



VOLUNTARY SECTOR LIAISON COMMITTEE – 17TH JUNE 2021

SUBJECT: THE CREATION OF A GWENT PUBLIC SERVICES BOARD

**REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR EDUCATION AND
CORPORATE SERVICES**

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1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to highlight to members steps that have been taken to further the intention to create a Gwent Public Services Board (PSB) from September 2021. The proposed Gwent PSB will replace the existing 5 PSB's that operate within the boundaries of the local authorities in the Gwent region.
- 1.2 The report sets out the timeline and the forums that have, or will, receive reports and how views will be included, where possible. The local authority is one of four statutory members who take decisions collectively as part of the PSB. Public Services Boards are not local authority boards and hence the decision is one for the board to take collectively, albeit engaging with various stakeholders, including third sector partners. Similar discussions are taking, or have taken, place within the governance structures of the statutory members; the local authority, South Wales Fire and Rescue Service, Aneurin Bevan University Health Board, Natural Resources Wales.
- 1.3 The report also updates on progress towards a regional assessment of well-being to inform a Gwent regional well-being plan from 2023 and highlights how regional and local delivery and scrutiny will be encompassed within the proposed structures.
- 1.4 The report highlights that the Caerphilly PSB partners will be asked to continue their commitment to the current Third Sector Agreement.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 This report summarises the process being taken towards forming a Gwent Public Services Board and the internal governance route within Caerphilly CBC, including engagement with this forum and the Community Council Liaison Committee. It sets out how the membership of the Gwent PSB will form, and the Local Delivery Partnerships that will replace the current Caerphilly PSB. It also updates on plans for regional scrutiny arrangements.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 That Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee provide comments on the proposals as a stakeholder representative of the third sector, to inform their development.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 To allow the views of members to assist in the development of the Gwent PSB. In particular, the arrangements for the delivery of local priorities for well-being.

5. THE REPORT

- 5.1 Public Services Boards were created by the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 to bring together statutory and invited partners to assess local well-being and develop well-being plans for collaborative activity, in partnership, to improve the well-being of future generations. The Caerphilly PSB has been in existence since 2017 and the first well-being plan for the Caerphilly local authority area runs from 2018-2023.

- 5.2 In addition to the four statutory members there are a number of prescribed invited members. The constituent members of PSB's are:

STATUTORY

Local Authority
Local Fire and Rescue Authority
Local Health Board
Natural Resources Wales

PRESCRIBED INVITED MEMBERS

Local Police Force
Police and Crime Commissioner
Public Health Wales
Local Community Voluntary Council
Welsh Government
National Probation Service

In addition, the Caerphilly PSB has extended an invitation to a representative from Community Council Liaison Committee.

- 5.3 The five existing Gwent PSBs already collaborate on a number of regional projects, some of the higher profile ones have been a review of the entire public sector fleet to recommend options to convert to low emission vehicles, and the provision of electric vehicle charge points across the region. Most lately the members are collaborating on a review of building assets to see what public sector space can be shared across organisations. The regional policy officer capacity already works collaboratively on data projects and planning. There is significant work ongoing at the moment to complete a Gwent level 'local assessment of well-being' in readiness for the next iteration of the well-being plan 2023-2028, in line with the legislative requirements.
- 5.4 Some of the member organisations meet regularly on a regional basis at Chief Executive/Chief Officer/Chief Constable level with the Leaders of the respective Councils at a pre-existing discussion group, known as G10. This group will need to expand its membership to ensure that can fulfil all its responsibilities as the Gwent

PSB. The Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations will have a seat at the table and will become a member of the Gwent PSB from September this year.

- 5.5 A recent Audit Wales report into the Effectiveness of Public Services Boards (October 2019) made a number of recommendations. One of which was:

That Welsh Government enables PSBs to develop flexible models of working including: –

merging, reducing and integrating their work with other forums such as Regional Partnership Boards.

A Welsh Government and Welsh Local Government Association review of the strategic partnership landscape (July 2020) looked at simplifying the complexities for public bodies working together. A number of recommendations are relevant to this report:

Recommendation:- Welsh Government to write to Chairs of all partnerships to clarify and confirm that flexibilities exist to for partnerships to review their own arrangements and alignment as appropriate – in terms of policy and geography.

Recommendation:- All strategic partnerships in an area should seek to play an active role to ensure that they are aligned more closely so that there are fewer partnerships. The multi-purpose strategic partnerships (such as PSBs and RPBs) have a natural leadership role in initiating this.

- 5.6 Discussions around merging the 5 existing Gwent PSBs have taken place over an extended period. Merging would provide a simplified landscape, and closer alignment with boards that are already regional, notably the Regional Partnership Board, Safeguarding Boards, the Violence Against Women Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Board and the Gwent Substance Misuse Board, amongst others. These discussions were delayed due to the pandemic however the G10 group agreed in January this year to make progress towards the formation of a Gwent PSB from September 2021.
- 5.7 The Caerphilly Public Services Board voted at its meeting on the 25th March this year to dissolve as a body in favour of the Gwent PSB, with the last meeting of the Caerphilly PSB taking place on the 24th June 2021. One of the recommendations was to notify/confirm the decision at the governance structures of the constituent members. All other statutory members have confirmed that this will take place.
- 5.8 In respect of Caerphilly County Borough Council we are one among many members and while we could decide not to participate in a Gwent PSB, practically this would be extremely difficult as all other local authorities in Gwent, and the statutory and invited members, have signalled their intention to merge from September this year. However, to gather the views of various stakeholders on the delivery arrangements for the Gwent PSB, particularly ensuring that local well-being planning and delivery occurs in Caerphilly communities, a series of reports are being taken to democratic forums over the next few months:

Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee 17th June

Public Services Board 24th June (update report and views of stakeholders to date)

Partnerships Scrutiny Committee 15th July

Community Council Liaison Committee 21st July

Council 27th July

5.9 Local and Regional Planning and Delivery

The Gwent PSB will be created from the G10 group which will need to expand to include the statutory and invited members at 5.2 above. However, each of the current Gwent PSBs also have very local members who do not operate on a regional footprint and would therefore not have a role at the Gwent PSB. They are, nevertheless, important well-being delivery partners.

