

Report to: Partnerships Scrutiny Committee
Date of Meeting: 25 September 2014
Lead Member/Officer: Leader/Partnerships and Communities Team Manager
Report Author: Planning and Performance Officer
Title: The BIG Plan: Part I, 2011-14 – Evaluation and Closure Report

1. What is the report about?

1.1 This report examines the delivery of The BIG Plan: Part I, 2011-14 (Denbighshire's integrated plan), identifying its impact on people in Denbighshire, and reflects on partners' success in streamlining what were previously complex partnership arrangements. The report highlights key lessons learned and recommends a change in approach going forward.

2. What is the reason for making this report?

2.1 To update the Committee on the difference made by The BIG Plan and lessons learned for the future.

3. What are the Recommendations?

That the Committee:

3.1 considers the report;

3.2 discusses the BIG plan's impact on the people of Denbighshire and the lessons learnt from managing the programme; and

3.3 comments on the proposed change of approach going forward.

4. Report details.

4.1 Background - A new way of working together (see Appendix 1)

4.1.1 In developing The BIG Plan (known as the single integrated plan), Denbighshire has become known, throughout Wales, as an innovator; influential in shaping the future of integrated planning in Wales. Previous partnership planning arrangements were complex, with a plethora of partnership plans and groups. In 2011, for the first time and before many other areas, the public sector in Denbighshire signed up to one single plan with agreement on a single set of eight outcomes.

4.1.2 The eight outcomes were ambitious and many required solutions to entrenched and intractable problems (such as poverty, vulnerable families, and economic prosperity). Because of this, one must exercise caution in expecting immediate improvements in all of the eight outcome areas in just a few years.

4.1.3 Partners took some time initially to establish this new approach while the Denbighshire Strategic Partnership Board was established. Leadership from this Board and the Conwy and Denbighshire Local Service Board has been critical to successful partnership working in the county.

4.2 What difference did The BIG Plan make to people in Denbighshire? (See Appendix 2)

4.2.1 The BIG Plan accommodated a range of statutory obligations and guidance from Welsh Government. Partners also identified new issues - or issues that had not previously been effectively prioritised in partnership, such as Denbighshire's economy, skills and employment issues, and early intervention

to support vulnerable families. Early indications show that addressing these priorities in partnership has improved outcomes for people, although the impact of The BIG Plan itself is less clear. Key messages for each outcome are listed below:

Outcome 1: Older People lead independent & fulfilled lives

- While there has been a good deal of activity in this area locally, regionally and nationally (the Council's Corporate Plan, North Wales Statement of Intent to Integrate Health & Social Services, the Social Services & Wellbeing Bill etc), The BIG Plan itself does not appear to have offered significant added value.

Outcome 2: People & Places in Rhyl benefit from regeneration activity

- The Rhyl Going Forward programme was not instigated by The BIG Plan, although its inclusion in The BIG Plan influenced LSB's awareness of and approach to regeneration in Rhyl.

Outcome 3: Children & Young People in Denbighshire are supported to live a life free from poverty, where they can be independent & flourish

- Some priorities in Outcome 3 were already underway, and their profile was raised by inclusion in The BIG Plan.

Outcome 4: Vulnerable families in Denbighshire are supported to live a life free from poverty, where they can be independent & flourish

- 159 families have been supported by Families First. Developments are underway to improve performance management to assess outcomes for families, and also to assess the cost benefits of this approach (most especially in respect of those families most at risk of requiring Social Services' input).
- Families First Income Maximisation project achieved £1,531,437 benefit and tax credit income gains lifting 180 households (70 per cent of all cases) out of economic poverty and 43 (15 per cent) out of fuel poverty. 72 per cent of families had an improved financial position as a result (2013/14)
- Denbighshire's programme is recognised across Wales as being at the forefront of outcome-focused, strategic commissioning. This has led to greater coordination of programmes (eg Flying Start, Families First, Communities First).

Outcome 5: Needs of our rural communities are recognised and met

- Partners struggled to identify priorities for our rural areas and indicators are inconclusive as to whether experiences of people living in rural areas have improved as a result of The BIG Plan.

Outcome 6: People in Denbighshire have healthy lifestyles

- People in Denbighshire generally have a good level of health and wellbeing and certain initiatives have been successful, eg tobacco control initiatives in partner organisations including public spaces such as playgrounds.
- However, inequalities in health are still pervasive
- This outcome provided a strategic focus for key delivery partners such as the Communication, Marketing and Leisure service in the Council.

