB and difference being made. It is envisaged that this will involve two or three Committee meetings per year.
- 2.4 The PSB is also accountable to Welsh Government Ministers and the Future Generations Commissioner, either of whom can refer the Well-being plan or the Well-being Assessment to scrutiny if they feel it is not adequate.

Scrutiny councillors have the power to:

- review or scrutinise the decisions made or actions taken by the PSB;
- review or scrutinise the PSB's governance arrangements;
- make reports or recommendations to the PSB regarding its functions or governance arrangements;
- consider matters relating to the PSB as the Welsh Ministers may refer to it and report to the Welsh Ministers accordingly; and
- carry out other functions in relation to the PSB that are imposed on it by the Act.

2.5 Scrutiny plays an important role in ensuring that partnership working is accountable to elected local councillors. The overarching objective of scrutiny to date has been to consider: What difference is Swansea Public Services Board making for citizens? Specific lines of questioning have focused on:

- The effectiveness of the Wellbeing Assessment
- The effectiveness of the Wellbeing Plan
- How well the PSB is meeting its well-being duties, and is considering the five ways of working and seven well-being goals
- The effectiveness of performance measurement arrangements
- The level of commitment from individual partners to the work of the PSB
- The effectiveness of the PSB in communicating its work, objectives and outcomes to its stakeholders
- The effectiveness of the PSB in addressing the issue of pooled funding to tackle priorities

2.6 It is important to note that the remit of PSB scrutiny includes only the activities of the PSB as a partnership and excludes scrutiny of individual partner organisations. The Committee can require any member of the PSB to give evidence, but only in respect of the exercise of joint functions conferred on them as a member of the PSB.

2.7 The Committee can routinely report its views and recommendations via Chair's letters to the Chair of Swansea Public Services Board. These letters, together with responses from the Chair of the PSB, will be reported back to the Committee. In addition, it is expected that these letters will be formally considered by Swansea Public Services Board at full meetings. A copy of most recent correspondence between the Performance Panel and Chair of the PSB, not already reported to the Committee, is **attached** for information. The last PSB scrutiny session took place in February 2020:

- Panel Meeting 3 Apr 2019 – Letter to/from Chair of PSB: discussion on Early Years Well-being Objective, PSB Governance and Q & A with Chair of PSB.
- Panel Meeting 4 Jul 2019 – Letter to Chair of PSB: discussion on new PSB Governance Structure and PSB Annual Report 2018/19.
- Panel Meeting 5 Feb 2020 – Letter to Chair of PSB: discussion on Early Years and Live Well, Age Well Well-being Objectives.

2.8 The Future Generations Commissioner, in their first Future Generations Report (published in May 2020) includes some findings about PSBs across Wales:

- PSBs are showing the power of collaboration, and many public bodies are going beyond their traditional functions to work with others. Collaboration now needs to move beyond involving the most obvious partners and from 'information sharing' towards pooling resources.
- I have seen promising improvements in the way PSBs are operating. Many have spent this first year focusing on building trust, relationships, and understanding each other's perspectives which is now beginning to bear fruit.
- The Act has provided public bodies and PSBs with a renewed focus on meaningful involvement. Some are finding new ways of involving people on an ongoing basis, but most are still only involving at a particular point in time.
- It is particularly encouraging to see how some PSBs are increasingly involving children and young people in their work, providing a voice to future generations.
- The Act is facilitating more integrated thinking, with many PSBs working together effectively to tackle issues and public bodies working beyond traditional organisational and geographical boundaries. But sometimes opportunities are being missed to achieve wider preventative benefits through integrating their objectives and collaborating with others.
- While PSBs are beginning to work together more effectively, their efforts to operate in a more transformational way are being hindered due to barriers such as funding, complex governance (especially relating to other boards) capacity and lack of support from Welsh Government.
- PSBs should consider PSB to consider whether they are operating in a transformational way (Believers and Achievers) or simply going through the motions and meeting process requirements.

The Future Generations Report 2020 is a statutory document that PSBs must take into account when setting or revising well-being plans.

The Future Generations Commissioner has also produced a 'Future Generations Framework for Scrutiny' which aims to support decision-making in the context of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. It is intended to help scrutiny councillors to ask the right questions, across all areas of scrutiny, in relation to decision-making and policy / service proposals and provide challenge in relation to whether the five ways of working and seven well-being goals have been considered and are being met / supported.

3. Public Services Board Annual Report 2019/20

3.1 It has been 2 years since Swansea Public Services Board published its Local Well-being Plan in May 2018. This Annual Report highlights the progress made, how the sustainable development principle's ways of working have been applied, and how we might better work towards well-being in the future. The Annual Report is **appended** for discussion.

3.2 The following have been invited to attend the Committee to present to the Committee, discuss the work and achievements of the PSB and answer questions:

- Cllr. Rob Stewart – Leader of the Council / Joint Chair of the PSB
- Cllr. Andrea Lewis – Leader's Representative / Joint Chair of the PSB
- Roger Thomas (Deputy Chief Fire Officer, Mid & West Wales Fire & Rescue Service) – Vice-Chair of the PSB
- Cllr. Clive Lloyd – former Chair of the PSB during 2019/20
- Adam Hill – Deputy Chief Executive, Swansea Council
- Leanne Ahearn – PSB Support Officer

4. Next Steps

4.1 Consideration of the PSB Annual Report provides a foundation from which to identify / discuss associated issues in relation to the effectiveness of the PSB. A further scrutiny session on the PSB could be arranged after six months that will enable the Committee to engage more widely with other PSB statutory members / key partners with regard to progress in the delivery of agreed Well-being Plan objectives.

5. Legal Implications

5.1 There are no legal implications from this report.

6. Financial Implications

6.1 There are no financial implications from this report.

Background Papers: None

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Minutes of Swansea Public Services Board Joint Committee – 15 October 2020

Appendix 2 - Letter correspondence between the PSB Scrutiny Performance Panel and Chair of the PSB

Appendix 3 – Covering Report and Swansea Public Services Board Annual Report 2019/20