

SUBJECT: Happy Communities

MEETING: Public Service Board Select Committee

DATE: 18th October 2017

DIVISIONS/WARDS AFFECTED: All

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To provide members with an overview of the Happy Communities project and roll out plan for Monmouthshire.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act is about the process of improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, by taking action in accordance with the sustainable development principle aimed at achieving well-being goals.
- 2.2 One of the responsibilities the Act places on the Public Service Board is to prepare and publish a local Well-being Plan which will set out how public bodies will work together to improve well-being in Monmouthshire.
- 2.3 The July meeting of this committee received a brief overview of three projects being taken forward at a regional level. One of these is the Happy Communities project which will contribute to the plan by providing an insight into the conditions and experiences of well-being of residents of Monmouthshire.

3 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Members are invited to scrutinise the proposed Happy Communities project and the suitability of using the tools in measuring well-being in Monmouthshire.

4 KEY ISSUES

- 4.1 The five Public Service Boards within the Gwent region have jointly agreed to utilise the Happy Communities tools in order to better measure, understand and improve the well-being of their populations. Currently measuring the local conditions for well-being or the experienced well-being of their local populations is largely restricted to data obtained from the 2011 census which lacks the details of well-being, timeliness and the local granularity needed to really inform decision making.
- 4.2 In using the same tools across Gwent PSBs it will be possible to compare well-being across the region and against other parts of the UK. The frameworks and tools are scalable and can therefore be used to inform decision making at a community, ward, neighbourhood or whole authority scale. More details on the tools is included in appendix 1.

- 4.3 Happy Communities provides two tools, the Happy Communities Index which measures the local conditions for community well-being and the Happiness Pulse which is an adaptable and scalable measure of personal well-being.
- 4.4 The *Happy Communities Index* draws on a number of indicators from various sources to understand and assess the local determinants of well-being and where to target interventions to create the conditions for people to thrive. The set of indicators available in Wales is currently being assessed for suitability for inclusion in the Index in Wales. As far as possible, the indicators are the same as, or equivalent to, English indicators so that comparisons can be drawn with areas in England.
- 4.5 The *Happiness Pulse* measures the detailed reality of personal well-being in communities and includes a resident survey which is expected to take place in January and February 2018.
- 4.6 Training for relevant officers will take place during November when more information on project details and rollout will be available.

5 REASONS

- 5.1 To ensure that we have a robust and comprehensive evidence base to help assess and evaluate well-being within Monmouthshire. Over time the tools will provide us with the ability to assess changes in well-being as a results of various interventions.

6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The initial funding for the programme has come from Welsh Government Grant funding which was made available to PSBs to work on collaborative projects to support the development of well-being plans. At this stage there no financial implications. However if the programme is to continue beyond the initial phase then the PSB will need to fund it on an annual basis. Costs for this have yet to be finalised.

7 EQUALITY, SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND CORPORATE PARENTING IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no specific implications identified at this stage.

7 AUTHOR

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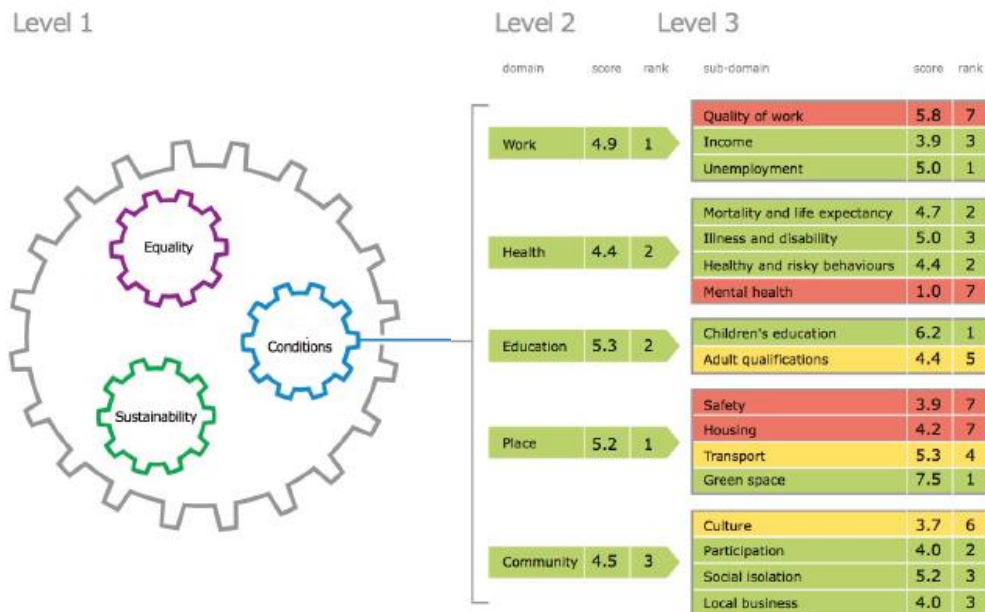
The Happy Communities Tools

The Happy Communities Index

The Happy Communities Index helps decision makers understand and assess the local determinants of sustainable and equitable well-being. It is a powerful progress report on the conditions for well-being at a local level which establishes the foundation for better decisions and use of resources for improving lives. It is both practical and accessible and can help local policymakers and leaders understand how well their area is doing in comparison to the other areas and regions and prioritise key policy areas, and communicate this to citizens and partners.

The framework consists of a validated set 60+ indicators that use existing, available and free to access data.

The Happy Communities Index is designed to show how well communities fairly and sustainably provide the conditions that create well-being. Overall scores and rankings are provided in three dimensions: Conditions, Equality and Sustainability (Level 1). Communities can ‘drill down’ into the Conditions dimension, for example, to see how well they are doing in five well-being domains – Work, Health, Education, Place and Community (Level 2). Each of these domains is further divided into sub-domains concerning key policy areas within each domain (Level 3).



The Happiness Pulse

The Happiness pulse measures the detailed reality of personal well-being in communities. It gets to the heart of how people feel and function in their lives, work and communities. It combines academic rigour, technology and community engagement in a highly interactive survey.

- At an **individual** level it engages, informs and enables each user to assess and improve their own lives, in simple, low-cost ways.
- At a **community** level, organisations and groups of every size and from every sector can use the pulse for mapping well-being strengths and needs, or as well-being measurement, social value and evaluation tool to demonstrate their impact on the well-being of citizens.
- At a **Local Authority** level, the pulse can create a detailed local picture of how people are feeling and functioning in their lives. All respondents input their postcode, so the resulting data can be analysed across varied geographical areas, time periods, different demographics, before and after different interventions or at an LA scale.

The **Happiness Pulse** framework aims to support a deep understanding of very local levels of well-being. It can be used at any scale from a few households through to entire local authority areas. The data can be fed back at an individual, community or area/region level allowing all stakeholders in local prosperity to better understand and act to develop it.

The model uses a set of core well-being measures, within 3 domains (Be, Do, Connect) which include how people think and feel about their lives, what they do that supports better lives, and how they connect with others. These include:

Life satisfaction	Worthwhile	Optimism
Usefulness	Peace of mind	Resilience
Competence	Autonomy	Being Active
Learning	Appreciation	Humour
Social Connection	Social participation	Volunteering
Close relationship	Belonging	

A fourth 'Community' module can be used to gather data about ways that users are interacting with place and its impact on their well-being:

