

REPORT TO:	Customers, Performance, Resources and Governance Scrutiny Committee
REPORT NO:	COGC/35/19s
DATE:	19 September 2019
LEAD MEMBER:	N/A
CONTACT OFFICER:	Suzanne Price (292179)
SUBJECT:	Wrexham Public Services Board (PSB)
WARD:	All

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To receive and consider Wrexham Public Services Board's (PSB) Annual Report, which has been sent to the scrutiny committee in accordance with legislation and the agreed protocol 'Wrexham Public Services Board, Accountability and Scrutiny'.
- 1.2 To enable the committee to consider, with the PSB, the role of the scrutiny committee in relation to the PSB and to agree the focus of future scrutiny.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 This report provides background to the establishment of Public Services Boards. It sets out the requirements for scrutiny of PSBs as set out in Wellbeing of Future generations Act (Wales) 2015 and the non-statutory Welsh Government Guidance for local authority scrutiny of PSBs which was published in August 2017.
- 2.2 The report explains the current arrangements for scrutiny of Wrexham's PSB and presents the agreed protocol (Appendix 1). Paragraph 4.7 outlines the options available to the committee in terms of recommendations to the PSB.

- 2.3 Welsh Government's 2017 Guidance for Local Authority Scrutiny Committees on the Scrutiny of Public Services sets out the three main roles for scrutiny committees to be:
- Acting as statutory consultees on the wellbeing assessment and wellbeing plan;
 - Reviewing the PSB's governance arrangements;
 - Monitoring progress on the PSB's implementation of the well-being plan and engagement in the PSB planning cycle
- The report presents an update on these three areas as a basis for the committee to discuss with the PSB the future role and focus of scrutiny.

3. RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 **That Members of the Committee formulate their conclusions and recommendations based on the information in the report and the discussion at the meeting, having regard to the arrangements outlined in paragraph 4.7.**

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

To enable members to scrutinise the work, performance and governance of Wrexham Public Services Board.

To meet the requirements of the WFG Act (Wales) 2015.

4. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Wrexham's Public Services Board (PSB)

- 4.1 Public Services Boards were established by the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (WFG) which established a PSB for each local authority area in Wales. PSBs consist of statutory representatives from Local Authorities, Health Boards, Natural Resources Wales and the Welsh Fire and Rescue Authority. PSBs must also invite relevant voluntary organisations along with Welsh Ministers, local Police & Crime Commissioners and the local Chief Constable to participate on the Board. Each PSB has a duty to undertake a local Wellbeing Assessment to inform a local Wellbeing Plan.

Wrexham's PSB was established in April 2017 and published its Wellbeing Plan in March 2018. The Chair is Lyndsey Rawlinson, Natural Resources Wales. A list of members of the PSB is included in the PSB Terms of Reference at **Appendix 2.**

Scrutiny of PSBs

- 4.2 The WFG Act required local authorities to designate one of its overview and scrutiny committees with the responsibility for scrutinising the work of the PSB. In March 2018, Council agreed CPR&GSC to be this committee.

The WFG Act requires that the scrutiny committee has the power to:

- Review or scrutinise decisions made or other action taken, by the PSB in the exercise of its functions;
- Review or scrutinise the PSBs governance arrangements;
- Make reports or recommendations to the PSB with respect to its functions or governance arrangements;
- Consider such matters relating to the PSB with Welsh Ministers may refer to it, and report to Welsh Ministers accordingly;
- Carry out other functions in relation to the PSB that are imposed on it by the Act.

Having published its Wellbeing Plan, the PSB must:

- Consult with the scrutiny committee during the preparation of any proposed amendments to the Plan;
- Send a copy of its Annual Report to the scrutiny committee.

The 2017 Welsh Government Guidance on Scrutiny of PSBs states that:

“failure to consider principles informed by good practice is likely to result in scrutiny mechanisms which lack impact and inadequately supports the PSB as a strategic partnership. The risks associated with poor collaborative governance arrangements include weakened decision making, additional complexity, fragmented accountability, lack of transparency and poorer well-being outcomes.”

- 4.3 The Guidance offers practical advice and suggestions for the kinds of questions scrutiny committees may find it useful to employ and as such these have been included in schedule 3 of the Scrutiny Protocol.

Arrangements for scrutiny of Wrexham Public Services Board

- 4.4 In March 2018, CPR&GSC and the PSB agreed the local scrutiny arrangements in the form of a protocol ‘Wrexham Public Services Board, Accountability and Scrutiny’ – this is attached at **Appendix 1**.

Role of scrutiny in accountability arrangements

- 4.5 The guidance sets out practical advice for overview and scrutiny practitioners and states the three main roles for scrutiny committees to be:

- Acting as statutory consultees on the wellbeing assessment and wellbeing plan;
- Reviewing the PSBs governance arrangements;
- Monitoring progress on the PSBs implementation of the well-being plan and engagement in the PSB planning cycle;

4.6 The PSB has submitted the following information in relation to these three areas, which provide the committee with the opportunity both to scrutinise the PSB and to discuss with the PSB scrutiny's role and future focus.

(1) Statutory Consultees on Well-being Assessment and Wellbeing Plan

CPRGSC considered a report on the ongoing consultation for the Wellbeing Assessment in February 2017. CPR&GSC was consulted on the Wellbeing Plan in March 2018 prior to it being agreed by Council. The Plan runs until 2023 and the scrutiny committee will be statutory consultees in the preparation of the next Plan.

(2) Reviewing the PSBs governance arrangements

PSB's Governance Handbook and Terms of Reference (including Membership 2019/20) at <https://www.wrexhampsb.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Terms-of-reference.pdf> and **Appendix 2**.

Minutes of the meetings of the PSB are available on the PSB website <https://www.wrexhampsb.org/about-us/>

(3) Monitoring progress on the PSB's implementation of the well-being plan

Wrexham's Wellbeing Plan (published May 2018) is available at <https://www.wrexhampsb.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Wrexham-PSB-Well-Being-plan-March-2018.pdf>

Wrexham PSB's first annual report, which provides an account of progress with the implementation of the five year well-being plan, was published in July 2019 and is attached at **Appendix 3**. The report is required by the Future Generations Commissioner and must also be shared with the Auditor General for Wales, Scrutiny and the public.

The PSB has continued to develop as a partnership, bringing together a range of public sector organisations, to do things differently, placing sustainability at the heart of how they are working.

The March 2019 PSB meeting was co-delivered by Wrexham's Senedd and the Children's Commissioner for Wales, Sally Holland. This led to an agreement that PSB organisations would work to embed children's rights within everything they do. Wrexham CBC has now started to progress this work and over the next year will test the approach in three services, Education and Early Intervention, Social Care and Housing and Economy, before rolling out the messages across the whole organisation.

The June 2019 PSB meeting discussed and agreed a robust Terms of Reference, committing partners to doing things differently from Business as Usual, being guided by the Future Generations Act ways of working and ensuring that each organisation aligns its business plan with the PSB well-being plan.

This meeting identified a number of partnership risks, which are highlighted in the Annual Report:

- 'We've realised how difficult it is when trying to procure services and use different business processes and systems across different organisations - everyone has their own priorities and a day job to do. If it's hard for the PSB organisations, then it must often be impossible for our communities. We need to make this work better in the coming years.
- Sometimes working within our own organisations to manage deadlines and working reactively to what's happening right now makes it tough to keep a focus on the long term as much as we should.
- It is challenging when there is no consistent funding for PSBs as a strategic body. When funding becomes available, then usually timescales are tight, which goes against how we are trying in Wales to work for the long term.
- Building trust and commitment to partnership and aligning budgets is complex. New staff and new thinking means constantly building new relationships, which means investing in time and encouraging ideas and creativity, wherever it comes from.
- We need to broaden understanding across the community of what our well-being plan will do, and get more people to join us on the journey.
- Finally, we know we need to focus on being more preventative in how we do things so that we build resilient communities and build social return in investment. To do this needs a similar shift in thinking from national and strategic partners.'

The September 2019 meeting will focus on these risks and produce a RAG rated action plan to be used at a strategic level to ensure that the PSB partnership can stay on track.

Programme Boards

There are currently three programme boards, and the PSB organisations are currently working on a fourth priority area. The programme boards usually have 6-10 members and membership may change during a year as tasks are completed or new connections are made.

