



Conwy and Denbighshire Public Services Board

Annual Report 2020/2021 - A Self-reflection on the year.

Welcome to our third Annual Report. This report is our self-reflection about the difference we have made in the third year of our 5 year [well-being plan](#). An annual report is essential to make sure that as a Board, we are accountable to the public and can self-assess what we have achieved, challenge ourselves as to whether we are making a difference and consider what we can learn to improve for the future. All our work is aligned with the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the [5 ways of working](#).

You can visit our website to find out more [about us as a Board](#) and to learn more about our progress in the [first](#) and [second](#) year of our plan.

Achievements this year

The last year has been dominated by the global coronavirus pandemic. The outbreak has been described as the biggest challenge for the world since World War Two. COVID 19 has for most people, been the most difficult and emotional circumstances they have ever experienced. Never before have the lives of so many people around the world been affected at this scale or speed. As a result, we cancelled some of our Board meetings and project work as strategic and operational focus shifted to emergency planning and business continuity. All PSB Member organisations have spent this period of time responding to the pandemic - supporting communities and businesses, as well as adapting and creating new services to continue delivering public services.

Through these extremely challenging times, we have continued to collaborate and work closely together, however in line with the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, collaboration and delivery of emergency response took place via the North Wales Local Resilience forum. We all played an integral part in the response to the pandemic and underpinning Strategic Coordination Group and Tactical Coordination Group structures. As such, a number of PSB Well-being Plan actions were put on hold whilst services dealt with frontline response and staff from other services were redeployed to assist with service and pandemic related pressures. This included:

- Caring for people hospitalised by COVID
- Ensuring fire safety considerations / fire risk assessments were included to help keep patients safe in the new field hospital sites
- Rolling out the COVID vaccine programme
- Supporting vulnerable people in care homes and at home
- Providing keyworker childcare and online education
- Providing local communities with key information about COVID rules
- Providing a community support service delivering food and prescriptions
- Issuing business grants on behalf of Welsh Government
- Implementing Trace and Trace locally

- Monitoring and educating about compliance with COVID Rules and issuing fines where necessary
- Seconding our staff across services and organisations as needed

The Conwy and Denbighshire PSB are committed, and stand ready, to playing a key role in the regions recovery from the pandemic as the Strategic Coordination Group idles and hands primacy to the Recovery Coordination Group.

Our meetings did recommence online when the response to the pandemic permitted. As soon as we were able to provide simultaneous translation the meetings were made open to the public and we have continued to publish minutes online. Going forward, we will continue to hold some meetings virtually. This is a better use of senior manager's time, makes meetings more accessible for the public to observe and reduces our carbon footprint – contributing to our environmental resilience priority.

Our priorities

As the first lockdown eased, we held a workshop to review our priorities to ensure they were still relevant to the local community and the seismic shift in people's day to day needs. We concluded that our priorities still hold true, with elements of the current priorities being even more important and relevant in the current climate. We have also added some new focus areas that we think will help communities recover from the pandemic. Below is an overview of our current position.

1. People – Supporting Good Mental Well-being

What difference have we made?

The PSB work on this priority has been paused owing to the pandemic. However this does not mean that there is no support in this area. There are a number of groups and charities that are working in this field such as:

- DPJ Foundation
- Tir Dewi
- Mind Cymru
- ICAN
- Bwrdd Iechyd Betsi Cadwaladr
- Farm and Community Network
- RABI

Both farming unions and young farmers also have been doing great work in this field over the years to raise awareness on the topic. Projects include:

- [Ffit i Ffermio](#) – A 40 page booklet has been developed by a team with experience of farming and men's health - in Welsh and English. Originally written by Dr Ian Banks, himself a farmer, it has been revised and redesigned in partnership with several farming and rural organisations and has been distributed to all farm holdings in Conwy.

- It's Good to Talk – a night to raise awareness of Mental Health
- Mental health first aid – which was run by DPJ with around 25 individuals attending. This was to showcase the symptoms so they could acknowledge any problem / issues / concerns
- Mart Llanrwst – Nurses from BETSI and ICAN officers planned to visit and test cholesterol and blood pressures of the farmers and to support their mental wellbeing – however due to COVID this project was postponed.
- Yr Eisteddfod – A session was held at the Conwy Eisteddfod to raise awareness and Alun Elidiyr shared his experience of dealing with Mental Health.
- ICAN Centres – Two drop-in ICAN community hubs opened in Rhyl and Prestatyn in February and March 2020, which can be accessed on a drop-in basis, without a referral or appointment. The community space offers people a chance to talk through their problems and to be listened to without judgement, and access the services and support.

Are we making a difference and what can we learn to progress in the future?

