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Friday, 26 April 2024

Notice of meeting

Public Services Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 7th May, 2024 at 1.00 pm,
Council Chamber, County Hall, The Rhadyr USK

Please note that a pre meeting will be held 30 minutes prior to the start of the meeting for members of the committee.

AGENDA

Item No	Item	Pages
1.	Apologies for absence	
2.	Declarations of Interest	
3.	Public Open Forum Select Committee Public Open Forum ~ Guidance Our Select Committee meetings are live streamed and a link to the live stream will be available on the meeting page of the Monmouthshire County Council website If you would like to share your thoughts on any proposals being discussed by Select Committees, you can submit your representation via this form Please share your views by uploading a video or audio file (maximum of 4 minutes) or; Please submit a written representation (via Microsoft Word, maximum of 500 words) You will need to register for a My Monmouthshire account in order to submit the representation or use your log in, if you have registered previously. The deadline for submitting representations to the Council is 5pm three	

clear working days in advance of the meeting.

If representations received exceed 30 minutes, a selection of these based on theme will be shared at the Select Committee meeting. All representations received will be made available to councillors prior to the meeting.

If you would like to suggest future topics for scrutiny by one of our Select Committees, please do so by emailing Scrutiny@monmouthshire.gov.uk

4.	Serious Violence Duty: Regional Strategy	1 - 30
5.	Community Policing	
6.	To consider the Public Services Committee's forward work programme and action list	31 - 32
7.	Minutes of the previous meeting held on 11th December 2023.	33 - 36
8.	To note the date and time of the next meeting: 14th October 2024	

Paul Matthews

Chief Executive

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
CYNGOR SIR FYNWY

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE COMMITTEE IS AS FOLLOWS:

County Councillor Jill Bond	West End;	Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru
County Councillor Jan Butler	Goetre Fawr;	Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Steven Garratt	Overmonnow;	Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru
County Councillor Penny Jones	Raglan;	Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Malcolm Lane	Mardy;	Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Dale Rooke	Chepstow Castle & Larkfield;	Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru
County Councillor Frances Taylor	Magor West;	Independent Group
County Councillor Armand Watts	Bulwark and Thornwell;	Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru
County Councillor Meirion Howells	Llanbadoc & Usk;	Independent

Public Information

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Welsh Language

The Council welcomes contributions from members of the public through the medium of Welsh or English. We respectfully ask that you provide us with adequate notice to accommodate your needs.

Aims and Values of Monmouthshire County Council

Our purpose

To become a zero-carbon county, supporting well-being, health and dignity for everyone at every stage of life.

Objectives we are working towards

- Fair place to live where the effects of inequality and poverty have been reduced.
- Green place to live and work with reduced carbon emissions and making a positive contribution to addressing the climate and nature emergency.
- Thriving and ambitious place, where there are vibrant town centres and where businesses can grow and develop.
- Safe place to live where people have a home where they feel secure in.
- Connected place where people feel part of a community and are valued.
- Learning place where everybody has the opportunity to reach their potential.

Our Values

Openness. We are open and honest. People have the chance to get involved in decisions that affect them, tell us what matters and do things for themselves/their communities. If we cannot do something to help, we'll say so; if it will take a while to get the answer we'll explain why; if we can't answer immediately we'll try to connect you to the people who can help – building trust and engagement is a key foundation.

Fairness. We provide fair chances, to help people and communities thrive. If something does not seem fair, we will listen and help explain why. We will always try to treat everyone fairly and consistently. We cannot always make everyone happy, but will commit to listening and explaining why we did what we did.

Flexibility. We will continue to change and be flexible to enable delivery of the most effective and efficient services. This means a genuine commitment to working with everyone to embrace new ways of working.

Teamwork. We will work with you and our partners to support and inspire everyone to get involved so we can achieve great things together. We don't see ourselves as the 'fixers' or problem-solvers, but we will make the best of the ideas, assets and resources available to make sure we do the things that most positively impact our people and places.

Kindness: We will show kindness to all those we work with putting the importance of relationships and the connections we have with one another at the heart of all interactions.

Role of the Pre-meeting

1. Why is the Committee scrutinising this? (background, key issues)
 2. What is the Committee’s role and what outcome do Members want to achieve?
 3. Is there sufficient information to achieve this? If not, who could provide this?
- Agree the order of questioning and which Members will lead
 - Agree questions for officers and questions for the Cabinet Member

Questions for the Meeting

Scrutinising Performance

1. How does performance compare with previous years? Is it better/worse? Why?
2. How does performance compare with other councils/other service providers? Is it better/worse? Why?
3. How does performance compare with set targets? Is it better/worse? Why?
4. How were performance targets set? Are they challenging enough/realistic?
5. How do service users/the public/partners view the performance of the service?
6. Have there been any recent audit and inspections? What were the findings?
7. How does the service contribute to the achievement of corporate objectives?
8. Is improvement/decline in performance linked to an increase/reduction in resource? What capacity is there to improve?

Scrutinising Policy

1. Who does the policy affect ~ directly and indirectly? Who will benefit most/least?
2. What is the view of service users/stakeholders? What consultation has been undertaken? Did the consultation process comply with the Gunning Principles? Do stakeholders believe it will achieve the desired outcome?
3. What is the view of the community as a whole - the ‘taxpayer’ perspective?
4. What methods were used to consult with stakeholders? Did the process enable all those with a stake to have their say?
5. What practice and options have been considered in developing/reviewing this policy? What evidence is there to inform what works? Does the policy relate to an area where there is a lack of published research or other evidence?
6. Does the policy relate to an area where there are known inequalities?
7. Does this policy align to our corporate objectives, as defined in our corporate plan? Does it adhere to our Welsh Language Standards?

8. Have all relevant sustainable development, equalities and safeguarding implications
9. been taken into consideration? For example, what are the procedures that need to be in place to protect children?
- 10.
11. How much will this cost to implement and what funding source has been identified?
- 12.
13. How will performance of the policy be measured and the impact evaluated

General Questions:

Empowering Communities

- How are we involving local communities and empowering them to design and deliver services to suit local need?
- Do we have regular discussions with communities about service priorities and what level of service the council can afford to provide in the future?
- Is the service working with citizens to explain the role of different partners in delivering the service, and managing expectations?
- Is there a framework and proportionate process in place for collective performance assessment, including from a citizen's perspective, and do you have accountability arrangements to support this?
- Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out? If so, can the Leader and Cabinet/Senior Officers provide members with copies and a detailed explanation of the EQIA conducted in respect of these proposals?
- Can the Leader and Cabinet/Senior Officers assure members that these proposals comply with Equality and Human Rights legislation? Do the proposals comply with the Local Authority's Strategic Equality Plan?

