



Pembrokeshire Public Services Board

ANNUAL REPORT

2023-24



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Foreword

Welcome to the first annual report for our new Well-being Plan published in May 2023, which outlines progress against delivering the objectives set out in the Plan.

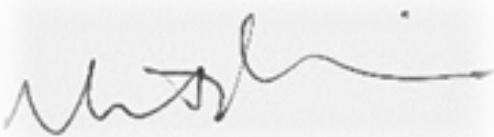
It's also my first full year as the Chair of Pembrokeshire's Public Services Board, and an opportunity for me to reflect on the progress we've made. In narrowing down our objectives I believe that we have become more focused on cross sector collaboration and tackling shared challenges, put in place a delivery structure that takes us from the (virtual) board room into operational delivery, and we've also taken the opportunity to engage more deeply with colleagues in Welsh Government and across the PSB landscape in Wales.

With the ongoing financial crisis in public services, and the necessary focus on the here and now, the work of the PSB is important in that we are very much focussed on the long term. It can therefore be slow-going and often unseen, but the work that we are undertaking collectively is absolutely necessary for the future well-being of our communities across Pembrokeshire.

The report outlines the work of PSB partners in delivering our collective well-being duty to improve the economic, environmental, cultural and social well-being of people and communities in Pembrokeshire, now and in the future. This involves working differently and focusing only on areas where working in partnership can have the greatest impact and where our collective influence adds value above and beyond what we already do as individual organisations.

In this report we also reflect on the impact of reduced resources across public services and identify issues that are restricting progress. We also outline our approach to delivery and reporting, which focuses on accountability and ensuring incremental progress across all of our project areas. These are all issues that we consider at some level at each of our meetings but which the Annual Report provides the opportunity to consider in a more focused way.

I'm just one person involved in this work, and so I'm grateful to my colleagues on the Board, colleagues involved in operational delivery, and our excellent support team for their continued commitment towards improving the well-being of people and communities in the County. I've also been encouraged by those who have taken an interest and expressed support for the work of the PSB, whether they are directly involved or not. With their backing and the support of our communities, we aim to have a meaningful impact on the lives of citizens across Pembrokeshire.



Neil Prior

Chair, Pembrokeshire PSB

Introduction and Context

Pembrokeshire Public Services Board was established in May 2016 and is a statutory strategic partnership created under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. The Board brings together senior leaders from public and third sector organisations who aim to improve well-being in Pembrokeshire by working together to address shared priorities.

Pembrokeshire's PSB currently includes the following organisations;

- Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service
- Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority
- Hywel Dda University Health Board
- Pembrokeshire Association of Voluntary Services
- Natural Resources Wales
- Port of Milford Haven
- PLANED
- Public Health Wales
- Pembrokeshire County Council
- Pembrokeshire College
- Dyfed Powys Police
- JobCentre Plus
- Dyfed Powys Police and Crime Commissioner
- HM Prison and Probation Service

Our second Well-being Plan was published in May 2023. The Plan represents the additional value that we hope to deliver through working innovatively and collaboratively as partners and our Well-being Objectives reflect this. They are;

