



## **PARTNERSHIPS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

### **MINUTES OF THE DIGITAL MEETING HELD VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON THURSDAY 27TH JANUARY 2022 AT 5.30 P.M.**

PRESENT:

Councillor G. Kirby - Chair  
Councillor B. Miles - Vice-Chair

Councillors:

M.A. Adams, C.J. Cuss, L. Harding, G. Johnston, C.P. Mann, R. Saralis, J. Taylor, L.G. Whittle

Together with:

K. Peters (Corporate Policy Manager) P. Cooke (Senior Policy Officer), S. Mutch (Early Years Manager), C. Forbes-Thompson (Scrutiny Manager), R. Barrett (Committee Services Officer), J. Thomas (Committee Services Officer)

P. Diamond and N. Harris (Gwent Regional Partnership Board)

Outside Body Representative: A. Hussey (South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority)

#### **RECORDING AND VOTING ARRANGEMENTS**

The Chair reminded those present that the meeting was being filmed and would be available following the meeting via the Council's website – [Click Here to View](#). It was noted that voting on decisions would take place via Microsoft Forms.

#### **1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Mrs E.M. Aldworth, Mrs C. Forehead, Mrs E. Forehead, S. Morgan, Mrs M.E. Sargent and G. Simmonds, together with L. Jones (Co-opted Member).

#### **2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest received at the commencement or during the course of the meeting.

### **3. MINUTES – 15TH JULY 2021**

It was moved and seconded that the minutes of the meeting held on 15th July 2021 be approved as a correct record and by way of Microsoft Forms (and in noting there were 8 for, 0 against and 2 abstentions) this was agreed by the majority present.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee held on 15th July 2021 (minute nos. 1 – 7) be approved as a correct record.

Councillors G. Johnston and R. Saralis confirmed that they had abstained from voting on the minutes as they had not been present at the last meeting.

### **4. PARTNERSHIPS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME**

Cath Forbes-Thompson (Scrutiny Manager) presented the report, which outlined details of the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme (FWP) for the period January 2022 to July 2022. Members were asked to consider the FWP and suggest any changes prior to publication on the Council's website.

The Scrutiny Committee noted the details of reports scheduled for forthcoming meetings and Officers sought approval for an additional report (Job Growth and Employability Support – Action Area 2) to be added to the Forward Work Programme for the meeting scheduled for 21st July 2022.

It was moved and seconded that subject to the inclusion of the aforementioned report, the report recommendation be approved. By way of Microsoft Forms (and in noting there were 10 for, 0 against and 0 abstentions) this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that subject to the inclusion of an additional report for the meeting on 21st July 2022 (Job Growth and Employability Support – Action Area 2b), the Forward Work Programme as appended to the meeting papers be published on the Council's website.

### **REPORTS OF OFFICERS**

Consideration was given to the following reports.

### **5. BEST START IN LIFE**

Sarah Mutch (Early Years Manager) delivered a Powerpoint presentation which outlined the progress to date and future development planned for the Early Years Integration Transformation Programme under Wellbeing Objective 1 (Best Start in Life).

The Scrutiny Committee were advised that the Early Years Integration Transformation Programme has undertaken a Whole Systems Approach to develop joined-up and responsive Early Years' services to ensure every child has the best start in life. The Programme places children at the centre of excellent, integrated services that put their needs first, regardless of traditional organisational and professional structures. The Programme is borough-wide and encompasses children from antenatal age to 7 years old.

The purpose and principles of the Early Years integration Transformation Programme have been agreed at the Gwent Early Years Steering Group which has membership from all five local authorities, Aneurin Bevan University Health Board and Public Health Wales. While

the Steering Group makes regional recommendations, the Gwent Public Service Board have overarching governance.

The Programme was initially piloted in the New Tredegar area and implemented a model which was developed using Vanguard Systems Thinking, which was based on family needs and supporting families to address their needs using consistent key workers in a core multiagency team. This Systems Thinking work also challenged commissioners to think differently on services commissioned within Early Years to improve integration and remove artificial funding boundaries within the scope of the project. This created a new jointly funded borough-wide early years model for early intervention support for families who need support from April 2021. The Programme also underpins the aims, principles and values of the Midwifery and Early Years system to work alongside all families to ensure their child has the best start in life, taking into account what matters to them, accessing support if and when needed, and to create a sustainable integrated model to meet families' needs at the right time in the right place by the right person.

