

# Draft Minutes



## Performance Scrutiny Committee - Partnerships

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Date: 6 October 2021

Time: 5.00 pm

Present: Councillors J Clarke (Chair), Hussain, S Marshall, R Mogford and M Spencer

In Attendance: Councillor Jane Mudd (Leader of Newport City Council & Chair of One Newport Public Services Board, Beverly Owen (Chief Executive), Huw Jakeway (Chief Fire Officer, South Wales Fire and Rescue Service), Nicola Prygodzicz (Executive Director of Planning, Digital and IT, Aneurin Bevan University Health Board), Guy Lacey (Principal, Coleg Gwent), Harriet Bleach (Natural Resource Wales), Will Beer (Public Health Wales), Tracy McKim (Partnership Policy & Involvement Manager), Nicola Dance (Senior Policy & Partnership Officer), Neil Barnett (Scrutiny Adviser) and Felicity Collins (Governance Officer)

Apologies: Councillors M Linton, T Suller, K Whitehead, Craig Lane

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### 1 Declarations of Interest

None.

### 2 Minutes of the previous meeting held on 28 July 2021

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 28 July 2021 were accepted as a true and accurate record.

### 3 Public Services Board Well-being Plan Annual Report 2020-21

Invitee;

Councillor Jane Mudd – Leader of Newport City Council and Chair of One Newport Public Service Board (PSB)

The Chair of One Newport Public Service Board (PSB) introduced the four well-being objectives to the committee and advised that the partnership have delivered a range of projects despite the difficult circumstances. There is ongoing close collaboration and a focus on long term improvements for the local communities. The report emphasises the partnership work in action and that the partners are very proud of the achievements from it. There are examples of the work to demonstrate their understanding that wellbeing is multi-dimensional and depends on teamwork for involvement of the communities of Newport.

The pandemic has shown that One Newport PSB's partners have a massive capacity and strong community resilience. This has been showcased through a number of examples of individuals coming together to support one another; the partnership wish to sustain and support this. This year, the partnership reviewed their objectives in light of the impact of COVID-19 and as part of the change; the partnership adopted a new vision for plan. All of the partnership activity seeks to deliver a proud and friendly City where both people and places thrive. The partners wanted to recognise that it is still a troubling time for the local

communities and that the PSB is committed to support these businesses. The partnership listens to the local individuals and appreciate that the action they take must bring about the best outcome for the years ahead. The new formation of the PSB for Gwent could create new opportunities and for stream lined governance. Members were assured that the representatives for Newport City Council will ensure that Newport gets the focus and unique consideration that it warrants and sought to deliver against the well-being objectives.

**First Well-being Objective:**

Invitee;

Beverly Owen – Newport City Council Chief Executive

The Chief Executive advised that the annual report is a testament to how everyone has worked together. Reference was made to the Purple Flag Status and referred Members to the report for the team's commitment to Place Making Wales Charter as an important backdrop on how the council delivers. In terms of achievements and interventions, there are numerous projects with a lot of progress made since the well-being plan has been developed. Members were reminded that this has been delivered in the face of a global pandemic but despite this the partners are maintain progress as best as they can. A few interventions were noted, which included The Chartist Tower Development which continues to progress despite being curtailed by the pandemic. Market Arcade which is due for completion in Winter 2021 to early Spring 2022, will be a real achievement to the Council and partners especially Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and Welsh Government.

The Chief Executive also advised the Committee of numerous ambitious projects underway, such as the Newport Knowledge Quarter, work on the Transporter Bridge and the city the City to continuing to develop its strategic events programme for a broader cultural offer; for instance the Newport Wales Marathon becoming a regular event in the calendar. It was then advised that it was from the work of the PSB; this could not have been done without the partners. But not just about the PSB, also it is from the work from the Business Improvement District, Newport Now, Newport Economic Network, Safer Newport and other strong relationships that the Council has forged with partners who work hard to keep city moving forward.

