

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**Minutes of the meeting of Public Service Board Select Committee held
at County Hall, The Rhadyr, Usk, NP15 1GA on Tuesday, 11th October, 2016 at 10.00 am**

PRESENT: County Councillors: D. Batrouni, P. Farley, L. Guppy, S. Howarth,
P. Jones, S. Jones and F. Taylor

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Matthew Gatehouse	Policy and Performance Manager
Sharran Lloyd	LSB Development Manager
Paul Matthews	Chief Executive
Hazel Clatworthy	Sustainability Community Officer
Hazel Ilett	Scrutiny Manager
Paula Harris	Democratic Services Officer

1. To elect a Chair

County Councillor Penny Jones was elected as Chair.

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from County Councillor J. Prosser and A. Webb.

3. Declarations of Interest

None.

4. Public Open Forum

No members of the public were present.

5. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 28th June 2016

The minutes of the Public Service Board Select Committee meeting held on 28th June 2016 were confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair with one addition; County Councillors S. Jones and F. Taylor's apologies were not recorded.

6. Discussion with the Chair of the Public Service Board (Paul Matthews)

The Chair invited the Chief Executive Officer to take the committee through the bullet points on the agenda, taking into account the letter sent to the Chair of the Public Service Board. It was noted that the Public Service Board has only met a few times and is still a young entity from previous Local Service Board.

Key Issues:

- The powers afforded to scrutiny to hold the PSB to account
- The capacity of the Public Service Board to deliver the well-being Assessment.

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- Recommendations made by the Select Committee to the PSB on their governance arrangements.

Member Scrutiny:

During discussion following the Chief Executive Officer's overview the following points were noted:

It was asked if at future Public Service Board meetings to ensure attendance levels remain good, that members of the board appointed a designated deputy who appreciated the complexity of the work to allow for continuity and informed discussion.

It was felt important that action points from the Public Service Board meetings were carried forward to Select Committees and it was agreed that the Public Service Board needs to be focused on the business so that the Select Committee can be reassured that the expected disciplines will be in place.

We were told that Monmouthshire County Council were looking at commissioning some futures work. This would add validity to the Public Service Board to supplement the work already being done.

Public service reform was discussed and we were told that we should expect collaboration of a different, more systematic order. The Committee heard outlines of two different footprints for the region and whichever the outcome, the Minister expects to see more collaboration.

With reference to a comment made, a member asked for reassurance that the PSB will be a forceful and driven committee. In response we were told that the Chair was a fan of intent, but a bigger fan of evidence and as a new committee its purpose had not been proven, in time the Select Committee will be able to scrutinise the Public Service Board on evidence.

In answer to a member asking if the cluster we are developing with the five main towns was the right direction we were told that the perfect architecture did not exist.

It was commented how important engagement from the Future Generations Commissioner Sophie Howe was. The Chair told the committee that the Commissioner had been invited to this meeting but had declined. It was felt important that she was invited again.

A Member sought reassurance that the council had sufficient resourcing to support and service a Public Service Board. The Chief Executive Officer explained that whilst the council is leading on the organisation side, this is a typical pattern across Wales and commitment from each of the partners will be sought to implement the priorities. The Programme Board was felt to be strong and well attended by partners who take responsibility for delivering its work. The Chief Executive Officer acknowledged that the PSB is operating at the edge of capacity and whilst currently, it is felt to be capable of being able to deliver its responsibilities, this is an issue that will need to be closely watched as time progresses.

Member queried the difference is between the current Public Service Board and the Local Service Board. The Chief Executive Officer responded by saying that whilst the membership is fairly similar, the major difference is the progress that has been made with the Programme Board and the alignment of activity. Members were advised that the requirements of the Future Generations Act have led to the PSB becoming a more focussed entity, emerging priorities being small in number but significantly difficult issues requiring a multi-agency approach to address them. The Chief Executive Officer advised members that board would adopt a

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business focussed discipline and that the ideal membership would enable partners to be represented, but avoid the board becoming too large and unwieldy in terms of its efficiency.

Members expressed an interest in Future Generations work and heard that this is being undertaken by Monmouthshire County Council as part of the Future Monmouthshire work and it is hoped this will have some validity for the future direction of the board.

Members recognised that the Local Government Minister Mark Drayford's address on his expectations of collaboration on key services is likely to have implications for the future footprint of local government, with collaboration with neighbouring authorities and those in the south east Wales region, particularly the Cardiff Capital Region on issues such as economic development, housing and transport. The Chief Executive Officer acknowledged the advantages of co-terminosity, with a focus on health on social care. The possibility of a Gwent Public Service Board may need to be considered as the entity develops, members suggesting that if this were to be established, there would be a need to reflect the local identity.

In terms of the Chief Executive Officer's view of the role and value of scrutiny of the board, he urged the Committee to consider it satisfies itself that that the evidence base coming forward is robust enough to enable the PSB to set a small number of priorities to take forward.

Committee's Conclusion:

The Chair thanked the Chief Officer for the reassurance that the Public Service Board has the capacity to deliver the wellbeing assessment.

