



## Report of the Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee

Scrutiny Programme Committee – 17 October 2023

### Scrutiny of Swansea Public Services Board

<b>Purpose:</b>	This report provides background and advice to the Committee in support of its ongoing scrutiny of Swansea Public Services Board (PSB). The Committee is the designated Council body for scrutinising the PSB and its overall effectiveness, which is a statutory requirement set out in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. This meeting follows on from the last Scrutiny session on the PSB in February 2023.
<b>Content:</b>	<p>The Chair and Vice-Chair of the PSB, along with lead officer(s), will attend to present, address questions, and consider Committee views on the performance of the PSB. A report has been provided on progress since the last Scrutiny session.</p> <p>The previous Committee Scrutiny Letter reflecting on the PSB Scrutiny session in February is also included to support the discussion, and enable follow up on action taken by the PSB in response, where the Committee has made suggestions for improvement.</p>
<b>Councillors are being asked to:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Consider the report of the Chair of the PSB, ask questions, and give views.</li></ul>
<b>Lead PSB Councillor(s) / Members:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Councillor Rob Stewart (Leader of the Council / Lead Council representative on PSB)</li><li>• Councillor Andrea Lewis (Leader's Representative on PSB / Chair of PSB)</li><li>• Roger Thomas, Chief Fire Officer, Mid &amp; West Wales Fire &amp; Rescue Service (Vice-Chair of PSB)</li></ul>
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<b>Legal Officer:</b>	Debbie Smith
<b>Finance Officer:</b>	Amanda Thomas

## 1. Introduction

1.1 It is a statutory requirement for Councillors within Swansea (as well as across Wales) to hold their local Public Services Board accountable for its work and achievements to see whether it is making a difference for citizens. [Swansea Public Services Board](#) (PSB) is the overarching strategic partnership of public service providers in the area, who work together to improve local services. The Scrutiny Programme Committee is the designated Council Committee for Scrutiny of Swansea Public Services Board.

1.2 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 requires that a PSB is set up in every local authority area in Wales. There is a duty on specified public bodies to work through these Boards to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of their areas by contributing to the national well-being goals set out in the Act. PSBs are specifically required to:

- a) Undertake a Well-being Assessment for the area
- b) Set local Well-being Objectives as part of a Well-being Plan
- c) Take all reasonable steps to meet those objectives

1.3 Although the work of the PSB will involve a wide range of partner organisations from public, private and voluntary sectors, there are four statutory members who are the formal decision makers responsible for the functioning and activities of the Board. The four Statutory Members of the PSB are:

- Swansea Bay University Health Board
- Swansea Council
- Mid & West Wales Fire and Rescue Service
- Natural Resources Wales

The Statutory Members, along with Invited Participants, come together to meet every two months. There is also a PSB Partnership Group for more wider engagement with partner organisations.

1.4 Scrutiny plays an important role in ensuring that partnership working is accountable to elected local Councillors, and provides a formal platform to make recommendations and challenge improvement of the PSB.

1.5 The overarching objective of Scrutiny, as agreed by the Committee, is to consider: What difference is Swansea Public Services Board making for citizens? Specific lines of questioning have focused on:

- The effectiveness of the PSB Wellbeing Assessment
- The effectiveness of the PSB 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, including the public
  - The effectiveness of the PSB in addressing the issue of pooled funding to tackle priorities
- 1.6 The Committee will engage with PSB statutory members / key partners about progress in the delivery of agreed PSB Well-being Plan objectives, and effectiveness of the PSB generally. The delivery of Well-being Objectives is at the heart of what the PSB is trying to do to make a difference. Performance against these objectives will be a key measure of success.
- 1.7 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.
- 1.8 Whilst the Committee is responsible for looking at the overall work and effectiveness of the PSB, subject specific Scrutiny bodies can still scrutinise the PSB's work in relation to a specific issue, within their remit.

## **2. Previous Scrutiny Committee Session**

- 2.1 The Committee will schedule at least two PSB Scrutiny Sessions each municipal year. In the last session held in February 2023 the Committee was formally consulted on the Draft PSB Local Well-being Plan 2023-28, which was to be in place by May 2023, ahead of formal decision-making and Plan approval. It also followed up on issues arising from previous scrutiny sessions, and action taken. The Committee intended to follow up on the development of the Well-being Plan at the next PSB Scrutiny session when it expected to be able to see the associated action plan and how performance against the Plan will be measured.
- 2.2 The Committee Letter to the Chair of the PSB is **attached** to remind Committee Members and enable follow up on how views have been considered and action taken, or planned, by the PSB in response, where the Committee has made suggestions for improvement.

### 3. Public Services Board Progress Report

- 3.1 With the publication of a [new Well-being Plan](#) this year, we are informed that there is no PSB Annual Report this year, which the Committee would usually consider at this time. However, the meeting will provide opportunity for the Committee to hear from PSB leads about progress / developments over the last 8 months and enable follow up on discussion on the Local Well-being Plan.
- 3.2 The Committee is keen to see detail on the performance framework and measurable outcomes, i.e., action plans for each Well-being Objective alongside the identification of responsibilities, outputs, and performance arrangements, with clarity about leads and actions for individual partners, etc. The Committee will want to ask questions about this and any other developments. The key Scrutiny question, as always, is asking about the difference being made by the PSB and effectiveness.
- 3.3 The Chair of the PSB has provided a report on the development of the performance framework to help show the work being undertaken by the Board – see attached **Appendix 2**. The following PSB leads will attend in support of this report:
- Councillor Andrea Lewis – Chair of PSB
  - Roger Thomas, Chief Fire Officer, Mid & West Wales Fire & Rescue Service (Vice-Chair of PSB)
  - Councillor Rob Stewart (Leader of the Council / Lead Council representative on PSB)
  - Ness Young – Director of Corporate Services, Swansea Council
  - Richard Rowlands - Strategic Delivery & Performance Manager, Swansea Council
- 3.4 However, it is recognised that many more people play a part in the work, effective functioning, and success of the PSB in delivering against agreed wellbeing objectives, and it is important to gather different perspectives. As with previous sessions invitation has also been extended to other PSB Members / Leads (both strategic and operational) as optional attendees, who may wish to attend if available and contribute to the discussion, to reflect experiences and help the Committee to understand what is going on.
- 3.5 The Committee will reflect on the session with a letter to the Chair of the PSB outlining views and any suggested action / recommendations, etc.

#### **4. PSB Meetings**

4.1 The Minutes of meetings of the PSB held since the last Scrutiny session in February 2023 are **attached** for Committee awareness:

- 9 February
- 27 April
- 13 July (draft)

4.2 The next PSB meeting is scheduled to take place on 12 October 2023.

#### **5. Legal Implications**

5.1 There are no legal implications from this covering report.

#### **6. Financial Implications**

6.1 There are no financial implications from this covering report.

**Background Papers:** None

#### **Appendices:**

Appendix 1 – Letter correspondence between the PSB Scrutiny Performance Panel and Chair of the PSB: February 2023 Committee meeting

Appendix 2 – Report of the Chair of Swansea PSB – October 2023

Appendix 3 – Minutes of Swansea Public Services Board Joint Committee:  
A) 9 February meeting & B) 27 April meeting & C) 13 July meeting (draft)