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MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Public Service Board Select Committee held
at County Hall, The Rhadyr, Usk, NP15 1GA on Thursday, 16th February, 2017 at 10.00
am

PRESENT: County Councillor S. Jones (Chair)
County Councillors: P. Farley, P. Jones, J. Prosser and F. Taylor

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Hazel Clatworthy	Sustainability Community Officer
Matthew Gatehouse	Policy and Performance Manager
Hazel Ilett	Scrutiny Manager
Sharran Lloyd	LSB Development Manager
Nicola Perry	Senior Democracy Officer

APOLOGIES:

Councillors S. Howarth

1. To elect a Chair

County Councillor S. Jones was elected as Chair

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest made by Members.

3. Public Open Forum

There were no items for the public open forum.

4. To receive the minutes of the meeting held on 11th October 2016

The minutes of the Public Service Board Select Committee meeting held on 11th October 2016 were confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

We heard that, as discussed, the Well-being Commissioner had been invited but was unable to attend. It was hoped she would attend a future meeting.

Councillor Taylor reiterated the request that the Public Service Board provide a current list of actions.

5. Scrutiny of the Public Service Board's draft Well-being assessment ~ process undertaken, findings of the review and forward priorities

Context:

The Policy and Performance Manager presented a report to provide members with an opportunity to consider the draft well-being assessment ahead of its approval by the Public Service Board at the end of March.

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Key Issues:

1. The Well-being of Future Generations Act should 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. It sets out in law a definition of sustainable development.
2. The sustainable development principle incorporates five ways of working that we are required to take into account. These are: Looking to the long term so that we do not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their own needs; Taking an integrated approach so that public bodies look at all the well-being goals in deciding on their well-being objectives; Involving a diversity of the population in the decisions that affect them; Working with others in a collaborative way to find shared sustainable solutions; Understanding the root causes of issues to prevent them from occurring.
3. The production of a well-being assessment is a key part of identifying the priorities for the area. The assessment is evidence based and draws on a range of sources, in particular: data; the views of local people; information about future trends and academic research.
4. Public Service Boards should expect to be scrutinised on the process of how they agreed their priorities. To ensure objectivity and robustness of their decisions it is essential that the process involved the collection and analysis of good evidence to ensure that priorities accurately reflect the diversity and variety of issues in the area.
5. The statutory guidance states that a deeper examination of the information and data from sources like those in the diagram above will help the PSB prepare a more rigorous assessment. The PSB will have to look at the long term, consider what the evidence tells members about how to prevent problems from happening or getting worse, and involve other people with an interest in the well-being of the area. Collecting and analysing good evidence is integral to this process. Appendix one draws out some key points from the guidance and could be used to help the committee frame questions as it scrutinises the process of producing the assessment.
6. Members were e-mailed a link to the assessment in early February. The summary assessment is included with the agenda while an extended version can be found at www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/ourmonmouthshire.

Member Scrutiny:

During discussion following the presentation the following points were noted:

The Chair recognised the huge piece of engagement, thanked officers for the work undertaken, and commended the document presented in terms of the level of content.

Members sought reassurance that members of the board are fully participatory, rather than this being a Local Authority report and questioned the engagement of other partners. To reassure Members, the Policy and Performance Manager explained that a Gwent group had been formed to address issues, so the likes of Public Health Wales and Gwent Police are able to come together and share information and hold dialogue with the five PSB footprints collectively. Much of the engagement was held outside the formal PSB meeting, but with full engagement of the PSB partners.

County Councillor F. Taylor declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest pursuant under the Members' Code of Conduct as an Independent Board Member of ABUHB.

A Member referred to Chepstow and Lower Wye Cluster meetings and added that this work could be used to underpin some of the useful working arrangements, including Area Committees.

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A Member stated that an additional measure to include could be average public travel time to Accident and Emergency services, and minor injury services. We were advised, in response, that officers were limited in some cases as the data is produced as part of the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation.

A Member asked how long the questionnaire cards had been distributed, and how many people had provided generic answers. There was concern that people were not allowed enough time to provide detail. The Sustainability Community Officer explained that the cards were available from the beginning of the Monmouthshire Engagement and were used in various formats. Officers recognised learning opportunities through the process, and a thorough evaluation would be undertaken. Welsh Government are feeding back on the quality of the assessment.

A Member expressed the importance of innovation and innovative practices, and hoped to see this in the completed plan. In addition, a Member commented that there were some proven things we are already aware of which would also address some of the issues, for example, fluoridation of the water supply.