Outcome 7: Children, young people and vulnerable adults in Denbighshire are safe

- Recorded crime has fallen in Denbighshire; however this is the case across Wales and has not improved our position in relation to similar areas.
- The number of children on the child protection register has grown and the number on the register for over 12 months remains concerning.
- The Community Safety Plan does not appear to have been significantly influenced by the BIG Plan, leading to the conclusion that the BIG Plan did not offer added value to this area of work.

Outcome 8: Denbighshire has a thriving and sustainable economy and a skilled workforce

- The BIG Plan proved influential and LSB took a strong lead on people-based economic issues through the following ESF-funded projects:
 - o A project to coordinate and improve training, skills and workforce development.
 - o A Progressive Engagement Pathways project to reduce the number of unemployed and disengaged 19-24 year olds has identified nearly 300 support services and found that there is a lack of understanding and awareness about these. The findings of this project will be critical to any future projects submitted to the Economic Ambition Board.
 - o A Financial Inclusion Together Project has trained over 625 frontline workers enabling frontline services to do more to support people to access quality financial inclusion advice and services.
- The BIG Plan highlighted poor basic skills in Denbighshire and this has led to some promising developments: LSB has approved a basic skills workstream in a single North Wales ESF bid addressing the support needed for those who are economically inactive. This bid will be developed by the Economic Ambition Board.

4.3 Lessons learned (see appendix 3)

- 4.3.1 Transformation to this new way of planning together led to some process issues and delays. Extended consideration was given to integrating partnership structures across Conwy and Denbighshire, which lost valuable time to agree and deliver action plans.
- 4.3.2 Given the collaborative nature of The BIG Plan I it has been complicated to track costs. Where priorities have been accompanied by clear funding arrangements, such as outcome 4 (Families First funding), changes to partnership working have happened more quickly, and, indicatively, are bringing about improved outcomes for people.
- 4.3.3 The financial environment is affecting partners' capacity to deliver services and work collaboratively across a broad range of priorities. This could lead to much more defined and specific collaborative work on a focussed set of issues, as partners have to consider very carefully what they can commit to tackling together and the benefits they plan to realise.
- 4.3.4 The BIG Plan galvanised the public sector to tackle a more focussed and meaningful range of issues together. It has driven strategic and business planning internally within organisations and has become the accepted model for partnership working, not only in Denbighshire but across Wales. However, The BIG Plan, was still too big – despite offering a significantly more streamlined alternative to previous planning arrangements – with unwieldy performance management and needs assessment processes.

4.4 Recommendations:

- 4.4.1 The future Single Integrated Plan should be a more focused plan, with fewer outcomes and priorities, while offering clarity on how statutory duties are being met in partnership.
- 4.4.2 Future plans need to be specific about the initiatives that are required to bring about improved outcomes, and must be precise about the desired and expected benefits, and when these will be realised.
- 4.4.3 The new Single Integrated Plan's performance management framework should be scaled to a manageable set of measures, enabling meaningful scrutiny of activity, performance and outcomes.
- 4.4.4 Early intervention delivers benefits for organisations and better outcomes for people, evidenced from new ways of supporting vulnerable families. This should be a population-wide area for consideration in future planning.

5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Priorities?

- 5.1 Not applicable.

6. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?

- 6.1 No extra funding is currently being sought for The BIG Plan or for the proposed Denbighshire Wellbeing Plan.

7. What are the main conclusions of the Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) undertaken on the decision?

- 7.1 The Equality Impact Assessment for Denbighshire's BIG Plan has been superseded by work to integrate equality into needs assessment. The proposed Wellbeing Plan will be accompanied by an EqIA.

8. What consultations have been carried out with Scrutiny and others?

- 8.1 This report will be considered by Denbighshire Strategic Partnership Board and Conwy and Denbighshire Local Service Board in September 2014.

9. Chief Finance Officer Statement

- 9.1 Not applicable.

10. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?

- 10.1 The recommendations above mitigate risks.

11. Power to make the decision

Articles 6.1, 6.3.2(f) and 6.3.4(b) outline Scrutiny's powers with respect to this matter.

Contact Officer:

Planning and Performance Officer

Tel: 01824 706291

Appendices

- 1 Streamlining processes – was it achieved?
- 2 The BIG Plan Outcomes and Indicators
- 3 Lessons learned