There are some excellent good practice examples for this priority but there is more we can do collaboratively. Owing to the pandemic the PSB area of work has not progressed and as COVID pressures ease, we plan to establish a sub group with the aim of bringing multiple work strands together to maximise the effect in addressing the two focus areas below (which were agreed by the Board in November 2020) -

- **Farming / rural community**
 - Build upon good practice to raise awareness around Mental wellbeing and support targeted to the farming / rural communities in Conwy and Denbighshire counties.
 - Increase mental health literacy amongst support agencies.
 - Partnership working in the area to integrate mental wellbeing across farm agencies and develop further outreach programmes.
 - Invite Samaritans (Cymru) to do one of their 'rural workshops' in the area, which delivers the 'working with compassion' toolkit. The workshop places a focus on mental health.
- **Mental well-being of children (in educational setting)**
 - Building upon Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) work and use as a platform for training and development for school staff in supporting children's mental wellbeing
 - Work with local partners to support educational settings to access specialist mental health and wellbeing support as required –early help hubs, single points of access for children's mental wellbeing, adopt 'no wrong door' model.
 - Support Welsh Government in embedding a whole-school approach to mental health and emotional wellbeing.
 - Link with libraries and their provision of Emotional Literacy Support.

2. Communities – Supporting Community Empowerment

What difference have we made?

- **Dementia support** – Denbighshire Voluntary Services Council are leading on this through their Dementia Aware community led programme. The programme delivery has been repurposed to consider the COVID-19 landscape, such as online networking events and e-learning training.

DVSC has continued to deliver its services online with the Network meetings and online training. They have also been working closely with the local Action Groups and community to re-develop or provide alternative delivery of existing programmes, services, and activities so they can continue to support the local communities, along with delivering regular Dementia Friends awareness sessions across Denbighshire.

- **Social prescribing** – looking at a whole-system support pathway for residents on clinical weight management programmes, so that they are also offered support to engage with community activities that should improve overall physical and mental health, therefore making the interventions more sustainable.
- **Digital connectivity** – this is a new topic area that was identified by the PSB as a priority area in light of the impact of COVID-19 on increased home working and schooling. The situation has highlighted the importance of good digital infrastructure both for enabling community resilience during the pandemic and also for the new world that will develop post-pandemic (in anticipation of increased levels of home working in the future. A report on the situation in Conwy & Denbighshire was brought to PSB in November, and further discussions are to take place with the Lead for the North Wales Economic Ambition Board.

Are we making a difference and what can we learn to progress in the future?

The Dementia Aware Denbighshire Network has grown in strength and attendance offering a safe space for people to share concerns or information, get advice and learn more about Dementia and services available in Denbighshire. The Network allowed for opportunity to meet with people from other local organisations working with the same aims which has been valuable - especially in lockdown when they continued on Zoom. The Dementia Aware Denbighshire Grant Programme has been an enormously successful opportunity for the whole community, where it has inspired and will continue to inspire everyone across Denbighshire to become involved and spread the news. The programme in Denbighshire has influenced and inspired local communities to work together and explores ways of creating Dementia Friendly Groups across the county, by sharing information through meetings and stimulating initiatives in the county's towns. The next steps are to continue to work with local communities to influence and support them to become Dementia Friendly groups and to continue to support local Dementia projects and activities to become sustainable.

There is great scope for cross-sector collaboration within the projects above. With the social prescribing/weight management initiative in particular, good working

relationships were established between partners and there was much enthusiasm pre-pandemic. However, the work was paused during the pandemic due to a shift in priorities and limitations in terms of the social prescribing opportunities on offer during lockdown. It has potential to be effective again, if resource to facilitate and coordinate collaboration can be identified by PSB.

In terms of digital connectivity, Denbighshire and Conwy's strategies for improving infrastructure differ, though there is likely to be useful good practise learning to be shared. In-depth understanding of the strategies, challenges and opportunities could help PSB to progress this agenda across the region's footprint.

3. Place – Supporting Environment Resilience

What difference have we made?

- **Community Green Pledges** – We launched this scheme in January 2020 and we had started to gain momentum, celebrating 4 green pledges with a few weeks of launching the scheme. The scheme aims to encourage communities to reduce their environment impact and celebrate their success when they do so. Owing to COVID, the scheme was paused during 2020 but is now being relaunched in 2021 and at the time of writing we had received our 5th green pledge.

Case Study



We are delighted to announce that in 2020 Community Green Pledges were achieved by

1. **Llanfairfechan Town Hall** (Silver Status)
2. **Denbigh in Bloom** (Platinum Status)
3. **Friends of Kinmel Bay Library** (Bronze Status)
4. **Rhyl Community Fire Station** (Bronze Status)



Between them, these community groups have pledged to make a difference by upgrading their lighting to LED, swapping energy supply to renewable energy, insulating buildings, swapping to reusable party crockery, growing local food, planting drought tolerant & native wildlife friendly plants (so they don't need much watering in the summer), composting, recycling, providing a terracycle scheme, reducing paper use, and using a skills swap scheme to repair items.

