

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE BOARD SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE HELD AT BY TEAMS ON TUESDAY, 4 MAY 2021**

PRESENT

County Councillor

County Councillors Gavin Bown, Mrs A Davies, N Evans, Swanson, T Buchan,
A Webb and L Rijnenberg

Apologies for absence were received from County Councillors

1. APOLOGIES

Present:

Neil Evans (Chair) (Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service)
Angela Davies (Powys County Council)
County Councillor Liz Webb (Brecon Beacons National Park Authority)
County Councillor Liz Rijnenberg (Powys County Council)
Trish Buchan (Powys Teaching Health Board)
Peter Swanson (Powys Association of Voluntary Organisations)
Gavin Bown (Natural Resources Wales)

Observers:

County Councillor Steve Evans (Brecon Beacons National Park Authority)
County Councillor David Selby (Powys County Council)

Officers in Attendance:

Wyn Richards (Powys County Council)
Rhian Jones (Powys County Council)
Catherine James (Powys County Council)
Diane Reynolds (Head of Digital Services - Powys County Council)

Apologies for Absence:

Ian Phillips (Powys Teaching Health Board)
Emma Palmer (Head of Transformation and Communications – Powys County Council).

2. MINUTES

The Chair was authorised to sign the minutes of the previous meeting held on 15th October, 2020 as a correct record.

Arising thereon:

Link to the Well-Being databank.

This was circulated to the Committee during the meeting.

<https://en.powys.gov.uk/article/5800/Wellbeing-Information-Bank>

Performance Framework.

It was reported that the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority (BBNPA) were responsible for Well-Being Step 2 and the PSB had been attempting to use it for reports. However, there was duplication with systems already used by organisations. At the last meeting of the PSB it was decided that each of the Step Leads would need to revisit their Performance Indicators / Measures.

The Committee suggested that all Steps should be using the reporting framework as developed by BBNPA as having different formats made it difficult to follow. Concern was also expressed regarding the quality and lack of information in some of the reports. In addition, the Committee suggested that there was a need for more clear performance measures against which the Steps are monitoring progress.

AGREED that the Committee request that the Public Service Board:

- (i) to consider whether the performance framework is meeting the Board's needs or whether it needs to be reviewed.**
- (ii) consider the need for more clear performance measures against which the Steps are monitoring progress.**

3. WELL-BEING STEP 4 - DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Documents Considered:

- Delivery Plan – Step 4 – Digital and Quarter 4 Report (January to March 2021).

Issues Discussed:

Work with and influence others to ensure improved digital infrastructure for Powys

- Original proposal to work with 3 community sites. The council was actually working with 12 communities. Some of the projects were ready and had requested vouchers from Welsh Government. Information had been placed on the Council's website about broadband connectivity.

Data Integration

- It had been difficult arranging meetings with stakeholders as the Council had been focussing on business critical activity.

Well-Being Dashboards

- The number of dashboards had now increased to 76.

Broadband and 4G Roll-out

- EE were enhancing 6 sites in Powys to 4G. The Council was awaiting any developments by other providers. The improvements to the Emergency Services Network had stalled and there was ongoing dialogue regarding progressing these improvements.

- Questions:

Is the Council reviewing the numbers in Powys who can access 4G	The Council is assessing those who cannot access broadband or 4G under the Mid Wales Growth Deal. It
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	<p>is estimated that up to 12,000 properties might not have a suitable connection but this is yet to be confirmed. Powys is the county with the highest number of white spots in Wales and probably the UK. The head of Digital Services is working with companies to try and get solutions tested in Powys. There is a need for innovative solutions in Powys as fibre broadband cannot be the only solution.</p> <p>One possible solution could be the use of tethered drones. However some properties in more remote areas of Powys did not have a mains power supply.</p>
<p>Should the RAG status on data integration be Red rather than Amber</p>	<p>The Head of Digital Services suggested that this should be Amber as some work had been undertaken on this measure.</p>

Residents Digital Skills

- This has been delayed due to the pandemic and a delay in the recruitment of staff. However digital skills had improved even without support as people had learned to communicate with their families electronically during the pandemic. PAVO had been active in assisting individuals.

- Questions:

<p>What is the main barrier for digital connectivity</p>	<p>There are few barriers in Powys, which is different to other areas. Research has shown that the transfer of old technology is a barrier for older people and can be frustrating. It is better if older people have new and up to date technology to use. The other barrier is finance and the cost of broadband for people on low incomes. Individuals need support around them at the beginning in the use of digital technology even though many have upskilled in the last 12 months.</p>
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Digital Businesses

- There is a focus in the Mid Wales Growth Deal on digital business sites.

- Questions:

<p>Welsh Government can be a barrier to digital business especially for the farming industry e.g. codes sent out for website access on mobile</p>	<p>The Chair suggested that this needs to be taken up through the farming unions (NFA / FAW). In addition, other businesses could be asked</p>
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<p>phones and there are areas in Powys with no mobile connection at all.</p>	<p>what barriers there were for them, and as in the farming example were there processes required by Welsh Government or others to which they did not have access e.g. mobile connectivity.</p> <p>The Head of Digital Services advised the Committee that a Welsh Government representative was required on this group.</p> <p>AGREED that the need for Welsh Government representation on this group be raised with the PSB</p>
<p>How far are the steps based on the needs of communities.</p>	<p>A draft strategy was developed and went out for public consultation. A digital study was also issued for public consultation. Step 7 (Develop a Carbon Positive Strategy) will be the subject of a public consultation and the PSB is considering how it can consult across all steps rather than on individual steps.</p>
<p>It does make sense to try and engage collectively.</p>	<p>Step 4 does try to engage and is working with third sector bodies, by considering what barriers need to be overcome, especially for those using third sector systems. The Step also considered children who were excluded during the pandemic and provided mobile connection devices so that children could engage in learning. However, there are still pockets of individuals that the Council needs to engage with, and this cannot be done digitally as they are not online.</p>
<p>In relation to targeting older people to engage digitally, some will not want to engage. Is this being captured</p>	<p>It is recognised in the strategy that it is digital first but not digital always. More people have engaged digitally this year but it is not for everyone. The Council is also considering establishing an Omni channel to connect different methods of communication with the Council. The Council is also looking at accessibility and what other methods of communications exist.</p>