- 5.10 The forthcoming Gwent well-being plan is likely, depending on the data and assessment, to include regional and local priorities. The legislation defines that the Gwent PSB still needs to assess and plan at a 'Community Area' level. For Caerphilly county borough these are the five community planning areas:

Upper Rhymney Valley
Mid Valleys East
Mid Valleys West
Caerphilly Basin
Islwyn

It is fully expected that, for the Gwent well-being plan, there will be regional priorities of the type at 5.3 above and more local priorities that rely on partnership working with local delivery partners e.g. the current Caerphilly Cares project.

- 5.11 To support local delivery, and local contribution to regional priorities, the proposal is to form Local Delivery Partnerships for each local authority area. These will be made up of all of the constituent Gwent PSB member organisations, with sufficient seniority to take decisions and direct resources, to make sure that the current well-being plan 2018-2023 continues to be delivered, and, importantly, to contribute to the new Gwent well-being plan 2023-2028. It is at these Local Delivery Partnerships that the very local PSB members across Gwent will sit. For example, the Caerphilly Community Council representative. Appendix 1 is a schematic that shows the intention for Local Delivery Partnerships.
- 5.12 To ensure that the existing well-being plan, which runs up until 2023, is delivered, the current Caerphilly PSB member organisations will be asked to ensure that they continue to champion delivery until the 2018-2023 plan is complete. The Caerphilly PSB website will remain until May 2023 and all action plans and update reports will be lodged there allowing the public and other organisations to see how the existing plan is progressing.
- 5.13 The current Third Sector Agreement, which is a Welsh Government requirement for the local authority and local health board to work together with the third sector, was signed by all the Caerphilly PSB partners in the summer of 2019. It, like the current well-being plan, runs from 2018-2023. The next update report to the Caerphilly PSB at its final meeting on the 24th of June will ask all members to continue to commit to the third sector relationship until 2023. Thereafter, the suggestion would be that the Gwent PSB develops a new Third Sector Agreement to align with the new Gwent well-being plan for the period 2023-2028. This would be a matter for the new Gwent PSB to consider.

5.14 Regional Scrutiny

There is a requirement for a local authority scrutiny committee to take oversight of

the work of PSB's. At the moment this role is taken by Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee sitting as Partnership Scrutiny Committee and meeting bi-annually.

- 5.15 The proposals are to create a regional scrutiny committee and the mechanisms for this are currently being worked through by committee services officers in the 5 local authorities. The first formal role of the committee will be to scrutinise the regional local assessment of well-being at the start of 2022. However, it will most likely need to form in tandem with the Gwent PSB as one of the roles is to examine the decision-making processes and governance of PSBs, and there may be a requirement to do this before the local assessment of well-being is completed. Relevant reports will be taken for decision by the council as the regional scrutiny develops.

5.16 **Conclusion**

While the process to get to a Gwent PSB by September this year is complicated and difficult to work through across so many members organisations it is progressing with the views of stakeholders being taken into account at various forums and meetings between now and September 2021.

All Caerphilly PSB members have given their commitment to the proposed Local Delivery Partnerships and to ensuring that they allocate staff that have sufficient seniority to take forward any local work up until the end of the current well-being plan, and as part of the new Gwent well-being plan 2023-2028.

The next meeting of the PSB on the 24th of June will be asking members to commit their continued support to the Third Sector Agreement.

6. **ASSUMPTIONS**

- 6.1 Section 5.8 above shows that while democratic input is requested, and the views of stakeholders are important in defining how local delivery will work, in practice it assumes that the decision has to be made, given that all other partners are working towards a Gwent PSB. However, the Council is a democratic institution and its members could be so against the creation of the regional Gwent PSB that they raise insurmountable objections. If this were to occur it is very difficult to see how any alternative could work in that case, it would not be possible to form a Caerphilly PSB and a Gwent PSB at the same time.

7. **SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 7.1 The integrated impact assessment shows that the Gwent PSB will, through its statutory responsibilities, be required to contribute to the well-being goals for Wales and will need to abide by the sustainable development principle in its activities. The intention is to create Local Delivery Partnerships who will ensure that local actions and activity, particularly in community areas, will continue.

[Link to full Integrated Impact Assessment.](#)

8. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 There are no direct financial implications in relation to this report. Additional workload will be absorbed within existing capacity.

9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no personnel implications.

10. CONSULTATIONS

10.1 This report has been shared with the consultees listed below and all comments are encompassed within the report.

11. STATUTORY POWER

11.1 Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015
Local Government Act 1972
Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021

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Background Papers:

Wales Audit Office Review of Public Services Boards- October 2019:
[Hyperlink to final report](#)

Welsh Government and Welsh Local Government Association Review of Strategic Partnerships:
[Hyperlink to final report](#)

Appendix 1

Schematic Representation of Regional and Local Delivery Partnerships' relationship to the Gwent PSB

Gwent PSB Structure Diagram