**Second Well-being Objective:**

Invitees:

Guy Lacey - Principal, Coleg Gwent

Will Beer – Consultant, Aneurin Bevan Health Board

The Lead Partner gave a brief overview of the progress of the interventions that have been developed to see if people have the skills to develop thriving cities. The officer highlighted the Digital Fair Event and Youth Engagement Profession Work. School Learning Coaches – providing alternative learning at the end of compulsory education – this has successfully reduced the number of needs. Other interventions noted by the officers included Film Cymru has been set up to promote careers in television and shows. A bid has been made to the UK Government's Community Renewal Fund, and is hopeful they will be able to extend this to run a six month programme.

The Consultant for Aneurin Bevan Health Board stressed the importance of Early Years Development. The foundations for human development are laid down in the early years. Therefore this explains why the partner wants to ensure that every child has the best start in life as adverse child experiences can massively affect their long term outcomes. Therefore this is a crucial area they would like to focus on for future generations. The officer went into detail of two case studies in Bettws; the Early Years Path Finder, which would be a better means of communication and integrating the services for each stage from antenatal services up until the age of five years old. Also, The Early Learning Community, which is

complementary to the first programme). This is funded by Save the Children but is a community approach – to see what conditions affect people's wellbeing in the community i.e such as digital exclusion, what affects their physical and social development. The team hope this will be a blueprint for the rest of Newport.

### **Third Well-being Objective:**

Invitees:

Nicola Prydodzicz – Director of Planning in Digital IT, Aneurin Bevan University Health Board – Joint Chair of Strong Resilient Communities Intervention Group with South Wales Police  
Huw Jakeway - South Wales Fire and Rescue Service – Joint Chair of Strong Communities  
Harriet Bleach -

The Partner from Aneurin Bevan University Health Board (ABUHB) provided an overview of the Participatory Budgeting Project – a project where the Health Board works with the Newport City Council in partnership with a company called Mutual Gain which are external consultants who are experienced in community engagement. They used £100,000 of Health Board funding for prevention, to engage with communities and asked them to put a bid in for grass root community projects to see how they could have an impact on Covid recovery and reduce inequalities.

There was a huge interest in this, as 83 projects were put forward by the communities where 400 residents took part in the online voting programme. Out of 83 projects, 24 of which were successful with funding ranging from £1000 to £10,000. Team are looking at projects which were not successful in case they might meet some of the criteria. The successful projects range from youth projects, digital inclusion and family based groups. The broad ranging community projects saw a build-up of enthusiasm from the communities. Previous work has been done on a smaller scale in Pill and Ringland, so the team applied their learnings from this.

Work has been recently undertaken by way of surveys with communities around well-being and levels of mental distress in the context of the pandemic. Key factors from this correlating to mental distress, where there is a good level of social interaction and personal resilience, there are lower incidents reported of mental distress. This shows how the Participatory Budget could bring about opportunities with these factors. They will follow this up in terms of impact and the team will look into how to roll this out further as they understand more about its success.

The partner representative for South Wales Fire and Rescue Service informed the Committee from a brevity perspective; the partner stated that they have learnt that from pandemic that they value their green spaces more and pointed out that there are examples in the report. The Partner highlighted the work with the Newport veterans' hub in creating an allotment facility to help the mental well-being of the veterans and building on the existing volunteer work that they have so there are discussions ongoing with G.A.V.O on this. The partner stressed that their ambition is to utilise the green spaces and that they are observing the pilot being done currently in Caerphilly to learn from that. The Partner personally thanked a fellow partner, Harriet Bleach and the team from Natural Resource Wales that continue to fund the project. Harriet has grown the green network up to 130 participants. Members were informed that this network is very active but has been impacted by the pandemic but the team are working hard with updates and looking to get a digital platform while restricted.

### **Fourth Objective:**

Invitees:

Huw Jakeway - Chief Fire Officer, South Wales Fire and Rescue Service  
Harriet Bleach – Natural Resources Wales

The Partner informed the Committee that he would like to tie the fourth objective in with the third and picked up on the maximising of green spaces which were mentioned in the reports.

It was stressed to the Members that if the green spaces are utilised then residents will feel safer and secure. There is currently a data-mapping exercise between Newport City Council, Gwent Police, South Wales Fire and Rescue Service and the fly tipping team to get an overview of disturbances, anti-social behaviour, deliberate fire setting etc., in green spaces so they can target resources to where appropriate. Through the Joint Emergency Services Group where the Chief Constable of Gwent Police who has been leading on a campaign against violence against emergency workers which has been data-mapped. There will be an opportunity where they can overlay information from emergency services workers in the local communities into this piece of work as well.

