

PSB 20

Dulliau gweithredu lleol ar gyfer lleihau tlodi: Deddf Llesiant Cenedlaethau'r Dyfodol a byrddau gwasanaethau cyhoeddus

Local Approaches to poverty reduction: The Well-Being of Future Generations Act and public service boards

Ymateb gan: Cyngor Sir Caerfyrddin Bwrdd Gwasanaethau

Response from: Carmarthenshire County Council Public Service Boards

The PSB's response is provided below, divided into the various areas outlined in the terms of reference:

- a) examine how public service boards (PSBs) are targeting improvements to public services in Wales's most deprived communities;
 1. As part of the development of its first Well-being Plan by May 2018 the PSB has identified its well-being objectives with short, medium and long-term actions to make progress against achieving those objectives. Delivery plans for making progress against these actions are currently being developed and consideration will be given to the different needs of communities within the county, be those deprived communities in our urban or rural areas. Traditionally, Welsh Government funded programmes such as Communities First and Flying Start have focused on deprived communities in the more urban areas. The well-being assessment undertaken by the PSB has recognised that rural poverty is also a significant issue in Carmarthenshire, and the PSB will need to focus its delivery programmes accordingly. This work is currently in its early stages of development with the Well-being Plan due to be published by May 2018.
- b) assess the quality of evidence used by PSBs in the development of their local Well-Being Plans in relation to the needs and experiences of people living in poverty, including how PSBs are approaching the impending demise of Communities First;
 2. The draft local Well-being Plan has been developed based on the findings of the Well-being Assessment and extensive engagement with local communities and other key stakeholders which was undertaken for both the Assessment and the Plan.
 3. Poverty was identified as one of the key 21 themes in the Well-being Assessment; from which the four well-being objectives were developed: Healthy Habits, Early Intervention, Stronger Connections and Prosperous People and Places. It was found that 35% of households and 20% of Carmarthenshire's children are living in poverty, 62% of these children are under 10 years old. Living in poverty has a broad impact on well-being, limiting opportunities and prospects, damaging the quality of life and harms health and life expectancy, with obesity also being more prevalent in disadvantaged communities. The Assessment also recognised that poverty can be a barrier to full participation in society and is often intergenerational which poses a significant threat to positive well-being both now and in the future. Action to tackle poverty is therefore crucial to improving overall well-being in Carmarthenshire.
 4. Poverty was identified as a key theme by the situation analysis undertaken as part of the development of the Well-being Assessment. The analysis was a collection of data

and information from a range of sources including the 2011 Census, national surveys, local authority data and the 2015 Carmarthenshire Rural Poverty Survey.

5. The data highlighted a number of key poverty-related facts:
 - 36% of households across the county are living in poverty based on the Welsh Government definition as “households with less than 60% of the GB median income”, making Carmarthenshire levels the 8th highest in Wales. Of these 15.7% are living in severe poverty.
 - The median household income in the county is £23,825, compared to £24,944, the Welsh median. This is the 7th lowest level in Wales.
 - Parts of the area of Llanelli appear in the 10% most deprived areas of Wales in the following domains: income, employment, health, education, community safety and physical environment.
 - 71% of northern Carmarthenshire (Tywi valley) appears in the 10% most deprived areas of Wales in terms of poor ‘Access to Services’.
 - 19% of the population is over-indebted, in line with Welsh national average of 19.6%.
 - 21% of homes are not connected to mains gas.
 - 17.9% of children are living in poverty which is lower than the Welsh average (22%), but those living in workless households is in line with the Welsh average of 14%.
 - The county has a large stock of social housing and supports social housing initiatives.
6. Low income limits access to a wide range of services, and also essentials such as fuel and food. **The Carmarthenshire Rural Poverty Study (2015)** provided good evidence for consideration relating to the needs and experiences of people living in poverty. For example, 21% of households are not connected to a mains gas supply which is traditionally used as a measure of fuel poverty (Department of Energy and Climate Change); in rural areas of the county such as northern Carmarthenshire it is more prevalent at 44%, and the Rural Poverty Study shows that in some smaller, more remote rural communities, the figure is 98% of households.
7. The draft Well-being Plan notes that the majority of poor households are in rural areas. The Carmarthenshire population is one of the sparsest in Wales at just 78 people per km². 60% of the population live in rural areas which form 53% of the County geographically according to the Rural Development Programme definition. The Well-being Assessment refers to rural residents often having higher dependency on more expensive sources of fuel such as oil. Living in fuel poverty not only has a detrimental impact on economic well-being but also on physical health with increasing number of excess winter deaths. There is also a strong correlation between levels of fuel poverty and age, as older people are likely to reside in older buildings which are harder and more expensive to heat.
8. In addition to the range of data sources analysed, extensive engagement has been undertaken with communities and other key stakeholders in the development of both

the Assessment and Plan. The engagement opportunities were well publicised and local communities encouraged to participate.

