

Cwm Taf Morgannwg Public Services Board Joint Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Annual Report 2025/2026



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Foreword



I am pleased to introduce the Annual Report of the Cwm Taf Morgannwg, PSB Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee (JOSC) for the 2025–2026 Municipal Year. This report outlines how we have continued to scrutinise the overall effectiveness of the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Public Services Board since the transition to a single Public Services Board (PSB) for Cwm Taf Morgannwg (CTM), consisting of Elected Members and Co-opted non-political members from RCT, Merthyr Tydfil and Bridgend local authorities.

I was extremely honoured to have been re-appointed as Chair of the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Public Services Board Joint Overview & Scrutiny Committee (JOSC) for the 2025-2026 Municipal Year with support from County Borough Councillor Huw David (Bridgend) as Vice Chair. I trust that I am supporting Members to demonstrate an objective and evidence-based approach to scrutiny and that I continue to support the aims and priorities of the CTM PSB JOSC in its commitment to act as a 'critical friend' to the Board.

The JOSC has made progress since the first year of the regional arrangements, amending the Committee's Terms of Reference to widen the scope and remit, bringing in scrutiny of the regional Community Safety Partnership (CSP) and the Regional Partnership Board (RPB). We have also since changed the current membership arrangements for the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Public Services Board Joint Overview & Scrutiny Committee (JOSC), to agree that the membership of the JOSC is not restricted to or nominated exclusively from within each Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

We have strengthened our arrangements by:-

- Agreeing and delivering a work programme for the year ahead which will bring about good deliberations and above all else good outcomes and recommendations;
- Establishing pre-meetings ahead of our formal meetings so that all Members can meet to discuss the reports, to set out the focus of scrutiny for the upcoming agenda;
- Undertaking an in person training session which reminded us of the Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Sustainable Development Principle, the relationship of the JOSC with the PSB and a session on using different types of evidence. This has equipped us with the necessary scrutiny tools to carry out our work.

The Chair of the PSB has enabled an inclusive, joined up approach to understanding the PSB priorities and work streams with his regular attendance at the JOSC meetings.

We had the opportunity to scrutinise the Chair's proposals on the leadership, governance and accountability requirements for the Public Services Board (PSB) which identified key areas of focus to establish good governance and accountability arrangements. We will review these arrangements again at the end of the year to assess its impact.

I would like to thank all members of the CTM PSB JOSC, my Vice Chair, Councillor Huw David, Co-opted Members and Citizen Representatives for their contributions, knowledge and the expertise they bring to the meetings.

Councillor G Hughes (Chair)

Membership of the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Public Services Board Joint Overview & Scrutiny Committee (JOSC)

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council Members



Cllr
Gareth
Hughes
(Chair)



Cllr Jill
Bonetto



Cllr Barry
Stephens



Cllr Sera
Evans



Cllr Craig
Middle



Cllr Sheryl
Evans
Substitute
Member

Bridgend County Borough Council Members



Cllr Huw
David



Cllr Ross
Penhale-
Thomas



Cllr Simon
Griffiths



*Cllr Gary
Haines



Cllr Tim
Thomas



*Cllr Freya
Bletsoe
Substitute
Member

*Cllrs Elaine Winstanley and Martyn Williams have, since April 2026, replaced Cllrs Gary Haines and Freya Bletsoe.

Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council Members



Cllr Julia
Jenkins



Cllr Geraint
Thomas



Cllr David
Hughes

Co-opted Members

Ms Rachel Rowlands

Mr Andrew Robinson

Ms Anita Lewis

Mr Michael J Maguire

Local Health Board

Natural Resources Wales

RCT Citizen Representative

MT Citizen Representative

The Role of the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Public Services Board Joint Overview & Scrutiny Committee

The Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 gives a legally binding common purpose to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of their area by contributing to the achievement of the 7 national well-being goals. The Well-being of Future Generations Act (the Act) puts a well-being duty on specified public bodies including local authorities, local health boards, fire and rescue services and Natural Resources Wales to act jointly via PSBs.

PSBs are required to:

- assess the state of economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being in their areas (the Well-being Assessment);
- use that assessment to set local well-being objectives (the Well-being Plan);
- act together to meet those objectives.