The Committee asked the following:

- A Member of the Committee mentioned the challenge of sustainable transport within the report and expressed concern that the new flecsi bus initiative does not cover the whole of Newport as it cuts off in some wards. The flecsi bus has been observed to not have many passengers. Could the board partners if they could comment on if this is effective enough?

The Leader clarified that to Committee that the partners present are there to report on the plan and partners are present to comment on the plan specifically; not any Newport City Council plan initiatives.

The Leader pointed out that the partners are looking at a range of interventions around sustainability, active travel and clean air that will enhance the lives of citizens of Newport. It was mentioned they participated in Clean Air Day and are currently looking at active travel routes. This work in the plan showcases how the partners collectively work across the public sector to look into how to improve the lives of the residents. It was mentioned there are transport interventions across Cardiff Capital region for example electric taxi vehicles, electric buses. With this partner organisation they were able to share and promote where they were converting part of their electric vehicles. There is quite a significant investment in sustainability across the partnership as they recognise it is very important. In the long term, the partners are looking to introduce partnership cycle hire and are developing the green infrastructure map which will demonstrate to people on how they can access sustainable green space.

The Leader stressed that sustainability is part of an integral part of the future generations' aims, which the achievements from the interventions undertaken will be a golden thread that the public service board and partners have tried very hard to integrate since the plan was set up.

- Members commented that it was good to learn about the work that the Newport Armed Forces Forum and Newport City Council have been doing with the Veterans' hub. However, there is still work that needs to be done with veterans but also for emergency services workers as well. Members further congratulated the partners as they would like them to keep up the good work for the veterans.
- Members referred to the third paragraph on page 86 of the plan; where it states the partnership is performing well against most of its indicators. They asked the partners to expand on the terminology of 'well' and how the partners see themselves to be working well? If they could mark themselves, for instance, out of a scale of ten.

The Leader noted in terms of progress, they rate their progress in a ranking, by rating the partnerships' progress against the rate of their interventions in a rating system. Overall, they have consolidated the partnership as they have just started to make improvements to the lives of citizens as the examples demonstrate in the report. The Leader welcomed input from the partners on this.

The Early Years Consultant for ABUHB commented that they feel they are doing well but could do better. One of the things they are trying to be of the partnership, is complacent. They want to be constantly improving in terms of more objective measures. The partner has got the 'Thriving Places Index' which allows them to rank Newport compared to other Local Authorities across the UK. This allows the partnership to have a specific focus on areas that affect people's well-being within the city.

Two further points were mentioned; firstly that it is important that they are not the place in which where they improve and do better and ensure that those four objectives are working at the heart of everything they do. And secondly, if looking at more objective measures, they have got the Thriving Places Index which allows the partner to focus on those different domains of well-being within the City which allows then to rank their position.

- The Partners were asked if they felt if evaluating themselves every two years is sufficient enough to make sure things are progressively changing and also in challenging each other not just their ideas.

The partner from Coleg Gwent offered reassurance to the Committee that officers interact on performance. Members were provided with an example of a subgroup called 'Write Skills Group' where they routinely look at the work plan and ask partners to contribute updates on progress. The challenge was acknowledged but they ask people to contribute their time for a joint purpose.

Members were advised they challenge and debate whether the partners can do things better. The partner mentioned that he is a chair of a meeting which brings in numerous representatives from different organisations which entails a lot of encouragement, cajoling and underlying challenge on reflection on an ongoing basis.

The Early Years Consultant for ABUHB also commented that over the last 18 months, it has been mostly challenging due to the Covid response. It has left the partners with an opportunity on where to go in terms of pandemic recovery, as it showed the partners what matters and that is people's well-being. It was argued that a huge amount has been achieved by the PSB and now have the opportunity to re-group as they move to the recovery phase.

The Chair of Strong Resilient Communities Network mentioned that they have been a part of the PSB since its inception and have been personally involved in a number of discussions on how they adapted their business on the back of evaluations. The partner explained they will be due on soon as unable to during the pandemic. It was stressed that strong links have been made and relations that they did not have before that. The strong links were a foundation for this and are fully thankful now than they were before.

