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Public Service Board Scrutiny Committee Tuesday, 14 January 2020

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE BOARD SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD AT BASIL WEBB ROOM, BRONLLYS, POWYS LD3 0LU ON TUESDAY, 14 JANUARY 2020

PRESENT:

N Evans (Mid and West Wales Fire Service), A Davies (Powys County Council), T Buchan (Powys Teaching Health Board) and Councillor A Webb (Brecon Beacons National Park).

In attendance:

W Richards (Head of Democratic Services), E Patterson (Scrutiny Officer), B Ledger (Strategic Planning, Policy and Performance Manager) and R Jones (Strategic Planning and Risk Officer).

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from O James (Powys Teaching Health Board), I Phillips (Powys Teaching Health Board), Councillor A Williams (Powys County Council), R Parry-Wright (PAVO) and P Swanson (PAVO).

2. MINUTES

The Chair was authorised to sign the minutes of the meeting held on 3rd October 2019 subject to confirmation that the date of the next meeting is 9th April 2020.

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

The responses to the matters raised in the minutes were received. It was noted that the Scrutiny Committee had not had sight of the Delivery Plans for each step. These had not been to the PSB but were used at the Working Groups for each of the Well-being Steps. To enable scrutiny to be effective it was the view of the committee that when scrutinising any individual step, it would be necessary to have sight of both the delivery plan and performance report for that Step.

RESOLVED:

That when Step Leads attend PSB Scrutiny Committee that the Delivery Plan and Performance Reports are made available for examination.

The matter regarding the ability to change any of the steps was revisited. Members were advised that the Well-Being Assessment had originally resulted in the production of fifteen steps which was considered too many and these had been reduced to the current twelve steps. The Well-Being Assessment is undertaken every five years which fits with the electoral cycle of the local authority. The PSB publishes an Annual Report which is independent of any individual organisations reporting cycle. Members expressed the view that the undertaking of the Well-Being Assessment should not be tied to the political cycle of one organisation and should be detached from this timeframe.

RECOMMENDED

That the timeframe for undertaking a refreshed Well-Being Assessment is agreed by the Public Service Board to suit the requirements of all member organisations and is not tied to the political cycle of the local authority.

4. STEP 6 RESPONSE

A response to the Scrutiny Observations on progress on Step 2 had been provided and was attached in the supplementary agenda.

Members noted the following:

Recommendation: That consideration is given to providing an opportunity for Powys learners who attend out of county sixth form provision to attend the Careers Festival

Response: The Positive Pathways Powys Board will reconsider the implications of offering attendance to the event to out of county six form pupils.

Scrutiny were of the view that this was an inadequate response to the recommendation and ask for a full response to be provided.

Recommendation: That consideration is given to joining the current separate but related workstreams relating to workforce undertaken by the PSB and RPB.

Response:...these two programmes are aligned and complementary, not least through the current governance arrangements (including having the same Council Senior Responsible Owner for both). However, the Council wishes to keep the two programmes separate as they focus on different workforces and involve different partners.

Scrutiny accept the reasoning behind the desire to keep these two programmes separate however, are not content that the current arrangements provide for full partnership working between the different partners on Step 6. This is an area which scrutiny will be focussing on in detail when Step 6 is next brought to PSB Scrutiny and evidence of full partnership working, in the true spirit of the PSB, will be expected.