Service Demands

- How will policy and legislative change affect how the council operates?
- Have we considered the demographics of our council and how this will impact on service delivery and funding in the future?
- Have you identified and considered the long-term trends that might affect your service area, what impact these trends could have on your service/your service could have on these trends, and what is being done in response?

Financial Planning

- Do we have robust medium and long-term financial plans in place?
- Are we linking budgets to plans and outcomes and reporting effectively on these?

Making savings and generating income

- Do we have the right structures in place to ensure that our efficiency, improvement and transformational approaches are working together to maximise savings?

- How are we maximising income?
- Have we compared other council's policies to maximise income and fully considered the implications on service users?
- Do we have a workforce plan that takes into account capacity, costs, and skills of the actual versus desired workforce?

Questions to ask within a year of the decision:

- Were the intended outcomes of the proposal achieved or were there other results?
- Were the impacts confined to the group you initially thought would be affected i.e. older people, or were others affected e.g. people with disabilities, parents with young children?
- Is the decision still the right decision or do adjustments need to be made?

Questions for the Committee to conclude...

Do we have the necessary information to form conclusions/make recommendations to the executive, council, other partners? If not, do we need to:

- (i) Investigate the issue in more detail?
- (ii) Obtain further information from other witnesses – Executive Member, independent expert, members of the local community, service users, regulatory bodies...

Agree further actions to be undertaken within a timescale/future monitoring report...

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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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Serious Violence Duty

Interim Strategy for Serious Violence Prevention for Gwent 2024-25

'A Gwent Without Violence'

Developing our Strategic Framework for Action: 2024-2025



Blaenau Gwent and Caerphilly Youth Offending Service

Newport Youth Offending Service



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Executive Summary

Serious violence has a devastating impact on the lives of victims and families, instils fear in communities and results in wide-ranging social and economic costs to society, communities, families, and individuals. Incidents of serious violence have increased in England and Wales in recent years. In Gwent, unfortunately, we are witnessing the same pattern. To reverse this trend a whole-system multi-agency approach is needed with everyone working towards a shared strategic vision of 'A Gwent without violence'.

Our collective approach should be based on a comprehensive understanding of the current serious violence landscape in Gwent, the evidence-based prevention and early interventions required to reverse this trend, what interventions and services are currently available and then detail where further action is needed. This is supported by a clear understanding of mutually beneficial partnership and inter-partnership priorities all informed and developed through meaningful community insight.

In 2019 the UK Government announced impending new legislation introducing a Serious Violence Duty¹ ('the Duty') to ensure that all relevant services work together to share information to target local interventions, where possible through existing partnership structures, collaborate and plan to prevent and reduce serious violence within their local communities. The Duty encouraged local areas to adopt a public health approach to addressing violence when developing the strategy. This is an approach that seeks to improve the health and safety of all individuals by addressing underlying risk factors that increase the likelihood that an individual will become a victim or a perpetrator of violence.

In response to the Duty, a Serious Violence Prevention Working Group ('Working Group') was established by the Office of Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) as lead convener in Gwent early 2023. Membership of the Working Group includes relevant partners, as outlined in the Duty and known as 'Specified Authorities'. The first task for the Working Group was to develop a regional Strategic Needs Assessment (SNA) to fully understand the serious violence landscape in Gwent. This was the first regional SNA for Gwent and as such has been a huge task for partners, led by the OPCC.

The first Gwent Strategic Needs Assessment (SNA) covers the five-year period 2018-19 to 2022-23 and was published on the same date as this interim strategy, as stipulated by the Duty, 31st January 2024. The current iteration of the SNA highlighted that the level of serious violent crime has been steadily increasing in Gwent over the last five years. All five of our local authorities have

¹ [Serious Violence Duty - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/serious-violence-duty) (accessed 22/12/23)

experienced increasing trends in serious violent crimes since 2019-20 when all crime was reduced due to the covid-19 pandemic.

In Gwent, there is currently no system in place to systematically collect regional and local partner serious violence data, which is compounded by a lack of dedicated data analytic resource to analyse and interpret the data shared. The current picture of serious violence in Gwent is therefore not complete, particularly regarding understanding and interpreting what the existing data tells us about where action is required. This imposes limitations on the effectiveness of setting longer-term priorities within the regional Strategy and local CSP delivery plans. To achieve our vision of 'A Gwent Without Violence' we need a much better understanding of the serious violence landscape to inform our strategic direction that incorporates appropriate partner and partnership data.

This first Gwent Serious Violence Prevention Strategy therefore intentionally sets out the priorities to be achieved in 2024-25 which will enable time to address the data and intelligence gaps, which can then be used to refresh this Strategy from 2025 onwards. For 2024/25, four strategic priorities have been identified that will have enabling functions to establish the essential pillars upon which an effective Serious Violence Prevention strategy will be based:

Strategic Priority One: Better use of data to inform action

In Gwent we will strive to achieve a data driven approach to preventing serious violence.

- A data driven approach requires dedicated data analytical capacity, a robust regional data collection and analysis function, with appropriate governance. Opportunities to share current partner and partnership data, analytical capacity and expertise will be explored and if required new and dedicated data analytic resource funded. Once identified, minimum data sets will be agreed, and data flow systems established. Future SNAs will be strengthened by additional partner data, from sources such as individual agencies/specified authorities, Third Sector partners and local community insights. Wider partnership data would also strengthen future SNAs. This could include data from regional governance structures such as Violence Against Women Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV), Local Criminal Justice Board and Gwent Substance Misuse Area Planning Board.
- This priority does not just meet the SV Duty in isolation, as there are clear links to wider CSP priorities, and the work of other partnerships (such as those above) impacting on serious violence across Gwent. This will require greater partner and partnership working, trust, and sharing of resources. This approach will provide the necessary intelligence to put in

place the most appropriate and targeted interventions to achieve reductions in serious violence.

Strategic Priority Two: Prioritise addressing the risk factors for violence with evidence-based interventions

In Gwent we will strive to understand the causes of serious violence to enable us to consistently take an evidence-informed approach to preventing serious violence.

- A consistent Gwent-wide approach is required to understand, prioritise, and apply evidence-base knowledge on the causes and the risk factors of serious violence. Whilst there is clear evidence of risk factors for perpetrators and victims of violence, which include age, gender, sexuality, education, social and cultural norms, mental health, substance use, and childhood trauma (ACEs) and that there are recognised repositories providing guidance on evidence-based interventions, this information is not systematically available, accessible, and applicable in the local context. Nor is this consistently referenced in partner and partnership plans.
- Future regional and local strategies and action plans will explicitly detail prevention and early intervention outcomes and the application of evidence-based interventions, supported by outcome measures which will be monitored and evaluated. Consideration of evidence-informed practice and robust monitoring and evaluation processes will be integral to future regional and local planning and commissioning.

Strategic Priority Three: Join the dots to better understand and maximise impact.

