

SUBJECT:	REDESIGN OF THE COMMUNITIES AND SOCIAL JUSTICE TEAM
MEETING:	COMMUNITIES AND PLACE DMT
DATE:	20th NOVEMBER 2023
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:	ALL

1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1 To consider a redesign of the Communities and Social Justice Team, following an internal service review.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 To recognise the need to reconfigure the service, realigning team roles and responsibilities, to reflect recent policy changes.
- 2.2 To approve the subsequent service redesign and agree to proceed to the staff consultation, to reflect a stronger emphasis on early intervention and prevention, in this first step towards a 'one team, one approach' methodology.

3. KEY ISSUES:

- 3.1 Since the previous restructure of the Communities and Social Justice Team, approved by Communities and Place DMT on the 13th of June 2022, much has changed:

Policy Changes

- 3.2 Social Justice is no longer a strategic priority since the change of political administration in May 2022. The ambition for the Council and county has now moved towards becoming 'a zero carbon County, supporting well-being, health and dignity for everyone at every stage of life', rendering the name 'Communities and Social Justice Team' inappropriate and prompting a proposed renaming of the team to the 'Community Development Team'.
- 3.3 As of Month 5 of 2023, Homelessness accounted for an in-year budget pressure of £.08M. In April 2023, Cabinet approved the [Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan](#) which identified the need to focus on preventing homelessness to reduce homelessness costs and where this is not possible, delivering a housing led approach to rehousing people who are experiencing homelessness. For this to work effectively, it is critical that Housing and Housing Support Services work in partnership with other services such as Social Care, Support, Health and criminal justice. To achieve this, we need to look across the associated Council services to identify where changes need to be made to enable streamlined place-based working.
- 3.4 Welsh Government has also set out a distinct expectation for the delivery of public services through the implementation of two pieces of transformational legislation each with well-being at its core.
- The Social Services and Well-Being (Wales) Act 2014 came into force on the 6th of April 2016, clarifying the need to provide services that enhance well-being, with a new definition of people in need and a focus on families and communities. The Act highlights the role of public services in building on individual and family strengths, helping people

to have a stronger voice, choice and more control and supporting meaningful and valued contribution to local community life.

- The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 also came into force in April 2016 with its focus is on improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales.

Both Acts require local authorities to ensure sustainability by working in collaboration with multi-agency partners, placing a duty on local authorities to ensure that an appropriate range of services are available to prevent, delay and reduce the need for care and support; minimise the effect of people's disabilities and enable people to live as independently as possible. Key to fulfilling this duty is the ability to intervene at the earliest opportunity through the provision of well-being information, advice and assistance (IAA), supporting people to build networks and connections and find their own solutions to the issues they face.

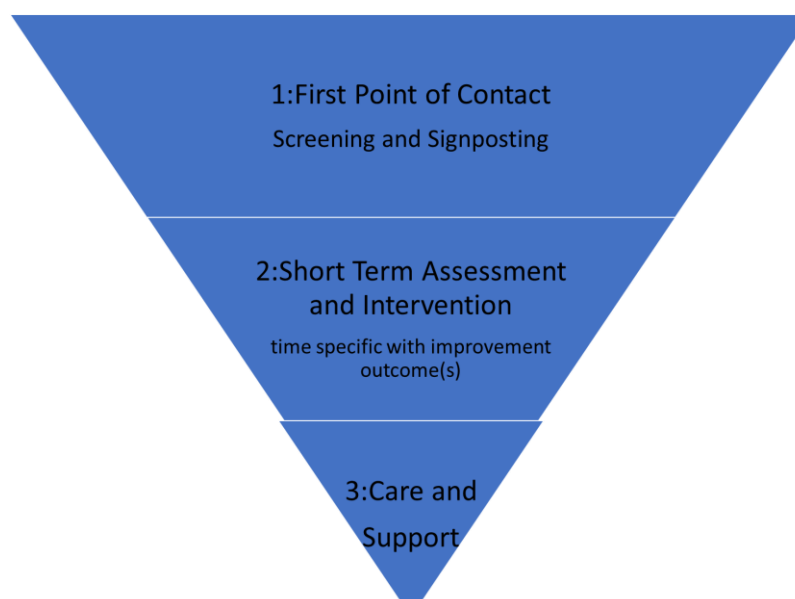
3.5 Given all the changes detailed above, the Council needs to ensure that it meets its legal obligations and enable residents to access the most appropriate service for them. As part of the team review, Officers are also seeking to:

