

Chapter 6 - Local accountability

161. Local integrated planning will only be effective if the members of the public services board take joint responsibility themselves for securing improvement, with local democratic processes providing appropriate challenge and support. For this reason, the Act gives the Welsh Ministers relatively few powers and relies predominantly on the role of local government scrutiny to secure continuous improvement.

162. The Welsh Ministers will not approve local well-being plans. Local well-being plans are the plans of the public services board members, locally owned and subject to local scrutiny. The Welsh Ministers instead have a power to direct a board to review its local well-being plan; or to refer a plan to the relevant local government scrutiny committee if it is not considered sufficient; for example, due to an adverse report by the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales or a concern statutory duties are not being met.

163. In order to assure democratic accountability there is a requirement for a designated local government scrutiny committee of the relevant local authority to scrutinise the work of the public services board.

164. While it will continue to be entirely legitimate for a subject scrutiny committee (such as a children and young people's scrutiny committee) to scrutinise the public services board's work in relation to a specific issue, it is important that one committee takes an overview of the overall effectiveness of the board. This is the reason one committee must be designated to undertake this work.

165. Overview and scrutiny functions: Each Local Authority must ensure its overview and scrutiny committee has the power to:

- a) review or scrutinise the decisions made or actions taken by the public services board;
- b) review or scrutinise the board's governance arrangements;
- c) make reports or recommendations to the board regarding its functions or governance arrangements;
- d) consider matters relating to the board as the Welsh Ministers may refer to it and report to the Welsh Ministers accordingly; and
- e) carry out other functions in relation to the board that are imposed on it by the Act.

166. The Local Authority will do the above through the 'executive arrangements' it is required to make under Part 2 of the Local Government Act 2000. Executive arrangements are arrangements for the setting up and operation by a Local Authority of an executive, which has responsibility for certain functions of the authority.

167. The designated committee will be provided with evidence in the form of the draft assessment of local well-being and, the draft local well-being plan (both of which

they will be formally consulted on) and copies of the final versions of both. It will also be provided with annual reports.

168. In addition, the committee will be able to draw on the published advice provided to the public services board by the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales.

169. The committee can require any member of the board to give evidence, but only in respect of the exercise of joint functions conferred on them as a member of the board under this Act. This includes any person that has accepted an invitation to participate in the activity of the board.

170. The committee must send a copy of any report or recommendation it makes to the Welsh Ministers, the Commissioner and the Auditor General for Wales.