

Gwynedd and Anglesey Public Services Board Annual Report 2021

The Chair's Foreword

Here we present our third annual report. In this report we will self-reflect on what has been achieved against our [Well-being Plan \(2018\)](#). Of course, it is not possible to look back at 2020/21 without referring to the Covid-19 crisis and the impact it has had on our services, businesses and residents. Dealing with the crisis has highlighted the importance of the services provided by the voluntary and public sector to our communities, and the importance of the collaboration between them. In addition, the crisis has magnified existing issues e.g. mental health issues, community resilience, over-tourism, second homes and threats to the Welsh language. It will be important that we as a Public Services Board ensure that our well-being objectives are addressed as a key part of the recovery following the crisis.

Introduction

The [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#) places a duty on public bodies to improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. The act is based on the principle of sustainable development and places a duty on public bodies to set and publish well-being objectives and to take all reasonable steps to achieve those objectives. The principle of sustainable development refers to five ways of working that public bodies are expected to think about to help us work better together and to address some of the long-term challenges that we face. The five approaches are to consider the long term, to prevent problems from occurring, to work in integration with other public bodies, to work together to achieve the objectives and to involve people interested in achieving the well-being goals, ensuring that those people reflect the diversity of the area they serve.

The Act also established Public Service Boards which include representation from different public bodies. The role of the boards is to assess the state of well-being in their areas and to set objectives to ensure the best possible contribution towards them. After conducting these assessments, we as a Board have a duty to publish a Local Well-being Plan setting out our objectives.

Following its well-being assessments back in 2017, the Board prioritised six areas: The Welsh language; Homes for local people; The effect of poverty on the well-being of our communities; The impact of climate change on the well-being of communities; Health and care of adults and The welfare and achievement of children and young people. Following full consideration of the work taking place to tackle the impact of poverty across Gwynedd and Anglesey, the Board decided that they did not need to take a specific role in this field at present but that they would receive presentations regularly on the work taking place in order to consider whether there is a role for the Board to step into the future. To address the other priorities, the Board established four operational sub-groups:

- Climate Change
- Homes for local people
- Integrated Health and Social Care
- The Welsh Language

This report therefore refers to the work of the above sub-groups. In the main, the organisations involved in the Board have focused on restoring our communities in the last year. The Regional Group responsible for recovering from the pandemic asked Public Services Boards to consider their

role in recovery, focusing on community resilience. We therefore asked all Board members to undertake a situational analysis to improve our understanding of those issues that are increasingly affecting our communities since the crisis. A workshop was held in September 2021 to discuss those issues further, taking into account how we can work together to respond to them. Among other things, these issues included the impact of second homes on our communities, mental health issues and youth unemployment. It was decided that a number of the Board's organisations were already working together to respond to these matters and that the role of the Board would therefore be to maintain an overview of the work and seek assurance that we as public bodies are responding appropriately.

The Board will continue with the work of assessing the condition of our communities as part of their well-being assessment 2021/22, and as part of that there will be an opportunity to hear from the people and communities of Anglesey and Gwynedd about what is important to them. The assessment will improve the Board's understanding of the needs of our communities, looking at the challenges and opportunities for the future.

Reports on the work of the Public Services Board's Subgroups

Climate Change

Why is this important to the residents of Gwynedd and Anglesey?

A Climate Change sub-group was established to encourage collaboration among public organisations on mitigating the impact of climate change, and in particular the impact of coastal and inland flooding on our communities. We have identified the need to educate and work with our communities to prepare them for the current challenges of climate change and those facing us in future. The aim is to try to mitigate the impact that any events of extreme weather have on those communities.

Update on our work to date

Although the Covid-19 crisis has taken our attention in the past year, climate change issues are still a major challenge for us. We cannot meet the challenges ahead on our own so a collaborative effort will be essential.

During the last year Natural Resources Wales commissioned work to look at a regional approach to mitigating the impact of Climate Change. This was on behalf of all Public Services Boards in North Wales and the North Wales Leadership Board. The main output of this work was an agreement to work together across the public sector in North Wales to respond to the challenge by establishing a Climate Change group for North Wales. The main aim of this group will be to achieve the Welsh Government's aims to reduce carbon emissions. The focus of the work by the Gwynedd and Anglesey Public Services Board will continue to be a local response to the challenges of climate change.