- Reduce service duplication and corresponding costs.
- Ensure the service is fully aligned with and support wider strategic priorities eg homelessness, climate emergency, etc.
- Ensure effective partnership working with both internal and external agencies

The Hierarchy of Need illustrated in Diagram One below illustrates where the Team's proposed future role will sit i.e., as the 'First Point of Contact' acting as a 'referral agency', signposting residents to the most appropriate services.

3.6 This will be the first step towards developing a 'one team, one approach' methodology across the whole of the Council. Other work is already taking place as part of the mapping of the Council's wellbeing 'offer' in the county, where Officers are exploring opportunities to fill gaps, address barriers and challenges and strengthen deliver, as teams work towards developing a cohesive Monmouthshire wellbeing offer for the county.

Diagram One – Hierarchy of Need



3.7 Recent figures from the Housing Gateway demonstrate that over 80% of cases have successfully been prevented from being homeless through early intervention measures, therefore by strengthening these service areas and putting residents in touch with the right services as soon as possible, more can be done to avoid homelessness and wider care and support cases, moving into phases 2 and 3 as detailed in Diagram One above.

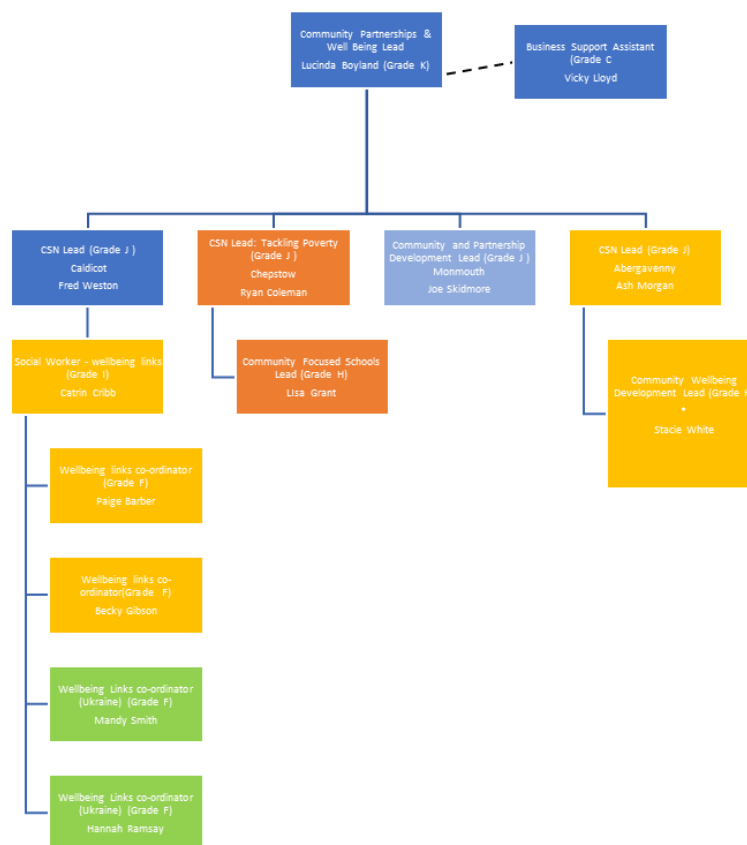
3.8 The type of support the renamed 'Community Development' team will offer will therefore include:

- Community Support and Development – facilitating community support through the Community Action Networks, unlocking the County's social capital by providing support for volunteers, encouraging participation, empowering community members, providing support to groups to facilitate Community Asset Transfer proposals, creating stronger and more connected communities;
- