

# Public Document Pack

## MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**Minutes of the meeting of Public Service Board Select Committee held  
at on Tuesday, 26th March, 2019 at 10.00 am**

**PRESENT:** County Councillors: J.Pratt, J.Treharne and V. Smith

### **OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:**

Sharran Lloyd	LSB Development Manager
Matthew Gatehouse	Head of Policy and Governance
Hazel Clatworthy	Sustainability Policy Officer
Hazel Ilett	Scrutiny Manager
Wendy Barnard	Democratic Services Officer
Richard Jones	Performance Manager
Chris Rees	Natural Resources Wales

### **APOLOGIES:**

County Councillors D. Batrouni and M.Groucutt

#### **1. Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were made.

County Councillor J. Pratt was elected Chair for the meeting. County Councillor V. Smith was substituting for Councillor D. Blakebrough.

#### **2. Public Open Forum**

No members of the public were present.

#### **3. Minutes of the meeting held on 9th January 2019**

The minutes of the last meeting were confirmed and signed as a true record.

#### **4. Progressing the steps in Monmouthshire's Well-being Plan**

##### **Purpose:**

To provide the context for presentations that will be given to update the Select Committee on the delivery of key steps as part Monmouthshire's Well-being Plan. The Committee is invited to scrutinise the lead agency assigned to these steps. Each lead agency is a member of the Public Service Board.

##### **Key Issues:**

1. The Public Service Board has approved four well-being objectives that underpin a clear purpose of building sustainable and resilient communities. The ideas and activity that will contribute to the delivery of these is set out as 'steps' within the Well-being Plan, each one being led by a PSB partner.

2. It is important that the vision set against each of these steps displays the appropriate ambition and clarity to ensure that it is supported by all partners and benefits from collaborative and integrated approaches. Organisations are being asked to put resources and energy into

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these in the name of the Public Service Board and it is important to ensure that that they are focusing on the right things.

3. The work on the steps is at different stages of evolution. The Programme Board sits underneath the PSB and maintains an oversight of all activities and is meeting the day before this committee.

4. The PSB has prioritised a six steps for particular focus. They are:

- Adverse Childhood Experiences - led by Gwent Police
- The Mental Health of Children and Young People – led by Aneurin Bevan University Health Board
- Improve the resilience of ecosystems by working at a larger scale – led by Natural Resources Wales
- Promoting active citizenship – led by Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations
- Re-addressing the supply and mix of housing stock - led by Monmouthshire County Council, with involvement of registered social landlords
- Develop technology-led solutions for improving rural transport – led by Monmouthshire County Council.

5. Members will recall that these six steps have been selected due to the extent to which they integrate, inform and create the conditions to enable these pieces of work to progress, or because there will be outputs over the next six months that will require debate, review and evaluation before decision are taken on how best to move forward. Partners need to ensure that these projects are appropriately resourced to ensure real progress over a defined period and must be prepared to provide updates to the PSB Select Committee.

6. The Select Committee can require any statutory member of the board to give evidence, but only in respect of the exercise of joint functions conferred on the partner as a statutory member of the board in line with the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

7. At its meeting on the 9th January 2019 the Committee scrutinised progress against the Active Citizenship and Supply and mix of housing step. This meeting will receive presentations on rural transport and improving the resilience of ecosystems. There will be a brief update on Adverse Childhood Experiences, with the committee previously having scrutinised Gwent Police in autumn 2018. The final of the priority steps addressing mental health will be presented at the next meeting of the committee.

8. The Presentations to the Select Committee should reflect the challenge identified in the well-being assessment and provide some of the available evidence to demonstrate the rationale for selecting the issue. The Select Committee will gain a clearer understanding of how the steps being taken reinforce the PSB's vision and ambition for the future.

9. The Select Committee may wish to consider the extent to which they feel the partners have applied the following five ways of working in their leadership of the steps they are delivering, as follows:

- Long term
- Integrated
- Involvement
- Collaborative
- Prevention

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9. Members may also wish to make use of the newly published Future Generations Framework for Scrutiny. This resource suggests questions to ask and the answers that scrutineers may expect to hear if the Act has been properly considered. The framework can be downloaded from:

[https://futuregenerations.wales/resources\\_posts/future-generations-framework-for-scrutiny/](https://futuregenerations.wales/resources_posts/future-generations-framework-for-scrutiny/)

#### **Member Scrutiny:**

The Head of Policy and Governance presented the report noting that there were two presentations for consideration.

Following the presentations, questions were invited as follows:

#### **a) Presentation from Natural Resources Wales**

Chris Rees, Natural Resources Wales (NRW) provided a presentation about the sustainable management of natural resources referring to the Wellbeing of Future Generations and Natural Environment Acts. The slides were circulated to Committee Members.

- A Select Committee Member queried if NRW is liaising with Monmouthshire County Council on the local development plan. It was agreed such liaison is a key part of the Acts and is one of the benefits of the Public Service Board.
- A Member asked how NRW is engaging with the general public (not just those who are more active on environmental matters). It was responded that social media is important in communicating NRW's work. Regarding the development of area statements, residents in focus areas will be contacted and public meetings will be held.
- A Member observed that a recent climate ready meeting was poorly attended and asked how future events will be publicised. NRW is working with local partners to contact networks in the areas. It was accepted that better promotion of events in the towns would be useful. The Communities and Partnerships Manager emphasised the role of the Community Engagement Teams that are area based and support the Public Service Board lead officers to take priorities to the community and seek responses on e.g. litter and protecting the environment. It was commented that events must be better publicised for better attendance as it was felt that the public would currently have to specifically look for information.
- The Chair raised the need for information to be relevant to local communities and communicated in simple language to encourage involvement and ideas e.g. harnessing waterfall power.
- A Member explained that people in his ward are interested but don't want to be active, and the challenge is how to change that. It was suggested that when it is possible to demonstrate achievement from working together with the Public Services Board, it will be easier to disseminate information to wider communities for more involvement. This was taken away as an action point
- A Member asked about NRW plans to prevent catastrophes due to climate change. It was replied that a major priority of NRW is to stop flooding in high risk areas. Communities can work with other partners in mitigating surface water flooding and planting trees.

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- A Member asked about plans for the £2.2m earmarked for Gwent. A briefing was made available to committee members.
- The Chair referred to Brexit and the loss of EU funding, and asked if there will resources to deliver outcomes and queried the ability to produce more food. Considering Brexit, it was noted that partners have received EU funding e.g. for improving the habitat of fish species. It was suggested that the question is directed to the Public Service Board. It is a priority to understand shared Assets, such as land, and to consider alternative management measures.
- The Chair asked how much input NRW has on big road projects referring to a significant local problem with flooding. It was responded that this was a rare incident and a lot of work has been carried out to ensure, as far as possible, it won't happen again. NRW has a good relationship with contractors and they are aware of the consequences of not abiding to good environmental management.
- The Chair asked about house building on flood plains. It was confirmed that NRW is a statutory consultee. Early involvement is welcomed and more work is needed to understand collective benefits and ensure legislation is made to underpin all decisions.
- A Member asked about the relationship of NRW with the fire authority. It was explained that there is regular consultation on how NRW deploys on incidents. NRW is a category one responder under the Civil Contingencies Act. Training is also undertaken together to strengthen resilience.
- The Chair stated that area practitioners need to be more proactive in engaging with locally elected members; engagement with NRW is welcomed. It was queried if there are area representatives available to meet town and community councils, and to ensure the input of residents. Being mindful of limited resources, it was responded that input is available according to need. It was added that the area statement process will identify issues allowing better connection with communities.

#### **Committee Conclusion:**

The Chair, on behalf of the Committee, noted that NRW carries out vital work for areas of the county.

The presentation helped to contextualise the challenges faced by NRW and communities.

The need to publicise the work of NRW was emphasised and also the need for more engagement with local communities.

The representative of NRW and officers were thanked for their input to the meeting.

#### **b) Develop new technologies for improving rural transport**

The Head of Policy and Governance provided a presentation regarding rural transport. It was highlighted that the initiative was as a result of the wellbeing assessment where residents considered what matters to them and questioned their aspirations for their future and that of future generations. Wellbeing objectives were then set by the Public Services Board.

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#### Member scrutiny:

Following the presentation, questions were invited as follows:

