

BWRDD
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CWMTAF

PUBLIC
SERVICES
BOARD



ANNUAL REPORT

2020-21



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Introduction from the Chair...

The Year that Changed the World, Mark Brace, Assistant Police and Crime Commissioner, South Wales Police.

During this unprecedented year, the Cwm Taf Public Services Board (PSB) and the Well-being Plan we are charged with delivering, has encountered its biggest challenge with the ongoing impact of the global pandemic, which has significantly changed the way we, as public bodies, operate and deliver services. Amid this turmoil, the Cwm Taf PSB had a change of Chairperson. I was delighted to assume the role from Professor Marcus Longley, and I am looking forward to working with partners over the coming year. As I am also Chair of the Bridgend Public Services Board, I believe this offers us the best opportunity to work collaboratively as a region, maximising our resources and sharing best practice wherever possible. Prior to the pandemic, we were also working in closer partnership with colleagues of the Regional Partnership Board, which is leading on the transformation of health and social care services across Cwm Taf Morgannwg. This relationship has only strengthened through our response to the pandemic, and we intend to maintain the new ways of working moving forward.

This was, undoubtedly, a challenging time to take on the role of Chair, given the global pandemic and the immense strain put upon public services to respond and recover from the impact of COVID-19. However, I hope that this annual report reflects and celebrates the incredible partnership effort that ensued, from the rapid response of services and communities to the needs of its citizens to the mobilisation of a mass vaccination programme in recent months. Now, more than ever, the well-being of the population of Cwm Taf is vital to the future health and success of our region, and I believe the Public Services Boards are crucial to making this happen.

Mark Brace

*Assistant Police and Crime Commissioner,
South Wales Police*

Doing it Differently

Five Ways of Working

Public Services Boards (PSBs) across Wales are responsible for implementing the **Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015** through the work they undertake. The Act places a duty on each PSB to carry out an assessment of well-being every four years, and then publish their local Well-being Plan. The Cwm Taf Well-being Plan 2018-2023 can be found [here](#).

Under the Act, it is just as important for public services to consider 'how' they work and involve citizens in the planning and delivery, not only 'what' they deliver. The Act sets out 'Five Ways of Working' under the Sustainable Development Principle to tell organisations to meet their responsibilities.

These are:



1 Prevention



2 Integration



3 Collaboration



4 Long term



5 Involvement



How We Have Worked

1

PREVENTION... how acting to prevent problems occurring or getting worse may help public bodies meet their objectives.



Tackling Loneliness and Isolation

Prior to the pandemic, this was a cross cutting area of work for the PSB and presented opportunities to integrate with the Regional Partnership Board (RPB) for Cwm Taf Morgannwg around social prescribing, using community assets and befriending services.

There is no doubt that the pandemic and resulting lockdown restrictions significantly impacted on our well-being. People from across all of society faced feelings of loneliness and social isolation as well as potential physical and mental health challenges that could make any return to 'normality' and social interactions all the more difficult. To this end, a joint mental health scoping review has been undertaken to try to understand the problems our communities have been experiencing and where services need to focus efforts to prevent problems from becoming worse and access to support can be more equitable.

The last twelve months have shown the importance of volunteering, for the individual and for the community. Supported by the partnership, Interlink RCT and VAMT were both successful in applying for WG Volunteering Recovery Grant and have been working with groups to improve training opportunities, best meet the changing needs within communities and improve resilience as well as recognise the value of volunteers.

Improving Health Outcomes for the People of Cwm Taf

The longstanding poverty and health inequalities seen within Cwm Taf communities have meant the pandemic has hit the area particularly hard. We will be using the learning from the Community Impact Assessment as well as other information and learnings from the last 12 months to try to ensure that we are not in this position should we face another health crisis. Central to this is working with communities to improve health outcomes for all generations.