A Member highlighted a few concerns around the process:

- It was accepted that there were 1400 people spoken to over 80 events, but it was felt that the opportunity to develop those conversations would improve understanding.
- It was considered to be a compressed process when drawing conclusions as to whether we have identified the most important issues which would have the most impact on future work.
- It was stressed that we must accurately reflect the five local areas, and it was thought that the Severnside assessment was very Caldicot focussed. Magor with Undy is a significant settlement, and considered a second town in it's size but not facilities.
- It was thought public transportation in Severnside, given the population, was probably exceptionally poor.
- In terms of assets we have a high level of volunteering across the County, and the Member would be interested to see the links with participative democracy.

To respond officers recognised the points made and agreed that the summary did not do the report justice. Officers wanted to involve people, in particular PSB members to develop an end section to reflect issues as seen by all partners, other than just local authority officers. With regards to the cluster profiles there was an aim to strike a balance between readability and obtaining the depth and wealth of information but the point regarding Severnside was recognised. In terms of the analysis, we were informed that this is not a stand still document and were legally obliged to provide once every five years. MCC recognise the need to be driven by data and analysis, making the best use of intelligence we have.

The Sustainability Community Officer added that when drafting it was important to remember this was a well-being assessment, not a well-being plan. When talking about the conclusions being brief, this is a snap-shot of where we are at the present time, and recognising challenges and issues would be the next stage, as part of putting together the well-being plan.

A Member explained that he was part of a sub-committee for Abergavenny Town Council, developing a five year plan with Team Abergavenny, where extensive consultation had seen over 400 aspirational project ideas. He asked if officers had been engaged in the process to ensure the PSBs aspirations are filtered down to a local level. We heard that a meeting with members of the group had been held recently where comments and reflections had been taken on board. It was thought that the strength in this moving forward would be in the ability to

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engage with, and work with different community networks to ensure the approach is owned by the whole community.

A Member expressed the importance of representation of farmers and the farming community and asked if National Farmers Union and Royal Agricultural Benevolent Institution were engaged. We were advised that whole place officers had attended Raglan Market and spoke to 40 or 50 farmers, which had helped to inform of issues on the community side.

A Member of the Agri-Urban project for sustainability and the future of that industry, made officers aware that by June 2018 a plan would be put together to identify problems perceived in that sector, along with plans to rectify the problems. Assurance was given that engagement would continue as the project progressed.

A Member questioned the scale of ambition and reflected that in some areas GVA or educational attainment seemed high in Welsh terms but on a larger scale were average or low.

A Member referred to the first PSB Select Committee meeting where one concern surrounded capacity. In terms of MCC input, the impressive work was recognised but it was questioned how much officer time this was taking, and to what cost. It was stressed that this is a point the CEO should be aware of. In response The Policy and Performance Manager agreed that this had taken a substantial amount of time, and was the single biggest issue dealt with by the team over the last six months.

The Sustainability Community Officer explained that she had been invited to attend a training event at Ceredigion Council for Members and senior staff demonstrating the openness and sharing of information. With regards to extra responsibility, it was explained that rather than more work it was more a case of looking at what is being done, and doing it differently. She added that in terms of capacity it had proved a good team exercise, including officers from Communications and Whole Place. The partners had been involved but there was a need to limit the number of report writers.

Members stated there should be a suitable way to show where contributions have come from. A Member expressed that he could not sit in the Chamber in good conscience knowing that in order to improve the well-being of our community, the well-being of officers is jeopardised.

The Chair raised a question around the interface with Welsh Government and Commissioner, and queried their role in the process. The Policy and Performance Manager explained that WG have set out the legislation, and over the course of the process officers had met with civil servants for discussion which was considered incredibly helpful. It had also been a positive experience engaging with staff from the Commissioner's office. It was thought an interesting challenge will be the one facing the Auditor General, who will have to learn to work in new ways.

Recommendation:

Members are invited to scrutinise draft Well-being Assessment and the process that led to its development to ensure that the Public Service Board is making sufficient progress towards meeting its responsibilities under the Act.

Committee's Conclusion:

In summing up, the Chair congratulated officers, and wider team, on the work being undertaken, and recognised that the Committee had thoroughly scrutinised the report.

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We agreed that an invitation be issued to the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales to attend a future meeting, appreciating that this would not be appropriate for the next meeting due to timescales.

The Committee agreed that representatives from the PSB would be invited to the next meeting, to ensure ownership of the whole PSB on the plan.

We noted that a repeat request would be made for a list of actions from the PSB, to assist the Select Committee with scrutiny.

Members were encouraged to contact officers with comments prior to the next meeting.

6. To note the date and time of the next meeting

The Committee agreed that, as the report was to be presented to Full Council on 20th March 2017, the next meeting be moved to 14th March 2017 at 10.00am.

The meeting ended at 11.40 am

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