A series of workshops were held, and a large number of organisations were invited to contribute and agree a short, medium and long term action plan. It was concluded that the next steps will be to work closely with communities to hold necessary conversations about what is important in relation to climate change, and flooding in particular.

In addition, Natural Resources Wales has held conversations with our communities as part of their Area Statements. The talks provided us with an opportunity to think about what we need to do as individuals, communities and organisations to respond to Climate Change. The findings and key messages from the conversations will be considered by the climate change sub-group.

During lockdown many of us realised the importance of the natural environment. We used our cars less and saw positive impacts on the quality of our air and water.

How does the sub-group contribute to the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015?

The sub-group operates a number of the ways of working that have been developed as part of the Sustainable Development principle of the Act by:

- understanding the needs of specific communities that enable us to plan for the **long term**
- **working with** a number of public bodies and our communities
- **involving** our stakeholders as an integral part of the sub-group's work

Homes for local people

Why is this important for the residents of Gwynedd and Anglesey?

The Board originally asked the group to establish a joint working regime in the housing sector and to develop more suitable and affordable homes in the right places. Of course a number of the Board's partners already had plans to develop affordable housing but one benefit of working together was to achieve economies of scale – namely joint housing development to reduce development costs and to be able to focus on developing innovative housing. To achieve the economies of scale it was anticipated that more than one site needed to be developed at the same time and to co-procure the associated development work.

Update on our work to date

For reasons outside the control of the sub-group and as not enough sites had been submitted by the Board's partners, the co-procurement of the housing developments under consideration has not been possible.

However, a good joint working regime has been established in the housing sector and the focus has been on planning for the development of more affordable housing in the right places, with an emphasis on developing innovative housing with a low carbon footprint. It has not been possible to develop more affordable housing beyond the organisations' existing arrangements. However, there has been a review of all redundant sites within the Gwynedd and Anglesey catchment area, and the Housing Associations and Anglesey Council were successful in attracting financial support through the IHP4 grant regime ("Innovative Housing Programme Phase 4") which has secured a programme to develop 139 affordable innovative housing on Anglesey. The work of the sub-group contributed to the process by working together on the grant application.

Establishing a joint working regime has been of great benefit to the partners. It has added value to work already being undertaken by partners through the sharing of ideas and information, and good practice. Collaboration has also enabled the evaluation of different models of innovative housing and this exercise will be of use to a number of the relevant partners as they develop housing in future.

In addition, through collaboration good practice was shared, and an arrangement was made to share information between the finance officers of some of the public organisations. Their methodology and financial assumptions were shared when considering the financial viability of the development plans of the various partners. The outcome of this will be of use to the relevant partners in their future housing developments.

Following this, the homes sub-group has therefore considered and agreed that their work is coming to an end as there is no further value that they could add to work already being undertaken in the housing field by individual organisations. The Board will therefore need to reconsider this priority and agree the way forward.

In addition to the work of the homes sub-group the Public Services Board has been considering the impact of the Covid-19 crisis on other housing issues. A workshop held by the Public Services Board in September 2020 discussed two issues in particular that have been increasingly highlighted as a result of the crisis, namely homelessness and second homes. Clearly the Board's partners have a role to play in dealing with these issues but for the time being, it was agreed that the Board's role would be to keep an overview of the issues and to receive updates from the partners in the future. This will

enable the Board to feel assured that these issues are being dealt with appropriately by the public bodies.

How does the sub-group contribute to the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015?

The sub-group operates a number of the ways of working that have been developed as part of the Sustainable Development principle of the Act, by:

- contributing to the delivery of **long-term** housing development plans within the organisations involved in the project
- encouraging **collaboration** between a large number of public organisations.

Health and Social Care

To deliver against this priority area sub-groups have been established in the children, adults and mental health areas. Each of these sub-groups report to the health and social care sub-group. The purpose of the health and social care sub-group is to establish a joint working regime in the sector concerned and to maintain an overview of the development and transformation of services, and the way in which we support individuals in our communities.