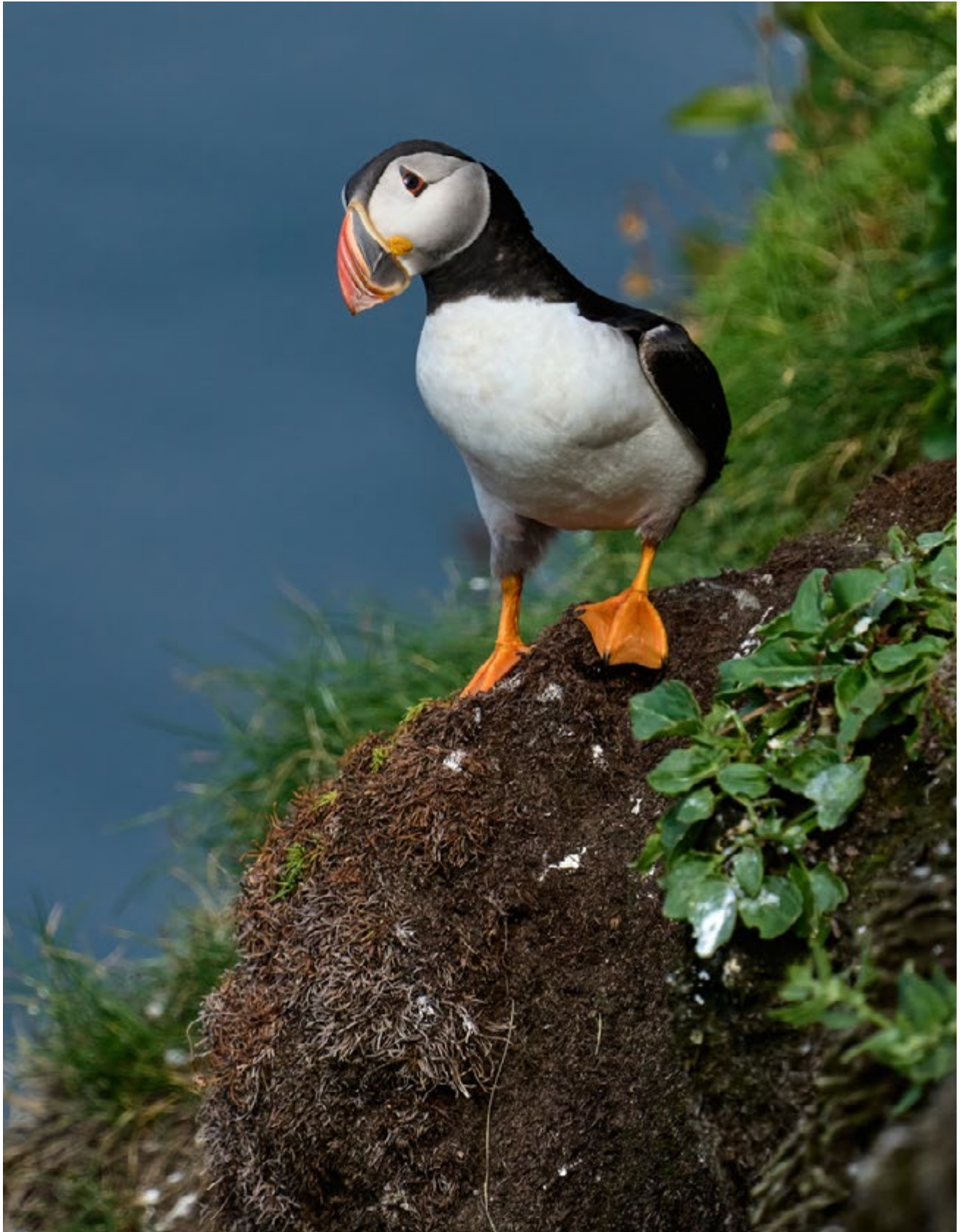
- Work with our communities to reduce inequalities and improve well-being
- Promote and support initiatives to deliver decarbonisation, manage climate adaptation and tackle the nature emergency
- Enable safe, connected, resourceful and diverse communities
- Support growth, job and prosperity and enable the transition to a more sustainable and greener economy

Although we have a Well-being Objective concerned with the economy and growth, there are already a broad range of existing partnership arrangements and boards focusing on this work in the local area. Therefore, to avoid duplication, the PSB has agreed not to work directly towards delivery of this Objective, but to take advantage of opportunities to contribute towards this Objective over the next five years, some of which may be delivered through activity that is aimed at delivering our other Objectives.

In developing our new Well-being Plan, we were cognisant of learning from our last Plan around the number of Objectives and projects we can realistically focus on in order to make the best use of limited resources and maximise efficient delivery. Therefore, the PSB has chosen to concentrate its collective efforts and time on delivery of the project plans laid out in our Plan and also on other priorities which may arise where it can make a real difference.

