# Monmouthshire Select Committee Minutes

**Meeting of Public Services Select Committee held at County Hall, Usk with Remote Attendance on Monday, 5th July, 2021 at 10.00 am**

| Councillors Present | Officers in Attendance |
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| County Councillor J.Treharne (Chairman)<br><br>County Councillors: R.Roden, T.Thomas, and S. Woodhouse | Sharran Lloyd, LSB Development Manager<br>Richard Jones, Performance Manager<br>Hazel Ilett, Scrutiny Manager |

**APOLOGIES:** County Councillors D. Batrouni, P. Jordan and S. Howarth

1. **To elect a Chair.**

   Councillor Jamie Treharne was nominated by Councillor Roden and seconded by Councillor Woodhouse.

2. **Declarations of Interest.**

   There were no declarations of interest.

3. **Public Open Forum.**

   No members of the public were present.

4. **Regional Collaboration: Gwent Public Services Board**

   Richard Jones and Sharran Lloyd presented the report and answered the members' questions.

   **Challenge:**

   *Will the workload for officers increase? How will the work be distributed?*

   The current programme board has been in place for a long time. It was structured at the same time as the Public Services board, mirroring our local Monmouthshire Public Services board. Representatives at a senior level who have direct control over their service areas can direct and steer the delivery that needs to happen, and how they can best resource delivery against our Wellbeing Plan priorities. We don't anticipate that workload changing dramatically because the Wellbeing Plan will stay current in Monmouthshire for the remaining two years of that plan. The programme board will retain strategic oversight of that delivery.

   Regionalisation, and 5 boards potentially duplicating work, is a fair point to raise, but the programme board for us will retain 'localism' as part of this delivery and be the voice to the regional PSB where we have common priorities across the region. Where we have, for example, mental health or climate change that we know are common priorities across Gwent, under a

regional PSB we anticipate that they will have more ability to direct the work regionally. Our programme board will then make sense of how that feeds down locally, especially as it pertains to Monmouthshire's particular circumstances.

*Until it starts, will we have an answer to the question of regionalism vs. localism?*

We already see some of the tensions, in terms of local and regional delivery, which is partly why the remit of this Select committee was changed – because we wanted to know how effective regionalised agendas were in delivering on behalf of Monmouthshire. The learning from that will help to inform how we need to structure the Regional Public Services Board, regarding its performance management and accountability, and governance framework. We are looking at where public service boards have absolute responsibility for delivery, and where/why things should sit with the PSB going forward. We will have the correct performance management framework, governance and accountability structures in place to ensure that we are delivering effectively at a local level through the regional arrangements; the partnership landscape in appendix 4 illustrates how we will deliver outcomes for citizens in Monmouthshire. It could be argued that there is currently no governance structure overseeing the effectiveness of local delivery. The report also mentions scrutiny arrangements, which are being developed; we feel there is still the need to retain local and regional scrutiny to strengthen this approach.

*Will we get additional benefits to ensure that we get good value from this kind of system?*

This hasn't required additional resources so far: we are servicing it through current structures and through cooperation with Gwent partners. At this time, we don't believe that additional resources will be required. At the moment, officers are working collaboratively across Gwent. It lends itself to having officers who understand the local picture developing the regional approach.

*The report says that each local authority will take a 2-year stint of overseeing the whole board – will that entail a single annual report for the regional body? Who takes the lead on the regional annual wellbeing report, or will it be a collaboration?*

While the local wellbeing plan remains in place, we anticipate that Monmouthshire scrutiny will continue to receive an annual report from a local perspective. For the performance and governance arrangements just described, the regional PSB might have a role in formally signing off that report. But, as will be shown in the next agenda item, the content and updates for that are driven by a range of step leads from different partners sitting on the public services board. For the regional public service board, there is detail still to iron out in the discussions about governance arrangements, but we would perhaps expect that whoever takes that administrative oversight will have a key role to play in the annual report, though everyone who is a partner of the public service board has a responsibility to contribute to and update the performance of the areas on which they lead. This is unlikely to change.

*The kind of relationships between organisations is different from those within an organisation. How are the relationships across the different counties?*

We have been fortunate in Gwent to have been working with our partners through the GSWAG arrangement (Gwent Strategic Wellbeing Assessment Group) for the last 5 years – that is local authority partners and public service board partners, with the addition of Data Cymru, Future Generations Commissioner's office, and Welsh Government. We have therefore developed relationships over a long period, working well in this area with our colleagues. There is trust and collaboration, so we can have awkward conversations, and sometimes compromise is required.

There is commonality and shared purpose. As part of the regional approach to developing the PSB we have divided the work strands amongst us – so the workload is being shared across the region.

*Has there been adequate training in this area, or do you require any?*

Through the process we are learning from other colleagues, with the collaborative arrangement allowing the five areas to share knowledge.

