

## **Cwm Taf Public Services Board Joint Overview & Scrutiny Committee**

Minutes of virtual the meeting of the Cwm Taf Public Services Board Joint Overview & Scrutiny Committee meeting held on Friday, 17 September 2021 at 2.00 pm.

### **County Borough Councillors - Cwm Taf Public Services Board Joint Overview & Scrutiny Committee Members in attendance:-**

Councillor Caple (Chair)

#### **Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Councillors**

Councillor D Sammon

Councillor J Davies

Councillor D Isaac

Councillor Gibbs

#### **Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Councillors**

Councillor J Bonetto    Councillor G Caple

Councillor A Cox    Councillor A Fox

#### **Officers in attendance**

Mr C Hanagan, Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication (RCTCBC)

Mrs Sarah Handy, Members' Researcher & Scrutiny Officer (RCTCBC)

Ms Kirsty Smith, Senior PSB Support Officer

Ms Lisa Toghill, Senior PSB Support Officer

Mr John Crockett, Apprentice Webcasting Assistant

#### **Co-opted Members in attendance**

Mr Mel Jehu, Local Health Board Representative

Others in attendance:

Dr Tom Powell, Chair of the Community Impact Assessment Group

### **1 Welcome**

The Service Director, Democratic Services & Communications welcomed Members to the first meeting of the JOSOC for the 2021-22 Municipal Year.

### **2 Apologies**

Apologies of absence were received from County Borough Councillors T. Skinner (MTCBC) and Councillor W. Jones (RCTCBC). An apology of

absence was also received from Mr Maguire, Citizen Representative.

### **3 The 5 core statutory functions of the Cwm Taf Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

The Service Director, Democratic Services & Communications asked Members to note the 5 core statutory functions of the Cwm Taf Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

### **4 Declaration of Interest**

In accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, there were no declarations made pertaining to the agenda.

### **5 Minutes**

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2021 as an accurate reflection of the meeting.

### **6 Chair and Vice Chair Appointment**

Following discussion, Members **RESOLVED**:

1. To appoint Councillor Caple as Chair of the Cwm Taf Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the 2021/22 Municipal Year; and,
2. To appoint Councillor Isaac as Vice Chair of the Cwm Taf Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the 2021/22 Municipal Year.

### **7 The Cwm Taf Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme 2021-22**

The Service Director of Democratic Services & Communications gave an overview to Members in respect of the Cwm Taf Joint Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2021/22.

Members were advised that the forward work programme sets out a manageable and realistic programme of scrutiny activity, allowing for the more pressing matters to be considered whilst having the flexibility to respond to emerging issues.

Members were also reminded that last year, Members of the JOSOC noted that over the medium term the Public Service Board must demonstrate its value and role in improving the delivery of public services and that its purpose makes a positive difference to the residents of Merthyr and Rhondda Cynon Taf. This recommendation has been incorporated into the Forward Work Programme and Members of the JOSOC have been provided with the opportunity to hear and learn experiences from partners in respect of their experiences during the pandemic, the value of the PSB and to hear evidence from corporate leads of the public sector bodies.

Following discussion, Members **RESOLVED** to acknowledge the contents of the proposed draft Cwm Taf Joint Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2021/22.

## **8 Update on the Cwm Taf Assessment of Well-being**

Members were provided with an overview from Dr Tom Powell, the Chair of the Community Assessment Action Group.

Dr Tom Powell thanked the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee of Cwm Taf PSB for allowing him time and the opportunity to provide an update.

Members were provided with a presentation on the work of the Community Action Group to date.

Following the presentation, the PSB Senior Support Officer, Kirsty Smith, suggested that it would be a good idea to have a representative from the Scrutiny Committee to sit on the Action Group. The Chair asked for volunteers and Members agreed that it would be a good idea for the Chair to sit on the Group and to report back to the JOSCS. The Chair agreed to accept this proposal.

Discussion continued and the Chair asked whether the toolkit will be looking at the family unit and the pressures that COVID has put on families as a whole unit. The PSB Senior Support Officer, Lisa Toghil, advised that the RPB and the Population Needs Assessment have priority groups that will be looked at through the Social Services and Wellbeing Act. Members were advised that the PSB has a duty for population-wide wellbeing and will be considering the most those deemed disadvantaged and / or vulnerable, including the huge impact that COVID has had.

