

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Public Service Board Select Committee held
at County Hall, The Rhadyr, Usk, NP15 1GA on Monday, 22nd January, 2018 at 10.00 am

PRESENT: County Councillors: D. Batrouni, M. Feakins, M. Groucutt, J. Pratt and
F. Taylor

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Sharran Lloyd	LSB Development Manager
Matthew Gatehouse	Head of Policy and Governance
Hazel Clatworthy	Sustainability Community Officer
Sian Schofield	Management Information Officer
Rhian Cook	Engagement and Communication Officer
Paula Harris	Scrutiny Officer

ALSO PRESENT:

Sophie Howe	Future Generations Commissioner for Wales
Chris Margetts	Fire Service (seconded to FGC Office)

1. To elect a Chair

County Councillor J. Pratt was elected as Chair.

2. Apologies for absence

County Councillor J. Treharne and P. Pavia.

3. Declarations of Interest

None

4. Public Open Forum

None.

5. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 18th October 2017

The minutes were approved and signed by the Chair.

6. Discussion with Future Generations Commissioner Sophie Howe

We were joined by Sophie Howe, Future Generations Commissioner for Wales who outlined the five sustainable development principles comprised within the legislation.

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A Member spoke of the large amount of work that Monmouthshire has done on this legislation and the commitment shown at Town and Community Council level. The alignment and integration of services was highlighted, although it was pointed out there is still some confusion on where the Public Service Board sits at a County Council level.

In regard to renewables, it was pointed out that we charge such high levels of business rates on hydro schemes that they become non-viable.

The Brecon Beacons National Park is currently involved with Powys PSB, with fifteen percent of our population live in that park, however their legislative purpose does not include the word economic, even though we are looking for an economic, sustainable future. We need to give the national park the tools to deliver more for our residents.

The issue of pollution was raised, with the onus on Welsh Government to assist Monmouthshire alleviate pollution, as village green and children's play areas next to dual carriageways does not reflect with the wellbeing of future generations commitments.

It was asked how Monmouthshire is shaping up in terms of its plans and how we could address pockets of the population who are particularly deprived.

A Member of the Committee spoke of hearing all of this before and that prevention has been around for decades, leaving them uninspired.

It was asked how best to hold Public Service Boards to account in a measurable way.

In terms of linking into governance structures it was asked how best the City Deal would deliver and how it would integrate with Public Service Boards.

It was asked if the level of detail provided by Monmouthshire was comparable to other Public Service Boards.

In respect of the M4, a Member raised the point that Welsh Government felt that the response from the Future Generations Commissioners Office did not reflect sustainable development.

A Member asked what marketing and promotion had been done to promote the Wellbeing Act as it was felt that residents of Monmouthshire were not aware of the work being done.

Members were concerned by the small budget given to the Commissioner and felt that such an important piece of work deserved more commitment from Welsh Government.

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7. Draft Well-being Plan

Context:

To provide an opportunity to scrutinise the draft Well-being Plan prior to its publication and ensure that it identifies appropriate steps to address the challenges and opportunities raised in the Well-being Assessment.

Key Issues:

Monmouthshire is facing some pretty big challenges, demographic changes, climate change and adapting to the potential of new technology. Our current way of delivering public services will need to change if we are to address these issues head-on and maximise wellbeing for current and future generations.

The Well-being of Future Generations Act aims to ensure that public bodies think more about the long term, work better with people and communities and each other, look to prevent problems and take a more joined-up approach. Each PSB must prepare and publish a local well-being plan setting out its local objectives and the steps it proposes to take to meet them. This needs to be published no later than one year after the last council election.

The plan must describe how the Board will improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of the county by setting local objectives which maximise its contribution to the seven national the well-being goals. There are two elements to the plan, objectives and the steps to meet those objectives.

The PSB adopted four draft well-being objectives at its meeting in 25th July following scrutiny by this committee. These are based on the well-being assessment. The draft objectives were then subject to a fourteen week statutory consultation period with the Future Generations Commissioner and a well-being plan developed to put in place the steps necessary to deliver the objectives. The process used to move from the Well-being Assessment to Well-being Plan was scrutinised by this committee in October 2017 and the draft plan was subsequently endorsed by the PSB prior to a statutory 12 week consultation period which will end on 8th February.

The complex nature of the challenges raised in the well-being assessment means that there are not off-the-shelf or ready-made solutions that can be applied. If these challenges could be addressed easily then they would probably not have arisen in the assessment. The PSB is here to address these complex issues and to convene the experts around the issues that cannot be solved by a single public body acting in isolation. Many of the steps will be about exploration and identifying what works. Consequently the document does not contain a detailed action plan. This will be developed alongside the Well-being Plan but will not form part of it.

This is the first opportunity the committee has had to consider the draft plan. Any recommendations will be used to refine the final document alongside feedback received

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during the consultation phase. Officers from Monmouthshire County Council and other partners continue to work on the process of refining the steps.

A timetable for the remainder of the process is shown below. This committee will have the opportunity to consider the final plan prior to publication. Given the proximity of the next PSB Select Committee to the publication date is expected that comments about the report are raised at the January meeting to ensure they can be addressed prior to publication.

4.7 Members of the public continue to have the opportunity to get involved and shape the plan up until the end of the consultation period. This can be viewed at www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/our-monmouthshire on social media using the hashtag #OurMonmouthshire. Ideas can also be shared on Made Open using the link <http://www.monmouthshire.madeopen.co.uk/issues/835>.

Member Scrutiny:

Members felt reassured that the Commissioner had felt we were in the top quartile in respect to Monmouthshire's PSB and praised officers for their work.

In regard to a workshop recently held a member expressed that not all key players were on board.

It was asked in regard to challenges and opportunities, what were the timeframes for short, medium and long term projects.

Reassurance was sought in regard to obtaining real solutions in regard to tackling the causes of perpetual generational problems in families.

Time banking was felt to be positive but concerns were raised that it would not be accessible for all.

A Member voiced frustration in respect to the lack of capability, capacity and will in our public services to enact.

It was asked why there is not a Gwent wide PSB.

Members felt that highlighting five issues and providing solution would build momentum.

A change of culture and mind-set is needed and we have to have clear ways of measuring our effectiveness.

Committee's Conclusion:

Members scrutinised the draft plan to ensure it was it is compliant with the statutory guidance on the collective role of Public Service Boards and that the steps identified are appropriate response to the challenges and opportunities identified in the Well-being Assessment.

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Members commented on the extent to which the plan will give a clear and coherent approach to unify public services and other stakeholders around the agreed purpose of building sustainable and resilient communities.

8. Well-Being Engagement and Measuring well-being at a Community Level

The Committee received a presentation regarding the Well-being Plan and Happiness pulse engagement.

Members welcomed the engagement work but feared that the resources were not in place to implement change.

9. To consider the Select Committee's forward work programme

The work plan was noted, Members were concerned regarding the lack of items for future scrutiny.

10. To note the date and time of the next meeting as the 21st March 2018

The meeting ended at 12.28pm