Members were provided with an overview of the Caerphilly Early Years system, changing practices, current challenges (including workforce capacity, electronic sharing of regards, communication in teams and shared language, and Covid-19 impacts), data from the New Tredegar pilot and wider early intervention, next steps, and feedback from families on the Transformation Programme. It was noted that a new single point of contact and request for support aims to make the system simpler for families. There is ongoing work around the Early Years website to make it a useful tool for families, who can access the information as well as the support they need when they need it, and this is planned for launch in Spring 2022. The initial data from the pilot shows increased understanding of family needs, as well as the services to support families, and the feedback from families has been very positive. However, there continues to be a number of areas requiring development in order to continue the journey towards integration of the Early Years service teams by 2024.

The Scrutiny Committee expressed their thanks to Mrs Mutch for the insightful presentation and the breadth of the positive work that has been achieved by the Early Years Team.

A Member made reference to Section 2.4 and digital access to Early Years support, and asked how this can be achieved if a family do not have access to a computer. Mrs Mutch explained that the new Programme places an emphasis on being able to access digital support through smartphones to enable the support to be digitally inclusive as possible, and that the Early Years Service are able to offer solutions such as the loaning of tablets or Chromebooks to families in certain circumstances. It was also explained that the single point of contact that has been launched aims to streamline services, and will allow staff across the Early Years Team to work in a more flexible way whilst allowing the telephone number to be continually manned across the working day.

A Member asked if there had been any extra staffing pressures placed on Caerphilly Early Years as a result of the collaborative working across the Programme with Blaenau Gwent, Newport, Monmouthshire and Torfaen. Mrs Mutch explained that a need for extra resources had been identified and subsequently achieved through the appointment of several new Early Years support workers. Members were advised that there had been some difficulties around recruitment with a gap in the market for family workers with suitable training in parenting programmes; however staff have now been recruited who will receive on the job training in delivering the parenting programme.

A query was received on when the measurable outcomes of the Transformation Programme would become evident. Mrs Mutch explained that a logic model is being utilised to develop the outcomes framework and the data needed to measure impact. This will include examining dataset population level indicators, looking at whether the right support is in place and how many people have access to this support. It was explained that

the Early Years service are seeing an increase in children with language and developmental delays due to a lack of interaction with others during the pandemic, and so it is expected that demand will increase over the next two years and so the Early Years service will need to make sure there is a sufficient workforce to meet this demand. Therefore it is vital that the data is in place to develop the necessary outcomes moving forward.

A Member enquired as to how the Early Years Team are able to engage with those people who are extremely vulnerable or non-receptive to offers of support. Mrs Mutch gave examples of how the mobile creche team have moved into Early Years support worker roles and built relationships with mothers in need in order to establish trust. Other avenues include the work being carried out by language workers and a network of embedded family workers, promotion of the Early Years service through word of mouth, and partnership working with organisations such as the Parent Network. The Member also expressed concerns around barriers where children may be at risk, and Mrs Mutch explained that such issues are often known at a community level and that trust-building with parents/guardians and identifying those children not present in school are vital approaches towards breaking down these barriers.

A Member asked about the support available to families who may be facing eviction. Mrs Mutch explained that the Team has links with Caerphilly Cares, the Housing Team, and support networks including Pobl, who work with the family in need to arrange a solution.

Having considered the report and commented on the planned priorities towards full implementation by 2024/25, the Scrutiny Committee noted the progress made to date on the Early Years Integration Transformation Programme under Wellbeing Objective 1 (Best Start in Life).