Discussions ensued and a Member queried how people could engage with the toolkits through the medium of Welsh language facilities. Dr Tom Powell advised that he will need to refer to the Chair of the sub group and report back to Members accordingly.

Following discussion, Members **RESOLVED** to note the update from Dr Tom Powell and the work of the Community Action Group.

## **9 The Cwm Taf Joint Overview & Scrutiny Committee Interim Annual Report 2020-21**

The Service Director of Democratic Services & Communications (RCTCBC) introduced the Cwm Taf JOSCS Interim Annual Report 2020-21, which details the work undertaken by the Committee during the 2020-21 Municipal Year.

Members received an overview of the Committee's work from the outgoing Chair, Councillor Bonetto. Members were thanked for their hard work during the year and Councillor Bonetto wished to place on record her personal thanks to Officers and support officers of the Committee.

Following discussion, Members **RESOLVED** to note the contents of the Annual report and work of the Cwm Taf Public Service Board Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

## **10 Update from a PSB representative on ongoing work to deliver against the Cwm Taf Well-being Plan 2018-2023**

The PSB Senior Support Officer, Kirsty Smith, provided Members with an update on the ongoing work of the Board to deliver against the Cwm Taf Wellbeing Plan 2018-2023.

Members were advised that the PSB Chair, Mark Brace, sends his apologies but has worked with the PSB Support Team to prepare this update.

Members were advised about the focus of the PSB as follows:

- PSB last met in July and the agenda was very much looking forward, both in terms of returning focus to the current Well-being Plan and Objectives and the work to undertake the next statutory assessment of well-being to be published in May 2022.
- When the PSB Chair last met with JOSCS, we as a Board were rightly challenged about not having workplans in place to be scrutinised and challenged. We are pleased to report that, in line with the PSB delivery year, delivery plans have been written for July 2021 – June 2022
- These were presented to PSB in July and have been included in the information reports for this meeting. We would welcome any questions or comments on these plans, these can be given through Lisa and Kirsty.
- The Board also considered the findings of a review of mental health provision carried out earlier this year and had a brief discussion about mental health as a future priority for the Board, linked to the work of the Assessment and Plan.
- These discussions took place in the context of a regional Health Foundation Event on 12 July looking at inequalities, and the interesting and informative discussions had at the session about the Assessment work, working with citizens and our communities to agree priority areas of focus and jointly agree how to tackle them.
- The PSB published its Annual Report in July 2021 as scheduled and in line with our statutory duty. The report provides an overview of the work of the Board over the last year against the five ways of

working and discusses the impact that Covid has had on the ability of the PSB and capacity of its Members. It also outlines our future plans regarding the Assessment and the remainder of the current Well-being Plan, 2018-2023.

Discussion continued and Members were advised about the Well-being Assessment and Regional Working:

Members were told that the PSB needs to undertake an assessment of well-being to be published in May 2022. This will be a joint assessment with Bridgend PSB, resulting in one Cwm Taf Morgannwg Wellbeing Assessment. The following points were noted:

- As previously mentioned, we also intend to collaborate with the Regional Partnership Board as much as possible. They need to undertake and publish a Population Needs Assessment by April 2022 so resources, intelligence, information and opportunities for involvement will be shared as much as possible.
- Cwm Taf and Bridgend PSBs were successful in applying for a 5-year support package with Co-Production Network Wales, one of only 3 chosen in Wales. Given the tight timescale and statutory requirements around the production of the Well-being Assessment, we are working under the acceptance that this iteration will not be fully co-produced, but the intention is for the next Assessment to be a fully co-produced process.
- A task and finish approach is being taken to the production of the Assessments which consists of a central steering group, an engagement group led by the communications officer of the RPB and one of the co-production officers we're working with, and a data group. This data group feeds directly into the work of Practice Solutions, the company procured using our PSB Support Grant to undertake the data report work and produce the final Assessment product.