Whilst an awareness of what is happening throughout our County and in the region is important, we do not want the work to be overshadowed by elements not directly related to delivery.

In preparing this annual report we surveyed our PSB members to gain an insight into their thoughts and experiences around progress and delivery of the Plan to date. Their responses are explored in Section 5, and will help to identify areas for improvement and focus going forward.



Delivery and Reporting

Before the Well-being Plan 2023-28 was published, the PSB discussed and agreed a structure for delivery of project plans and the reporting arrangements that would sit within this. A Gold / Silver / Bronze approach was agreed, with each level having its own specific role as outlined below;

PSB WELL-BEING PLAN DELIVERY

GOLD PSB

Strategic direction, support and challenge / Oversight of project progress and delivery / Shared responsibility and accountability

SILVER Project Groups

- **Poverty Group**
- **Nature, De-carbonisation and Climate Change Group**
- **Strengthening Communities Group**
- Identifying and allocating organisational resources
- Delivery of project plans
- Monitoring and measuring of progress
- 'Spotlight' reporting and escalating concerns and issues to Gold (PSB)
- Identification of cross-cutting themes across project areas
- Leading on engagement for each project area

BRONZE Supporting Groups (e.g.)

- **Strengthening Communities Operational Group**
- **Pembrokeshire Biodiversity Partnership**
- **Keep Warm, Keep Well Project Group**
- **Others as appropriate**
- supporting Project Groups with delivery of project plans
- providing community / citizen intelligence to Silver
- escalating concerns and issues to Silver

The role of the three co-ordinating Silver level groups is to ensure there is PSB accountability and ownership of the delivery of the Plan. With this in mind, all three project groups are Chaired by PSB members and provide updates at each PSB meeting. In addition, at each meeting one group provides a more in-depth update, or 'spotlight' session, on their project area, providing detailed information on progress, achievements, aspirations and concerns. PSB partners then have the opportunity to ask questions and provide support to resolve any issues. Project leads not taking part in the spotlight sessions provide a short written report for each meeting where they provide updates on project activity including general progress; what has gone well; whether there have been any issues/barriers; what engagement/involvement has taken place or is planned; and what the priorities are for the next reporting period. This approach was outlined by the PSB Chair at the joint Welsh Government / Office of the Future Generations Commissioner shared learning event in Wrexham in February 2024, where it received positive feedback.

Although delivery of the Plan is well underway, there are still several areas where further discussion is required to ensure that we not only meet our responsibilities in delivering the Well-being Plan, but that we also deliver it well. For example, although the projects appear very different, there are clear cross-cutting issues that emerged through development of the project plans and through feedback received during consultation on the Well-being Assessment and Plan. Therefore, there is a need to consider how this cross-cutting activity will be identified and to explore how delivery can be co-ordinated.

In terms of engagement, as well as involving citizens and communities in delivery, some of the projects may require the involvement of partners and organisations that sit outside of the PSB and will require significant resources to deliver. There is also a need to explore this further, to identify who these organisations might be and to try and identify the resources that will be required to deliver the more ambitious elements of projects. We should also carefully consider how communities can become meaningfully involved in delivery of certain areas within the Plan.

As well as progress reporting at PSB meetings, the PSB is also required periodically to provide progress updates to the designated Local Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Council's Partnerships Panel is responsible for providing democratic accountability and oversight of the work of the PSB and can review or scrutinise the decisions made or action taken by the PSB and review its governance arrangements. It can also request any individual PSB member to come before it to be scrutinised on the contribution their partner organisation is making to the work of the PSB.



YEAR 1 – Project sub-group activity

Pembrokeshire's PSB has three Silver level project groups in place whose role is to deliver our project plans;

- Poverty Group
- Strengthening Communities Group
- Nature, De-carbonisation and Climate Change Group

Each of these groups are led by a member of the PSB to ensure accountability and consistency. Outlined below are some of the key achievements of these groups during the last year.

