

**COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT**

**REPORT TO: THE CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC SERVICES BOARD SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**SUBJECT: PUBLIC SERVICES BOARD SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 28<sup>TH</sup> JULY, 2021**

**REPORT OF: DEMOCRATIC & COMMITTEE SUPPORT OFFICER**

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PRESENT: COUNCILLOR S. HEALY (CHAIR)

Councillors M. Cook  
G.A. Davies  
J. Hill  
J. Holt  
J. Millard  
M. Moore  
G. Paulsen

AND: **Leader of the Council/Chair of the Public Service Board**  
Councillor N. Daniels

WITH: Managing Director  
Service Manager, Policy and Partnerships  
Policy Officer (PSB)  
Scrutiny and Democratic Officer/Adviser

ITEM	SUBJECT	ACTION
No. 1	<b><u>SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION</u></b>  It was noted that no requests had been received for the simultaneous translation service.	

<p><b>No. 2</b></p>	<p><b><u>APOLOGIES</u></b></p> <p>The Labour Group wished it to be recorded that there was no attendance from Labour Group Members as the meeting had been moved to accommodate a last minute change by the Majority Group with no consultation with the Labour Group, even after the Leader of the Labour Group had responded to advise of the clash with the regularly planned Labour Group meeting before Council.</p>	
<p><b>No. 3</b></p>	<p><b><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></b></p> <p>No declarations of interest and dispensations raised.</p>	
<p><b>No. 4</b></p>	<p><b><u>PUBLIC SERVICES BOARD SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</u></b></p> <p>Consideration was given to the Minutes of the Meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> April, 2021.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED that the Minutes be accepted as a true record of proceedings.</p>	
<p><b>No. 5</b></p>	<p><b><u>MOVE TOWARDS REGIONAL GWENT PSB</u></b></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Managing Director.</p> <p>The Managing Director advised that the report provided Members with an update on the development of a Regional Gwent PSB and the next round of the Assessment of Local Well-being and Local Well-being Plans. It was reported that the report would be presented to Council on 29<sup>th</sup> July, 2021 to seek approval for a move towards a Regional Gwent PSB.</p> <p>The Managing Director spoke to the report and provided an overview of the process to be undertaken with regard to a move to a Regional Gwent PSB. It was noted that the current Well-Being Plans (2018-2023) form the delivery arrangements for the next two years and these would continue to be delivered by the local partnerships supported by the Regional PSB and scrutinised by partnership Scrutiny Committees in each of the local areas.</p>	

The Managing Director referred to the timelines for the process and advised that arrangements for Regional Scrutiny Committees were being discussed among democratic services leads and the aim was to conclude this to meet the approval requirements of the local assessment of well-being needs. The scrutiny of the existing well-being plans would be continued through local Scrutiny Committees until 2023. The Managing Director added that there would still be work for the Blaenau Gwent PSB Scrutiny Committee, however this work would gradually be taken on board regionally.

In terms of approval of reports, the Managing Director advised that Newport and Torfaen had already approved the move to a Regional Gwent PSB with Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly and Monmouthshire being considered this week.

The Chair and Members welcomed the report as it was felt that partnership working should be encouraged and recognised the benefits of working with other local authorities and partners.

A Member asked if there would be any cost implications in terms of officer time due to the change to the regional partnership. The Managing Director referred to the report and advised that there would be no financial implications for the Council, however, there would be additional work for staff in the Policy Team who supported the PSB. The Policy Team would now work with colleagues across Gwent to put the regional work in place. There was also an expectation of the Policy Team to continue to support the local delivery partnership.

In terms of resourcing the chair and administration of the new Regional PSB it would be rotated between statutory partners. The first meeting in the autumn would agree the Terms of Reference and appoint a Chair. The nominated Chair's respective organisation would be permitted to undertake the administration of the Regional PSB and for an agreed term of 2 years, following the end of the 2-year period another chair would be appointed. It was felt that this was a fair way to take forward chair and administration on the regional basis.

The Member also asked if a move to a Regional Gwent PSB was permitted under the Well-being Future Generations Act and was this change encouraged by Welsh Government.

The Managing Director confirmed that the move was allowed within the Act and noted the report which stated that two or more PSBs was permitted to form such a practice. Although, the Managing Director pointed out that there cannot be a Blaenau Gwent PSB as well as a Regional Gwent PSB, therefore local PSBs needed to be disbanded to move forward on a regional basis.

It was confirmed that Welsh Government was aware of the plans in Gwent to move to a Regional Gwent PSB. The Managing Director advised that Welsh Government are keen to see more regional working and have encouraged the Local Authorities in Gwent to go take this forward. The Gwent Region was the first in Wales to be formed, although other areas are looking at this way of this working.

A Member welcomed that all partners would be treated as equals and have a rotating Chair and administration, however the Member asked would there be a need for a local Scrutiny Committee.

The Managing Director advised that the current Scrutiny Committee would continue to have work for the next 2 years as it was important to scrutinise the local plan until 2023. Following 2023 there may not be the need for local Scrutiny Committees as this would be undertaken on a regional basis. An Officer added that partners carried out their respective scrutiny differently as the report stated, therefore there was a need to ascertain how this would be delivered going forward.

In terms of Elected Representatives on the Regional PSB and Regional Scrutiny Committee it was reported that this had not yet been discussed in terms of Scrutiny, however the representatives of each local authority for the Regional PSB would be the Leader of the Council and the Managing Director.

It was anticipated that in relation to the Regional Scrutiny Committee membership would be taken into consideration in due course and be based on proportionality across the organisations, any recommendations on matters going forward would be brought back to PSB Scrutiny Committee for consideration.

The Committee AGREED that the report be accepted and the following recommendations as detailed in Option 1 be noted:-

**Recommendation 1:** To move to a regional PSB as outlined in the report with the importance of maintaining strong local partnerships.

**Recommendation 2:** To establish regional scrutiny and the developing arrangements, and to receive further details as appropriate.

**Recommendation 3:** The local assessment of well-being, to be agreed by 5th May 2022, will be part of the PSB Scrutiny Committee work programme for 2021/22.

**Recommendation 4:** To support the proposed regional PSB terms of reference (Appendix 5), and requirements to make any relevant changes to committee structures and constitution.

**Recommendation 5:** The development of Local Delivery Partnerships to be considered in local scrutiny work programmes.

**Recommendation 6:** To continue to support Scrutiny of the current Well-Being Plans to 2023 through existing local partnership Scrutiny arrangements.

Councillor J. Millard abstained from the vote.