



PUBLIC SERVICES BOARD – DATE 25TH MARCH 2021

SUBJECT: GWENT PUBLIC SERVICES BOARD- LOCAL ASSESSMENT OF WELL-BEING AND 2023-2028 WELL-BEING PLAN

REPORT BY: KATHRYN PETERS- CORPORATE POLICY MANAGER, CCBC (PSB COORDINATOR)

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 For the Board to formally consider and decide upon the dissolution of the Caerphilly Public Services Board (Caerphilly PSB) and the creation of a Gwent Public Services Board (Gwent PSB) from September 2021. Such that the June 2021 meeting will be the last meeting of the Caerphilly PSB.
- 1.2 To agree that each individual statutory member (Caerphilly CBC, Natural Resources Wales, South Wales Fire and Rescue Service and Aneurin Bevan University Health Board) will take the decision through their own governance processes, if this is required. The decision of the Caerphilly PSB will be reported to Partnerships Scrutiny Committee on the 15th of July 2021.
- 1.3 To consider the development of a Gwent local assessment of well-being over the 12-month period to May 2022 and thereafter develop a Gwent Well-being Plan 2023-2028.
- 1.4 To discuss the local arrangements for the continued delivery of the Caerphilly We Want Well-being Plan 2018-2023 and thereafter what local partnership group will deliver the new Gwent Well-being Plan 2023-2028.
- 1.5 To notify the Caerphilly PSB of the intention to create a Regional Scrutiny arrangement to provide the statutory oversight to the Gwent PSB and the Gwent Well-being Plan 2023-2028.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Gwent 'G10' Leadership Group has been considering the development of a regional PSB for some time and the proposal has been discussed at several previous Caerphilly PSB meetings. The pandemic inevitably delayed discussions, however, on the 8th of January the G10 group confirmed their intention, as the statutory partners, to come together to form a Gwent PSB.
- 2.2 The Gwent Strategic Well-being Group of support officers have been tasked with establishing the governance arrangements by September 2021.

- 2.3 The time period coincides with the statutory development period for the next iteration of well-being planning and so this report updates on that, the proposed future scrutiny arrangements and makes suggestions for local delivery under the current well-being plan and the forthcoming regional well-being plan.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY AND LEGISLATION

- 3.1 The aim of the PSB is to maximise its contribution to the national well-being goals within the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015.
- 3.2 The Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 provides that two or more PSB's may merge if it would assist them in contributing to the achievement of the national well-being goals, providing the Local Health Board is a member of each board. The new Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 allows merged PSBs to demerge if required.

4. THE REPORT

4.1 Merging the 5 existing Public Services Boards

The long-standing proposal has been to merge the 5 existing PSB in the Gwent area. It might be worth noting here that 'Gwent' does not exist as an administrative area but is used to describe the area of the 5 local authorities: Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Monmouthshire, Newport and Torfaen. The area is coterminous with the boundary of the police force and the local health board and comprises 5 of the 10 local authorities covered by the South Wales Fire and Rescue Service. It is understood as a geographical region by Welsh Government and other partners and the proposal is to title the merged PSB the 'Gwent Public Services Board'.

The proposal is aimed at strengthening the governance and accountability of partnership working, aligning to the activity of the G10 group and other Gwent regional board structures, streamlining administrative functions, reducing the challenge of regional partners participating in several boards delivering broadly similar aims, and providing a clearer partnership landscape. Merging the existing PSBs will follow the recommendations of the Audit Wales review into the 'Effectiveness of Public Services Boards'. However, there needs to be a continued strong and concerted focus on communities and the involvement of local people with an interest in the well-being of the area. While administrative processes may be streamlined the creation of a two tier structure will require greater input at the delivery level.

The proposal to create a Gwent PSB will need to follow the legislation and the governance arrangements of the constituent members. Of these the local authorities are probably the most democratically accountable and there is a consensus among local authority Monitoring Officers that the decision to create a Gwent PSB and regional scrutiny will need to be agreed by Full Council with precursor reports to scrutiny committees and the respective Cabinets of the constituent local authorities. The intention is to reflect the decision of the Caerphilly PSB to Partnership Scrutiny Committee in July, thereafter Cabinet and Council to allow the Gwent PSB to form by Sept 21, the desired commencement date of the G10 Leadership Group. Caerphilly PSB statutory members will need to consider their own internal governance arrangement in relation to this timeline.