## **6. REGIONAL ASSESSMENT OF WELL-BEING INCLUDING LOCAL COMMUNITY AREA ASSESSMENTS**

Kath Peters (Corporate Policy Manager) and Paul Cooke (Senior Policy Officer) presented the report, which introduced to Members the consultation draft of the assessment of well-being (the Well-Being Assessment) in line with statutory timelines, the local Community Area Assessments being undertaken on the five community planning areas in the county borough, and outlined the consultation process and next steps for the draft Well-Being Assessment and future development of the Well-Being Plan for Gwent (2023-2028).

It was noted that this report was linked to the following agenda item being presented by the Gwent Regional Partnership Board (Social Services and Well-being Act Population Needs Assessment – Presentation) and that questions would be taken once both agenda items had been presented.

The report outlined the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 statutory guidance 'Shared Purpose – Shared Future' which sets out a requirement for each Public Services Board (PSB) to prepare and publish an assessment of the state of economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being in its area no later than a year before it publishes its local well-being plan. This means that the first Gwent Well-Being Assessment must be published by 5th May 2022. The timeline of the Assessment and plan is linked to local government elections.

The Well-being Assessment is being developed on a regional basis for the first time. However, local Community Area Assessments are being undertaken in communities across Gwent. For the county borough these communities are the five community planning areas: Rhymney, Mid Valleys West, Mid Valleys East, Islwyn, and Caerphilly Basin.

Members noted that the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee are a statutory consultee under Section 38 of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. A link to the draft Well-being Assessment was appended to the Officer's report, together with the Executive Summary and Assessment Timeline. It was noted that the Community Area Assessments were currently being drafted, with the Upper Rhymney Valley Assessment attached to the report to provide an insight to Members of the content. The four remaining Assessments were scheduled for completion by the end of January 2022 and would be circulated electronically to Scrutiny Committee Members for comment following the meeting.

Paul Cooke (Senior Policy Officer) then delivered a Powerpoint presentation which outlined the key findings and data around the draft Gwent Well-being Assessment. The Scrutiny Committee were advised that the Assessment provides an overview of all aspects of Well-being on a Gwent basis for the first time, and covers 5 very different local authority areas with different strengths and experiences. This piece of work will help understand differences in communities and help to work collaboratively on issues affecting the whole region, and will highlight inequalities in our communities as well as opportunities.

The data from the Well-being Assessment outlines many advantages, including a diverse economy, a rich culture and heritage, strong communities and a distinct and iconic natural environment. Disadvantages include significant health, education, housing, income and employment inequalities, together with significant deprivation and declining biodiversity.

The Scrutiny Committee were provided with a detailed overview of each of the areas that underpin the Well-being Assessment, namely Social Well-being (Housing, Health, Community Safety, Education and Transport), Economic Well-being, Environmental Well-being and Cultural Well-being, with key points of note within these areas which are relevant across the communities within Caerphilly county borough. Members were also provided with a summary of the key challenges and opportunities identified by the Assessment, including an ageing population, resilience to a changing climate, the long-term impact of Covid-19 and leaving the EU, decarbonisation, and energy/food security. It was noted that all these considerations have the potential to widen inequalities across local communities.

The Scrutiny Committee noted details of the timetable rollout for the Well-being Assessment (November 2021 to May 2022) and the key activities at each stage of the rollout. Members were also provided with details of the next steps in the process, including a need for individual PSB members to take the draft assessment forward through the governance arrangements in their own local authority, prior to publication of the final version of the Gwent Well-being Assessment by 5th May 2022.

Mr Cooke then handed over to colleagues from the Gwent Regional Partnership Board to introduce the next item (Social Services and Well-being Act Population Needs Assessment)

## **7. SOCIAL SERVICES AND WELL-BEING ACT POPULATION NEEDS ASSESSMENT - PRESENTATION**

The Scrutiny Committee welcomed Phil Diamond and Natasha Harris (Gwent Regional Partnership Board) to the meeting.

Mr Diamond gave an overview of the collaborative work that had taken place on the Social Services and Well-being Act Population Needs Assessment and its links to national strategies and partnership working. Mr Diamond explained that both the Social Services and Well-being Act 2015 and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 have similar requirements in that they both require the preparation of a Population Needs Assessment, and he expressed his thanks to colleagues from Caerphilly Council's Policy

Team for the collaborative work that had been achieved in order to create and plan for these Assessments.