In Gwent we will strive to understand the local landscape, as well as seeking to learn from activity and good practice in other areas within and outside Gwent.

- To maximise the impact of greater partnership working, partnership collaboration and integration of services/resources to prevent serious violence, we need to join the dots. The statutory responsibility for community safety in each of our five local authority areas lies with Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) and each CSP has an action plan based on local SNA's. However, due to the scale of vulnerability and susceptibility factors that influence violence there are a wide range of regional and local partnerships and networks whose priorities also impact on preventing serious violence.

- These forums have been highlighted in the Appendices but include the Public Safety Board (PSB), VAWDASV Board, Local Criminal Justice Board, Strategic Housing Coordination Group, Gwent Safeguarding Board, and the Gwent Regional Area Planning Board for Substance Misuse (APB) – all of which have statutory responsibilities. There are several well-established local forums which address similar priorities, such as 'Youth Justice Management Boards' and emerging ones such as 'Gwent Serious Organised Crime Partnership Meeting'. The priorities and activities of all these forums must be considered to avoid duplication of effort, and instead amplify the efforts to achieve mutual goals.

Strategic Priority Four: Adopt a place-based approach that utilises local experience, listens to community voices and is strengthened through regional governance

We will build on local experience and understanding of violence through a place-based approach which is supported by regional partnerships.

- An effective response to serious violence needs to utilise local experience, as well as listening and responding to community voices. Across the region of Gwent, the Working Group agree that although there is a shared vision to prevent serious violence, the patterns of serious violence are not the same across our localities.
- Although specified authority partners have agreed to collaborate on a Gwent-wide strategy and support, serious violence prevention interventions and activities will also still be driven by local need and guided by local intelligence including community voices. Regional to local governance will need strengthening after considering the findings of the PSB's CSP review.

In Gwent we are committed to securing the foundations required to establish a strategy which achieves our vision of 'A Gwent Without Violence'. This interim strategy establishes what we need to put in place prior to setting out a longer-term strategy to prevent serious violence.

Introduction

The Duty

In 2019 the UK Government announced legislation introducing a new Serious Violence Duty² ('the Duty') on a range of Specified Authorities³. The Duty ensures that all relevant services work together to share information to target local interventions, where possible through existing partnership structures, collaborate and plan to prevent and reduce serious violence within their local communities.

The Duty set out the specific requirements for:

- 'Specified Authorities' to collaborate and plan to prevent and reduce serious violence "*including identifying the kind of serious violence that occur in the area, the causes of that violence, and to **prepare and implement a strategy for preventing, and reducing serious violence in the area***"⁴.
- Local areas to set out their medium and long-term priorities, and subsequent actions/interventions required based on a **theory of change model** AND encouraged the adoption of the World Health Organisations' (WHO) definition of a **public health approach** to reducing violence⁵ by using the WHO's four step framework⁶.

The Duty was introduced to address the devastating impact of serious violence on the lives of victims and families, fear in communities and the cost to society and communities. Incidents of serious violence have increased in England and Wales in recent years, which is mirrored in Gwent.

The Local Response

In 2023, the Office of Police and Crime Commissioner initiated a Serious Violence Working Group, as lead convener, made up of representatives from Specified Authorities in Gwent. The Working Group was tasked with coproducing a regional Strategic Needs Assessment (SNA) and Serious Violence Prevention Strategy.

This is the first time that a regional SNA and Strategy have been produced in Gwent. Prior to 2024, broader community safety SNA's and strategies have been required to be produced on a Local Authority level by Community Safety

² [Serious Violence Duty - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk) {accessed 22/12/23}

³ Police, Justice (Probation and YOS), Fire and Rescue, Local Health Board, Local Councils in Wales

⁴ WHO Definition of Serious Violence [Violence Prevention Alliance Approach \(who.int\)](https://www.who.int) {accessed on 22/01/24}: "the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group of community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation"

⁵ Page 8 - [Serious Violence Duty - Statutory Guidance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

⁶ [Violence Prevention Alliance Approach \(who.int\)](https://www.who.int)

Partnerships, often through Wellbeing Plans under the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act. In Gwent there are five Local Authorities: Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Torfaen, Monmouthshire, and Newport, each now have Community Safety Partnership structures. Most CSPs in Gwent have only recently been reformed independent of the PSB's previous local Wellbeing Partnership structures.

The Public Health team within Gwent's local Health Board: Aneurin Bevan's University Health Board (ABUHB), led the development of this strategy in collaboration with Specified Authorities. Two partner workshops and a succession of Working Group and partner meetings, added to the available intelligence gathered in the SNA and guided the development of this interim strategy.

Our local vision has been agreed as: "**A Gwent without violence**". To achieve this vision requires a strategic approach based on a comprehensive understanding of the data, intelligence, evidence-base, partner and partnership priorities and community insight. This strategy identifies the initial key strategic priorities that are required to develop our understanding of existing data and intelligence, engagement with communities to seek their views and align and strengthen the maturing community partnership structures at both local and regional level in Gwent.

The strategy highlights actions for 24/25 which will provide the insight and impetus for what is needed to effectively reduce and prevent serious violence in Gwent.

Current Situation

Background

The Duty stipulates that a local Strategic Needs Assessment (SNA) should provide the intelligence to inform the development of strategic priorities, with the detail of how these priorities are addressed being articulated in a local strategy. The local SNA should provide intelligence on:

- What kind of violence is taking place
- Who is affected by violence
- Where violence is happening
- When violence is happening
- And where possible, what interventions are needed

This is the first time a region-wide Serious Violence SNA and Strategy have been drafted in Gwent. The Duty required that both be completed by the 31st of January 2024, and as such the development of this strategy was based on an evolving version of the SNA.

Gwent's 'definition' of Serious Violence

In Gwent, the agreed definition, or 'areas of focus', for serious violence have been identified as:

- 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.

This definition was agreed by the Gwent Serious Violence Duty Working Group, with representation from all Specified Authorities.

Current picture in Gwent

What?

The Gwent Strategic Needs Assessment (2018-19 to 2022-23) has highlighted that the level of serious violent crime has been steadily increasing in Gwent over the last five years.

Serious violent crimes with the highest crime rate per 1 thousand population of Gwent are: '*stalking and harassment*', '*actual bodily harm*' and '*weapon related crime*.' In 2022/23, homicide reached its highest recorded level, and a significant increase has been seen in reported '*assaults on professionals*',

'robbery' and 'weapon offences (specifically bladed implements)'. NB: This is based on the current data set and does not include domestic violence data or crimes that are precursors to violence-related crime. This demonstrates the urgent and vital need for concerted and coordinated action within Gwent to achieve our vision of 'A Gwent Without Violence'.