The Leader concluded that the partnership has developed a broad development action plan to challenge the partnership sessions; which helps them know how they are being effective and learn from that as well as self-evaluation. They have taken this forward and one decision was to invite the Chair of Scrutiny Committee to attend the meetings to observe that the PSB has got that 'golden thread' for connectivity. Further, the Leader mentioned how this highlights the partnership's willingness to be scrutinised and to get feedback.

It was noted that the Chair has agreed to first of the sessions and that will be with the Newport Youth Council. They are proud to be engaging as not only does this help the partnership development; but it also helps them to evaluate their progress and recognising that they are reaching groups of people.

- Members noted the mention of Covid recovery and advised that they would be interested to hear what the panel says on; whether they feel the difference in working from home has made them efficient in delivery or has it challenged the projects with partners not being able to meet face to face?

The Early Years Development (ABUHB) partner mentioned that they were deployed to the COVID-19 incident co-ordinating centre since February 2020; with the Track, Trace and Protect programme across Gwent and the mass vaccination programme. This shows what can be achieved with cross party support with a unified objective with a fully engaged public and programme that is fully resourced, and they have been able to use advances in digital technology to support the response. There is a huge amount of learning from the pandemic, if the communities have got those conditions right then they can achieve significant outcomes in short period of time. Moving forward it would be good to take this perspective and look at other very important issues such as child poverty and climate change.

- Members asked the partners where they see themselves moving forward closer together in the future as a partnership. As the City has great interventions with hotels and markets to sell the city; is the City doing enough for tourism to sell itself? Members further queried how could the panel can test themselves and collectively do more for benefit of citizens in local area?

The Chief Executive referred the Committee to their brief run through of the plethora of projects that are ongoing in Newport for the first objective. The PSB is aware that it cannot just be a programme for project delivery as it is about the offer. There are two aspects of that which were discussed at length with Newport One and Newport Now Business Improvement District around; how they can develop an indigenous narrative about Newport, and how can they make sure the residents become proud. As pride is about the market tool. The second aspect has been talking to a range of local businesses, SMEs and largest employers on how the partners can market themselves to the wider world.

The City has a rich cultural offer and mentioned its aspiration around the City of Culture. It is certainly on the One Newport PSB's radar but however considering the last 18 months has been difficult to further the momentum. For example they are developing the events programme, and the website as they move through the pandemic and looking to see how they can pick that

momentum back up. Members were assured that this is something on the One Newport's radar for future plans.

The Partner for the South Wales Fire and Rescue Service echoed the sense of pride as something that the PSB has had to drive through Newport City Council's brand. It was acknowledged that it could be difficult for the PSB to be able to do that, as its being able to work through the brand that people connect with. On the topic of pride in Newport; there are 130 volunteers in the Green Network to encourage biodiversity spaces in Newport. Members were advised that this emphasises that people want to embrace the biodiversity and everything that Newport is. The partner also mentioned how important it is for the partnership to work on the connection outside of the PSB with resident schools to improve biodiversity in the green spaces within Newport.

- Members commented on the green spaces within their ward such as St. Mary's, the community gardens, Eveswell, and Food for Life which all have brilliant initiatives where a lot of volunteers are getting involved in the greening in Maindee. Members congratulated the partnership on that as it is a positive to their diverse ward who all got involved on the issue. For example they are working on the mural in Maindee; that is a project they look forward to seeing finished.

The Partner representative from Natural Resources Wales confirmed that Maindee Unlimited are great projects which ran ten projects at once. This is a brilliant example of communities working together and volunteering – by creating the community gardens; the partner noted that they work with that particular group quite often. The partner stressed that the community is key in terms of sustainability and would like to keep it going as they make a difference.

- Members noted the regeneration of the city centre with the bringing in of the living quarters with grants as great to see that work going ahead. Are there projects with electric charging parking points to bring people in, to live in the City?