A key focus in terms of prevention has been the work undertaken by partners to realise the Welsh Government Early Years Co-Construction Project (December 2017) and the PSB's agreement in July 2018 to develop an Early Years Vulnerability Profiling Model. In this context, Early Years includes preconception, pregnancy, children, and families up to the age of seven. The model aims to identify the individual level of need amongst families, including the investigation and removal of potential barriers to sharing information. The project is currently integrating the work streams to inform the development of the model for piloting in RCTCBC. These needs will be compared with the geographically based eligibility criteria for Flying Start support. The project is currently integrating the work streams to inform the development of the model for piloting in RCTCBC:

- Research evidence undertaken by Secure Anonymised Information Linkage (SAIL), Swansea University on the risk factors and weighting for: Low birth weight, Poor School readiness, Children going into care, Adverse Childhood Experiences (Domestic Abuse, Substance Misuse, Mental health).
- Vulnerability profiling insight project: Qualitative research by EMPOVA into Professional and Citizen's views on sharing data.
- Electronic sharing of birth data between CTMUHB and RCTCBC, including the five evidence birth risk factors, for all RCT births January to December 2020.

The draft Vulnerability Profiling model is currently being finalised for piloting in RCTCBC with a high significance placed on prevention and early identification with the focus on improved targeting of individuals (including pre-conception, pregnancy) in need of support. The next stages of the project will include:

- Review of the information, amend model as required and present to Public Service Board / Strategic Planning Board / Welsh Government.
- Plan for implementation of Early Years Vulnerability Profiling model across Rhondda Cynon Taf / Merthyr Tydfil / Bridgend.
- Dissemination/publication of learning from the Project.

How We Have Worked....

2

INTEGRATION... Considering how the public body's well-being objectives may impact upon each of the well-being goals, on their other objectives or on the objectives of other public bodies.



Partnership working

has been at the forefront of the COVID-19 response work. The organisational relationships that originated in the PSB have meant that organisations were able to integrate their work and resources to work at pace, work smartly and support communities during this difficult time.

Working in Partnership with Bridgend PSB

sharing a Chair with Bridgend PSB has allowed the support teams for each PSB to work closely together (virtually!) and consider where areas of joint work can support each other in delivering against the national well-being goals as well as our local well-being objectives. One example of this is the joint working group on Social Prescribing, including memberships from both Bridgend and Cwm Taf PSBs as well as the RPB.

Natural Resources Wales' Strategic Allocated Funds

Cwm Taf PSB was successful in applying for £25,000 that NRW had made available to support delivery of Well-being Objectives that maximised the contribution to the nature and climate change emergencies. We know that COVID-19 has changed people's relationship with nature and were keen to better understand and support this so developed a project called 'The Great Escape'. Led by Interlink RCT, the project provided socially distanced outdoor activities for targeted groups of people to improve physical and mental well-being. One example of the success of the work can be viewed [here](#).

Valleys Regional Park (VRP)

three of the VRP's Discovery Gateway Sites are in Cwm Taf: Ynysangharad Park, Dare Valley Park and Cyfarthfa Park. The objectives and work of the VRP align very closely with elements of the Cwm Taf Well-being Plan so the last twelve months have seen positive discussions on how integrated approaches and working can maximise work being done to promote and improve our unique landscape and how it is used, as well the economic benefits that this can bring.



How We Have Worked...

3

COLLABORATION... Acting in collaboration with any other person (or different parts of the body itself) that could help the body to meet its wellbeing objectives.



Using Partnerships Efficiently

During the last year, we have continued to develop and strengthen our relationships with the Bridgend PSB and the RPB as well as the Regional Housing Support Grant Group. During the first wave of COVID, the PSBs and RPB combined forces to produce a Community Impact Assessment to understand the effect of the pandemic on our local communities. This resulted in a snapshot of data about how elements had been impacted by the first lockdown period and provided us with a 'picture in time' about the effects of the pandemic in the early stages. Information from across partnership organisations was gathered in relation to the effects on children and young people, older people, homelessness, employer and employees and the impact of the furlough scheme, mental health, loneliness and isolation, communities and neighbourhoods, volunteering, changes to crime and anti-social behaviour, and impact on health and social care services.

