



BWRDD GWASANAETHAU CYHOEDDUS
Blaenau Gwent
PUBLIC SERVICES BOARD

Barriers to the successful implementation of the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

Response from the Blaenau Gwent Public Services Board

1. Awareness and understanding of the Act and its implications

1.1 Since its inception the Blaenau Gwent Public Services Board has adopted a principle of learning and self-reflection to assist with its development and effectiveness in understanding the Act and its implications. Early development sessions included “Creating a purposeful PSB” in 2016 which helped to build positive ways of working for the Board.

1.2 More recent reflective sessions supported and facilitated by Academi Wales includes:

- Self-assessment exercise on Board effectiveness in April 2019
- Considering local responses to Covid19 in July 2020 and what it revealed about the positive effectiveness of partnership relationships including future challenges

1.3 The work undertaken in 2019 highlighted areas to develop including the need to simplify partnership arrangements, resources, development of a strategic plan of work and the benefits of sharing expertise. Several of the challenges highlighted informed the development of a new performance management for the PSB that was adopted in January 2020.

1.4 The pause and reflect session in July 2020 considered both the impact on the PSB strategic work programme and learning from the response to the Covid19 pandemic, which the board wanted to continue and build on.

1.5 The Chair and Vice Chair of the Scrutiny Committee have a standing invitation to the PSB which assists in member awareness of the PSB and the Act and developing a strong committee forward work programme and accountability. Sessions have been provided with elected members on understanding the Act and applying the five ways of working to scrutiny enquiries. Sessions with Council staff on the various levels on the Act have also been delivered and the decision making reporting framework has been revised to include the five ways of working, including within the supporting templates and guidance.

2. The resources available to public bodies to implement the Act and how effectively they have been deployed

2.1 The Blaenau Gwent Public Services Board takes an inclusive approach across its membership and has taken the approach of identifying a sponsor for each of the strategic well-being programme work streams. Regional working has also been a key feature, with the Gwent Strategic Well-being Action Group (GSWAG) continuing to deliver key work on the regional footprint e.g. Gwent Futures, Thriving Communities Index and Climate Ready Gwent. The regional use of WG funding for PSBs has been important to progress some innovative work and GSWAG has been successful in attracting in additional funding to support PSB projects.

2.2 More challenging has been the identification of financial resources from partner organisations, although there are some good examples of where funding streams have been maximised e.g. aligning EU Transition funding to the PSB sustainable food programme, NRW funding for supporting well-being projects relating to using natural assets to help physical and mental well-being within the community and a participatory budget pilot across Gwent developed from health board funding.

2.3 The PSB seeks to resource its well-being programmes of work using existing resources across its membership. This can be challenging given the organisational demands each face in a public sector landscape that has faced its own resourcing challenges. That said the boards leaders remain fully committed to helping to delivering the well-being plan and several of the members play their part in steering exciting key programmes of work as Sponsors. This helps to spread the leadership and encourage real collaboration. Examples have included:

- First 1,000 days – Sponsor Aneurin Bevan University Health Board
- Adverse Childhood Experiences – Sponsor Gwent Police
- Community Safety Hub – Sponsor Gwent Police
- Blaenau Gwent on the Move – Sponsor Blaenau Gwent Borough Council
- Blaenau Gwent Sustainable Food Partnership – Sponsor Tai Calon
- Climate Change Adaptation - Sponsor Natural Resources Wales
- Climate Change Mitigation - Sponsor Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
- Integrated Well-being Networks – Sponsor Aneurin Bevan University Health Board
- Foundational Economy – Sponsor Coleg Gwent
- Age Friendly Communities – Sponsor Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations

2.4 The Public Services Board also considered the impact of COVID-19 on its existing programme of work in September 2020 and the importance of flexing its

approach to engagement and involvement to adapt to the current pandemic challenges.