9. The initial engagement period from July to October 2016 involved a well-being survey and a range of events. 2,582 survey responses were received and 27 events, focus groups, drop in clinics and workshops were held across the county. These were well publicised and included 11 sessions in Communities First areas run by the Communities First team on community days, which assisted in ensuring views of those more likely to be living in poverty were obtained.
10. Once the Well-being Assessment was drafted, further engagement was undertaken on the document between 3rd February 2017 and 3rd March 2017. An online survey was used with links to the survey, draft Assessment and related documents circulated widely, including town and community councils, business, trades unions (including schools), and specified 'statutory consultees'. 443 emails were sent to the respondents from the original engagement event who indicated they would like to be kept involved. A total of 112 responses were received from various sections of the community, including from groups and organisations.
11. A priority-setting workshop was held with key partners on 9th March 2017. Based on these discussions on prioritisation of the key themes, such as poverty, identified in the Assessment, draft Well-being Objectives were identified and a multi-layered engagement phase was then undertaken to develop actions. A series of large-scale workshop events were held with frontline staff, stakeholders, county councillors and members of the public at three locations in the county. In addition, shorter workshops were held with other key groups including young people and the Town and Community Councils who are themselves subject to the Well-being of Future Generations Act. An online survey was also available.
12. This new approach undertaken by the PSB to date has been a positive first step in the right direction in terms of the PSB members working together to share information, data and research available within their organisations to develop a better understanding of the needs of our county. However, it is recognised that more could be done and this will be considered in future with the PSB looking to establish a multi-agency Research and Evidence Hub as part of the actions of its draft Well-being Plan. It must be noted however that resources (funding and staff) to take this work forward are limited and could hinder the pace of progress.
13. PSB's approach to impending demise of Communities First
The PSB received a presentation in January 2017 from a Welsh Government representative regarding the consultation on the new approach to Resilient Communities and was keen to engage in discussions relating to future delivery and the use of funding. Communities First was further considered at its September 2017 meeting when the PSB received a presentation on the programme which included a summary since its launch in 2001 and the focus from 2013 on Prosperous, Learning and Healthy communities in a cluster area, which includes parts of Llanelli, Ammanford and Trimsaran. An overview was also provided in relation to successful

outcomes since 2013 which included numbers securing employment, accessing employment support, basic skills support, digital skills and financial inclusion support as well as accessing promoting well-being and mental health programmes.

14. The Legacy Fund programmes have been developed in line with the draft PSB priorities of Healthy Habits, Strong Connections, Early Intervention and Prosperous People and Places and are aligned to the Goals of the Well-being of Future Generations Act.
15. PSB Members, at their September 2017 meeting, supported in principle the Communities First Legacy Fund proposal to be submitted by the Delivery Body, focusing on programmes in three areas: engagement and participation, adult skills and encouraging a positive lifestyle. The continuation of the collaborative approach of working with the other Welsh Government Tackling Poverty Programmes was noted.
16. The PSB is also supporting the development of the Carmarthenshire Children First pioneer area which is currently being developed and is linked to the existing Communities First areas. Both the Children First and the new Communities First programmes will be key delivery projects for the PSB to support and influence.

c) consider how PSBs are specifically addressing rural poverty as part of the development of their Well-Being plans

17. There are clear actions proposed in the draft Well-being Plan which relate to rural poverty. Under one of the PSB's four objectives - Prosperous People and Places – the summary in the Plan states the following:

“The Well-being Assessment found that over 1 in 3 households are living in poverty (36%) – households and the majority of these are in rural areas... Those living in (often hidden) rural poverty experience higher fuel costs and the significant additional cost and challenges that come from lack of access to services, transport and employment. Long term trends see fuel costs rising, and the issues of economy and accessibility ... are becoming increasingly challenging. To soften the impact of this, and to prevent the implications of poverty on individuals and on their communities, the PSB must enable opportunities to have fulfilling lives, and support infrastructural transformation.”

- The Well-being Plan delivery programme will consider the different requirements and responses required in the county's rural and urban communities. During discussions to date there has been a clear understanding that a one-size fits all approach will not be sufficient to address the unique needs of different communities within the county.
- d) explore and understand the experiences of organisations (public, private and third-sector) and individuals in the development of well-being plans and the potential impact of greater regional working in the future.

18. The engagement process in the development of the well-being plan is outlined above and this was extensive and encompassed the involvement of a wide range of partners and opportunities for the public to engage.
19. The PSB support team ensured active participation from partner agencies in the development of the draft well-being objectives which then resulted in further workshop sessions to formulate actions to deliver the objectives. A further multi-agency event will take place on 7th December 2017 with PSB partners to drill down further into how the actions can be delivered.
20. Engagement with individuals in the development of the well-being plan is outlined above in paragraphs 8-11. There have been opportunities to attend numerous events to contribute and also to complete online surveys.
21. Regional working across the three PSBs in the Hywel Dda area has featured strongly in the development of the draft Well-being Plan. The PSB officer leads have worked together to ensure a consistent approach and this has been facilitated across the PSBs by the Regional PSB Co-ordinator, funded by Welsh Government.
22. This consistency has been seen in the engagement events held by each PSB across the region to identify well-being objectives which took place January and March 2017 and engagement sessions between May – July 2017 for front-line staff and the public. The support provided by the Regional Co-ordinator has been essential to provide the expertise, consistency and capacity to the process. The current statutory consultation on the draft Well-being Plans is also being undertaken during the same period - October 2017 to January 2018.
23. The impact of greater regional working in the future is clear and will be beneficial to partners and communities. The regional approach is considered to be an effective way of sharing knowledge and expertise and reducing duplication and is also of benefit by our partners who work across more than one county boundary. Best practice can be shared and potentially there could be collaborative working on actions which may benefit more than one PSB if similar issues may have been identified.
24. This may also be further developed in the future with discussions around the merit of closer working currently ongoing.
25. Progression in a number of key areas such as improvements to future data collection, assessments, monitoring of performance and the development of future Plans could all benefit from enhanced regional working. Collaborative activity will add value to the limited available resources to progress these key areas.