

SUBJECT: Gwent Serious Violence Prevention Strategy 2024/25

MEETING: Public Services Scrutiny Committee

DATE: 7th May 2024

DIVISIONS/WARDS AFFECTED: All

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To provide an overview of the Gwent Serious Violence Prevention Strategy 2024/25, which has been produced in-line with the statutory requirements of the Serious Violence Duty Act 2023. The report seeks Scrutiny Committee Members views and feedback for further consideration, prior to Political approval.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The Scrutiny Committee is requested to scrutinise the Gwent Serious Violence Prevention Strategy 2024/25 and provide feedback for consideration prior to Political agreement.

3. KEY ISSUES

- 3.1 In 2019 the UK Government announced its intentions to introduce a Serious Violence Duty to ensure that all relevant agencies work together to share information and develop local interventions to reduce and prevent serious violence within their local communities.
- 3.2 On 28th April 2022, the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts (PCSC) Act received Royal Assent. The PCSC Act legislates the Serious Violence Duty (the Duty), a multi-agency approach to prevent and reduce serious violence in England and Wales. It sets out that 'specified authorities' across England and Wales must collaborate to share information to address priorities, where possible through existing partnership structures when implementing the Duty. 'Specified authorities' comprise of:
- The Chief Officer of Police
 - Fire and Rescue Authorities
 - Local Health Boards
 - Local Authorities
 - Youth Offending Teams
 - Probation Service
- 3.3 The Serious Violence Duty came into place on 31st January 2023 and stipulated that agencies must work collaboratively and share data and information to develop a strategic needs assessment and strategy to prevent and reduce serious violence. In addition to the Duty the UK Government also amended the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to place an explicit duty on Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) to have a strategy in place to tackle serious violence.
- 3.4 In response to the Duty, a Gwent Serious Violence Prevention Working Group was established by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner as lead convener in Gwent. The group consisted of representatives from all the specified authorities listed under the Duty who agreed to

collaborate on the development of a serious violence needs assessment and consequent serious violence strategy. The first task for the working group was to develop a strategic needs assessment to fully understand the serious violence crime trends and problems and the underlying factors that increase the risk of these incidents happening.

3.5 Under the requirements of the serious violence duty, local areas are responsible for developing a 'definition' of violence based on local issues and key information available that describes the picture locally. This is in addition to those key national issues the Home Office want to see reductions in. In the development of the strategic needs assessment partners agreed to adopt a broad definition of violence, or areas of focus as follows:

- Homicide,
- Knife and gun crime,
- Public space youth violence,
- Youth violence in schools,
- Grievous bodily harm (GBH) and actual bodily harm (ABH),
- Robbery,
- Sexual violence and domestic abuse including stalking and harassment,
- Arson with threats to life,
- Assaults against professionals.

The strategic needs assessment has focused the research and data analysis on these key areas, starting with a profile of violence types. However, it has been acknowledged by all partners that this definition may change and adapt over time.

3.6 The needs assessment highlighted that all five local authority areas have experienced increasing trends in serious violent crimes. Since 2019/2020 partners acknowledged that there were significant issues at the data gathering and analysis stage of the process. Currently across Gwent there is no system in place to gather, collate and share regional to local partner data. There is also a lack of dedicated analytical resource to analyse and interpret data. This has therefore been highlighted in the strategy as an area for development over the next twelve months as without sufficient data analysis partners cannot effectively set long term priorities or develop effective Community Safety Partnership delivery plans. The first Serious Violence Strategy will therefore be an interim strategy whilst the data and intelligence gaps are addressed and used to refresh the strategy for 2025 onwards.

3.7 The Gwent Serious Violence Prevention Strategy therefore sets its four key priorities for 2024 - 2025; these are as follows:

- **Strategic Priority One:** Better use of data to inform action.
- **Strategic Priority Two:** Prioritise addressing the risk factors for violence with evidence-based interventions.
- **Strategic Priority Three:** Join the dots to better understand and maximise impact.
- **Strategic Priority Four:** Adopt a place-based approach that utilises local experience, listens to community voices and is strengthened through regional governance.

Details on each of the priorities can be found within the full strategy document.

3.8 Discussions have taken place within the working group regarding governance for this work and where this should sit within each of the local authority areas. It has been proposed that Community Safety Partnerships are well placed to monitor the work of the strategy, develop local action plans and commission initiatives/services at a local level to address the identified priorities within each local authority area. It is therefore proposed that the Safer Monmouthshire Group

(SMG), which fulfils the CSP (Community Safety Partnership) function for the county, be the key Partnership to take responsibility and ownership of implementing the strategy in the county. This is in-line with the other four local authority areas across Gwent.

- 3.9 The development of the initial strategy for Gwent is a positive step in identifying and addressing the serious violence priorities across the county of Monmouthshire. Over the course of the next twelve months the Safer Monmouthshire Group will work with key partners and agencies to embed the relevant actions within its CSP plan to ensure interventions and activity is delivered across the county targeting the factors that drive people to become victims or preparators of serious violence.

4. **RESOURCES**

- 4.1 Some additional resource implications may be identified. It is anticipated that there may be some financial costs of developing and implementing initiatives/services to address some of the aspects of serious violence, in line with the priorities identified within the strategy for Monmouthshire. The Home Office has provided a limited amount of funding to support this identified work at a county level of approximately £24,000 for 24/25. This funding will be managed by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner Gwent on behalf of CSPs across Gwent. Through consultation with partners in the Gwent working group it has been agreed that this will be an equitable split across all five Gwent Local Authorities for 2024/25.
- 4.2 Additional resource implications may be identified as work progresses on local delivery plans, however the aim is to, where possible, realign existing resources and budgets to meet the delivery requirements. Dedicated Officer time and capacity to manage and champion this work, will continue to be provided within existing budgets.

5. **EQUALITY, SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND CORPORATE PARENTING IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The Gwent Serious Violence Prevention Strategy 2024/25 has been developed in line with equalities legislation and the sustainable development principle, including Wellbeing goals, under the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act.

6. **AUTHOR(S):**

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