Llanfairfechan Town Hall Committee said –

"We're so pleased to receive our Silver pledge status. The changes we have made have helped our budget as well as the environment. We've seen a reduction in our bills and the hall is more attractive now it's warmer and sound proofed, so we're seeing an increase in bookings".



Their top tips for making a pledge are:

- Make sure you have a place where people can drop items off easily
- Network – learn from others
- Make sure you have a team who are keen to help you
- Educate people on what you have on offer – use social media

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MAKE THE PLEDGE TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

- **Common organisational environment framework** – developing common steps/goals all PSB organisations can work towards to address the carbon reduction agenda. The framework has been revised to expand biodiversity and include the benefits from home working, the regional energy strategy and environmental certifications.
- **Green & Blues Spaces** – this is a new identified focus area looking at building on communities' re-connection and enthusiasm for their local environment during the 2020 and 2021 lockdowns and the role green and blue spaces have in our recovery from the pandemic, and in developing healthy communities.
- **Local Wellbeing Projects** – we are delighted that owing to a £25,000 Natural Resources Wales (NRW) Public Services Board grant to support delivery of the well-being objectives, we have supported two projects to promote sustainable travel via E-bikes in Colwyn Bay and community access to green spaces via a community woodland in Rhyl.

➤ **Coastal electric bike empowerment programme (E-bikes)**

We have funded £10,000 to purchase additional E bikes for the Coastal electric bike empowerment programme in Conwy.

The Rural Leisure Development team has used this money to expand their existing programme. Prior to lockdown, the team had been providing outreach sessions (within targeted areas) to support communities to engage more with the outdoors. They have been running specific electric bike activities to support people with mental health challenges, obese or weight management challenges and people who have been made homeless. To most people in this demographic riding a traditional bike may be difficult and they may have many barriers to overcome such as the cost of the equipment and the lack of confidence or experience in cycling. There is a great deal of evidence to demonstrate that electric bikes along with the support of qualified and experienced instructors, can help people become more active, healthy and have a better sense of wellbeing. This project brings together communities in the outdoors and encourages physical activity, and so supports all three of the PSB's priority areas.

The additional bikes will support the expansion of the project to the coastal area (based from Colwyn Bay/Porth Eirias area) utilising the paths from Conwy – Mostyn to encourage people from many communities to use cycling as a tool for both health, wellbeing and as a mode of transport. The team have supported many individuals to change their lifestyle. Some have changed their mode of transport from car to ebike after having a number of supported sessions. Others have joined local cycling clubs and some have gained qualifications in the sector and contributed back to the sport. In all cases participants have experienced a better sense of wellbeing.

When permitted, the project will deliver weekly sessions along the coastal path. The team are currently working with The National Trust and other partners on a similar project in the heart of Rural Conwy. As part of the project the instructors will teach road safety elements to help riders understand the Highway Code and best practice. Cycling has been shown to be a very positive and safe activity during these times. The need to socially distance and being outdoors in a well ventilated area both reducing the risk of infection compared to most other sports and activities. There is also no sharing of equipment making this activity one of the safest.

Work is developing with NRW to offer stopping points along the coastal bike routes that will raise environmental awareness. The Scheme is also hoping to develop other routes such as using Llyn Brenig and Lon Las Cefni. The team are also collaborating with Cartrefi Conwy to promote the project.

➤ **Glan Morfa Community Woodland**

Glan Morfa is a former landfill of 85 acres. Historically, the site has always been used by local people but not in sufficient numbers because they were deterred by its derelict appearance and issues with illegal motorbike access and extensive fly tipping. When Denbighshire Countryside Service were asked to take over the management of the site it was important that we had a vision that eclipsed the obvious environmental quality issues. We quickly picked up on its strategic location immediately adjacent to some of the more disadvantaged wards in Wales and the opportunity to address the shortage of good quality public open space in this part of Rhyl. It is an area to take in fresh air and exercise and to learn about the environment – essentially to connect communities with nature. The challenge is to encourage positive use of the site and to change people's perceptions. This will only be possible by working with a variety of partners.

The funding made available via the PSB grant has allowed us to reconfigure the numerous access points and install signage. This will allow 'access for all' whilst making it difficult for "off road" motorbikes to gain access to the site. The output will result in increased usage by young families with prams, wheelchairs/disabled buggies and cyclists who once at the site are safe in the knowledge that they can

enjoy the flat and surfaced paths without the danger and annoyance of off - road motorbikes. North Wales Police receive many complaints relating to illegal/unauthorised access at Glan Morfa and fully support the proposal.