The Chief Executive highlighted are lot of achievements, but also a lot more in progress which are not included in the report; such as the leisure project and the quarter. As part of their wider future planning and what they endeavour to do will be as sustainable as possible. For instance, public sector building electric charging points. Despite some in very early stages, regeneration work infra-structure time does take a while to come to fruition. Conversations on this are ongoing and within the next few years they are hoping they will be involved in future developments.

- Are any fears on deadlines as a partnership?

The Chief Executive advised that in terms of key initiatives that were highlighted there will always be project risks but they are on track for delivery. As sustainable interventions, in terms of risk; these are monitored regularly and reported back to the PSB from a risk management perspective therefore are on track to deliver within the timescales. All partnerships are signed up to the sustainable travel charter which was launched, the lead officer linked this

back to Clean Air Day as all partners realise what needs to be done. This is a challenge but it everyone involved are working very well together.

The Early Years Consultant commented on the point about development; one is of the achievements with supplementary planning guidance for sustainable travel. This is the Council's responsibility however it is open to the partners to input; this is a great opportunity from the public health point of view on how this can help the partnership achieve public health outcomes. This chance to contribute is a good example of collaboration.

- Comment was made regarding greening and regeneration with the interest in becoming more carbon neutral. Is there information on each of the properties of the City Centre, even if not under the remit of the Council's properties. The Member summarised if they can ask partners if they can grant grants funding for these private buildings to get them to do it also.

The Chief Executive advised that in terms of energy data collation; that is ongoing work as part of the Local Area Energy Plan where Newport has been the pilot with Welsh Government over the last six months. This will be rolled out to the rest of Wales. It is not completely perfect but were assured that Newport is potentially ahead in terms of collecting data on buildings across Newport.

- In terms of greening – as mentioned last year with local houses, there was an idea for local residents to be provided with seeds and tips to grow plants themselves. Are any updates on this?

The Partner representative for Nature Resources Wales gave an overview of the home grown vegetable scheme And confirmed that the home grown packets were done in Ringland and they look to do it again next spring but hopefully across all four hubs. In terms of encouraging people to grow food at home and in their gardens/balconies, the partner has been finding the resources and tips for that and getting the findings on the social media page. The partner advised that there is more to be done on promoting that and that they are looking into that.

The Leader highlighted that Wastesavers has opened their centre in Maindee. A re-use centre will be also opening in the city centre; this is really important as it will be a library of things where people can drop in to borrow items to help and support them in activities.

- Have the partners been able to link in role models with education, for the curriculum and if skills have been identified for green jobs? Could apprentices be linked in and what skills have been identified prior to Covid and now post Covid?

Coleg Gwent partner explained that they look closely at the way in which residents in Newport work; as work in Newport is quite mobile with people coming in for work and a number of residents leave the city for work. The growth sector has a potential to offer long term growth for jobs with good jobs developing the city in areas such as manufacturing and engineering with success stories from that. They have a need of skills, such as in the health and care sector. Colleagues from the health sector have noted that and we

look at the needs of the Aneurin Bevan Health Board and note that they have a high number of vacancies with a difficult job to recruit. They are looking on how they can steer young people by flagging up careers and promoting in STEM career areas. This is going to follow in the next virtual careers event in order to help younger people look into the areas of care work and help drive young adults who are returning to work or choosing to upskill to support these sectors.

Apprenticeships will form key support for that and has helped the way in which partners are working around these skills issues.

- What type of partnership networking has been done to coordinate more effective and prosperous work for the outdoor world to encourage green citizens?

The lead partner for Nature Resources Wales responded stating that with the Greener Safe Network, a strong partnership with Gwent Wildlife Trust which links them with children in community groups such as Pill. Keep Wales Tidy also run a number of similar activities as well. The Council's Biodiversity Officer, works with local schools and assists with plans for carbon literacy training which entails learning more about the carbon footprint and actions you can take. This type of learning is currently in discussion.

- The Committee recognised the works being undertaken on the economic side of things and noted how the City wants to bring in people to the centre, as they will be attracting more students with the new campus and flats. Has there been any change to economic power that the centre has due to the post pandemic situation?

The lead partner for Coleg Gwent responded that they are considering how education can train developers in the recovery phase. There has been a great show of young people wanting to get back to face to face education as remote learning experiences can be variable as it does not suit all learners.