In developing this strategy, the specified authority partners agreed to collaborate with the Gwent Violence Against Women and Girls, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) Commissioning Board, to co-commission a consultant to complete a detailed analysis of the current sexual violence and domestic abuse picture across Gwent. This report is expected in Spring 2024 and relevant information will be added to this SNA at that time.

What and where?

All five of our Local Authority areas include 'stalking and harassment' and 'actual bodily harm' in their top three recorded serious violent crimes. Four out of five of our Local Authorities: Caerphilly, Newport, Torfaen, and Monmouthshire have also seen increases in homicides. The exception is Blaenau Gwent which did not have any homicides recorded. Blaenau Gwent's main recorded serious violent crimes were 'stalking & harassment', followed by 'ABH' and 'weapon related crime'.

Stalking and harassment accounts for the majority of recorded violent crime in Gwent, in terms of crime rates and volume. The recorded rate across Gwent for stalking and harassment has increased by 32% in the previous five years. Although all Local Authority areas recorded an increase in rates, the highest rate increases were recorded in Blaenau Gwent (57%), followed by Monmouthshire (48%) and Caerphilly (35%). More detailed analysis and narrative will be included in future iterations of data reports which will include consideration of VAWDASV data.

ABH is the second highest violent crime recorded in Gwent. Although the Gwent ABH recorded rates have been stable over the last five years, this picture masks the variation across the five Local Authority areas. There has been an increasing trend in four of our five local authority areas, which has been counteracted by the decreasing trend in Newport. Monmouthshire has seen the biggest increase in recorded ABH, with a rise of 11% over the last five years.

Weapon related crime is the third highest violent crime recorded in Gwent. It has shown a gradual increase in each of the 5 local authorities in Gwent. In 2022/23 Blaenau Gwent's weapon related crime rate has increased by 51%, Caerphilly 21%, Monmouthshire 20%, Newport 22%, and Torfaen 18%.

Who?

For most violent crimes, the SNA currently indicates that victims and offenders, are of similar age: between 26-35, are white and male. This is slightly different

for homicides where victims are typically over 46 and offenders between 18-25. With stalking and harassment, victims are on average between 26-35 and female with the majority of recorded ethnicity as 'white'. Further data and analysis are required to fully understand this picture. Also, it is important to note when considering this data that it is based on the numbers of 'reported crimes' and there should be consideration on the groups of the population who are more likely and less likely to report crimes.

When?

Violent crime is recorded as being most frequently committed between the months of April and December, during the weekend and from 3pm to midnight. Most of the violent crimes are recorded as occurring around midnight. Going forward more detailed analysis and narrative will be produced in Problem Profiles which will give the detail necessary to drive activity locally. Such as details on location of crime (i.e. in homes, parks, licensed premises) which will enable more targeted initiatives and preventative projects.

Why?

There remain some data gaps which need addressing prior to undertaking a more detailed analysis of the data to understand the local serious violence landscape. For example, domestic/sexual violence data has not yet been incorporated in detail due to a standalone needs assessment being commissioned in partnership with the Gwent VAWDASV Board. Future iterations of the SNA will provide a more comprehensive data set, but this will require dedicated and sustained data analytic capacity.

A data driven approach, which incorporates analysis and narrative, complemented by a good understanding of the evidence base is an essential precursor to understanding why serious violence is occurring in our localities. Future iterations of the SNA will also provide a more comprehensive description of the vulnerability and risk factors and drivers of serious violence, providing the intelligence required to better understand why the patterns of serious violence are occurring across Gwent, as well as to identify effective preventative interventions.

The Duty states that an effective strategy considers other strategies/partnerships which have a role in preventing serious violence to ensure greater cohesion, partnership working and no duplication in effort and resources. This is a priority for future iterations of the SNA and Strategy.

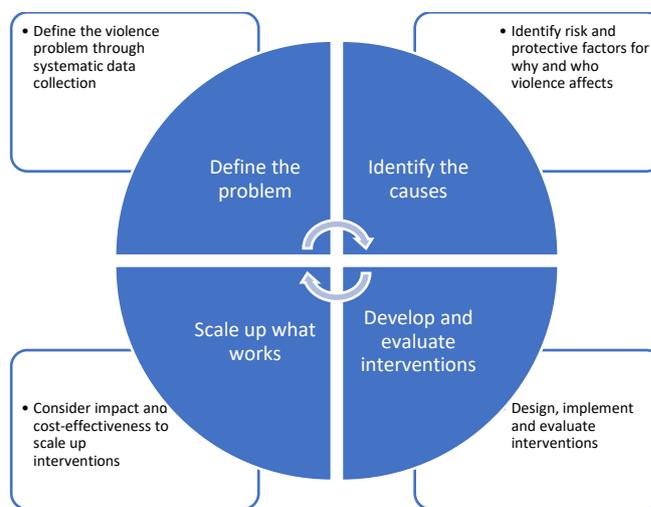
With this context, the Working Group agreed to the development of an interim strategy which outlines the key strategic priorities required to provide the intelligence, supported by appropriate governance, required to develop a long-term strategy to prevent serious violence in Gwent. There is a commitment to continuing to develop and improve the Gwent Serious Violence SNA and

Strategy, with partner agreement to review and update both documents within six months of publication, allowing time to consider the role of other local partnerships.

Our Approach - How we will reduce serious violence in Gwent

As advised by the Duty, the Working Group agreed to adopt a public health approach to violence. This is an approach that seeks to improve the health and safety of *all individuals* by addressing *underlying risk factors* that increase the likelihood that an individual will become a victim or a perpetrator of violence. This requires thinking about the *whole population* and *communities* rather than individuals with a move in focus from individual crimes to *impacts on families and communities*.

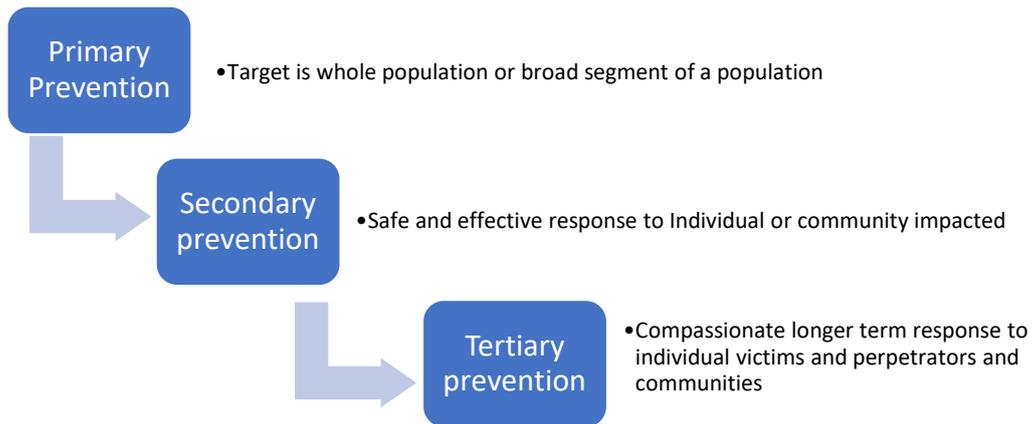
The Working Group agreed to use World Health Organisations framework: 'Four Steps approach'⁷ which is guided by the principles of public health:



Firstly, there is a need to know the facts, working in partnership to understand and define the problem. This will require assessing underlying causes, risk and protective factors and include data, local intelligence, and community insight. Solutions then need to be explored by assessing evidence of 'what works' to prevent violence, and interventions designed. These interventions should be evaluated with those deemed effective and cost effective scaled up as necessary.