Additional benefits are that the 13,000 trees that have been planted to date as part of the PLANT project will be given additional protection. Other funding spent at the site in 2020/21 is £18,000 via DCC Commuted Sums and £33,000 via the PLANT project.

The project contributes to the following 3 themes and as set out in the Area Statement for NE Wales:

- Develop and improve urban/rural Green Infrastructure
- Increase woodland cover for social, environmental, and economic benefits
- Promote the resilience of ecosystems in maintaining and enhancing biodiversity

Are we making a difference and what can we learn to progress in the future?

At a national and local scale, the Climate Emergency and Nature emergencies are recognised by many members of the PSB. The last twelve months have reminded us all how valuable the local environment and communities have been in lockdown and how important they will be in taking us forward.

We cannot work towards healthy places for people without resilient ecosystems and cannot make our ecosystems resilient without safeguarding stocks of natural resources. The regenerative economy safeguards and restores those stocks and is the route to the transformational change needed to achieve wellbeing.

Although COVID put our projects on hold, as we return to a new normal we must build upon the positive behavioural changes which COVID lockdowns have brought about (such as less commutes resulting in a reduction in air pollution and our carbon footprint). Looking ahead we will develop opportunities with communities to link climate and nature action with local wellbeing.

Other Areas of Work

We're still working collaboratively with other partnerships and national bodies, to avoid duplication and to share ideas. This year we have -

- reviewed key risks in the area and discussed what we can all do to help each other. We've developed a risk register to help us monitor our local risks.
- reviewed our website to ensure that is accessible to people with sensory loss.
- developed and implemented an action plan to address the recommendations from Wales Audit Office's review into PSBs.
- contributed to the Welsh Parliament Public Accounts Committee review into the *Barriers to the successful Implementation of the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015*.

- participated in Welsh Government's working groups to discuss support for developing well-being assessments.
- reported our progress to the Joint Conwy and Denbighshire PSB scrutiny committee, who after a resumed meeting virtually in January 2020.

Reflecting on this year

Whilst this report looks back on a most extraordinary year, we must also look forward and consider what aspects of service change we want to retain as we move into a 'new normal'. We have been working in partnership with Wrexham Glyndwr University to review our purpose and how we can work as a Board going forward.

The PSB sits amongst a number of collaborations across North Wales and we have used workshops with Glyndwr University to consider how we can continue to make a meaningful contribution to the partnership landscape without duplicating the work of other partnerships. We will continue to work on our future purpose and relationships and to ensure we learn and build upon the findings of the Public Accounts Committee Report.

Looking Forward

This year we started a review of our [Well-being Assessment](#). A Well-being Assessment seeks to capture the strengths and assets of its people and communities. It also seeks to describe the challenges and opportunities faced both now and in the future. The review of the Well-being Assessment will be informed by new data, updated national and local research and most importantly feedback provided to us from residents, visitors and businesses across Conwy and Denbighshire. It will give us insight into what the new pressures are and whilst it is too early to fully comprehend, it will give some insight into the impact of COVID and Brexit. A first draft will be available by October 2021.

The feedback we receive from communities is vitally important. Those communities of interest who have lived experience are best placed to inform what are the challenges and opportunities, and what are the best ways to address them. Trying to engage during lockdown is a challenge in itself, but we also want to review our approach to engagement to ensure that we hear and listen to the voices of the seldom heard and that we feedback to people about what we have changed as a result of their contribution. To this end we are also reviewing our approach to engagement and developing a North Wales engagement network so that we can share community feedback and listen to new ideas whilst avoiding repeatedly asking communities the same questions. We will use the Wellbeing Assessment and community feedback to inform the development of a new PSB Wellbeing Plan which will be drafted by 2023.

Get Involved

We want you to stay in touch & get involved in our work. You can:

- Come to one of our meetings, all the [dates and agendas](#) are published on our website
- Follow us on social media through [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#)
- Stay involved and share your views through our [website](#)
- Email us at countyconveration@conwy.gov.uk
- Write to us at C/O Corporate Improvement and Development Team, Conwy County Borough Council, PO Box 1, Conwy, LL30 9GN
- Call us on 01492 574059 (BT Relay Service Customers with hearing or speech impairments can contact any Council service by dialling **18001** before the number they require).
- British Sign Language users can contact Conwy County Borough Council using a Sign Language interpreter, through the InterpretersLive! service, provided by Sign Solutions – visit www.conwy.gov.uk/Contact-Us/sign

We are happy to provide this document in large print, audio and braille.

This document is also available in Welsh.