Members were then advised about the ongoing work of the Board. The following points were noted:

- Work continues against the current Objectives, of particular note:
  - Regional working with the Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES) on progressive procurement and Community Wealth Building. A spend analysis has been completed as well as a commencement workshop and an implementation planning workshop resulting in actions needed to progress the work. These are around:
    - developing a more comprehensive understanding of local suppliers,
    - working to better understand the value and potential of our social enterprises,
    - reviewing 'leakage contracts' of spends outside of

- Wales and potential to use local suppliers, and
      - Streamlining and developing contract procedure rules and practice in relation to lower value contracts (below £25k / £50k).
    - Initial findings of the Vulnerability Profile work and an update on the CTM Early Years Transformation work are expected at upcoming PSB meetings.
    - The Hub model and networks created under the 'Thriving Communities' objective continues to be developed in line with community need.
    - The Loneliness and Isolation development officer for Cwm Taf, Karen Vowles, has been working to re-establish the Befriending Network for the region, and there will be a 'Hackathon' considering loneliness, isolation and older people on 13 October.
- The intention is still to have one PSB covering Cwm Taf Morgannwg, mirroring the footprint of the Regional Partnership Board. The Assessment will be a useful vehicle for doing this, and we know that we must be one PSB by the time of publishing a joint Well-being Plan. The remainder of this PSB cycle will confirm the timeline for the creation of the new regional PSB, the future structure of the Board and how it can consider and meet local need whilst working regionally at a strategic level. Key to this will be considering how we continue to work with the delivery boards that sit under the PSB such as the Community Safety Partnership and the Substance Misuse Area Planning Board.

Following the update, Members were asked if they had any questions and were also reminded that the Board will meet next on the 12<sup>th</sup> October.

A Member queried whether the Board is continuing to look at loneliness and isolation with the younger generation as well as the elderly population. The PSB Senior Support Officer confirmed that loneliness and isolation continues to look at a broad age range and that Karen Vowles continues to work with the younger generations on loneliness and isolation problems as well as many wide ranging social groups.

The co-opted Member, Mr Mel Jehu, referred Members to page 8 of the report and noted the importance of having a progress report and a RAG system report (Red, Amber, Green) so that the Committee can be reassured in relation to the progress and work of the Board. The PSB Senior Support Officer reassured Members that this is the intention of the Board and that JOSOC Members will receive update reports with a RAG system used.

Discussions ensued and the Chair referred Members to the meeting of the Chairs and Support Teams with Julie James, the Housing Minister, to discuss the role of the PSB's and the ongoing struggles the Boards face

in terms of funding. The Chair sought further information about that meeting and queried whether the notes from that meeting were available to share with JOSC Members. The PSB Senior Support Officer advised that the notes are not available yet and advised that Julie James has now changed her role within the Welsh Government. Members were advised however that the new Minister will be interested in meeting with PSB Chairs again and assured JOSC Members that they will be kept updated accordingly.

The Chair subsequently queried whether funding and resources were a big concern for the PSB. The PSB Senior Support Officer advised that as a PSB the only source of funding available from Welsh Government is a PSB Support Grant and it comes with criteria on how it has to be spent. In terms of undertaking projects, Members were advised that the PSB has to ask constituent partners to release funds from their side and that this can be constraint on the PSB's flexibility and ability to progress matters quickly. The Chair noted this important issue and asked to be kept updated accordingly.

A further query was raised by Mr Mel Jehu, the Co-Opted Member, who queried whether the Board was merging with Bridgend to become a Cwm Taf Morgannwg PSB. The PSB Senior Support Officer, Lisa Toghill, advised that this is the eventual aim of the Board and to follow the same footprint as the RPB. The intention is to become a merged PSB by July 2022, subject to approval from all involved. The Service Director, Democratic Services & Communications (RCTCBC) advised that discussions would then ensue with colleagues in Merthyr and Bridgend and to re visit the arrangements in terms of the host Local Authority and the composition of Membership, political balance and community representation.

Following discussion, Members **RESOLVED** to note the update in respect of the ongoing work to deliver against the Cwm Taf Well-being Plan.

## **11 Information Reports**

The Chair noted the Information Reports and advised Members to email any questions to [scrutiny@rctcbc.gov.uk](mailto:scrutiny@rctcbc.gov.uk).

## **12 Urgent Business**

There was no urgent business to report.

## **13 Chairs Review & Close**

The Chair thanked the Committee for electing him as Chair for the 2021-22 Municipal Year and wished to put on record his congratulations to Councillor Isaac for being elected Vice Chair of the Committee.

The Chair passed on his admiration and thanks to the outgoing Chair and

Vice Chair respectively, Councillor Bonetto and Councillor Skinner.

The Chair thanked Members for attending and referenced the upcoming training event with Dr Dave McKenna. The Chair expressed his enthusiasm for this event and hoped to see Members at the event in November.

**This meeting closed at 2.44 pm**

**Councillor G Caple  
Chair**