The Gwent Strategic Well-being Group (GSWAG) of senior policy staff and PSB coordinators have a long-standing collaborative working relationship and have been tasked by G10 with meeting the desired timeline. This work can be thematically summarised as:

- Establish the Gwent PSB Governance

- Deliver a Gwent Well-being Plan for 2023-2028- likely to include both regional and local projects
- Establish a regional scrutiny arrangement
- Work to develop local delivery arrangements that reflect the needs of smaller geographical areas than Gwent

The timeline defines that the June the 24th Caerphilly PSB will be its last meeting and the board will be dissolved in favour of a Gwent PSB meeting in September. However, for the local authority, governance timelines may mean that this will need to be confirmed at a later meeting of the Caerphilly Council and an update on the timeline will be provided to the next meeting of this board. The June meeting of the Caerphilly PSB will be asked to agree the Terms of Reference of the new Gwent PSB. The Gwent PSB will need to expand its membership from the current G10 group to include some partners currently invited to participate in well-being plans for example the Community Voluntary Councils, Public Health Wales, National Probation Service and Welsh Government. The work programme of G10, if it is to become the Gwent PSB, will need to focus on delivering the Gwent well-being plan.

The constituent partners of the PSBs vary across Gwent including Registered Social Landlords, Town and Community Councils and local Youth Forums. As these groups are sub-regional their involvement will need to be secured at county borough level

4.2 **Gwent Well-being Planning**

The next iteration of the well-being plan, now at a Gwent level, will need to be agreed by the new PSB by May 2023 (aligned as 12 months after the next local government election). The precursor work to understand the needs of the communities of Gwent, the 'local assessment of well-being', must be delivered by May 2022 and agreed by the Gwent PSB, the individual statutory partners separately and be developed with the involvement and advice of the Future Generations Commissioner and Welsh Government.

The timeline to deliver the local assessment of well-being and the next iteration of the well-being plan was shared at the last meeting of the Caerphilly PSB.

The GSWAG group has convened working groups to deliver the **data** and **engagement** aspects of the local assessment of well-being and the principles of these groups were agreed by G10 on the 2nd of March 2020. The two groups include the statutory partners, the community voluntary councils, representatives of the other Gwent boards (Regional Partnership Board, VAWDASV Board, Substance Misuse Board) and are working to deliver a consistent assessment process across the area, utilising common data analysis and engagement to allow the aggregation of assessment work to develop a Gwent level plan.

4.3 **Local and Regional**

All PSBs are required to assess and plan for local community areas and to involve local people and organisations who have an interest in the well-being of their areas. This will be at much smaller geographies than Gwent and the new PSB will need to determine how it will define these statutory 'community areas' and ensure that collaborative partnership working reflects the needs of those areas.

While many well-being partners cover larger areas than the boundaries of the constituent local authorities many more operate on much more local geographies, particularly at the community level and the Gwent Well-being Plan will need to encompass local projects, albeit these will contribute to an overarching set of Well-being Objectives for Gwent.

The current 'Caerphilly We Want' well-being plan does not end until 2023. The legislation defines that a merged PSB must, as soon as practicable, set a well-being plan for the area.

As this will likely be the new 2023-2028 well-being plan, recognising the well-being planning timeline described above, the existing delivery must continue.

The suggestion is that the Caerphilly Leads group continues to operate and that membership may need to expand to include the representative of the Town and Community Council sector. Similar very local PSB partners exist across the current Gwent PSBs and they will be having similar discussions on managing local and regional arrangements concurrently.

In the new iteration Gwent Well-being Plan it is reasonable to assume that some projects will be regional, much as some of the landscape level projects have been e.g. the Gwent electric vehicle work and the Climate Ready Gwent work, but that local projects will continue e.g. the Resilient Communities work in Lansbury Park. It will be a matter for the new Gwent PSB to decide how it wants to receive reports and monitor performance. However, the recommendation is that a local senior leads group will still need to exist.

Consulting with local partners on the development of the Gwent PSB has begun and some concerns have been communicated. Please see appended to this report a concern expressed by one of the local Community Councils that the PSB will wish to comment on.

4.4 **Scrutiny and Oversight**

The Well-being of Future Generations Act defines that a local authority elected member overview and scrutiny committee must be established to:

- Scrutinise PSB decisions
- Scrutinise PSB governance
- Make reports or recommendations to the PSB
- Consider the recommendations of Welsh Ministers
- Carry out any other function imposed on it by the Act

In order to move to a Gwent PSB a regional scrutiny arrangement will need to be in place soon after September 2021.

The GSWAG group of officers are working on this and will be reporting to PSBs, G10, the existing local Scrutinies, Cabinets and Councils in due course.

4.5 **Conclusion**

A significant amount of work needs to happen between now and September 2021 as set out above. The governance timelines are understood, members from partner organisations are engaged in the process and future reports will be made to elected members and the PSB as things develop.