Prevention can be considered across three level: primary prevention which aims to prevent violence before it occurs; secondary prevention which focuses on the immediate response to violence and tertiary prevention which reduces harm after violence has occurred. Our local response will need to consider all these levels of prevention.

⁷ [Violence Prevention Alliance Approach \(who.int\)](#) {accessed 05.01.24}



Essentially, our communities should be at the heart of all action to address violence. We will seek and consider the voices of our local communities in providing insights through our data and intelligence gathering. Their voices will provide the local context to risk and protective factors which we acknowledge will vary across Gwent as well as seek to ensure that any planned intervention is acceptable and appropriate.

Strategic Priority One - Better use of data to inform action

In Gwent we will strive to achieve a data driven approach to preventing serious violence.

Despite the OPCC dedicating substantial data analytical resource to collate and analyse partner data for the first Gwent SNA, the current iteration of the SNA does not fully reflect all relevant data that is held and available to partners. There remains a need to better understand the current serious violence landscape by gathering and interpreting additional partner and partnership data, on an ongoing basis.

Specified Authorities have welcomed the increased flow of data resulting from the development of the first Gwent SNA. However, there is a need for wider partner data and more comprehensive data set which include, at a minimum, domestic violence data, and data analysis with narrative to enable interpretation of the data. There is acknowledgment that there is no system in place to receive and include qualitative data from partners and community members, or to identify potentially emerging issues.

To achieve this strategic priority there is a need to identify and develop a robust mechanism to receive, collate, analyse, interpret, and share partner data in a systematic, timely and sustainable way. The data set to be shared needs to be agreed but should include data from Specified Authority partners, local CSPs, wider partnership/forum data such as data from Public Safety Board (PSB), VAWDASV Board, Local Criminal Justice Board, Strategic Housing Coordination Group, Gwent Safeguarding Board, and the Gwent Regional Area Planning Board for Substance Misuse (APB). The Gwent Joint Strategic Assessment, and local community insight data will also provide rich sources of data. There is a vast bank of data and intelligence which could support the serious violence prevention agenda, and this data and access to it needs to be explored.

This will require dedicated data analytic resource, greater partner, and partnership collaboration and inclusion of community insight data. A system with appropriate governance will need to be identified.

The Working Group recognise that there is a wealth of data analytical capacity and expertise within Gwent, but currently this resource is allocated to working in siloes within their partner/partnership. Given the range of partners and partnerships that have a role to play in responding to serious violence prevention, the Working Group will explore the possibility of pooling this resource, before seeking any additional data analytical resource/mechanism. This is consistent with taking a whole system multi-agency approach to preventing serious violence. It is also in compliance with the requirement specified within the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015⁸ for

⁸⁸ [42329 WBFEG Essentials Guide \(gov.wales\)](#) {accessed 24/02/24}

public bodies to demonstrate in their decision making that they are implementing the Five Ways of Working principles. 'Integration' is one of these principles, and exploring the pooling of partnership analytical capacity would demonstrate the implementation of these principles.

The Working Group are committed to better using partner and partnership data, shared local intelligence, and community insight to inform practice. Therefore, routinely sharing of agreed data between partners and partnerships, which is then analysed and interpreted will enable interventions to be based on a well-analysed and accurate picture of serious violence.

Action: Over the next year we will work together to:

1. Agree data sets, and information to be shared systematically.
2. Identify opportunities across partners and partnerships (as detailed above and in Appendix B) to routinely and sustainability share data and information.
3. Agree a regional mechanism and/or role to receive, collate, analyse, interpret, and share data and information, from National to Regional to Local Level.
4. Identify dedicated and/or pooled data analytical capacity, and funding, if necessary, to analyse and present agreed data sets and information which inform planning and commissioning priorities.
5. Ensure appropriate Welsh Accord on the Sharing of Personal Information (WASPI) agreements in place.

Strategic Priority Two: Prioritise addressing the risk factors for violence with evidence-based interventions

In Gwent we will strive to understand the causes of serious violence to enable us to take an evidence-informed approach to preventing serious violence.

To enable the Working Group's agreed priority of more emphasis being placed on prevention and early intervention, there is a need for our understanding of the causes and the risk factors of serious violence and evidence-based responses to be demonstrated and applied to all local interventions.

In Gwent, we are committed to identifying drivers of serious violence and addressing these in an evidence-informed way, based on what cause people and communities to be more vulnerable and susceptible to the harms of violence.

There is clear evidence of risk factors for perpetrators and victims of violence, which include substance use, age, gender, sexuality, education, social and cultural norms, mental health, and childhood trauma (ACEs). Alongside significant academic literature, there is guidance for evidence-based approaches to prevent serious violence, available through several reputable repositories, such as the Wales Violence Prevention Unit, the ACE Hub Wales, the Wales Safer Communities Network, and the College of Policing. Understanding and applying this evidence is a core role of regional and local planning and commissioning, and the Working Group agree that this should be more transparent with partners being more accountable to apply this evidence.

Working Group partners are committed to applying evidence informed learning when planning and commissioning future intervention. The best available evidence of what works will be applied, along with testing new and innovative approaches. Routine monitoring and evaluating the impact of interventions will further contribute to the evidence base. In line with the public health approach to violence prevention using evidence to inform local solutions, monitoring and evaluation their impacts will be core practice.

Given that there is a complex interaction of factors that impact on serious violence, there will not be one solution, one agency or partnership that can prevent it. Understanding and addressing risk factors will require collaborative working. Although this will be time consuming and complex, it is essential to prevent serious violence. The benefits will be far reaching. For example, if the evidence base indicated investment in early years/parenting programmes to prevent serious violence, this could be beneficial for other programme priorities such as improving mental health and wellbeing, and reducing the susceptibility to addictions such as alcohol, drugs, and gambling.

The Working Group are committed to focusing greater effort on prevention and early intervention activities, guided by the evidence-base, which are monitored

and evaluated. Learning will be shared across partners and partnerships, and effective and cost-effective interventions will be rolled across our local authority areas proportionate to need.