Poverty Group

(Chair – Darren Mutter, Head of Children's Services, Pembrokeshire County Council)

Background

Our Poverty Group was initially established as a Local Authority group looking at child poverty, but has since been expanded to considered a wider range of issues and to involve a wider range of partners. The main focus of the group is on delivery of the Tackling Poverty Strategy and on helping PSB members and officers to understand the issues faced by people of all age groups for whom the Strategy will deliver.

During 2023-24 the group has...

- Utilised available funding to support poverty-focused initiatives in Pembrokeshire, providing assistance to food banks and to support the local Warm Spaces campaign
- Published a Tackling Poverty Strategy, which considers the priority issues people in our County face when experiencing hardship, and identifies what works to support people to navigate themselves into better circumstances
- Held an inaugural Poverty Summit, including contributions from The Bevan Foundation, National Energy Action and a local research project looking at the lived experience of poverty in Pembrokeshire (led by PAVS)
- Developed a system for monitoring delivery of the Strategy to report back to the main PSB

The next 12 months

- An annual review of the Strategy to ensure the content is relevant and up to date and that the lived experiences of people are appropriately reflected in the Strategy
- To expand the membership of the Poverty Group to include those with lived experience of poverty who are willing to challenge leaders to review and reflect on their work
- To also invite representation from schools onto the Poverty Group, as they are most often on the frontline in seeing how poverty effects children and young people in our communities
- Consider establishing a Bronze level lived-experience group to understand from them what would make a difference to improving their circumstances

Strengthening Communities Group

(Chair – Cllr. Neil Prior, Pembrokeshire County Council)

Background

The work of this group is intended to build on the pivotal role of our communities in the introduction of new initiatives and new ways of working with traditional service providers resulting from the Covid pandemic. Our communities have skills and assets that can be mobilised for public benefit and for working in equal partnership with both the public and private sectors. Membership of the group reflects its focus on strengthening and empowering our communities to meet the challenge of future slimmed-down public services and promoting working alongside local people on the things that matter most to their communities.

During 2023-24 the group has...

- Hosted the 'Joining the Dots for All to Live Well in Pembrokeshire' Communities Conference in October 2023, which was also attended by the Welsh Government community policy development team
- Identified a primary Bronze level delivery group for the operational elements of the Strengthening Communities project plan, who have identified priority delivery areas and organisational leads
- Continued multi-agency engagement and relationship building in order to produce a more detailed delivery plan for the group going forward

The next 12 months

- Focus on the emerging priorities identified by the delivery group and how these can be integrated into a detailed delivery plan
- Continue multi-agency engagement and relationship building in order to identify further opportunities to support the work of the group

Nature, Decarbonisation and Climate Change Group

**(Chair – Caroline Drayton, Operations Manager (South West Wales),
Natural Resources Wales)**

Background

As part of delivery of our first Well-being Plan a group was established to deliver the environmental elements within it. For our new Plan, membership of this group was reviewed and expanded, to better focus on delivery of the Tackling Climate Change and the Nature Emergency elements of the new Plan; Biodiversity and the Nature Emergency; Climate Adaptation; and De-carbonisation and Net Zero.

During 2023-24 the group has...

- Identified a need for additional resources to support delivery of the Biodiversity and the Nature Emergency section of the project plan
- Commenced work on prioritisation of action identified in the Pembrokeshire Climate Adaptation Strategy
- Supported work to develop bespoke Carbon Literacy training and e-learning modules for PSB partners

The next 12 months

- Continue to try to identify resource to lead coordination, prioritise and progress delivery of actions across all three project plans within the Tackling Climate Change and the Nature Emergency part of the Plan