As part of the statutory duties placed on Public Services Boards under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (WBFG Act), and as set out in Welsh Government's Statutory Guidance for PSBs in Wales, Local Authorities must create a designated scrutiny committee to scrutinise the work of the PSB, to ensure democratic accountability. In Cwm Taf Morgannwg, the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee, consisting of Elected Members and co-opted non-political members from RCT, Merthyr Tydfil and Bridgend local authorities was created in May 2023 to reflect the regional footprint of the newly merged Cwm Taf Morgannwg Public Services Board.

The Cwm Taf Morgannwg Joint Overview & Scrutiny Committee comprises of 5 Elected Members from each of the three Local Authorities' Overview and Scrutiny Committees designated to scrutinise the work of the PSB as required by the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act, 2015 and based on the political balance of each of those Committees, as far as practical.

FUNCTIONS OF THE CWM TAF MORGANNWG PSB JOSOC

The overall aim of the JOSOC is to scrutinise the overall effectiveness of the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Public Services Board. The core statutory functions of the JOSOC are:-

- To carry out functions in relation to the Board that are imposed on it by the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, including in particular as a statutory consultee upon the:

- PSB Well-being Assessment;
 - PSB Well-being Plan, and;
 - To receive an Annual Report detailing the progress made towards meeting local Well-being objectives in the Well-being Plan.
- To review or scrutinise the decisions made or actions taken by the Board;
 - To review or scrutinise the Board's governance arrangements;
 - To make reports or recommendations to the Board regarding its functions or governance arrangements;
 - To consider matters relating to the Board as the Welsh Ministers may refer to it and report to the Welsh Ministers accordingly; and
 - In addition to these functions the JOSC's Lines of Inquiry can include (but not be limited to), the following:
 - The effectiveness of the Wellbeing Assessment;
 - The effectiveness of the Wellbeing Plan;
 - The effectiveness of performance measurement arrangements;
 - The level of commitment from individual partners to the work of the Public Services Board;
 - The effectiveness of the Public Services Board in communicating its work, objectives and outcomes to its stakeholders; and,
 - The effectiveness of the Public Services Board in addressing the issue of pooled funding to tackle priorities.

Effective Joint Scrutiny Membership

Effective joint scrutiny membership brings a commitment to working jointly with other Members of other local authorities as well as co-opted members. It requires an understanding of the role and functions of the Public Services Board, its key strategies and priorities. Members from the three local authorities of Merthyr Tydfil CBC, Bridgend CBC and RCT CBC and the co-opted members bring with them a commitment and an approach to joint scrutiny which is member-led, provides an evidence based challenge and is an important mechanism for service improvement.

Coming together from different local authorities to undertake scrutiny of the PSB requires an ability to operate both objectively and collectively, together with an understanding and willingness to be guided by the Chair.

Developing and Delivering the PSB Joint Overview & Scrutiny Work Programme



The CTM PSB Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee's (JOSC) approach to work programme setting during 2025-2026 was a more robust process. This year's forward work programme was developed by means of a Member led process and workshop. Based on the priorities of the Public Services Board (PSB) and the Regional Partnership Board (RPB) with scope for further items to be added throughout the year, this ensured that the scrutiny agenda remained timely and impactful.

At the work programme workshop held on the 19th January 2026, a draft version of the forward work programme was presented to Members for them to complete, which included legacy items from the previous municipal year and other suggested areas and topics of scrutiny as appropriate. The workshop was held with only the members of the JOSC present (Elected Members and Co-opted Members) which contributed to an informal setting where everyone was comfortable sharing their thoughts, contributing to the forward work programme and able to fully engage in the scrutiny process.

The forward work programme was agreed by all Members to include scrutiny of the priorities and future focus determined by the Cwm Taf Morgannwg PSB (shared through updates to the JOSC and Chair engagement) and items determined by the work programme of the RPB which focusses on strategic planning, effective governance, and active stakeholder engagement to meet community needs, particularly for children and vulnerable populations. Importantly, the Committee also took flexibility into account to be able to accommodate any emerging issues throughout the year. In addition to agreeing the work programme, a calendar of meetings was also developed which would assist with diary management and reduce the likelihood of time conflicts (particularly as each individual local authority has differing committee meeting schedules).