5. **WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS**

- 5.1 As noted Section 47 of the Act allows two or more Boards to merge where it is considered that this will contribute to the national well-being goals; a more prosperous Wales, a resilient Wales, a healthier Wales, a more equal Wales, a Wales of cohesive communities, a Wales of vibrant culture and Welsh language, a globally responsible Wales.

6. IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 6.1 The new socio-economic duty brought into force by the commencement of Part 1 of the Equality Act 2010. The new duty applies to public body partners in Wales and so the Gwent PSB will need to develop assessments to assure itself that its actions are meeting the duty.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There will be financial implications in the creation of a Gwent PSB. The new PSB will require a web presence and digital identity for the continued transparency of its activity and to involve the communities of the Gwent area in its work. Officer time will need to be devoted over the next 9-12 months to ensure that the governance arrangements are meeting the requirements of the legislation and regional scrutiny will need to be created and that the local assessment of well-being is prepared regionally.
- 7.2 These are matters which will be considered by the G10 Leadership Group over the coming months. The statutory guidance to the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 expects that, aside from administrative support provided by a local authority, the resourcing of the board will be shared by all statutory partners equally.

8. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The Gwent Strategic Well-being Group will, along with policy and partnership capacity from all the statutory and invited PSB partners, be working on the tasks set out in the report.

9. CONSULTATIONS

- 9.1 Appendix 1 to this report is a concern expressed on behalf of the local Community and Town Council Caerphilly area Committee by the Clerk to Risca Town Council. The Caerphilly PSB will want to discuss this in considering the recommendations below.

The PSB Coordinator gave a verbal update to the Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee on the 18th of March. The committee raised some concerns about the speed of the decision being made, that a Gwent PSB will not reflect local well-being, and concerns around how a Gwent PSB will monitor local projects. A motion was carried at the meeting as in Appendix 2 below. The Caerphilly PSB will want to discuss this in considering the recommendations below

The existing Caerphilly PSB delivery groups are being kept abreast of the process with updates provided at meetings by the policy staff of the Council.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 That the PSB considers the following recommendations:
- Agree to dissolve the Caerphilly PSB after the June 21 meeting
 - Agree that, if necessary, the decision will be confirmed at the internal governance structures of the members
 - Note that the local assessment of well-being necessary to develop a Gwent Well-being Plan for 2023-2028 must pick up some momentum to meet the statutory timelines and agree to commit resources, in collaboration, to this task
 - Determine what local delivery arrangements need to continue post September 2021 both for the existing well-being plan and the new one
 - Consider and comment on the proposed regional scrutiny

12. STATUTORY POWER

- 12.1 Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 Section 47- Merging of Public Service Boards
Local Government and Elections Act 2021 Section 165- Merging and demerging of Public Service Boards.

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Consultees: Cllr Philippa Marsden, Chair of the Caerphilly PSB
Nick Wood, Vice Chair of the Caerphilly PSB
Christina Harrhy, Chief Executive Caerphilly CBC
Sue Richards, Interim Head of Transformation Caerphilly CBC

Appendices: Appendix 1 Letter from the local Community and Town Council Caerphilly area Committee
Appendix 2 Motion Carried at the Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee meeting 18.3.21

APPENDIX 1

At the Town and Community Councils' Liaison Committee held last Wednesday evening via a remote virtual platform, the Committee were updated on the latest discussions of the Public Services Board meeting of November 2020 by our nominated representative Cllr Judith Pritchard. The Committee were disappointed to hear the Caerphilly PSB members were continuing to listen to a 'G10 report' that suggests moving away from a focus on local well-being, local community concerns and local priorities to a 'pan Gwent' movement not only for Asset Management matters but now for other locally based matters as well.

Whilst Welsh Government continue to support the 22 Unitary Authorities in Wales the Committee wish for the status quo for the Caerphilly PSB to remain intact. The Committee is well aware that its Board's principal public service players of NHS, Fire and Police plus its other and voluntary groups are area wide based entities. The Committee are also fully aware of WG's wish for local well-being to remain as an important factor in Wales, as mentioned in its latest guidance to the PSB's.

It had taken the Caerphilly TCCLC a couple of years to be accepted onto the Caerphilly PSB and Cllr Judith Pritchard was elected as our representative on this board and she is doing a great job for us and our local communities. The Committee appreciates this collaborative working and wishes for this to continue with a valuable place on this Board. The Committee objects to the Caerphilly PSB's ongoing, suggested discussions to possibly take that local democracy away from its constituent communities.

Can you report the Committee's view to the next Caerphilly PSB meeting please.

APPENDIX 2

The Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee requests that the Caerphilly Public Services Board defer their decision on the creation of a Gwent Public Services Board and requests a detailed consultation and engagement exercise prior to any decision being taken forward. We have serious concerns if a decision goes ahead.