We are also reassured that the Public Service Board will take stock & consider where it intends to aim for in the future and MCC's capacity to resource it. Since resources are limited, greater integration should be actively encouraged.

We also noted the danger of fragmentation and felt that the Public Service Board should manage this by being at the centre of all the ongoing work.

It was felt a brief action list from the Public Service Board would help the Select Committee with scrutiny.

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7. Scrutiny of the community engagement activity being undertaken in preparation for the Well-being Assessment

Context:

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To provide members with an update on progress to date and planned activity to prepare the Well-being Assessment for publication in March 2017.

Key Issues:

1. The Well-being of Future Generations Act is a ground-breaking piece of legislation that 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 is made up of 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 Act highlights the importance of balancing short-term needs with the need to safeguard the ability to meet long term needs. It is expected that public bodies and public services boards will look at least 10 years ahead, although best practice would be to look 25 years ahead.
4. The production of a well-being assessment is a key part of identifying the priorities for the area. The assessment will be evidence based and draw on a range of sources, in particular: data; the views of local people; information about future trends and academic research.
5. The statutory guidance states that a deeper examination of the information and data from sources like these will help the PSB prepare a more rigorous product. They will have to look at the long term, consider what the evidence tells them 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.
6. The process of engaging people in the development of the well-being assessment is currently underway. A brief synopsis of the process is shown at appendix 2. To date we have received around 800 responses from members of the community. These have been drawn out from extensive public engagement grounded in some of the key data items that we would expect to form part of the well-being assessment. At this stage some of the most commonly raised issues are about the affordability of housing in the county, problems with public transport and the vibrancy of local retail centres, particularly in the south of the county
7. Engagement will continue through October into early November. The well-being assessment will be available for scrutiny when the committee meets in February 2017 before being presented to the PSB for a decision in March.

Member Scrutiny:

- The Committee were reminded that the well-being assessment is an analysis of well-being as opposed to a needs assessment and that it would also need to consider the assets and strengths within the county and that this has had an impact on the approach taken to gather evidence, officers being proactive in targeting high footfall areas.

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- Key emerging issues of significance included the need for affordable housing given that house prices are too high compared to earnings which are too low and the need for transportation infrastructure as well as suitable employment, particularly an issue for rural areas. There was a real sense of positivity emerging from the engagement in terms of assets, particularly the beautiful countryside, the sense of community and the agricultural opportunities in Monmouthshire.
- Officers reassured Members that they have focussed engagement activities in villages as well as larger towns and that significant effort has been invested in the community well-being assessment. The Committee heard that the Welsh Government has expressed an interest in Monmouthshire's approach to the assessment as well as its establishment of scrutiny arrangements. In November, the Council's Scrutiny Manager will attend an event with PSB officers to share Monmouthshire's scrutiny practice with those who may not yet have developed their scrutiny arrangements.
- Members stressed to the officers their valuable knowledge of their wards and how important that knowledge would prove to officers in suggesting local groups and clubs to engage in the process.
- It was felt that when all the results were collated that an all members seminar would prove useful for feedback.
- There were mixed feelings on the small MCC logo on the literature. Some Members felt that the logo was not prominent enough while others felt that the small logo removed the emphasis from the council which was felt would ensure members of the public gave more honest, less negative responses.
- Members asked that published results were 'jargon free' with easy to read graphics.
- Members asked for the 'Made Open' platform to be published wider, with public use encouraged.
- Questions were raised regarding how officers will weigh the evidence and prioritise the issues from the findings and were told that each emerging theme will be looked into more detail by bespoke groups of cross-agency specialists in each field. Members acknowledged that too much data can be difficult to make sense of and were reassured to hear that some funding had been made available from Welsh Government to analyse the data and organise it into themes in addition to extracting local level data to provide a Monmouthshire context. Officers concluded that the key findings need to be presented in an accessible and interesting way, such as via infographics, with references to data sources to substantiate the findings.

Committee's Conclusion:

In summing up the Chair congratulated the team on their hard work and recognised how much hard work is taking place going out, engaging with the public.

The Committee is confident that satisfactory progress has been made and now look forward to updates and the eventual results. The next meeting will be postponed to Mid-February to allow the results to be collated and the Commissioner would be invited to attend.

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The Chief Executive Officer was requested to discuss the Committee's recommendations and the need for an action list and designated deputy to attend with the PSB.

Members were urged to contact officers with details of any groups that they considered needed to be engaged with before the end of November.

An all member seminar would be organised to consider the emerging findings of the well-being assessment.

8. Terms of Reference for the PSB Select Committee

No debate was required on this item as the committee intends to work with the draft terms of reference.

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

Members discussed the Work Programme for the Public Service Board Select Committee. In doing so, the following points were noted:

The meeting on the 18th January 2017 will be postponed to end of February 2017.

10. To note the date and time of the next meeting:

The meeting on the 18th January 2016 will be postponed to allow the Committee to scrutinise the results of the Well Being Assessment with a date mid/end of February planned.

The meeting ended at 11.50 am