2.5 The Public Services Board greatly values the Horizon Scanning Work undertaken by Ash Futures and Climate Ready Gwent which is beginning to influence both regional and local programmes of work. It is worth noting that with Blaenau Gwent any new programme of work proposed to the PSB requires a consideration of Futures thinking. This is built into the Inception Report arrangements for “project initiation”.

3. Support provided to public bodies by the Future Generations Commissioner

3.1 The PSB have welcomed the support provided by the Future Generations Commissioner and the wider team since the inception of the Act. This has included challenge and support since its inception. Examples included responding positively to developmental feedback on its first iteration of the well-being assessment and more recently compliments from the Commissioner on the PSB’s approach to collaboratively engaging and involving people in its “The Blaenau Gwent We Want “. A significant feature of this work was to work closely with the Children’s Grand Council and Youth Forum for Blaenau Gwent in both the development of the and implementation of the well-being plan for the area.

3.2 A good example of this aim in action is the involvement of the Youth Mayor for Blaenau Gwent in the launch of the Wellbeing plan in May 2018. More recently the PSB is delighted that the representatives from the Youth Forum and 50+ Forum have accepted invitations to join the Climate Change Mitigation Steering Group which meets next in December 2020.

3.3 The PSB also welcomes the regular reports and updates provided by the Commissioner and regular reviews their content and recommendations at Board meetings. We welcomed and utilised the Commissioners Framework for Projects and utilised it in the design of our performance management framework that includes programme management.

3.4 At times in the past and more recently during our ongoing response to the Covid19 pandemic, capacity to fully engage and explore opportunities within all the reports and guidance documents shared by the Future Generations Commissioner has been limited.

4. The leadership of the Welsh Government

4.1 The PSB found the “Shared Purpose Shared Future” Statutory and non-Statutory guidance provided by Welsh Government extremely useful in forming the Board,

developing the wellbeing assessment and the setting strategic direction for the plan. Welsh Government representation on GSWAG has also been helpful.

5. Any other barriers to successful implementation of the Act e.g. Brexit, COVID etc.

5.1 One of the key challenges facing the Public Services Board in the delivery of its well-being programme at this time is the challenges the COVID-19 environment creates in engaging and involving local communities. Within Blaenau Gwent our Public Services Board Engagement Sub-Group is currently exploring how we can meet this challenge which is important in both the delivery of the existing well-being programmes of work but also in developing our well-being assessment during next year. We are exploring these issues regionally within such forums as the Gwent Strategic Well-being Action Group (GWSAG) but also welcome the workshops being facilitated by the Local Government Partnerships Team within the Welsh Government. This provides opportunities for sharing good ideas and good practice and last met on 26 October 2020.

5.2 The Council's Brexit core planning group recognises that preparing for the end of EU Transition needs to feed into a huge variety of related work areas and not be a standalone programme. Opportunities to link the impact of EU Transition into the PSB's strategic work programme are being considered; for example, the economic impact Covid19 recovery theme and the PSB Foundational Economy and Sustainable Food Partnership programmes will help to mitigate against any local economic impact of EU Transition going forward.

6. How to ensure that the Act is implemented successfully in future

6.1 The Blaenau Gwent PSB continues to raise awareness of the Act and promote the application of the 5 ways of working to inform decision-making; placing an emphasis on involvement, learning lessons and reflecting on any learning we would want to keep in place from the pandemic response to support the implementation of the Act. Local leaders continue to be supported to embrace an adaptive and creative approach, nurturing a culture change for partnership working.

6.2 The PSB recognises the need for continued navigation through what at times is an overly complex partnership landscape within Wales, aiming to maximise synergies and resources in an impactful way. Steps are being considered to address this in a PSB context within Gwent following discussions within all 5 Public Services Boards and G10 to consider a move towards a Regional PSB in future.

6.3 Looking forward it is clear we should not under estimate the work involved in undertaking a further well-being assessment in 2021 potentially during a period of ongoing COVID challenges. We are as yet unclear what our collective capacity will look like by the spring / summer 2021 to respond positively to this challenge. It is possible we will require some additional resourcing support to complete this work.