Mr Diamond acknowledged the breadth and range of the Regional Assessment of Well-being, and explained that when drafting the PNA for the Social Services and Well-being Act, rather than creating a document along similar lines, the Gwent Regional Partnership Board decided to focus on priorities which require partnership efforts across health, social care and looked after children. He explained that these areas create huge concerns for local health boards and also place pressures on local authorities in terms of the cost. Therefore the Gwent Regional Partnership Board have been examining how local authorities and health boards can work more effectively to address these challenges.

Mr Diamond gave a Powerpoint presentation which focused on three priority areas identified within the PNA, namely Children Looked After, Carers, and Dementia.

In terms of Children Looked After (CLA) the percentage still remains high across all Gwent local authority areas but there is a great deal of work ongoing to tackle this area. CLA face some of the most complex and challenging of circumstances amongst their peers and Welsh Government has prioritised support at a local and regional level through Integrated Care Funding guidance and legislation. Multi-agency partnership approaches under the RPB have been established such as MYST project and SPACE Wellbeing Panels. However, there have been large costs for emergency and out of county placements incurred across the region which has led to the development of capital projects in Gwent such as Windmill Farm, through ICF capital funding, where savings can be redistributed into preventative programmes.

In terms of carers, all local authority areas across the Gwent region are predicted to see an increase in the number of carers. The predicted increases range from 35.6% in Blaenau Gwent to 58.9% in Monmouthshire. In response to a Carers UK survey, 36% of carers said that their financial situation had worsened since the start of the pandemic. The largest issue for Welsh carers was that they did not know what services were available in their area, with 40% of carers reporting this as a barrier. 26% of carers described their physical health as bad or very bad and 34% of carers rated their mental health as bad or very bad. Online GP appointments was the most popular technology listed by carers, with 37% of carers stating that this made their caring role easier. 30% of working carers in Wales stated that if care services did not return, they would either need to reduce their working hours or give up work entirely. In response to these issues, the Gwent Regional Partnership Board is examining how health, social care and voluntary sector agencies can come together to support these carers and put suitable solutions in place, for example GP appointments, respite arrangements and use of the Young Carers scheme.

In terms of dementia, Mr Diamond highlighted the ageing population and the fact that people are living longer. Approximately 42,000 people are living with dementia in Wales, which is most common in older people, affecting 1 in 20 people over the age of 65 and 1 in 5 over the age of 80. It is predicted that 1 million people in the UK will have dementia by 2025. Across all local authority areas in the Gwent region, an increase in the number of people living with dementia is predicted and range from 62.1% in Blaenau Gwent to 97.1% in Monmouthshire over the period 2013 to 2035. The Regional Partnership Board are working to support more timely diagnosis and are developing a consistent clearly understood diagnosis, care and support pathways.

Mr Diamond explained that he had not duplicated information within the PNA which is already contained in the Well-being Assessment, but if people require further information on the aforementioned areas, then they can be signposted to the Gwent Regional Partnership Board so that this can be provided to them.

In conclusion, Mr Diamond explained that the PNA will include an action plan to deliver the identified priorities and enable the Gwent Regional Partnership Board to work together with health boards and local authorities on joint priorities to deliver the maximum outcome for local residents. Members were advised that Council approval will be sought for the Population Needs Assessment (PNA) prior to its submission to Welsh Government, and therefore the Scrutiny Committee were asked to provide comments on the PNA ahead of its presentation to Council in March 2022.

Questions were then invited from the Scrutiny Committee on Agenda Items 6 and 7.

In response to a Member's query on Page 4 of the Upper Rhymney Valley Local Well-being Assessment, Mrs Peters provided clarification around Medium Super Output Areas (MSOAs) and Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs), explaining that these are statistical geographic areas defined by Welsh Government which generate a range of data such as deprivation levels, and are used to identify where and/or what the worst issues are in a particular area of Wales.