Action: Over the next year we will work together to:

1. Continually consider quality assured, published research and best practice of 'what works' when planning and funding interventions, as well as reviewing the effectiveness of core business and universal services.
2. Ensure all actions/interventions within local CSP strategies and plans are systematically underpinned by the best available evidence and include clear outcome measures and explicit evaluation methods.
3. Map where Prevention and Early Intervention is currently delivered at both Regional and Local levels, across partners and partnerships.
4. Source appropriate funding to introduce effective interventions based on available evidence and local learning.

Strategic Priority Three: Join the dots to better understand and maximise impact.

In Gwent we will strive to understand the local landscape, as well as seeking to learn from activity and good practice in other areas within and outside Gwent.

The Working Group acknowledge the established Community Safety Partnerships (CSP) with statutory responsibility for community safety in each of our five local authority areas, each developing a local action plan based on local SNAs. We are also conscious that at the time of developing this interim strategy, a PSB review of the CSP landscape is currently in progress. However, the CSPs are not the only Boards which have a role to play in preventing serious violence.

Due to the scale of vulnerability and susceptibility factors that influence violence there are a wide range of regional and local partnerships, boards, and networks whose priorities and activities can play a role in the prevention of serious violence (Appendix B for a list).

Several well-established Forums/Boards, such as the PSB, VAWDASV, APB, have statutory responsibilities which impact on the prevention of serious violence, in addition to a wide number of established groups (see Appendix B for a list) and as well as the wider Specified Authority agencies. Established groups with similar priorities and actions which positively impact on the reduction and prevention of serious violence, such as VAWDASV, must be considered when developing future iterations of the of the Gwent Serious Violence SNA, Strategy, and action plans. This will avoid duplication and increase the impact of achieving mutual goals.

It is essential that we build on the collaborative working that already exists in Gwent, and clarify the structural governance arrangements, dependencies, and interdependencies between each partnership. To achieve our vision of preventing serious violence, we must focus efforts on inter-partnership as well as on increased partnership working to address the underlying risk factors for serious violence, which include poverty, homelessness, substance misuse. Some of these are outlined in the '*Building a Fairer Gwent: Improving Health equity and the Social Determinants*' report. Challenges and solutions are often interconnected which requires the alignment of delivery, policy, and strategy, and ultimately the commissioning of services and projects.

There already exists positive activity and interventions to address serious violence across Gwent. In addition to understanding the partnership landscape, there is also a need to better understand what is going on locally across the five local authority CSPs and Specified Authorities, to identify both good practice and gaps in existing service provision. This will provide an opportunity to scale up good practice interventions, proportionate to need.

Action: Over the next year we will work together to:

1. Map and gap partner and partnership plans where collaboration could help prevent serious violence.
2. Align the governance for implementation of the Serious Violence Duty within the context of the PSB Community Safety review in Gwent.
3. Strive towards rationalising the partnership landscape where more effective delivery can be achieved.

Strategic Priority Four: Adopt a place-based approach that utilises local experience, listens to community voices and is strengthened through regional governance

We will build on local experience and understanding of violence through a place-based approach which is supported by regional partnerships.

Across the region of Gwent, the agreed goal for all Specified Authorities is consistent: the 'prevention of serious violence'. However, the first iteration of the SNA, which is supported by local intelligence, indicates that the patterns of serious violence are not consistent across our localities.

Local intelligence is essential to develop a meaningful strategy which is effective at a regional and local authority level. Local intelligence must be supported by community insight to enable the development of appropriate responses informed by lived experience. The Working Group agree that interventions should be informed by ongoing and meaningful community engagement to provide local insight to guide appropriate responses. It is acknowledged that there is a need to seek to understand the voices of those affected or harmed, as well as those who perpetrate the harm, as well as the voices of people at most risk of being victims of serious violence.

Going forward the Working Group will seek to learn from organisations, such as Youth Offending Service, who routinely undertake engagement. We acknowledge the risk of engagement fatigue for communities, so will seek to align community engagement activities with other partners' community engagement calendars. We will also agree a set of common questions to include within community safety engagement activities to enable us to compare data and intelligence across localities.

Action: Over the next year we will work together to:

1. Identify learning from existing local mechanisms which seek, capture, and respond to community insight, whilst maintaining on-going engagement with local communities.
2. Ensure that community voices are a key element of future SNA's and formation and evaluation of updated strategies.
3. Clarify the regional and local structural governance arrangements to support the effective implementation, monitoring and review of the place-based Serious Violence Plans and Regional Serious Violence Strategy.

Conclusions

The introduction of the Serious Violence Duty has challenged partners to come together and consider their current agency and collective responses to violence and the causes of violence and consider what more can be done.

The Strategic Needs Assessment tells us that serious violence is happening in the homes and communities of Gwent, and the problem is growing. Some areas are more susceptible than others through their various societal risk factors. There are commonalities across Gwent in some types of violence, frequency, severity, and other factors, but there are also differences in each local area. This means careful consideration needs to be made about a response strategy.

This Strategy, therefore, is the first iteration of a long-term commitment by all Specified Authority duty holders to prevent and reduce serious violence across Gwent. It provides a broad framework alongside specific actions, within which partners and partnerships can act. Those action plans will now be developed in the next 12 months, by local CSPs, Gwent-wide, and potentially wider. Our collective aim is to introduce new and innovative interventions, supported by comprehensive performance monitoring to ensure as a collective group of partners we can tackle this problem, and strive to make a 'Gwent without Violence'.

Author: Jackie Williams, Senior Public Health Specialist, Public Health Team, Aneurin Bevan University Health Board

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Sharran Lloyd, Strategic Partnerships Manager, Monmouthshire County Council

Andrew Mason, Community Safety Lead, Monmouthshire County Council

Sam Slater, Head of Strategy, Gwent OPCC

Kate Williams – Public Service Support Unit Group Manager, Torfaen County Borough Council

Note: Representatives from Gwent Police, local Youth Offending Services and Probation have contributed to this Strategy development via local Workshops and Working Group meetings.