5. STEP 2 UPDATE

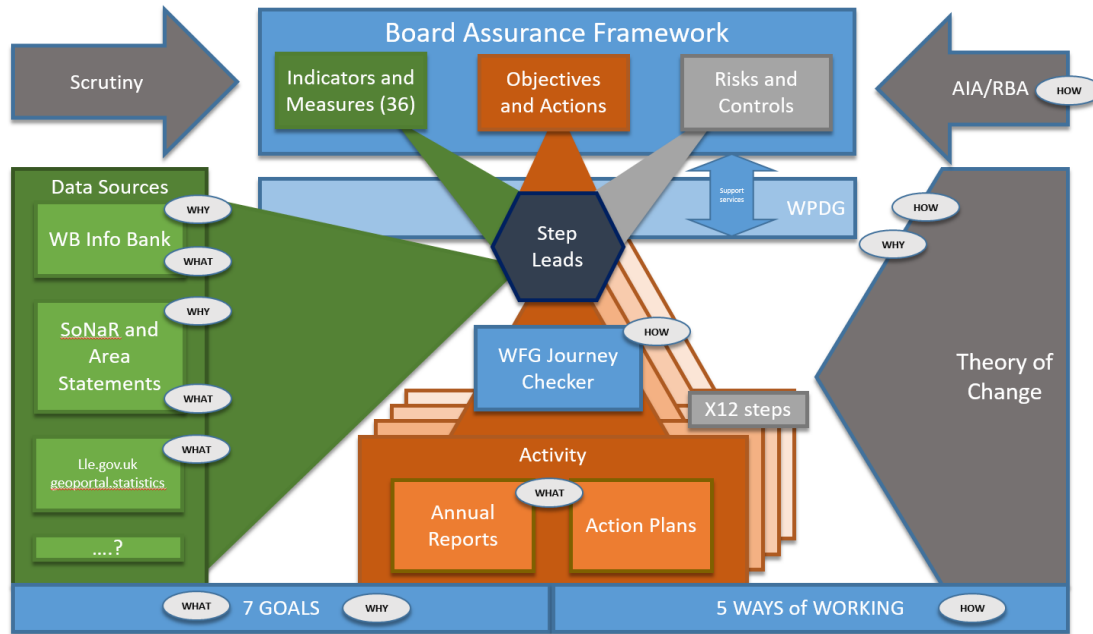
Mr J Atkins Step 2 Lead and Mr P Furnell Step 2 Operational Lead attended the meeting to give an update on Step 2.

The responsibility for Step 2 had formally sat with the Step Lead since February 2019. The work to date had centred around understanding the performance arrangements of each partner organisation with the aim of agreeing a common framework. It was identified early that it was necessary to ensure that any indicators were meaningful and manageable. A suggested proportionality of indicators would be that there would be around three indicators for each step giving a total of 36 indicators. Progress to date had been dependent of progress of the different steps. Some steps had made more progress than others. To date much of the work had taken place behind the scenes with useful facilitating conversations.

In order for the framework to be effective it will need to present information to different groups including the PSB, PSB Scrutiny, Town and Community Councils and the public.

One of the problems experienced is that the Step Lead comes from one of the smaller partner organisations (with around only 100 employees) and finds it difficult to resource the support of this Step. This difficulty is exacerbated by staff turnover.

The following reporting schematic was provided:



The Operational Lead outlined how different assurance frameworks had been examined including suggestions from the National Park auditors and joint working with the Head of Transformation and Communications and the local authority. The frameworks will be completed by the delivery teams for onward reporting to the PSB and PSB Scrutiny.

The reporting schematic includes the sources of data which will be used to ensure that agreed actions are evidence driven.

The following draft assurance framework was put forward for consideration:

Details	Step	Step number and title
	Lead	Lead contact at organisation
	Project/ Action/ Indicator	Element within step that is being reported
	Description	Description of what this element involves
Activity/ Status	Activity this quarter	What's happened?
	Implications for next quarter	What's going to happen?
	RAG	What is the overall status traffic light colour?
Risks and Controls	Main Risks	What are the risks to this element?
	Current and planned controls	How are these risks being, or going to be, controlled (mitigation, contingency, etc.)?
	Risk RAG	What is the overall risk traffic light colour?
Assurances	Recent assurance activity	What related assurance activity has occurred through scrutiny, audit, Wellbeing commissioner, etc.?

Attention was drawn to the Activity Status section which would be a particularly important part of the reporting framework.

Will this be accessible as a live document?

A common way to use this information is being sought. At present the local authority are using Power BI which the Fire Authority also use. The National Park need to improve their reporting systems but a common approach maybe to use Microsoft Sway. It is intended that the method used should be interactive as well as visual.

This differs from some other assurance frameworks which would include detail of the aim at the beginning of the document.

Detail of the aim of the step should be outlined within the delivery plan. If the delivery plan is correct the reporting schedule should be straightforward.

It has been suggested that three indicators will be identified for each step. Is this prescribed or might different steps require fewer or more indicators?

The indicators have yet to be finalised and steps may require fewer or more indicators.

Is there a place where partners contribution or lack of support to a step is recorded?

This is likely to be by omission rather than an explicit record and this would be an opportunity for scrutiny to question the Step Lead in this regard.

How do Step Leads work with other organisations over which they have no authority?

The Delivery Group (of Operational Leads) is the place where these issues would be discussed but ultimately this would be a matter for the PSB.

What are the risks of using such a performance framework?

It is the professional judgement of a Step Lead what to include in the schedule. It will be essential that this is honestly completed for this to be of value.