A Member sought clarification on the reasons for the projected 97.1% increase in dementia across Monmouthshire over the period 2013 to 2035. Mr Diamond explained that this is because the average age range of Monmouthshire citizens is higher than other local authorities and is based on information around those people currently living with dementia and higher population clusters in the Abergavenny area which will have an impact on the predicted levels moving forward.

Clarification was sought on Page 44 of the Upper Rhymney Valley Local Well-being Assessment and the linkage between access to services and crime at Section 3.3 of the document. Mrs Peters confirmed that she would seek information from the Officers who drafted this Local Community Area Assessment and respond to the Member following the meeting. The Member also queried when the measurable outcomes from the Local Community Area Assessments would be realised. Mrs Peters explained that these outcomes are geared towards the long-term and these will only begin to become apparent at the end of the first 5 year period.

A Member expressed concerns around the deprivation figures contained within the Upper Rhymney Valley Local Well-being Assessment and asked how these will be tackled. Mrs Peters confirmed that planned actions will include a series of face to face community engagement sessions over the summer period, and that the action plan surrounding the Local Community Area Assessments will feed into other areas such as the Best Start in Life and Jobs Growth Wellbeing Objectives, and will be delivered with partners through local boundaries and local projects. The Member also asked if the forthcoming ward boundary changes would have an impact on the statistics within the Assessment in future years. Mrs Peters confirmed that these changes will not affect the LSOA data as this uses a different geography to that of ward boundaries.

A Member referred to the merging of services on a regional basis and asked if this was still a matter under consideration post-Covid. Mr Diamond acknowledged the impact of the pandemic in delaying progress around this collaborative approach, but explained that this is still very much a priority and that the PNA is particularly important in this regard as it places a key focus on the integration of key services and collaboration across many areas, including safeguarding, adult services, dementia support, reablement, hospital discharge services and community support.

Following discussion, and having provided comments on the Well-being Assessment and associated Local Community Area Assessments. the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee noted the contents of the report (as set out in Agenda Item 6) and the contents of Mr Diamond's presentation on the Social Services and Well-being Act Population Needs Assessment (as set out in Agenda Item 7).

Members also noted that the five local area assessments (once completed) would be circulated to them following the meeting to allow Members additional time to provide any comments by 15th February 2022.

The Chair thanked Mrs Peters, Mr Cooke and Mr Diamond for their detailed presentations and for responding to Members' queries.

## **8. CAERPHILLY PUBLIC SERVICES BOARD ANNUAL REPORT 2020-2021**

Mrs Kath Peters (Corporate Policy Manager) presented the report, which informed the Scrutiny Committee of the annual report of the residual Caerphilly Public Services Board (PSB) covering activity under the 'Caerphilly We Want Well-being Plan 2018-2023' from October 2020 to September 2021. The Partnerships Scrutiny Committee are a statutory recipient of the report. The report was agreed virtually by the residual PSB in November 2020.

It was noted that the PSB's annual report runs for the time period October 2020 until September 2021. It reflects progress on the enablers and action areas under the current well-being plan over that 12-month period. It includes progress against the new pandemic recovery areas agreed by the PSB in early 2021; 'Caerphilly Cares', and 'Jobs Growth and Employability Support'.

The Caerphilly PSB agreed, at its dissolution, to act as a residual body and to continue to drive and monitor progress against the current well-being plan until it is superseded in May 2023 by the new Gwent well-being plan. Therefore Members were advised that this will be the last annual report prepared under the Caerphilly PSB but that 6-monthly updates will be provided to the Scrutiny Committee until January 2023.

A Member queried a reference at Page 15 of the report relating to well-paid employment opportunities around City Deal. Mrs Peters explained that City Deal is not under the remit of the Public Services Board and that colleagues within Regeneration would be best placed to respond to the Member. It was confirmed that the enquiry would be passed to the Council's Corporate Director for Economy and Environment following the meeting.

Following consideration of the report, the Scrutiny Committee noted the contents of the Caerphilly Public Services Board Annual Report and the progress made during 2020-2021.

The meeting closed at 7.16 p.m.

Approved as a correct record, subject to any amendments agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 21st July 2022.

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CHAIR