What the workshop also highlighted (and confirmed through a supportive resource delivered by the Manager of Co-Production Network for Wales) was the appetite to establish pre-meetings, based on the RCT CBC model, to assist Members with their lines of enquiry, set the focus of scrutiny for the upcoming agenda and ensure each JOSC member feels valued and heard. The workshop presented an opportunity for members of the JOSC to strengthen a number of areas:-

- Agreeing a robust forward work programme to ensure a shared and consistent approach;
- Establishing pre meetings ahead of every formal meeting to aid meeting preparation

as a practical mechanism for improving scrutiny quality and consistency;

- Setting a calendar of meetings- a well-orchestrated schedule reduces the likelihood of time conflicts and encourages attendance; and
- Identifying training needs as such that will support the scrutiny process.

The ability to regularly evaluate the needs of the JOSC is helpful to identify areas for improvement and implement changes as required. The areas of good practice identified by members of the JOSC will continue for the ensuing year and will be reviewed and feedback sought to ensure they remain relevant and fit for purpose.

Training & Knowledge



Providing regular training for the members and co-opted members of the JOSC ensures they feel comfortable and confident about their knowledge base. Members specifically requested an 'in person' training session before their formal meeting in April 2026. This would serve as a reminder of the

Well-being of Future Generations Act and the function of the PSBs to support their understanding of the seven Well-being Goals and the 'Five Ways of Working', the long-term impact of decisions within Cwm Taf Morgannwg, and how to tackle persistent issues such as poverty, health inequalities and climate change, through the lens of the Act.

In addition, as a tool with which to understand how data can be used to help boost research capacity and capability for scrutiny, the Health Determinants Research Collaboration team (HDRC) RCT delivered a training session on the importance of using different types of evidence. The HDRC Team, who are supporting change in the local authority culture towards evidence informed decision making, outlined the importance of using different types of evidence to create a more detailed picture, bring differing perspectives and build capacity for learning.

The Public Services Board element of the training helped re-connect the JOSC with the principles of the Well-being of Future Generations Act and the role, responsibilities and priorities of the Cwm Taf Morgannwg PSB and specifically its relationship with the PSB JOSC. The training session also served to explain the PSB priorities, which have now been embedded into the forward work programme of the JOSC.

It was considered that local delivery of training, by both the PSB support Officers and the HDRC RCT team, more effective and informal, fostering a greater opportunity for discussion and sharing ideas. The 'in person' element also presented a useful networking opportunity for Members to meet and share ideas.

Notwithstanding the targeted training session, members of the JOSC are able to request further training as and when required through a request to the Chair or via the supporting Scrutiny Officer to ensure they feel well equipped to undertake their role. Where there is a change in membership, there is an opportunity to access training modules previously shared and an insight into previous work materials through the RCT website and Joint Committee terms of reference.



The Work Streams of the JOSC

The JOSC met on four occasions during the 2025/2026 Municipal Year with hybrid/virtual meetings held on the 17th July 2025, 3rd October 2025, 19th January 2026 and 21st April 2026 (with a separate training session also being held in April 2026). Below are the key areas of scrutiny:

Leadership, Governance and Accountability

The JOSC continues to undertake effective examination and challenge of the PSB and in July 2025 the JOSC undertook scrutiny of the PSB Chair's report on the leadership, governance and accountability requirements for the Public Services Board (PSB) identifying key areas of focus and establishing good governance and accountability arrangements. Comment and feedback was sought by the JOSC on the proposed arrangements to ensure the Board is fit to deliver on its statutorily required remit and role.

It was a timely review for the PSB to ensure that its structure and arrangements remain fit for purpose and a clear role of the JOSC to provide feedback as its primary role includes holding the PSB to account, to ensure transparency and effectiveness of the PSB governance. It was also an opportunity to recognise the Joint Committee's need for a clear set of priorities to embed into its forward work programme.

The JOSC agreed that the proposed new arrangements will provide a more strengthened and accountable approach to delivering the well-being objectives; it also recommended that it undertake a review of the arrangements in twelve months' time to establish the impact of the arrangements.