We are collaborating with Bridgend PSB to produce a joint Well-being Assessment as required under the Act, as well as working closely with the RPB to share resources and intelligence to inform their upcoming Population Needs Assessment. We are currently working on how we will involve citizens and service users in the work.

Public Services Role in Building the Wealth of Local Communities

In June 2020, we took up a revised offer of support from Lee Waters, MS, Deputy Minister for Economy and Transport to be involved in a Welsh Government supported project, led by the Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES). This project applies a 'community wealth building approach which is a people-centred...and redirects wealth back into the local economy, and places control and benefits into the hands of local people'.

The purpose of the project is to pursue progressive procurement, and which help anchor institutions (such as public services) better achieve their core priorities. At a time when the economy has been so badly impacted, it is important that we consider how we can support local jobs, businesses, and the supply chain.

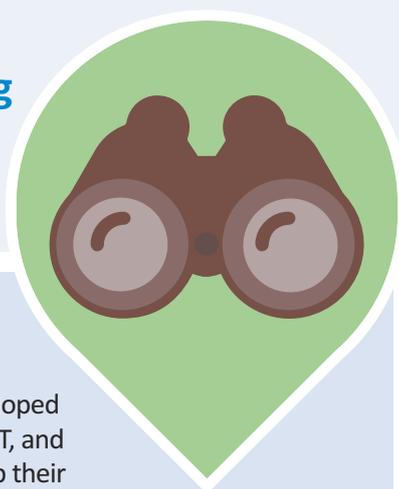
To date, we have held several workshops with a range of partners including the three local authorities, Natural Resources Wales, local colleges and third sector organisations, to explore what we could do regionally to enable a progressive procurement approach. We are currently finalising an action plan to begin the implementation of some of these new practices.



How We Have Worked....

4

LONG TERM... The importance of balancing short-term needs with the need to safeguard the ability to also meet the long-term needs.



A Place Based Approach to Building Resilient Communities

As set out under the 'Thriving Communities' Objective in our Well-being Plan, we developed two Community Zone hubs, **Hwb Glynrhedynog** in the Upper Rhondda Fach area in RCT, and **Calon Las** in Gurnos in Merthyr Tydfil. These hubs have continued to thrive and develop their services and facilities within those communities. Local delivery teams and neighbourhood networks support the work of the hubs, to meet local need and build resilience amongst its residents, offering wider services and facilities linked to the main hub. This model has been expanded across RCT to include a further hubs at Porth, Mountain Ash and Llantrisant. The Hubs and networks all played a significant role in the COVID-19 response effort.

A joint, strategic approach is now needed from all partners to ensure financial sustainability and responsive and flexible public services that can meet the ever-changing demands of local communities, particularly post COVID-19. This will be a key priority for the Cwm Taf PSB in the coming years, using future trends data, local intelligence and co-production methods to ensure that these Hubs remain at the centre of the community.

5

INVOLVEMENT... The importance of involving people with an interest in achieving the well-being goals and ensuring that these people reflect the diversity of the area which the body serves.



Involving Partners and Communities During a Global Pandemic

The past year has proven to be the most challenging time in recent history, and public services have faced their biggest test in responding to the crisis, while still maintaining many of their core services.

More than ever, it is important that we ensure that we involve people and listen to what matters to them, what services are needed and what needs to change or be improved but, in many ways, this has been more challenging in the face of a crisis.

As a PSB, we have used opportunities to support and inform the response to the pandemic, where possible. Through PSB representation in the Protect Tactical Group for Cwm Taf Morgannwg we have undertaken a Food Sufficiency Review and a Mental Health Scoping Review which engaged with groups and individuals to hear about first-hand experience of the pandemic. As a strategic board, we helped manage operational issues faced by partners during the crisis.

The three County Voluntary Councils in the region are hosting BAME engagement officers to address the gap in health and socio-economic inequalities faced by BAME residents, and improve engagement with the Test, Trace and Protect service in Cwm Taf Morgannwg.

