

**Report to:** Partnerships Scrutiny Committee

**Date of Meeting:** 14 January 2016

**Lead Member / Officer:** Leader of the Council / Strategic Planning & Performance Manager

**Report Author:** Strategic Planning & Performance Officer

**Title:** Local Service Board's proposed future arrangements for Public Services Board and options for Scrutiny

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**1. What is the report about?**

Arrangements for establishing the statutory Public Services Board, also including potential options for scrutinising the new PSB, in line with requirements of the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act.

**2. What is the reason for making this report?**

To request support from Elected Members of the Conwy & Denbighshire LSB's proposal for the future arrangements of the Public Service Board (PSB), and for Partnerships Scrutiny to make a recommendation as to which option to follow for future PSB Scrutiny arrangements.

**3. What are the Recommendations?**

That the Committee:

- 3.1 supports the proposal of Conwy and Denbighshire continuing with their joint arrangement and merge to become the Conwy and Denbighshire Public Service Board under the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act (subject to proposals continuing for Conwy and Denbighshire to merge under a future local government reorganisation);
- 3.2 supports the proposal of Conwy and Denbighshire having a single Wellbeing Plan for both counties;
- 3.3 supports working towards a target publication date of November 2017 for the joint Conwy and Denbighshire Wellbeing Plan;
- 3.4 considers the options for scrutiny of the PSB outlined in appendix 2, and supports the continuation of the existing scrutiny arrangements for the LSB/PSB and, subject to a decision on local government reorganisation, to introduce Joint Informal Arrangements as outlined in Option 4 of Appendix 2 from May 2017.

**4. Report details**

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act comes into force on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016 and places Local Service Boards (LSBs) on a Statutory footing under the new name

of Public Service Boards. At their September 2015 meeting, the Conwy and Denbighshire LSB agreed their desired approach for the future direction of the board and the necessary steps needed to be taken to form the PSB. The report discussed at the meeting is attached in Appendix 1.

4.1 The key proposals of the LSB were as follows:

- i. Conwy and Denbighshire LSB wish to continue with their joint arrangement and work towards a joint PSB – unless the Welsh Government Local Government reforms (the merger map) propose otherwise.
- ii. Conwy and Denbighshire LSB wish to have a single long term Partnership Wellbeing Plan for both counties.

Given the new statutory link to the Local Authority political cycle, both Councils would aim to publish their new Corporate Plans at a similar time to the proposed joint Wellbeing Plan, ensuring systemic links between the plans. A provisional target of November 2017 was proposed at the meeting. However, to ensure that working to this timetable is also feasible for regional partners, work is underway to produce a work programme to determine if this target is achievable.

4.2 A meeting was held on 5<sup>th</sup> November with Local Authority officers to discuss approaches to collaborating in support of a single PSB Needs Assessment and Wellbeing Plan, as well as facilitating an agreed approach to scrutiny. Local Authority Scrutiny Officers agreed to submit an options appraisal to Councils to agree an approach for scrutinising the work of the Public Service Board (see Appendix 2). It was agreed to aim to have a process in place by May 2017, existing scrutiny processes to continue until then.

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

This decision is independent of current corporate priorities, and instead begins to establish arrangements for managing priorities for the next electoral term. Legislation dictates that a public sector Wellbeing Plan would serve as a driver for the priorities of individual organisations.

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

6.1 Under the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act, administrative Support for the PSB must be provided by the local authority. It is proposed that the current arrangement of sharing this work with Conwy will continue, as long as funding is in place.

6.2 Support functions for the Local Service Board are currently provided via Welsh Government funding for a Local Service Board Development Officer (housed in Conwy at the moment). Funding for this function will cease on 31st March 2016 and, currently, no alternative methods of funding have been identified to support this work going forward.

6.3 The costs of any payments made to a chair of a joint Scrutiny Committee or Joint Sub-committee would need to be considered. Such payments would be in addition to the maximum proportion of its membership that can normally receive a senior salary, but it would be for the two authorities to decide whether such posts would be paid.

**7. What are the main conclusions of the Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) undertaken on the decision? The completed EqIA template should be attached as an appendix to the report**

This decision does not relate to a plan or policy and, as such, carries no implications in terms of equalities.

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

Consultation has been carried out through the discussion with LSB. This proposal has also been sent to Conwy County Borough Council's Partnership Overview and Scrutiny Committee (on CCBC's behalf), and is coming to Partnerships Scrutiny for DCC approval. Conwy CBC has not yet decided its preferred option for Scrutiny of the PSB.

**9. Chief Finance Officer Statement**

The report identifies a sensible and cost effective approach to establishing the statutory Public Services Board taking into account the requirements of the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act. The service has confirmed that the support functions will be able to be provided going forward by prioritising statutory requirements even if the funding is withdrawn by WG next financial year.

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

10.1 The risk that if Welsh Government choose to merge Denbighshire Council with Flintshire and Wrexham Council the joint PSB will have to be undone.

10.2 The risk that the Public Service Board becomes unsustainable due to lack of funding.

**11. Power to make the Decision**

Articles 6.3.2(b), 6.3.3(d) and 6.3.4(ch)

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