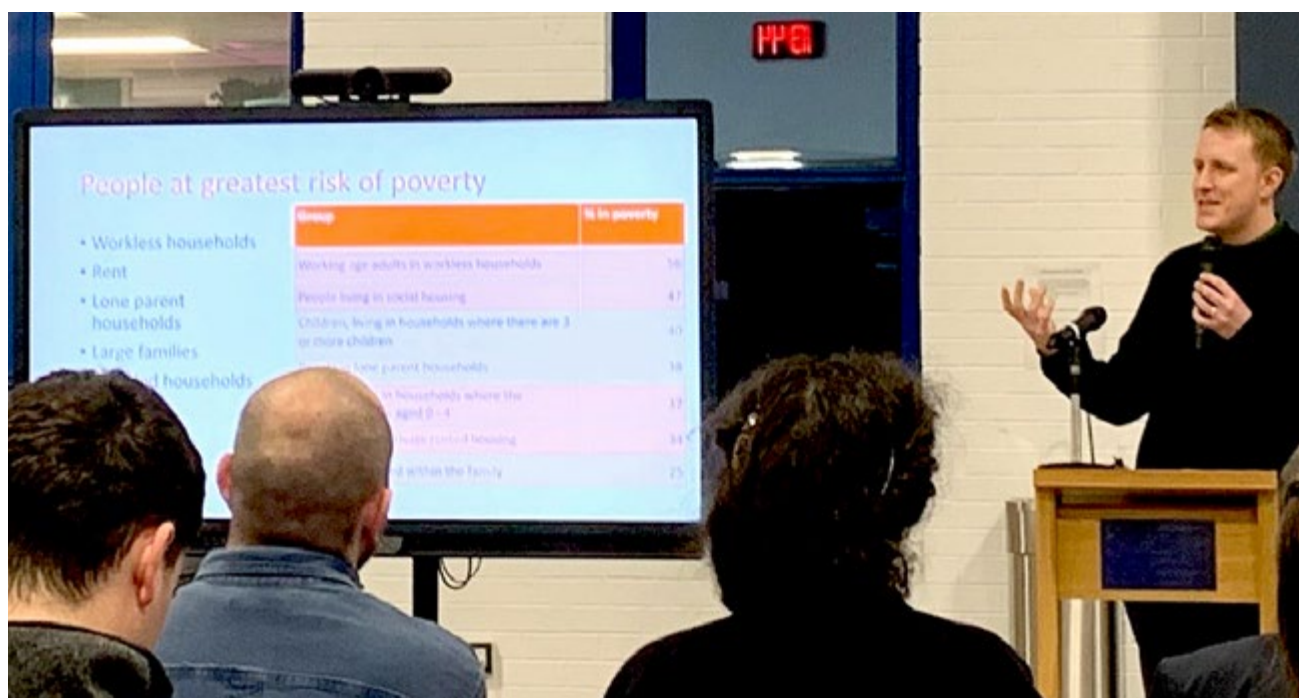
Case Study – Poverty Summit

In February 2024 Pembrokeshire's first Tackling Poverty Summit was held at Pembrokeshire College. The event brought together a cross section of professionals and local leaders from a variety of organisations, alongside PSB members, to explore solutions to alleviating poverty in the local area.

Attendees at the event heard from a number of speakers directly involved in this work, receiving presentations from the Bevan Foundation, Hywel Dda University Health Board, National Energy Action and PAVS.

Dr Steffan Evans from The Bevan Foundation gave a national overview of Poverty, highlighting those most affected by the cost of living crisis and also spoke about the effect of poverty on rural communities. In particular, he noted the differences in types of work and low pay

compared to the rest of Wales and spoke about the 'rural cost of living premium'. These are issues that predominantly affect rural areas, and the impacts include; high housing costs compared to income; that it is more expensive to heat homes; the lack of public transport; accessing childcare can be difficult; and that rural areas are most likely to have been impacted by the cost of living crisis.