The engagement by JOSC provides scrutiny with the opportunity to help build a productive, pro-active and robust PSB for the Cwm Taf Morgannwg communities and is in accordance with the duties placed on the PSB under the Well Being of Future Generations Act.

Integrated Community Care System (ICCS)

The JOSC undertook scrutiny of the regional agreement by the constituent councils of RCT, Merthyr and Bridgend which proposed to bring together health and social care to deliver new community pathways and create a new model of integrated care across the Cwm Taf communities. It will set about increasing transparency on the delivery of health and social care services in the community.

The JOSC scrutinised the progress of the Integrated Community Care System (ICCS) for older people and people living with frailty ICCS Model and Regional

Partnership Agreement with the specific details of the Agreement as a matter specifically for the consideration of the JOSC.

There was an extensive discussion between the JOSC, Officers and the Chair of the RPB, Councillor J Gebbie, which provided assurance that the proposals were a positive development and that the regional Integrated Community Care System is an opportunity to improve how all partners work to deliver better outcomes for the Cwm Taf Morgannwg population. The RPA will be a key enabler of the statutory duties under the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 and directly supports the respective Councils' corporate wellbeing objectives to promote independence.

The JOSC, in its support of the RPA, requested that this item remain on their forward work programme to undertake a Regional Partnership Agreement implementation review at the end of the year in conjunction with scrutiny of the Golden Thread programme (another example of improvements in partnership working).

PSB Climate Change Risk Assessment- Climate Adaptation Programme

The JOSC received a progress report with a focus on the 3 priorities identified from the 11 climate risks to Cwm Taf Morgannwg, those being Post-Industrial Landscape Risk, the Infrastructure Pinch Points workstreams where GIS mapping is being used to identify infrastructure, risk and local vulnerability and Climate Resilient Communities.

The report from the PSB Officers and partner agencies, which include Natural Resources Wales (NRW), Interlink RCT and Transport for Wales (TfW) set out the progress of the three Task and Finish Groups as well as the challenges faced to communicate the visibility of the work of the CTM PSB CCRA process by increasing public and partner awareness, understanding progress to date and sharing knowledge, learning and best practice. Importantly, understanding how the PSB can make best use of expertise and resources locally and regionally, involve and integrate with partners and residents alike.

The PSB Climate Change Risk Assessment has enabled the JOSC to maximise the role and purpose of the scrutiny function to ensure that the work and priorities of CTM PSB are in line and embedded within the communities of the region and community need. It has been an integral part of the developments from initially undertaking pre scrutiny of the work of the PSB in developing a climate change risk assessment for Cwm Taf Morgannwg and therein having regular progress reports on the priorities of the Task and Finish Groups.

The JOSC contributed particularly to the communication and engagement elements of the Climate Change Adaptation Programme as to how it can integrate across

organisations where there is already a variety of different approaches to climate adaptation and involve and update people in the community.

The JOSC will continue to scrutinise the PSB Adaptation Programme as it develops, which will support contributions to the PSB well-being objective Healthy Local Neighbourhoods by working together with communities and local groups to improve resilience to the impact of climate change and promote positive action. Supporting the PSB Commitment that risk assessment improves an understanding of climate risk and adds to the evidence of well-being across the Cwm Taf Morgannwg communities.

Regional Community Safety Partnership (CSP)

As part of its terms of reference, the JOSC plays an important role in scrutinising progress of the Regional Community Safety Partnership to maximise the collaboration between the Public Services Board, Regional Community Safety Partnership and the JOSC. The oversight also ensures the PSB and its related Boards, including the CSP, adhere to the Five Ways of Working and the sustainable development principle in its work.

Existing legislation excludes any matter which could be considered by an individual Authority's Crime and Disorder Committee (sections 19 and 20 of the Police and Justice Act 2006) from the work programmes of all other scrutiny committees, sub-committees and JOSCs.

Having already undertaken pre-scrutiny on the proposal to establish a single Community Safety Partnership for the Cwm Taf Morgannwg region, the JOSC continues to robustly scrutinise progress of the Regional CSP to ensure the recommended approach supports the Public Service Board Wellbeing objectives.