The work in the health and social care field proved to be of key importance as we deal with the Covid-19 crisis and as we carry out the work of recovering our communities afterwards. New ways of working have been developed virtually which have been of great benefit to the multi-disciplinary teams. Weekly meetings were also arranged among the partners during the emergency period to discuss the most pressed services and to offer joint responses. A willingness to work together and adapt to very challenging working circumstances has been demonstrated.

As a result of the need for the relevant services to prioritise their response to the crisis, the work of the health and social care sub-group, namely the transformation of our services, has been delayed for a period of time. Work has now re-commenced and below is an update on their progress over the past year:

Mental Health

This work stream focuses on developing a more integrated system with a focus on preventative work. The programme has four parts:

- Working together to promote emotional health and well-being and to prevent mental health crisis from developing
- Providing a holistic, timely response to individual needs with the aim of supporting people to stay safe in the community
- Workforce development - The integration of health care is introducing changes to the way we work. We will develop the skills and knowledge needed for joint action.
- Developing more accessible and appropriate housing (and support) for people at risk of a mental health crisis.

More recently Mental Health Practitioners with roles to support individuals work in four GP surgeries in Gwynedd and Anglesey. This means that individuals have timely access to mental health assessment and support. This is a positive step forward and responds to our objective of planning preventative services.

Adults

A focus has been placed on laying strong foundations for the Community Resource Teams (CRT), which are teams that have been established within 5 areas and include members of local authority and Health Board staff. The purpose of the CRT is to bring services together to provide the appropriate support to our residents, to ensure a single point of contact for individuals' health and social care issues, and ultimately to support them to live independently.

A number of tasks have been completed in the last year on laying the foundations for the CRT, all of which contribute to the introduction and implementation of this new way of working. Information governance issues have been addressed to ensure that suitable data sharing agreements are in place; training in multi-disciplinary leadership has been provided; a Sharepoint system has been developed which allows all TAC members to share relevant information about

their work and the barriers they face and all developments are communicated to raise awareness of them.

In addition to the establishment of the CRT arrangements the health and social care sub-group has also been developing projects at Local Authority and sub-regional level such as:

- SPOA front door project – to consider models of establishing central places to access health and care services
- hospital discharge project – to ensure that people can be discharged from hospital as soon and as safely as possible, by working together as a team to support the individual to leave hospital.
- a new domiciliary care model for Gwynedd – looking at how we deliver health and care services, focusing on what matters to people receiving those services
- a bilingual working project – to support the use of Welsh in health and social care.

In addition, work is taking place on a regional basis to respond to the Population Needs Assessment. The sub-group will encourage joint working between Local Authorities and the Health Board and maintain an overview of the work for that Assessment.

Children

Originally the intention was to develop a multi-disciplinary team covering a wide range of professionals who would provide a high quality transformational service for children and families on the periphery of care. Work was delayed due to the Covid-19 crisis. However, the children's sub-group has now consulted with the organisations' team managers and staff and has produced a training programme which includes a wide range of training for staff. This will enable them to work better with children and families on the periphery of care, to provide the appropriate care and support.

In terms of early support for children and families in local communities, the sub-group is working with the third sector with the aim of helping families to reintegrate into their communities after lockdown and to provide early help and support to those families.

Robust arrangements are now in place by the health and social care sub-group to drive the work forward as we resume following having to prioritise our response to the Covid-19 crisis. The sub-group has also had time to revisit their terms of reference, and the expected outputs are clear for the next 6-12 months:

- Making progress in the children, adults and mental health work streams as the role of the sub-group will be to work with the sub-group leaders on responding to the barriers to full implementation.
- Continue with the sharing of information and data amongst our partners in order to plan services effectively.
- Deliver the actions agreed for the sub-group by the Public Services Board.

How does the sub-group contribute to the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015?