Dr Rob Green, Public Health Consultant from Hywel Dda University Health Board spoke about how the relationship between poverty and health exists in a complex system that changes according to the interaction between individuals and their environment. He highlighted this by explaining that anyone can experience poverty and that it can be caused by a number of issues, including unemployment and a lack of affordable housing, but also by bereavement and ill health, which in itself can be caused by poverty. Reduced access to healthy food and increased access to unhealthy food and activities are both issues associated with poverty that impact on health. Poverty can also drive inequalities in health outcomes and increases use of health services.

Ben Saltmarsh and Maisie Chatfield of National Energy Action gave an overview of how fuel poverty is affecting communities in Wales. They highlighted the impact of the increase in the energy price cap and UK Government support, help available from schemes designed to increase the energy efficiency of homes and issues surrounding prepay energy meters.

Finally, Sarah Hughes from PAVS gave a hard-hitting presentation of research undertaken by PAVS around addressing poverty in Pembrokeshire. She began by providing an overview of the experiences of people living in poverty, before moving on to key findings and themes and suggestions for improvement moving forward. The full research report and a short video can be found on the PAVS website; <https://www.pavs.org.uk/influencing-engagement/current-projects/>

Crucially, all the presenters highlighted the need to work together, across statutory, voluntary and community sectors, in order to alleviate the effects of poverty. Attendees at the event were also asked to sign up to their own Poverty Pledge, to demonstrate a shared sense of responsibility and to show their commitment to making a difference in Pembrokeshire. Examples of some of these pledges are;

Get more information on support for families and make sure it's available to more families in the school community.

Undertake a review of contracts around the national living wage and work with providers on moving to this as a minimum standard.

Think about the impact on poverty of every decision I am involved in.

Develop a renewed focus on equity across the health board area.

Share today's findings with my staff.

During 2024 directly and in-directly create at least 80 full time equivalent jobs at the Port of Milford Haven.

Educate, work with and promote rights to young people who are experiencing poverty whilst ensuring their voices are heard.

Register as a Real Living Wage employer.

The intention is for a Poverty Summit to be held annually, to share learning and experiences, with the aim of demonstrating how collective action can bring about change and alleviate hardship in Pembrokeshire. A video was filmed at the event where PSB members provide an introduction to the work of the PSB and explain how by working together with communities, the PSB hopes to make a difference to the lives of people living in Pembrokeshire. The video can be found on the PSB web pages at <https://www.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/public-services-board/projects-public-services-board>



Survey of PSB Members - thoughts on progress and barriers to delivery

In preparation for writing this Annual Report, PSB members were invited to complete a short survey asking them to respond to the following questions;

- What do you think has gone well over the first 12 months of Pembrokeshire's new Well-being Plan?
- What do you think have been the main challenges or barriers to progress?
- Is there anything you think we can do over the next 12 months to try and overcome these?

What do you think has gone well over the first 12 months of Pembrokeshire's new Well-being Plan?

PSB members were happy with the delivery structure and reporting arrangements, which they see as helping to hold members to account for their roles in delivering the plan. Linking the PSB through to operational delivery on the ground and linking up with groups that are already established was also seen as a positive step.

Members also appreciated a focus on discussion rather than presentations and regular reviews of progress at PSB meetings, where board members recognise that they are there for their strategic input and to identify issues to unlock within their own organisations. Although it was noted that progress has generally been slow to date, projects were seen as being aligned for the most part towards working collaboratively to address shared challenges.

It was also identified that Pembrokeshire has been well represented externally, for example at the national PSB shared learning event in February 2023 where the Chair of the PSB gave a presentation outlining his experiences of leading the work of the PSB and the associated challenges and opportunities as part of that. In addition, Pembrokeshire PSB has been very much involved in working with Welsh Government to develop a new communities policy.

What do you think have been the main challenges or barriers to progress?

Lack of resources in terms of time, people and capacity, and funding for PSB work more generally, were identified as barriers to progress. PSB members felt that this has resulted in the potential of the PSB not being fully realised during the first year due to a lack of resources to support progress.

