

Committee	Communities Scrutiny Committee
Date	13th July 2023
Title	Annual Report of the Gwynedd and Anglesey Public Services Board 2022-23
Cabinet Member	Cllr Dyfrig Siencyn
Purpose	To review the Annual Report of the Gwynedd and Anglesey Public Services Board 2022-23

1.0 Introduction and context

1.1 We present the Annual Report of the Gwynedd and Anglesey Public Services Board (PSB) 2022-23. This was the final year of our Well-being Plan 2018-23. In this report, we will reflect on what we have achieved as a Board to improve the well-being of our communities during the period 2022-23.

1.2 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 Act also established Public Service Boards with representation from key public bodies. Every five years the Public Services Boards must prepare and publish an assessment of the state of economic, social, environmental and cultural wellbeing in their areas and use this as the basis of the Wellbeing Plan for the following five years.

1.3 We are now in the last year of the Well-being Plan 2018-23 for Gwynedd and Anglesey, where the Board had prioritised six areas of work:

- 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.

1.4 The Board has learned from experience and adapted its structures over the last five years to account for work being undertaken elsewhere. Since a number of the Board's members were already working together to respond to these matters it was agreed 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. To address the remaining priorities, the Board currently has two operational sub-groups:

- Climate Change
- Welsh Language

2.0 What has been achieved this year

2.1 Preparing the 2023-28 Well-being Plan:

In May 2022, Local Well-being Assessments for Gwynedd and Anglesey were published. The Public Services Board has divided the two counties into 14 smaller areas and research was carried out in order to understand and learn more about the wellbeing of those areas. Eight of these areas are in Gwynedd and six are on Anglesey. The information brings together local data,

messages from engagement work with communities and national research work. The Information Pamphlets for each area are available on our website.

Following the publication of the Well-being Assessments in May 2022, they were used as a reference to the Board's priorities for drawing up the 2023-28 Well-being Plan. Having considered the data and people's opinions locally, nine key messages were highlighted in the assessments for the whole area:

- Responding to poverty and the cost of living
- Improving the health and well-being of children and young people
- Improve mental health and well-being
- Climate change – supporting communities to reach net zero targets
- Promote the use of the Welsh language
- Enable equal experience and access to nature
- Planning a workforce for the future that meets the needs of the community and the local economy
- Secure housing for local people
- Influence the financial priorities of public bodies

A series of further workshops were held with Board Members during 2022 based on the key messages identified in order to prioritise and agree how it would be possible to respond to these issues. By using the evidence in the Well-being Assessments, the Board has identified *three Well-being Objectives to work on together in the period 2023-2028:*

- We want to work together to mitigate the impact of **poverty** on the well-being of our communities.
- We want to work together to improve the well-being and success of our **children and young people** in order for them to realise their full potential.
- We want to work together to support our services and our communities to move towards **Zero Net Carbon**.

In a period of significant reduction in public sector resources, we believe that these are areas where we can work together to ensure the best results for the residents of Gwynedd and Anglesey.

Whilst the Welsh language has not been identified as a specific Well-being Objective, it is a priority for the Board and we will continue to promote the use of the **Welsh language** in all areas of our work, and work with communities to develop services and activities through the medium of Welsh. The Public Services Board is an opportunity to share good practice, promote the language and ensure that residents of both counties have access to all public services through the Welsh language.

2.2 Public consultation on the Well-being Plan 2023-28:

In accordance with the requirements of the Act, a public consultation was held on the draft plan for a period of 12 weeks between 12 December 2022 and 6 March 2023. Many opportunities were provided for individuals, interest groups and organizations to participate in the consultation by holding workshops and information sessions. There was also a questionnaire available on the Board's website or paper copies available in the Council's main offices and libraries. Copies could be requested in an alternative format.

499 responses to the questionnaire were received as part of the public consultation with many of the comments supporting what is being proposed. Feedback was obtained from approximately 200 additional individuals through engagement such as workshops and information sessions held through Older People's Forums, engagement with Grŵp Llandrillo students in Pwllheli, a group of young people from GISDA, various Third Sector Groups, and Town and Community Councils.

Attention was given to the consultation in Anglesey County Council's Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee and Gwynedd Council's Communities Scrutiny Committee. There were also several messages on the Board's social media accounts and these were shared by other Board Members on their own social media.

We are confident that the Well-being Plan now reflects many of the comments received from the consultation and the Board will revisit all the feedback again over the next year specifically when preparing a Delivery Plan for the priority areas.

2.3 Climate Change:

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

A Climate Change subgroup was established to encourage collaboration among public organizations on mitigating the impact of climate change, and particularly the impact of coastal and inland flooding on our communities. We have recognised the need to educate and work with our communities to prepare them for the current challenges of climate change and those that face us in the future. The aim is to try to mitigate the impact that any case of extreme weather has on those communities. During the lockdown period, many of us noticed the importance of the natural environment - we used our cars less and we saw the positive effects of that on the quality of the air and water.

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

The subgroup implements a number of the ways of working that have been developed as part of the Sustainable Development principle of the Act through:

- understanding the needs of the specific communities which enables us to plan for the long term
- working with a number of public bodies and our communities
- involving our stakeholders as an essential part of the subgroup's work

2.4 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 throughout 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 having access to 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 sector bodies in Gwynedd and Anglesey. We are also committed to promoting the Welsh language as the language of choice for communication among public sector bodies across the two counties. As public bodies, we try to ensure that the citizen continues to engage with public bodies in their chosen language, and we remain equally passionate about contributing to the Welsh Government's target of having one million Welsh speakers by 2050.

