

## **Response from Pembrokeshire Public Services Board (PSB) to the review by the Public Accounts Committee in the “Barriers to the successful Implementation of the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015**

### **1. Awareness and understanding of the Act and its implications.**

Pembrokeshire PSB members have a strong awareness of the Act and its implications, as well as the requirements of the Act as they relate to the PSB.

The PSB has met its statutory requirements in terms of the production of a Well-being Assessment and Well-being Plan, and annual reporting processes. Pembrokeshire's PSB is comprised of a broad range of representatives and has invited a number of organisations and individuals who have an interest in the well-being of the County, beyond those listed in the Act as statutory or invited participants.

The PSB's Well-being Plan and associated workstreams adopt the kind of longer term perspective as required by the Act, rather than focussing on short term issues, those which fall under the responsibility of individual organisations or are addressed through other partnership arrangements.

Its focus is not to be seen to 'do everything' but rather, in line with the advice from the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales, it is to focus on those select areas of collaborative activity where it can add value and make a difference. In doing so, the PSB is committed to a change of mind set in challenging existing culture and behaviours so it truly works differently and develops a new approach to partnership working.

### **2. The resources available to public bodies to implement the Act and how effectively they have been deployed.**

Other than the regional PSB support grant (which unfortunately was not made available to PSBs this year), all resources deployed which enable the PSB to function effectively as a Board, and to deliver on its objectives, rely on each constituent partner being prepared to commit people, time and energy to make PSB working a success. This is a particularly difficult challenge at a time of diminishing budgets and where all organisations which are part of the PSB are also mindful of the need to meet their own individual objectives and priorities, both statutory and otherwise.

The regional PSB support grant has been helpful though it is a relatively small in the grand scheme of things. Working with colleagues in Carmarthenshire and Ceredigion PSBs we have attempted to put the money to good use through employing a shared regional co-ordinator who provided additional capacity on developing both the Well-being Assessment and Well-being Plan and ensured there was a consistent approach to these tasks across the region.

However there is little doubt that compared to other statutory partnership boards such as Regional Partnerships Boards or even Community Safety Partnerships,

PSBs are often viewed as the poor relation with such little specific or dedicated funding which can support PSBs to realise their objectives and to deliver on the expectations set out in the Act.

### **3. Support provided to public bodies by the Future Generations Commissioner.**

The Future Generations Commissioner has provided some useful support and challenge to PSBs during the early years of the Act, producing a number of helpful guidance documents, and through highlighting new approaches, practices and ways of thinking.

It must be said that the volume of some of this activity in scale and scope can be overwhelming and at times does not seem to appreciate the pressures public bodies are facing in terms of necessarily having the resources which could actually take advantage or utilise some of this thinking. A more realistic approach would be beneficial, recognising the pressures and lack of capacity across the public sector, and focusing on what can actually be achieved rather than ambitious and aspirational challenges which are currently not always possible to commit to given current financial constraints.

### **4. The leadership role of the Welsh Government.**

Welsh Government representation on PSBs is helpful as it provides a line of communication between local and national levels. Welsh Government also provides support to local PSB leads by way of regular network events, briefing notes and workshops.

### **5. Any other barriers to successful implementation of the Act (e.g. Brexit, COVID, etc.).**

As previously mentioned, financial constraints, resources and capacity are the biggest barriers when it comes to PSBs fully realising the expectations set out in the Act. Issues such as Brexit and Covid no doubt present significant challenges, but to date have been viewed as opportunities (as opposed to barriers) and have provided the PSB with a chance to reflect on its priorities and activity and to consider how we will all need to work differently moving forward in order to take account of the potential impact of these issues on our communities.

### **6. How to ensure that the Act is implemented successfully in the future.**

It is important to consider that given the longer term aspirations set out in the Act it is still relatively early days in terms of its implementation. The initial round of Well-being Assessments and Well-being Plans presented a steep learning curve for all participants, and many lessons have been learned which should benefit all PSBs as we approach the second round of well-being planning and as Boards mature and the relationships within them continue to grow and strengthen.