**Chair's summary:**

We've had a helpful discussion on the regionalisation of the Public Services Boards of Gwent. Key advantages highlighted this morning are a strengthened strategic board whilst retaining a strong local voice to enable us to respond to our communities. It should offer us a stronger oversight of some of the regional work such as domestic abuse and should enable us to have greater focus on common regional issues such as climate change and obesity. We've also talked about how plans should be more cohesive across the region and governance should be strengthened. The Select Committee gave its support to the original proposal to merge the PSB's, so we are content that regional arrangements are now being put in place. We are pleased that there is recognition of the need to ensure that we can scrutinise local delivery to ensure outcomes are provided for Monmouthshire citizens. Thank you to officers for all the work that must be involved in merging the boards and we will see what transpires in terms of the future scrutiny arrangements.

## 5. Public Service Board Well-being Plan Annual Report

Richard Jones and Sharran Lloyd presented the report and answered the members' questions.

**Challenge:**

*Regarding statistics, there is a comparison from p37 onwards with other authorities and national indicators – why do they change throughout the document?*

We thought it was useful not to just compare Monmouthshire's performance with Wales, but also with comparable authorities. Those are chosen by looking at the particular indicator – which aspect of wellbeing – then using a statistical tool based on different variables (e.g., socio-economic, demographic, geography, etc.) to look at similar authorities. Depending on which indicator it is, we choose which area is most similar to Monmouthshire, statistically. So, the comparison authority will vary between indicators because we use slightly different variables, depending on the indicator. These are national indicators looking at how each area is progressing towards the national wellbeing goals – they are not necessarily, in themselves, a performance indicator of any one individual public body or public service board. Nonetheless, the public service board uses them to look at how they are progressing against those broader wellbeing goals.

*What has the effect been of Covid on Monmouthshire's performance?*

Due to a delay in reporting, several indicators will cover periods prior to the pandemic. As more information becomes available, and now there is a lot of data coming through about how the pandemic has affected wellbeing, we will give those areas further consideration. The process discussed in the previous item concerning the wellbeing assessment will be key to that: we will gather data about and views from Monmouthshire residents about how the pandemic has

affected their wellbeing, and what might affect it in the future. PSB partner organisations will provide a vital range of evidence to inform the process.

*Would it ever be possible to have a synthetic county, in data terms, to compare more accurately with the other counties by extracting the same data from them?*

We can try to utilise data in the most effective way possible to help us to understand wellbeing, using the range of data at as low a geography as possible to do that. Through the Wellbeing assessment process and the Public Service Board working both regionally and locally, we will be able to build up our knowledge based on the statistical assessment and qualitative data. We can continue to make progress through the various mechanisms.

*What is the Iceberg model referred to on p10?*

It is linked to the CAMHS transformation model under the RPB, looking at how we address the mental health and wellbeing and emotional resilience of children and young people. There are several strands of work under that model. Some of that concerns how we push community psychology into the community to understand the behaviour of children and young people, linking very strongly with adverse childhood experiences, keeping children and families well in a community, and that we have intervention at different stages of the inverse pyramid – pushing more resources out of specialist treatment and into the broader community.

*How long does it take to write a report like this, and when do you start gathering the information?*

It's a collaborative effort: each of the steps set out under the Public Service Board objectives has a Step Lead in place who is responsible for coordinating the delivery of that step but also in working with other partners. We report the progress and performance of that step during the year. The Community & Partnership team then supports those step leads throughout the year in delivery and coordinating updates in a consistent format to populate the annual report, as well as strengthen it where we can see alignment with work that is happening across the county. We also look at the broader parts e.g. national indicators. We also have team members responsible for particular facets working across the county, and members who work directly with town and community councils in this area, assisting them and providing support, and identifying what they would like to see represented in the annual report. Activity is throughout the year but ramps up once we get past the end of the financial year to bring the elements of the report together.

**Chair's summary:**

The committee has received the PSB's annual report and are quite impressed with the report. We understand that comparisons are drawn with statistically similar authorities, and we think that is helpful in terms of enabling us to see how we are progressing against the broader well-being goals at a national level. We recognise that having a wider evidence base will help with the development of the new well-being assessment and we also recognise that there has been so much change over the past 18 months, that the Covid pandemic will have a significant impact on well-being that will also need to be captured within the assessment. As a scrutiny committee, we will want to scrutinise this going forward. We would like to thank you for all your work in drawing the work of the PSB together into such a well written report and congratulate you on your hard work. The committee asks that you feed back our conclusions on the scrutiny of the annual report to the PSB.

In future, it would be very helpful if a glossary for acronyms were to be included in the report.

6. **To confirm the minutes of the previous meeting held on 19th November 2020.**

   The minutes were confirmed and signed as an accurate record. Moved by Councillor Roden and seconded by Councillor Treharne.

7. **To consider the Select Committee's forward work programme.**

   Due to the merger of PSBs, the forward work programme is very much in the developmental stage. Suggestions for topics to be emailed to Hazel Ilett.

8. **To note the date and time of the next meeting: To be confirmed.**

The meeting ended at **11.05 am**