It was also identified that some PSB member organisations have limited engagement in the work of the PSB and that more active participation from these members is needed, as they might see their role on the Board as representing the interests of their organisations rather than as working together as a group.

Citizen engagement also remains a challenge due to the individual requirements of some organisations around keeping on top of their own consultation and engagement needs. Wider societal challenges, for example in terms of the poverty agenda and cost of living crisis, have also challenged progress in some areas.

Is there anything you think we can do over the next 12 months to try and overcome these?

It was suggested that projects within the Well-being Plan could be cross-referenced against existing work being undertaken by PSB partners in order to expedite action, especially where no funding streams are available. Organisations that are not participating fully in the work of the PSB, including in sub-groups, should be challenged on why they are not more involved.

We also asked some of our Public Services Board members for their views on what they think is working particularly well and what they are looking forward to in the coming year;

Darren Mutter, Chair of the Poverty Group, said that **“The newly established monitoring and reporting structure is ensuring that the PSB is holding to account its project leads and the members of the sub-groups, making the PSB activity more purposeful, meaningful and impactful. The PSB in my view is in a good position to move forward and continue to expand its reach beyond conceptual discussion at senior level, and get more into the detail of what matters, why it matters and what needs to be done.”**

Sue Leonard, Chief Officer at PAVS, also agrees with the positive impact of the new reporting structure, **“The Gold/Silver/Bronze approach to linking the PSB through to operational delivery on the ground and linking up with groups that are already established is something that I think works well. I also like the structure of the PSB meetings with a rolling programme of “spotlights” on each of the three headline priorities and time being given over to discussion rather than presentations.”**

Dr. Barry Walters, Principal of Pembrokeshire College, said **“In terms of the key PSB priorities of supporting those in poverty, the community and climate challenges, all are important areas which we wish to work with our student community at Pembrokeshire College to raise awareness and channel energies into helping address the associated concerns. We are working with our Learner Council to ensure all students are conscious of these priorities, and think about how they can contribute to tackling such issues. We were also pleased to host the Poverty Summit at Pembrokeshire College. There was much debate about the financial challenges that people in the community are facing at the current time and a range of pledges were put forward by those present as the outcome of the event. We look forward to seeing the positive impact that these pledges have on the local community.”**

Claire Germain, our Welsh Government representative on the PSB, said **“It is a pleasure to sit on the Pembrokeshire Public Service Board and see the passion for, and commitment to, improving the well-being of the area. I am pleased to be able to play my part in connecting local and national action on important subjects like tackling poverty, strengthening communities and responding to the challenges of climate change.”**

Looking Forward – Year 2

As a group that represents a wide range of organisations, all of which provide services to the public, we are in a unique position to utilise our collective resources. Increasingly however, this advantage is being undermined by the financial challenges all PSB member organisations face.

During the first year of delivering the Well-being Plan we have identified a number of areas that we will need to focus on over the next 12 months;

Identification of cross-cutting themes and issues – we need to consider how to approach this important issue and incorporate this into delivery where necessary, before individual projects becomes too far advanced.

Engagement and involvement – we need to explore in more detail what we mean by 'meaningful involvement' for each of the three project areas and any areas of cross-cutting work, as well as how we will demonstrate it.

Participation of PSB members – we need to look at how to get all PSB members more involved and to identify what the underlying issues might be for those organisations who are not engaged. We can achieve more together but only if all members are invested in what the PSB is trying to achieve.

In addition to these areas of focus and the day-to-day delivery of our Plan, we also hope to have further involvement with Welsh Government's Communities Policy Team in their development of a Communities Strategy for Wales.

As we move forward into the second year of delivery, we will continue to explore different ways of working, building on our successes and progress to date, in order to deliver the Plan. We are determined as a group of public facing organisations acting as one public service to deliver as much as we can, as well as we can, with what we have available, focusing on delivering our Well-being Objectives through the project areas identified and creating the conditions for meaningful involvement of our communities along the way.