- The Chair and Councillor Smith had visited the RiverSimple hydrogen powered car pilot in the bus station in Abergavenny, were very impressed and agreed that the idea should be promoted more adding that the installation should be made more attractive with information to encourage residents to think more about this option. It was agreed that the facility could be promoted more.
- In response to a question, it was confirmed that Grassroutes buses are driven by a mix of volunteer and paid drivers.
- A Member raised the poor condition of some toilets in Monmouthshire and referred to more sustainable facilities available in the market that e.g. conserve water and electricity.
- The availability of electric charging points was raised. A recently completed project as part of the Rural Development Plane (RDP) installed 20 electrical charging points in tourist locations, such as hotels, caravan sites; these were fitted at no cost to the business in return for advertising. A hotel has reported increased business due to the availability of charging points. A report on the success of the "Fully Charged" project will be compiled. It was confirmed that the first RiverSimple hydrogen car will be delivered very soon. It was also reported that there is a possibility that schools may work with Gwent Energy to provide artwork for the construction at the bus station. Information was provided that electric car owners generally check ZapMap before journeys to check the location of charging points.
- The Chair asked about taxis, and provided the example of ViaVan which is an on-demand transit system that takes multiple passengers heading in the same direction and books them into a shared vehicle. It was confirmed that the GovTech companies are looking at this sort of solution but also taking into account the rural aspect. The GovTech project competitive process ends this week. Other important dates for the project were provided.
- A Member asked the insurance status for persons providing lifts in their own car. It was thought that a private car driver is not insured to take money/reward to give someone a lift but individuals would have to check their own policies. It was requested that the information from Bridges car sharing project is provided to County Councillor Smith.
- A Member raised a query about City Deal and it was confirmed that there is significant investment in heavy and light rail. In Monmouthshire most communities will not be touched by this. If Monmouthshire County Council has a successful technology driven solution that connects rural and isolated communities, it could possibly be referred to the City Deal Cabinet for further development.

#### **Committee Conclusion:**

The Committee was encouraged with the direction of the GovTech scheme.

It was agreed that more effort must be made to promote environmentally friendly transport.

It was agreed that a Special scrutiny meeting would be required to look at all rural transport options.

#### **5. Update on Regional Well-being Work**

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#### Purpose:

To provide the committee with a brief update about work being undertaken at a Gwent regional level to build on well-being assessments and to provide an update on emerging proposals for 2019-20 funding from Welsh Government which is in place to help Public Service Boards build their strategic capacity and capability to support the delivery of well-being plans as well as consolidate work on the assessments and plans.

#### Key Issues:

1. Officers representing the five Public Service Boards in Gwent have been meeting in the Gwent Wide Strategic Well-being Assessment Group (GSWAG) to share learning and identify opportunities to collaborate on areas of common interest. This work initially focused on the development of the well-being assessment and has continued to strengthen the development and implementation of well-being plans with a particular focus on collaboration and regional working.
2. For each of the past two years the Welsh Government has made available circa £74K of funding for the five PSBs in the Gwent area to use collaboratively to build on work completed as part of the well-being assessments and help build towards the development of the well-being plan.
3. Past projects include:
  - i) Future Trends – The limitations of work on future trends was a common theme raised by the Future Generations Commissioner and Welsh Government when they provided feedback on Well-being Assessments. Initial work on identifying strategically important future trends and disruptors has now been built upon with a regional conference in November and a local workshop for Monmouthshire, held in Monmouth in December which developed this at a local level and which members of the committee were invited to attend.
  - ii) Climate Ready Gwent – This work is underway and aims to identify landscape scale opportunities for climate adaptation using an ecosystems approach and make recommendations for future strategic regional collaboration. The aim is to influence the required changes to policy and practice that will enable Monmouthshire and its neighbours in Gwent to take the necessary steps towards being climate ready for the future.
  - iii) Happy Communities – This provided two tools: the Happy Communities Index (now called Thriving Places Index in Wales) which measured the local conditions for community well-being and the Happiness Pulse which is a measure of personal well-being.
  - iv) Data and Dashboards – Remaining funding is being utilised to improve how Monmouthshire PSB can use a type of data that is published under an Open Government License to develop accessible and automated reporting of key data issues raised in the well-being assessment, that can be used by the community, the PSB and councillors.
4. A further allocation of funding has been made for 2019-20 (see appendix 1). Officers on the Gwent wide group are currently developing projects to utilise this funding for 2019-20 and this is a work in progress ahead of a submission at the end of March. A progress

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update will be given at the meeting. It is likely to include work on annual reporting and community risk registers.

#### **Member scrutiny:**

The Policy and Performance Manager provided an update on regional wellbeing work. Committee members were given the opportunity to ask questions.

- Regarding concerns about the small numbers of the public attending the Monmouth climate ready workshop, it was confirmed that the first workshop was widely advertised and attended by 40 members of the public. The second workshop was arranged for public bodies.

#### **Committee conclusion:**

The Officer was thanked the officer for the update and looked forward to receiving the annual report for scrutiny.

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

The forward work programme was noted.

It was agreed that it is helpful to have partner organisations in attendance.

#### **7. To note the date and time of the next meeting: TBC**

**The meeting ended at 12.26 pm**

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