The Committee was advised that there is a big demand of education as a social activity. The partner mentioned that the Knowledge Quarter to draw people in to the centre is a huge potential.

It was recognised that prospects have been impacted by covid, through many means such as furlough and loss of employment which will be a big challenge for the partner to tackle. There are key sectors that the partners will have to support in terms of their recovery and integration of their training is a vital part of that. Therefore the partner is hopeful that the Knowledge Quarter project will be a major step in helping them sustain the city centre.

- How is the partnership looking to draw that back to the local communities and city centre so the money can stay locally to help the residents?

The Chief Executive clarified that Newport is no different from other cities and unfortunately there is not a 'silver bullet' for its partners. Through the One Newport PSB, partners have discussed what Newport's unique selling point is and what the different offer that Newport has. This comes from the smaller independents and comes back to one of the first questions of this is through marketing. This can be through firstly sustaining the market and the footfall of Newport to make people want to come in to the centre and secondly is how to

market that to others to come visit. When the vaccination programme reaches its final conclusion; the City will be likely to see a return of people.

The lead officer also reinforced the lead partner from Coleg Gwent's point with their very productive conversation with the College and University of South Wales. This conversation covered how the education system and eco-system help boost the economy in different levels. The Committee was informed there with the strong working relationships between the partners, the partnership can build on this from where they are.

- Comment was made that the partnership may need to give more experiences for people coming into the city centre that could be something different, not from online. As a chance to be bold, Newport has great art for instance. Members hope that the partners could come up with creative ways and local knowledge to move that idea forward.

The Chair thanked the partners and officers for their time and for answering every single question within the meeting. It was mentioned that everyone has gone through a lot through the pandemic but noted the enthusiasm on behalf of the partners and thanked them on behalf of the Committee for the work that they are doing.

#### **Conclusions:**

1. The Committee **noted** the Public Services Board Well-being Plan Annual Report 2020-2021
2. The Committee **agreed** to forward the Minutes to the Public Services Board as a summary of the issues raised and in particular wished to make the following comments to the Public Services Board:
  - The report was very positively received by the Committee. The report shows that the partners are working hard as a team and in terms of the Covid-19 recovery phase; the fact their partnership has strengthened through a most difficult 18 months sounds positive. The Committee also appreciated that the partners were able to answer each other's' questions and work well together, and also made comment that they are clearly not afraid of challenges and trying new things.
  - Members were pleased that individual interventions appear to be working well and that the partners are checking in and evaluating on a regular basis.
  - Whilst talking about the city centre regeneration, Members were interested and hopeful to move forward for the city to becoming green and carbon neutral. Members asked if we have information about each of the properties or old buildings in the city centre, such as energy ratings, that we may be working in partnership with.
  - Whilst Members praised the positivity of the report as encouraging, they voiced the importance of openness from the partners where they can admit of any issues that need to be worked on. Comment was made that if the partners are looking at the public perspective to ensure the goal of everyone being happy; they have to recognise that not every single person will be. The committee then enquired if there could be additional information at the end of the report to advise people of what things the partnership are looking to do in the future, what areas that may be struggling and what needs to be done to overcome them.

- Members were pleased to see more mention of the Armed Forces Covenant and the work to support the Newport Veterans Hub. Members praised the good work with the veterans and hope to see a continuation of this in future reports.
- The Committee recommended that the partners should be bolder and advertise more highlight the strong partnership work that they are doing for the residents by being proud and honest with the public about their collaborations. For example, the flower and greenery work done in the Victoria ward looks brilliant and people in the area know it is there, however they might not know where it came from and who put it there.

#### **4 Scrutiny Adviser Reports**

Invitees:

- Neil Barnett – Scrutiny Adviser

The Scrutiny Adviser presented the forward work programme, and informed the Committee of the topics due to be discussed at the next two meetings:

##### **3 November 2021**

- Norse Joint Venture Partnership – Strategy and Performance Review
- Education Achievement Service – Value for Money 2020-21

##### **17 November 2021**

- Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children

Members asked the following:

- Would the committee be able to have an informal briefing with officers for the Norse agenda item?

The Scrutiny Adviser told the Committee that this would be discussed with the officers to check if this can be arranged.

The meeting terminated at 6.46 pm