The sub-group operates a number of the ways of working that have been developed as part of the Sustainable Development principle of the Act and is in line with many of the national design principles in 'A Healthier Wales', the Government's Health and Social Care Strategy, by:

- taking account of **future** trends and responding to changes in demographics
- putting the sustainability of our health system as an output for the sub-group in order to plan for the future
- developing a **preventative** model
- **integrating** our health and social care services to make a real difference to the lives of our residents
- recognising a wide range of factors that influence health and well-being (including education, housing, reduced homelessness, economic growth, regeneration, leisure and the environment)
- realising the benefits **of partnership working**

The Welsh Language

Why is this important to the residents of Gwynedd and Anglesey?

The Board understands how important the Welsh language is to our communities across Gwynedd and Anglesey, and that it is part of the social fabric and cultural identity of the area. Being able to live their lives through the medium of Welsh and access community services and activities in Welsh is important to our communities and we are committed to working together to increase the use of the Welsh language within public bodies in Gwynedd and Anglesey. We are also committed to promoting Welsh as the language of choice for communication among public organisations across both counties.

Of course, the Covid-19 crisis has presented some significant challenges for organisations in trying to ensure the continuity of their services. The conditions and restrictions of having to work virtually, as well as the lack of ability for community groups to come together have made it difficult to maintain some services and opportunities to use the Welsh language. We as public bodies have sought to ensure that the citizen continues to engage with the public bodies in the language of their choice, and we continue to be equally passionate about contributing to the Welsh Government's target of having a million Welsh speakers by 2050.

Update on work to date

It is fair to acknowledge that the work of this sub-group has effectively been completely delayed during 2020/21 as a result of the Covid-19 crisis. Because relevant staff were diverted to be doing different work or had to change their priorities, the sub-group was unable to meet regularly to drive the work programme forward.

As a result, there is no progress to report for 2020/21. However, it was noted in the Board's Annual Report for 2019-20 that the sub-group is considering a project relating to linguistic behaviour in reception areas and this remains a priority. The original intention was to pilot different types of interventions in order to be able to provide guidance to reception staff from different organisations on how to encourage the use of Welsh with the aim of increasing public confidence to use Welsh when engaging with public bodies.

Although this project was approved by Board members in March 2020, it has not been possible to implement it as a number of reception areas across the public bodies had to close due to lockdown restrictions. However, since early 2021 we are currently reviewing the original project proposal to reflect the current situation. This includes consideration of the change in the way the public communicates with public organisations and any change in the role of reception areas.

We hope to be able to start this work following early approval by the Board. The objective is to normalise the Welsh language as people go about their public business and ultimately, that could lead to not only more people using services through the medium of Welsh but also an increase in the number of people seeking and expecting it from organisations of all kinds. From the resident's perspective, expression is often easier when using first language especially when discussing sensitive issues, such as issues relating to the well-being of individuals, so the aim is to simplify the process of getting appropriate support.

The sub-group is also currently considering other potential projects to address the commitment in the Gwynedd and Anglesey Well-being Plan so that a work programme for the coming year can be put in place.

How does the sub-group contribute to the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015?

The sub-group operates a number of the ways of working that have been developed as part of the sustainable development principle of the Act, as well as the additional ways agreed by the PSB namely the Welsh Language and Equality by:

- ensuring that the **Welsh Language is** a natural part of the work of Gwynedd and Anglesey's Public Services
- **working together** to raise awareness, share good practice, develop the skills and confidence of public services to use Welsh with service users and to encourage them to make use of the language time and again
- **including** the views of relevant stakeholders as they introduce new projects.

Looking forward to the year ahead

Every 5 years, and as one of the statutory requirements introduced by the Future Generations Wellbeing Act (2015), Public Services Boards must prepare and publish an assessment of the state of economic, social, environmental and cultural wellbeing in their areas. Gwynedd and Anglesey Public Services Board have started the process of revising the Wellbeing Assessment.

Once again the Assessment will pull together a range of information about Gwynedd and Anglesey's communities. This means that we will be looking at research, collecting data and engaging with our residents to find out what is good about their communities, and what isn't as good. It will be an opportunity for us to consider the challenges and opportunities in our communities, by considering the effects of the Covid-19 crisis and Brexit on them.

Working with our communities on the assessments is a key part to ensure that we understand their true needs. The information shared by our communities will contribute to our wellbeing assessments which are to be published by May 2022. The assessment will set the direction for the Board's priorities as part of the Wellbeing Plan.