What is the reporting cycle?

Steps are led by Leads from organisations which have different reporting cycles. It is the intention that a common PSB reporting cycle is developed whereby quarterly performance reports are provided.

Different steps have different timeframes. Can this be included in the performance framework?

This is detailed in the delivery plan but can be included in the Details – Description part of the performance framework.

PSB Scrutiny will need to have sight of what performance information is going to the PSB.

Initially the performance reports will be published in pdf form. It is the intention to have a high level dashboard for the PSB with further dashboards for each of the steps.

It will be necessary to have a record of the performance reported at the point in time it is reported.

The requirement for a static report for the public record is understood and will be included in any proposals brought forward.

Is the Step Lead receiving support from the Powys Teaching Health Board?

Yes. The reporting that already takes place in this organisation is being considered to see how this can feed into the overall arrangements.

What is preventing progress on this step?

The different rates of progress with the different steps mean that it is not known what performance arrangements and indicators are needed on those steps (7 and 8) where least progress has been made.

A further difficulty is resourcing the support for these Steps when the PSB is not funded in the same way that RPBs are funded.

There is synergy between the RPB and PSB with the PSB delegating steps 5,11 and 12 to the RPB thereby opening up access to Intermediate Care Fund monies to progress these steps.

Recommended that:

The PSB be advised that progress on Step 2 has been hampered by the lack of progress on Steps 7 and 8 and that PSB advise the scrutiny committee what actions are being taken to ensure that this block is being addressed.

That the PSB provide scrutiny with a schedule of steps with a number of agreed performance indicators and note when the performance indicators were agreed for that step. This information to be provided to each meeting until the whole performance framework is in place.

The Step Lead and Operational Step Lead were thanked for their attendance at the meeting.

6. WAO REVIEW OF PUBLIC SERVICE BOARDS

The Head of Democratic Services presented the WAO Review of Public Service Boards October 2019 report.

He drew attention to the following three main recommendations:

1. Public bodies have not always taken the opportunity to effectively organise and resource the work of the PSBs.
2. Public Service Board are not consistently being scrutinised or held to account
3. Despite public bodies valuing PSBs, there is no agreement on how their role should evolve

He referenced the Auditor General Discussion Paper – Six themes to help make scrutiny ‘Fit for the Future’.

The Powys PSB was unusual across Wales in that it is not solely a County Council Scrutiny Committee but is comprised of members from all of the appointing bodies to the PSB.

The Chair noted that Powys was not noted in the report so was neither an example of good practice or poor practice but that it appeared that all PSBs had struggled to get going which, five years after starting this process was disappointing. It was also noted that it could take about 15 years to change a culture.

Resolved that PSB Scrutiny would consider the WAO Review of PSBs at a future meeting setting aside time to look at the findings in detail and considering what actions need to be taken to meet the recommendations.

7. PSB SCRUTINY TRACKER

The Scrutiny Tracker was received. It was noted that one item remained outstanding: *‘that a chart is provided detailing the work undertaking on learning and skills between the partners across Powys including but not exclusively: Powys County Council, Powys Teaching Health Board, NPT, PAVO, the Public Services, the Public Services Board, the Regional Partnership Board, the Growth Deal, the Regional Learning and Skills Partnership, the Skills Board and the Learning and Skills Board’.*

The Scrutiny Officer advised that the Operating Lead for Step 6 had confirmed that this work was in progress.

RESOLVED that a further request for this information be made to the Chair of PSB.

What had been the outcome of the Town and Community Council liaison meeting?
There had been positive feedback from this meeting.

8. MINUTES FROM THE PUBLIC SERVICE BOARD

The minutes of the meeting of the PSB held on 19th September 2019 and a written update from the PSB Scrutiny Committee representative who had attended the PSB meeting on 19th December 2020 were received.

The Strategic Planning, Policy and Performance Manager advised that this was the first meeting that the Department of Work and Pensions had attended and that the Board would be considering if they should invite anyone else to attend.

RECOMMEND that the PSB introduce an action log and tracker to assist both in their work and the ability of scrutiny to monitor progress.

9.	WORK PROGRAMME
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The following arrangements were agreed:

- 9th April 2020 – meeting to be hosted by Powys County Council – County Hall Llandrindod Wells
- TBC July 2020 – meeting to be hosted by the Mid and West Wales Fire Service – venue TBC
- 15th October 2020 – host and venue TBC

N Evans (Chair)

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