APPENDIX A: Vision: A Gwent Without Violence

Inputs		Short Term Outputs	Outcomes		Strategic Priorities
Activities	Resources		Intermediate	Long Term	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agree regional mechanism to receive, collate, analyse, interpret, and share data Review data set, information and governance required Identify data analysis capacity within current system and/or need for dedicated resource 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data analytical capacity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data sets and data report template agreed (i.e. data and narrative to be provided) Data sharing agreements in place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established data flows between partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Linked data sets providing timely, systematic and comprehensive reports to enable local and regional planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achieve a data driven approach to preventing serious violence, by understanding where violence occurs and who is affected
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Map current prevention and early intervention activity Continually review quality assured, published research and best practice of 'what works' and apply to all interventions Funding allocation based on evidence of need, effectiveness All interventions to be evaluated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National repositories of evidence and toolkits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding of current intervention landscape Evaluation built into all local interventions Understanding of evidence base for interventions to tackle drivers and precursors of SV (e.g. ASB) established) Greater accountability within local plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sharing of learning/evaluation of local interventions Effectiveness and cost effectiveness of interventions systematically considered Evaluation integral to interventions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional and local preventative interventions commissioned based on effectiveness, cost-effectiveness, and local learning Greater understanding of drivers of violence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Address the risk factors for violence with evidence-based interventions which are routinely evaluated.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Map SVP activity/interventions across CSPs Map partner and partnership plans (with a link to SV) and associated funding Align governance of SVD in context of PSB CSP review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dedicated resource (postholder/organisation) to complete mapping and joining the dots 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identification of commonality, governance arrangements and funding across partnerships Aligned governance for SVD with other partnerships Sharing of local CSP SNAs and plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarity of current funding streams and shared priorities across partnerships Sharing of learning from local SNAs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreed common priorities across partnerships and some shared funding of evidence informed interventions Rationalised partnership landscape 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Join the dots to better understand and maximise impact by (i) recognising and building on what is being delivered and (ii) strengthening partnerships at a strategic level.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community insights gathered on a local level systematically and in meaningful way Learning from good practice Regional and local structural governance structures identified 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dedicated resource at local level to complete activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local SNA informed by community insights. Regional SNA informed by qualitative data from local SNAs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local action plans informed by data, evidence and local insights 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interventions and support that reflects and responds to local needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adopt a place-based approach that utilises local experience, listens to community voices and is strengthened through regional governance

External Factors: Funding allocations to core and statutory services, partnerships.

Assumptions/Requirements: understanding of other partnership common priorities, dependencies, interdependencies, overlaps and funding. Local needs assessments through CSPs and community insights shared. Funding available to achieve strategic priorities

Appendix B: Partner and Partnerships Plans and Priorities to consider when developing future strategies (in no order)

- Marmot/Building a Fairer Gwent
- Gwent Substance Misuse Area Planning Board
- Regional criminal/youth justice boards
- Gwent Licensing Forum (licensing of licensed premises)
- Public Service Boards (under WBFG Act 2015)
- RPB (Regional Partnership Board) (Social Services and Wellbeing Wales Act 2014)
- Regional Safeguarding Boards – Adults and Children – Social Services and Wellbeing act 2014
- Regional and Local CSPs
- Gwent Regional VAWDASV Board and Strategy
- Wales Police Schools Programme
- ACE and the Adverse Hub for Wales
- Third sector partners
- Victims, survivors, and perpetrators of crime
- Regional Housing Collaboratives
- Gwent Mental Health & Learning Disabilities Strategic Partnership
- Integrated Service Partnership Board
- Local Wellbeing Partnership Boards

National Legislation

- ASB (Crime and Disorder Act/Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policy Act 2014)
- Counter Terrorism Act
- Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- WBFG Act – places a duty on sustainable development, how maximise contribution to the 7 WB goals, embed sustainable development principles, Five Ways of Working
- Community Safety Partnerships – Crime and Disorder Act 1998 – statutory obligatory to produce evidence-based strategies – ‘Strategic Assessments’. Could be stand alone or incorporated into Wellbeing Plans. The PCSC Act amended the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to require CSPs to prepare strategies addressing 2 further matters – preventing people from becoming involved in SV and reducing instances of SV in the area.
- A Healthier Wales – treat and support individuals affected by SV. Pressures on urgent care services can be reduced if SV addressed in locality. Need to play active part in supporting and delivery against Duty.
- Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014. Specified authorities – Safeguarding Boards

- Rights of CYP (Wales) measure
- Housing (Wales) Act – priority needs status including person subject to DA 18-21 at risk of sexual or financial exploitation
- Socio-economic duty – requires public authorities when making decisions of a strategic nature due regard to exercising them in a way designed to reduce the inequalities of outcome which result from socio-economic disadvantage. Purpose of act encourage better decision making, ensuring more equal outcomes. Need to consider how plans reduce inequalities of outcomes resulting socio-economic disadvantage
- Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021 – health and wellbeing area of learning and experience – focus on health and wellbeing of learners including relationships and sexuality education.

National Strategies:

- National VAWDASV Strategy 2023-2027
- WG Substance Misuse Delivery Plan
- Whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing
- Youth Work strategy for Wales
- Youth Engagement and progression Framework and Young Person's Guarantee
- Anti Racist Action Plan for Wales
- LGBTQIA+ Action Plan – SV plan seek to challenge discrimination and violence against people identifying as LGBTIA+
- Together for Mental Health
- Homicide prevention (College of Policing) – serious violence and vulnerability. Resources for tackling serious violence and vulnerability. Similar strategies e.g. College of Policing: Homicide Prevention Strategy

Regional Strategies and Plans must also be considered.

Monmouthshire's Scrutiny Forward Work Programme 2023-24

Public Services Scrutiny Committee				
Meeting Date	Subject	Purpose of Scrutiny	Responsibility	Type of Scrutiny
7 th April 2024	Serious Violence Duty: Regional Strategy	To scrutinise the regional strategy for the Serious Violence Duty.	Martyn Smith, (Gwent Police) Sharran Lloyd Andrew Mason John Crandon	Policy Scrutiny
	Community Policing	To discuss community policing and to understand the direction for Monmouthshire	Amanda Thomas Emma Sowrey (Gwent Police)	External Scrutiny
To be confirmed 17th June 2024	Integrated Services Partnership Board	To discuss the role and remit of the Integrated Services Partnership Board and how it delivers services in Monmouthshire.	Jane Rodgers and Nikki Needle Chair of the ISPB ~Melanie Laidler	Performance Review
Workshop ~ Date to be confirmed	County Lines	To provide a workshop for members on County Lines.	Gwent Police	External Scrutiny
To be confirmed	VAWDASV Regional Strategy	To assess what the regional strategy delivers for Monmouthshire.	To be confirmed	External Scrutiny
To be confirmed	Pre-decision Scrutiny of the Public Service Board Annual Report	To undertake pre-decision scrutiny of the report and to draw agree any items for future scrutiny.	Richard Jones Sharran Lloyd	Pre-decision Scrutiny/Performance Monitoring
14th October 2024 (with Place)	Local Flood Strategy	Pre-decision scrutiny of adoption of the Local Flood Strategy.	Craig O'Connor Cllr Maby	Pre-decision Scrutiny

Monmouthshire's Scrutiny Forward Work Programme 2023-24

Public Services Scrutiny Committee				
Meeting Date	Subject	Purpose of Scrutiny	Responsibility	Type of Scrutiny
9 th December 2024				
10 th February 2025				
7 th April 2025				

Corporate and Community Plan Items for the Committee's consideration for inclusion into the People Scrutiny Forward Plan:

- Progress the development of the new Magor & Undy Community Hub
- Invest in better bus infrastructure.
- Work with police, partners and communities to tackle anti-social behaviour.
- To explore funding streams: Housing Social Grant, Substance Misuse Grants, to assess what they are delivering for Monmouthshire.
- Youth Offending Service ~ how partners contribute and what it delivers for Monmouthshire.