The current programme boards are:

- **Children and young people are given a healthy start in life.** This Board is led by Public Health Wales with support from the PIP team in WCBC, and its focus areas are healthy food for young people and their families in Wrexham and developing good sleeping patterns to support a healthy and physically active start in life.

- **All people have the opportunity to learn and develop throughout their lives.** This Board is led by Coleg Cambria with support from the PIP team at WCBC, and is currently focusing on lifelong learning, building life skills, volunteering and working with employers

- **East Area Strategic Group (EAST) to take forward and implement the Healthier Wales strategy across North East Wales.** This Board is led by Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board and the local authority and is currently focusing on a transformation project around older people, including mental health.

Appendix 4 outlines in more detail what each Board does, what was achieved in 18/19, what each Board has identified as risks and barriers to partnership working, and what the initial thinking around activity for 19/20 looks like.

An additional programme board for 19/20 will co-ordinate community resilience issues such as climate change, community involvement and sustainable travel, and will be led by AVOW.

4.7 Reports / Recommendations.

The legislation states that scrutiny committees must send a copy of any report or recommendation in respect of the PSB functions or governance arrangements to the Welsh Ministers, the WFG Commissioner and the Auditor General for Wales. The issue of what constitutes a recommendation that should be copied to these addressees is discussed in the Guidance. This advocates adopting a 'local' approach. This requires that the Committee 'match the most appropriate method of communication with the degree of intended formality best suited to local circumstance' and suggests that scrutiny committees consider adopting more informal means of communication such as "Chair's letters". The arrangements for PSB scrutiny in Wrexham, and the recommendations in this report, reflect this approach.

If this committee is minded to make recommendations, it should be clear whether it wishes to:

- (a) instruct the Chair to send the outcome of the meeting, its general views and comments (as recorded in the minutes of the meeting) to the PSB in the form of 'Chair's Correspondence', or
- (b) make formal recommendations to the PSB, copied to (i) Welsh Ministers; (ii) the WFG Commissioner; (iii) the Auditor General for Wales.

5 **IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 **Policy Framework** – The work of the Wrexham PSB is following the guidance from the Well-Being of Future Generation (Wales) Act
- 5.2 **Budget** – n/a
- 5.3 **Legal** – The Well Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act requires that Councils make arrangements to scrutinise the work and governance of PSBs.
- 5.4 **Staffing** – Staff from Wrexham County Borough Council's PIP team have taken a lead on supporting the PSB.
- 5.5 **Equality / Human Rights** – Members are advised to consider the EIA Screening of this report which is available at <http://vmwinsql/EqualityISALive/PrintEIA.aspx> This indicates that no impact arising from this proposal. A copy of the summary of the screening is attached at Appendix 5.
- 5.6 **Risks** – The scrutiny arrangements have been adopted to reduce the possibility of the PSB not meeting the requirements of the Well-Being of Future Generation (Wales) Act.

6. **CONSULTATION**

The Chair of the scrutiny committee has invited representatives of the four statutory PSB members, as well as the appropriate WCBC Lead Members to provide their views on the PSB in order to add value at the scrutiny committee meeting. Comments received are included below:

WCBC Chief Officer Education & Early Intervention - The PSB Plan has an appropriate focus on improving outcomes for children and young people across the Borough and will be including a focus on raising aspirations as part of its on-going work programme.

7. **EVALUATION OF OPTIONS**

Not applicable

Background Papers	LOCATION / WEBSITE INFO.
Welsh Government Guidance - Guidance for Local Authority Scrutiny Committees on the scrutiny of Public Services Boards	http://gov.wales/docs/dpsp/publications/170817-public-services-boards-guidance-en.pdf
Report HF/15/17 (22 February 2017) 'An Update on Wrexham Public Services Board (PSB) Well Being Assessment	http://moderngov.wrexham.gov.uk/documents/g3406/Public%20reports%20pack%2022nd-Feb-2017%2013.00%20Customers%20Performance%20Resources%20and%20Governance%20Scrutiny%20.pdf?T=10
Report HF/37/2018S (28 March 2018) ' Wrexham Public Services Board (PSB) well-being Assessment and Draft well-being Plan'	http://moderngov.wrexham.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=138&MId=3773