Following much consultation and a review of consistent themes amongst the constituent local authorities, the following three priorities were selected by the Regional CSP to be taken forward:

'Preventing Violent Crime' includes domestic abuse and serious violence, relates to the Serious Violence Duty and the strategic needs assessment / problem profiles being developed.

'Promoting Cohesive Communities' considers the role that community safety can play in the context of cohesion including housing pressures, demand on temporary accommodation, tensions around Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs), resettlement and dispersal schemes and a potential link to the Prevent agenda.

'Creating Safe Spaces' includes town centre strategies, day and night-time economy and links to Protect.

The progress report to the JOSC demonstrated the volume of work covering the three priorities such as asylum dispersal schemes and engagement with communities and training (Ask for Angela). The work to deliver against the Welsh Government Community Cohesion plan and integrating strategic assessment requirements with the PSB Well-being Assessment. The priority around Counterterrorism, particularly Prevent and Channel.

The JOSC applauded the priority of Community Cohesion, particularly work drawing on the lived experience and the 'whole society' approach through collaboration across public, third and private sectors and stressed the importance of demonstrating this aspect in further reports. They contributed and drew on local experience relating to the topics of housing pressures, demand on temporary accommodation, tensions around Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs), resettlement and dispersal schemes.

The JOSC agreed that Community Safety and the public's positive perception of safety are key in ensuring the PSB delivers the Well-being Objective 'Healthy Local Neighbourhoods' and elements of feeling and being safe. Therefore, the JOSC will continue to scrutinise the activities of the Regional CSP, which will be reported by exception to the Public Services Board (PSB) and will remain a standing agenda item on its forward work programme.

PSB/JOSC Chairs Engagement

In order to enhance the JOSC understanding of the PSB priorities, a consistent interaction between the Chairs of the PSB and the JOSC has been established.

The PSB Chair, Mr Paul Mee, attends meetings of the JOSC to deliver a timely update of the work underway which supports an active discussion on the issues being taken forward by the PSB, aside from and in addition to those highlighted on the JOSC forward work programme. Recent updates have included information on the PSB workstreams of Climate Change, Healthy Travel and Food Resilience as well as the role of the PSB in improving community well-being and resilience. The latter representing a fundamental priority for the PSB as the strategic body responsible for the delivery of its Well-being Plan and in support of the goals of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act.

The practice of the PSB Chair attending in person fosters an inclusive environment where members of the JOSC are able to ask questions and probe further and highlights the importance of accountability and transparency between the PSB and the JOSC.

In addition, there is a standing invitation to the Chair of the JOSC to attend identified meetings of the PSB to provide his updates on the scrutiny activity and resulting recommendations of the Joint Committee which has further assisted a joined up approach to ensure that the PSB and JOSC are performing their roles appropriately.

- Key matters for consideration following publication of the annual report 2025/2026 will include pre scrutiny of the PSB Annual Report 2025/2026, specifically whether the PSB has been effective in making progress towards meeting local Well-being objectives in the Well-being Plan and whether the JOSC is satisfied that the PSB has efficiently communicated its work, objectives and outcomes to its stakeholders.

It will also scrutinise progress of the Regional Partnership Integrated Children's Board new strategy for babies, children and young people, titled '**Whole System: Whole Heart**' for Cwm Taf Morgannwg.

Looking Ahead....



In the year ahead, the JOSC will aim to build on the areas of good practice it has established this year:

- Continue to hold a workshop style session to develop the forward work programme which is Member led and based on the PSB/RPB priorities and other emerging themes;
- Ensure next year's forward work programme continues to be developed in good time to maintain the flow of scrutiny of key priorities that impact the communities of Cwm Taf Morgannwg;
- Set out a clear timetable of meetings for the year to support diary management;
- Promote the good practice of holding pre meetings to develop themes and lines of enquiry that support members of the JOSC with good exchanges at their meetings;
- Encourage in person training sessions to enable members of the JOSC to meet informally and ensure any training sessions reflect the needs of the JOSC;
- Continue the sharing of knowledge and current levels of engagement between the Chairs of the PSB/JOSC as good practice which provide valuable insight into the PSB/JOSC work streams and activity.