Monmouthshire Select Committee Minutes

Meeting of Public Services Scrutiny Committee held at County Hall, Usk - Remote Attendance on Monday, 11th December, 2023 at 10.00 am

Councillors Present

County Councillor Armand Watts (Chairman)
County Councillor Penny Jones, (Vice Chairman)

County Councillors: Jill Bond, Jan Butler, Steven Garratt, Malcolm Lane, Dale Rooke, Frances Taylor

Also in attendance County Councillors: Catrin Maby, Cabinet Member for Climate Change and the Environment

Officers in Attendance

Hazel Ilett, Scrutiny Manager
Robert McGowan, Policy and Scrutiny Officer
Mark Hand, Head of Place-making, Housing, Highways and Flood
Nicholas Tulp, Active Travel Officer

APOLOGIES: None

1. Declarations of Interest

Frances Taylor declared a non-prejudicial interest as founder member of the Magor Walkway group.

2. Public Open Forum

None.

3. Pre-decision scrutiny of the Strategic Transport Plan

Cabinet Member Catrin Maby introduced the report. Debra Hill-Howells delivered the presentation and answered the members' questions with Christian Schmidt, Mark Hand and Nicholas Tulp.

Key points raised by the Committee Members:

- The current provision in some areas is insufficient. We can't change people's practice if we don't have alternatives for them e.g. Severn Tunnel car park isn't very accessible.
- The Active Travel network in Caldicot hasn't come back to Members to discuss outstanding issues, so isn't felt to be 'complete' as an action.
- Can the positive impact of the B4245 project on High Beech roundabout be emphasised to Welsh Government?
- How can the digitally excluded be assisted to access the consultation?

- How is the Wellbeing Assessment being assessed?
 - Some of the consultation questions and response options could be better for engaging the public and the Christmas period may not be the most appropriate time for a consultation.
 - Members would like greater clarity on the timescales for actions associated with the Magor with Undy walkway station.
-
- Members are hesitant about some of the active travel measures relating to the station, for example, dropped kerbs. **(ACTION): - Officers to provide more information about interventions.**
 - Concern that the improvements for buses to High Beech roundabout cannot happen without a dedicated bus lane. Concerns around variable lanes on link roads in general.
 - Concern that if Chepstow bus station is moved, the National Express may no longer stop at Chepstow.
 - Concerns that electric vehicle charging on-street is going to be more difficult in older towns and concern as to whether we have the electricity infrastructure to make it happen.
 - Concern that commuters from Chepstow to Bristol via Severn Tunnel Junction, 20mph limits will slow commuting traffic between Chepstow and Bristol.
 - A member advised that the lobby group Transition Chepstow didn't invite local councillors to their discussions, so there may be some disjoint.
 - General concerns around the accessibility of bus platforms and drop kerbs: Example being Goytre, and Llanover, which only has one drop kerb.
 - Members requested more information on the proposed route through Penperllenni, noting future employment near the site and more information on the Goytre to Llanellen project **(Action): Officers to provide.**
 - Questions around the core bus services, including the No.60.
 - Queries around the Integration of public buses and Home to School transport.
 - Members would appreciate information on the New Inn/Pontypool station and whether there will be a bus link to Usk **(Action): Officers to provide. (Action): Officers to provide.**
 - Concern that Usk isn't considered a key town in the plan.
 - Delivery vehicles on roads: a Member commented that residents need to shift to using local shops and pickup points.
 - Monmouth: concern that there are no trains, and that National Express doesn't stop there and whether any progress could be made on this.
 - A feeling that there isn't encouragement for people to use buses, as it takes too long.
 - The provisional objectives in the plan: a feeling that culture shouldn't come above economic ambitions.

- Concern that there are frequent technical issues with trains coming back from Cardiff or Newport, including trains not stopping at Chepstow, which does disincentivise people from using the service.
- A feeling that there needs to be recognition that we are part of the Severnside economy and a question as to whether we fully understand the enormity of the movement of workers each day into England.
- A query around funding for the A466, as we don't have any jurisdiction.

Cabinet Member Concluding Remarks:

There is a need to move away from system built over decades at a time of huge economic difficulty and it is complex. There are limits to powers within Monmouthshire, and the extent to which we can influence decisions rather than take them ourselves. The challenge is not easy for the public to understand and transport across the country does appear very fragmented. A big frustration is seeing expertise and ability in our team and being aware of what we could achieve if there was access to funding. We need to continue working with Burns, Transport for Wales and local authorities over the bridge.

Chair's Summary:

The Chair thanked the Cabinet Member and officers for attending and taking Members questions. The Chair concluded the following feedback for the Cabinet on behalf of the Committee:

The Strategic Transport Plan has been brought to the Public Services Scrutiny Committee on 11th December 2023 for Pre-decision Scrutiny. The committee has scrutinised the report in detail with key points highlighted in the minutes of the meeting, however our concluding feedback follows:

- There are concerns around the consultation process and the involvement of Chepstow Councillors in relevant matters relating to Chepstow area. Members raised a limited reference to the train network within the plan and suggested it would benefit from greater prominence.
- Concerns have been expressed about the level of funding required to deliver the aspirations of the plan and a concern that smaller projects may not happen as a result.
- Members highlighted the need for accessibility at train stations but also at bus stops, because the lack of dropped kerbs are preventing people accessing bus services, although we acknowledge the trunk roads are the responsibility of Welsh Government.
- There were also concerns around the Electric Vehicle charging infrastructure.

4. Minutes of the previous meetings held on:

The minutes were agreed with a correction for the appointment of Vice Chair on 19th June 2023, advised by Councillor Penny Jones (**ACTION**).

5. Public Services Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme and Action List

An update on Dentistry Services has been sent to members and Members are able to contact the officer directly with any future queries. Members cited some ongoing concerns around the recruitment of dentists and services to care leavers.

The Scrutiny Manager highlighted that the Committee had tabled all the items suggested by Members, but that there are some topics remaining on the work programme list that the Committee may want to table to future meetings. This was agreed.

Members raised accessing neighbourhood policing as a key concern and asked whether the new inspector could be invited to the next meeting.

6. Council and Cabinet Work Planner

The plan was noted.

7. To note the date and time of the next meeting: 19th February 2024

The meeting ended at **12.19 pm**