Through our 'Involvement Workstream', we have continued to develop the work started in the Live Lab on tackling Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and are working on a community development approach to tackling inequality and building resilience. This will be tested through a place-based approach, in a community with an appetite for change and action, while implementing a workforce development programme, which develops compassionate service delivery and commissioning.

Improving our Health and Well-being

Understanding Well-being Post COVID-19

In May 2022 we will publish a Well-being Assessment of Cwm Taf Morgannwg. This will inform the Well-being Plan published the following year. Work on the Assessment is underway and it is vital that we receive as much support and input from communities, partners, and organisations to ensure that we have the best chance to collectively build a Cwm Taf Morgannwg of which we are proud.

Involvement will be a strong thread through our work and we will use our data and intelligence to produce an assessment that is directed at the key issues that can tackle the health and well-being inequalities we face in the region, which have been further exposed and exacerbated by the pandemic. We will need a more focussed and co-ordinated approach as we emerge from the effects of COVID-19. Some of this work has already begun through the Community Impact Assessment of the first wave, and this will be supplemented by work being conducted in relation to the effects of the second wave, which is being led by the Regional Strategic Oversight Group set up in response to the pandemic for Cwm Taf Morgannwg. It is vital that we learn from the pandemic and its impact, both the positives and negatives.





How We Will Get There

Building on Strong Foundations

As reported in the [2019-20 Annual Report](#), at the end of January 2020 the two PSBs and RPB held their Annual Strategic Conference. This resulted in some key shared priorities being set, which strategic partners agreed to develop jointly, sharing resources, and doing things once, and better. Some key themes emerged, and these have been developed and challenged over the last year, through the lens of COVID-19, and its impact on our communities. The assessment will give us the opportunity to explore and consider these themes together with a view to informing the Well-being Plan and setting out how we can collectively secure the best outcomes for Cwm Taf.

We have experienced seismic shifts in our work over the last year; priorities shifted rapidly, and services and workforces were forced to adapt quickly in response to differing needs within communities and service areas, changes to employees working patterns, with a large percentage of public services workers moving from being largely office based to working from home. The pandemic has demonstrated what is possible, but we cannot underestimate the impact this pandemic has had on huge sections of our workforce. The long-term effects of this pandemic will be far reaching, and we must factor these in to all our future planning and delivery.

Focusing on the Future

Our immediate priority is to produce a Well-being Assessment, as part of our statutory duty under the Well-being of Future Generations Act. As mentioned, we will be working with Bridgend PSB to produce one assessment covering Cwm Taf Morgannwg. We will also work closely with the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Regional Partnership Board as they carry out their Population Needs Assessment in the same timeframe. It is our intention to share resources, data and intelligence, incorporating ongoing plans for recovery and review of the impact of COVID-19, building on work already carried out over the course of the pandemic. We welcome Welsh Government restoring the support grant available to Public Services Board for 2021-22 to help with the assessment process and demonstrate their commitment to Public Services Boards.

In understanding what well-being currently looks like and means for our communities, we need to consider what the future holds, the challenges, and the opportunities. Whilst we could not have predicted the pandemic, we can think about what we want the Cwm Taf Morgannwg of the future to be and have conversations with our communities to develop a shared vision. Look out for opportunities for getting involved on the PSB website: www.ourcwmtaf.wales

We will also be focussing on the creation of one Public Services Board for the Cwm Taf Morgannwg region. It is intended that this will be finalised in time for the publication of our Well-being Assessment in spring 2022.



Our Communities, Our Greatest Asset

Many of us have experienced loss as a direct or indirect consequence of this pandemic and we extend our deepest sympathies, not forgetting that for some the pandemic started with them being already displaced because of the floods of February 2020.

We want to extend our thanks to all our workforces, volunteers and residents for their efforts and the sense of community spirit that has been so evident over the last year. At times of adversity, the communities of Cwm Taf continue to demonstrate their strength and resilience and confirm their position as the greatest asset available to us. We look forward to continuing working together as we move forward on building the Cwm Taf Morgannwg of which we are proud.