An update on this year's work:

During 2022/23, research was commissioned into the reasons why people choose to use Welsh or not when receiving first contact services. The research was intended to:

- understand the linguistic habits of those who use first contact services;
- understand the challenges and reasons behind any choice not to make use of services through the medium of Welsh;
- understand how we can create the best possible environment in order to encourage the use of Welsh when using our first contact services.

The key findings from the observation exercise were:

- that a proactive offer was in place in each reception to some extent, but that was not always enough to encourage the use of the Welsh language - the service users needed to hear the Welsh language in order to know for sure that the Welsh language was in place.
- that the opportunity for reception staff to make a difference to service users' language choice is very limited – highlighting the real importance of the first greeting from the staff.
- that a high percentage of the interactions take place between service users and staff who already know/are familiar with each other.

Feedback sessions were held for managers in all the organisations and there was interest across North Wales. A **guide** has been shared which includes a list of recommendations for staff to follow in order to encourage service users to use their Welsh. The points include:

1. Understanding language choice - what is the brief background that everyone needs to know.
2. Environment – the difference between the visual and the auditory, and the true importance of the auditory.
3. Greeting – the importance of greeting the service users taking responsibility for the choice of language.
4. Response – how to be responsive in various situations and dependent on the level of the staff's language skills.
5. Recording – the importance of remembering the choice of language, so that a service user does not ask again and again.

The feedback has been very positive locally and regionally about this project and we have been motivated to undertake further work to look at good practices and draw up recommendations when planning and recruiting a bilingual workforce in the next year. The other Public Services Boards across in north Wales are eager to collaborate with us on this and it is likely that a sum of money will be allocated from the Regional Fund to finance the work.

2.5 Other Areas of Work:

We collaborated with partnerships and other national bodies to avoid duplication and to share ideas. This year we have -

- Participated in Welsh Government working groups to discuss support for developing well-being assessments.

- Reported our progress to Anglesey County Council's Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee and Gwynedd Council's Communities Scrutiny Committee and acted on their recommendations.
- Reviewed the main risks in the area and discuss what we can do to help each other and have developed a risk register to help us monitor our local risks.
- Been part of re-establishing the North Wales Research and Understanding Partnership which is a forum for officers who work for Board members to share research and good practice.
- Worked to secure an amount of money from the Regional Research Fund to finance the language project in 2023/24.
- Continued to work with the Wales Co-Production Network, which has supported us as we developed our Well-being Plan.
- Collaborated with Professor Elizabeth Woodcock who has undertaken an academic review of the Board's challenges, opportunities and set up - this is unique across Wales.

3.0 Looking forward to the year ahead:

- During the summer we will launch our Well-being Plan for the period 2023-28 and begin drawing up an annual delivery plan.
- We will welcome the Office of Future Generations to the National Eisteddfod 2023 - we will have the opportunity to raise awareness of the Board's work in a Welsh setting and hold a Discussion Panel about the Well-being Objectives and the Act.
- We will work together on an Annual Delivery Plan and put arrangements in place to ensure that the Board makes a real difference in the priority areas. We will also reflect on Professor Elizabeth Woodcock's recommendations when planning the Board's governance set up. As part of developing the Delivery Plan, we want to build on our engagement work and continue to engage meaningfully. We want to ensure that the public's voice is heard and that they will help shape our annual Delivery Plan.
- The subgroup has received the Board's approval to move forward with its next Welsh language project, namely to look at good practices and draw up a report of recommendations when planning and recruiting a bilingual workforce in our public services. This will give a better understanding of the challenges of workforce planning and how to address them by looking at good practices that organisations can use. We will report on this in our next annual report.
- In June 2023 we will welcome Welsh Government officials to visit hubs and community alliances across Gwynedd and Anglesey over three days in order to show the strengths and challenges of our rural communities. This will shape their new Communities Policy - with the understanding that the Board will continue to be a stakeholder in developing the policy.

4.0 Monitoring

The sub-groups noted above are accountable to the Public Services Board in relation to delivering any commissioned work. The sub-groups will update the Board on progress every quarter, and their submitted progress reports will be challenged and discussed at Board meetings. The Board's support team also has a role to play between Board meetings to support and maintain the work of the sub-groups. In addition, the annual report summarising progress is published by the Board as it works towards achieving its strategic aims.

5.0 Scrutiny arrangements

The work of the Public Services Board is subject to scrutiny by the designated Scrutiny Committees of both Gwynedd and Anglesey local authorities. The Well-being of Future Generations Act and associated national guidelines note three roles for scrutiny committees of Local Authorities when providing democratic accountability for the Public Services Board:

- Reviewing the governance arrangements of the PSB
- Statutory consultee on the Well-being Assessment and the Well-being Plan
- Monitoring progress of the efforts of the PSB in the implementation of the Well-being Plan

6.0 Equality Impact Assessments

The Public Services Board's support team has considered and identified the need for impact assessments (e.g., Language and Equality) and assessments are developed and used when the Board engages with our communities on specific points and to update the Well-being Assessments.