

Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee: Inquiry into Public Services Boards

Conwy and Denbighshire Public Services Board provides this response to the Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee shaped around the three key issues the committee have identified as Terms of Reference for the inquiry into PSBs:

- To gain an understanding of the structure and functions of the Public Services Boards.
- To explore the effectiveness of PSBs, resourcing and capacity.
- To gather evidence of issues or barriers that may impact on effective working, and examples of good practice and innovation.

1. Structure and functions of the Public Services Boards

1.1 In April 2016 the [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#) established a statutory board, known as a Public Services Board (PSB), in each local authority area in Wales. Conwy and Denbighshire have used the power within the Act to merge both of their separate PSBs into a single PSB for the Conwy and Denbighshire region.

Membership and meetings

1.2 The Conwy and Denbighshire PSB is chaired by the Area Director (Central) of Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board and the vice chair is the Chief Executive of Conwy County Borough Council.

1.3 Membership of the Conwy and Denbighshire PSB comprise of the statutory members and invited participants specified by the Act. The following are the agreed nominated representatives for the Board:

Statutory Members	Nominated Representative
Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board	Area Director of Central (representing the Chairman)
Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board	Chief Executive
Conwy County Borough Council	Leader
Conwy County Borough Council	Chief Executive
Denbighshire County Council	Leader
Denbighshire County Council	Chief Executive
Natural Resources Wales	Head of Operations North (representing the Chief Executive)
North Wales Fire and Rescue Service	Chief Fire Officer
Invited Participants	Nominated Representative
Community & Voluntary Support Conwy	Chief Officer
Denbighshire Voluntary Services Council	Chief Executive Officer
National Probation Service	Head of Local Delivery Unit
North Wales Police	Superintendent
Police and Crime Commissioner Office	Chief Executive

Public Health Wales	Public Health Consultant (representing the Executive Director of Public Health)
Wales Community Rehabilitation Company	Head of Local Delivery Unit
Welsh Government	Senior Civil Servant

1.4 Although the Conwy and Denbighshire PSB decided to keep membership to the core members stipulated in the Act during the development of their well-being plan, membership will be reviewed to ensure there is sufficient representation to deliver the priorities.

1.5 The PSB hold quarterly meetings and since November 2017, PSB meetings are now open to the public.

Purpose and Priorities

1.6 The purpose of the board is to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of the Board’s area by contributing to the achievement of the national well-being goals as specified within the Act.

- A prosperous Wales
- A resilient Wales
- A healthier Wales
- A more equal Wales
- A Wales of cohesive communities
- A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language
- A globally responsible Wales

1.7 The overriding principle of the PSB’s activities is sustainable development. This means the PSB must act in a manner which seeks to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The Board use the five key ways of working to carry out sustainable development:

- Long Term
- Prevention
- Integration
- Collaboration
- Involvement

1.8 The PSB initially had two main tasks -

- To prepare and publish an assessment of the state of economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Conwy and Denbighshire, and
- To prepare and publish a Local Well-being Plan for the counties of Conwy and Denbighshire setting out local objectives and the steps it proposes to take to meet them.

1.9 The well-being assessment was published in April 2017 and was informed by data, national and local research and most importantly feedback from residents, visitors and businesses through the County Conversation during the summer and autumn 2016. The assessment is available to view on the Conwy and Denbighshire PSB website (<http://conwyanddenbighshirepsb.org.uk/wellbeing-assessment>).

1.10 The Conwy and Denbighshire Local Well-being Plan was approved in April 2018 and sets out the local objectives we as a Board will take to improve the economic, social, cultural and environmental well-being for the area. This is where the PSB feel they can make the greatest contribution without duplicating good work already taking place within existing partnerships and organisations. The priorities the PSB has opted to take forward are:

- People - Good Mental Well-being for All Ages
- Community – Community Empowerment
- Place - Environmental Resilience

1.11 The PSB have also committed to 4 additional principles which support the priorities -

- To address inequalities and treat everyone equally.
- To support and promote the Welsh Language.
- To support access to appropriate accommodation.
- To avoid duplication.

1.12 Please find the Terms of Reference for the Conwy and Denbighshire PSB and the Conwy and Denbighshire Well-being Plan (summary and technical versions) appended to this document for further information.

2. Effectiveness of PSBs, resourcing and capacity

2.1 In accordance with the Act, the Local Authority partners provide secretariat support for the Board. This support rotates between the two local authorities (Conwy County Borough Council and Denbighshire County Council) on a biannual basis.

2.2 An officer group has been established for the PSB which provides support for Board activities such as consultation and engagement, editorial input or data collection/analysis. Officers who support the board are undertaking work in addition to their usual job role.

2.3 The Public Services Board does not have any dedicated resource to deliver projects in support of their identified priorities and also considers that the creation of another 'layer' of work would not be effective. As the priorities are developed in more detail, the PSB will assess the allocation of staff capacity and or funding resources either from existing budgets or through grant applications. The board recognises it can most usefully provide leadership, scrutiny and promotion of work in

these areas among existing structures, and seek to consolidate and challenge those structures to meet the agenda that it has set out.

- 2.3 Welsh Government have provided a regional grant (based on local health board footing) to support PSB's to deliver their Well-being Plans. In North Wales this supports 4 PSB's. For 2018/19, in North Wales the grant will be used to -
- Ensure analytical capacity and arrangements to support the maintenance of the local well-being assessments.
 - Commission research around any identified gaps in our intelligence and analysis, including those outlined in feedback from the Future Generations Commissioner and Welsh Government.
 - Commission research into best practice interventions, helping identify potential steps in support of local well-being objectives.
 - Work collaboratively across North Wales on common themes.
 - Ensure that the good regional engagement and involvement work that has informed our assessments and plans can continue.
- 3. Evidence of issues or barriers that may impact on effective working, and examples of good practice and innovation.**
- 3.1 There is a real sense of willingness and support from PSB members to make progress against the PSB well-being objectives. All partners can see the potential collective and organisational benefit of the actions that have been agreed but there are organisational pressures and often different planning timetables that can sometimes restrict the capacity and resources of partners to contribute as fully as they'd like to the work.
- 3.2 In addition to organisational pressures, several PSB partners are members of multiple PSB's both regionally (such as North Wales Fire and Rescue Service, Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board, North Wales Police etc) and nationally (such as Natural Resource Wales and Public Health Wales). As well as compounding the capacity and resource issue in supporting 4 PSB's across North Wales, this involves working to different local priorities.
- 3.3 The partnership landscape is complex within North Wales, as there are several regional strategic partnerships in operation (such as Regional Partnership Board, Safer Communities Board etc). Although this presents more opportunity for collaborative working, conversely there is a danger of duplication and / or too many priorities for partner organisations to focus on and allocate support and resources too.
- 3.4 The Conwy and Denbighshire PSB feel there is a need to better understand existing partnership arrangements locally and in time seek to consolidate and challenge those structures in order for the PSB to influence prioritisation and work going forward locally.

- 3.5 There is a concern there is limited resources and financial support to deliver the programme of work needed to achieve the local well-being priorities for the area.
- 3.6 The Act is about behaviour change (both individually and organisationally) and although the PSB wants to take different actions - there is uncertainty in how the PSB can influence, facilitate and support behaviour change to achieve our objectives, especially in the current economic climate of public sector squeeze.