- LoRaWAN technology is being assessed by the Council. These are sensors that run on a battery which then sends information back to a gateway.
- Welsh Government has provided gateways to the public which can be set up on public buildings to test sensors and assess what can be provided in Powys. This could be an exciting development for enabled care provision and the sensors could assist with enabled care which does not require broadband.

- Questions:

How secure is the data	This is what is being tested first and it will not be rolled out until has been assessed. The technology is growing and is being rolled out across the UK.
Is the Council collaborating with other organisations once this has been tested. For example, there are 18 towers at fire stations which could be used to site the gateways.	A barrier busting group is looking at how barriers can be overcome once the testing has been completed.
How will this be policed once it is rolled out. What is the follow up to make sure the technology is doing what it should be doing.	A bid is being made to Welsh Government to install and evaluate the technology.
<p>There is a challenge to continue to have face to face discussions but online.</p> <p>There are clearly defined actions to deliver this step. How will the measures deliver the step. Are all partners playing their part. Is there a scope for greater collaboration. There is a question as to whether all the resources have been secured. Can the timescales be accelerated and have we learned from the pandemic.</p>	<p>The expectation / ambition of the PSB is to have a digital infrastructure to support communities which would help learning, business and keeping in touch with others. Digital is also more important for rural communities and can provide great benefits. However, it is not the only solution and Powys needs to make sure that we do not get left behind with technological advances. The project is about getting the basic infrastructure right. Some items have not been achieved as yet but are progressing and the pandemic has had an effect on this.</p> <p>There is a need to focus on the data step and engagement is not totally secured as yet. However, the agenda has been pushed and a barrier busting group established as well as meetings with PAVO, but progress is not moving easily. The Head of Digital Services has raised these concerns with the PSB. There is a need to integrate data and the Council's business intelligence team</p>

	has been looking at integrating Council, social care and health data. There is much more to do and whilst £1m funding came from Welsh Government for this, additional funding will be required to make this work.
Are there any more measures which should be included	The plan has been reviewed and some additional measures added. Partner participation needs to be added to the measures.
If Powys is only receiving 4G now, will be behind anyway as 5G is being rolled out elsewhere.	There is a discussion ongoing with BT at present about their plans for 5G in Powys as there is currently only 1 site for 5G in Powys at Builth Wells.

The Committee concluded that it was content with Step 4 and the progress that had been made to date.

4. WELL-BEING STEPS - HIGHLIGHT REPORTS - QUARTER 4 2020-21

Documents Considered:

- Well-Being Steps Highlight Reports – Quarter 4 2020-21

Issues Discussed:

- The Committee would find it useful to receive the schematic for the purpose of the steps at each meeting when considering the report – **AGREED.**
- Step 1 – others have been able to undertake engagement exercises despite the pandemic. There is a need for other steps to consider innovative ways of engaging.
- Step 3 – there is nothing included under this step about Safe Routes to Schools. **AGREED to request that the PSB consider including this under the step.**
- Step 6 – Holistic approach to skills and Lifelong Learning
 - There is a connectivity between this Step with Step 7 e.g. a need to have a digital structure to assist developing a carbon strategy.
 - There does not also appear to be smart objectives under either active travel or developing a carbon strategy.
 - What is being done to replace those traditional skills which are being lost e.g. farming, blacksmiths.
- Step 7 – Developing a Carbon Positive Strategy
- The pandemic should have assisted the carbon strategy.
- The Chair indicated that the Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Authority were undertaking virtual visits to properties for fire safety checks. The number of annual visits had increased but only a small number of these were physical visits.
- In response to a question about the lack of activity in relation to this Step, the Committee was advised that consultants had been engaged in 2020 to assist in developing the way forward. The Decarbonisation Strategy had

been developed and was awaiting approval for the consultation phase to be undertaken. Welsh Government had originally been leading on the Step but had handed this back and it was now being undertaken by the Head of Digital Services for Powys County Council as Step Lead. The Council had appointed a climate change officer who was responsible for the Step.

- The Committee expressed its disappointment with the lack of progress and **AGREED that the PSB be asked to review this Step as a matter of urgency to speed up the process and so that some tangible projects could be commenced.**
- This step also linked across all steps and should not be seen as isolated from the others.
- Some of the steps include detail of how they link with other steps but this is not consistent in all the steps. **AGREED this should be raised with the PSB.**

5.	WORK PROGRAMME
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The Committee noted that future meetings would be held as follows:

09-07-2021 – 10.00 – 12.00

07-10-2021 – 10.00 – 12.00

The Committee requested that the date of the next meeting be changed to 7th July, 2021.

AGREED that the Step Lead (Natural Resources Wales) for Step 8 (Develop a Sustainable Environment Strategy) be invited to discuss the Delivery Plan for Step 8 at the next meeting.

County Councillor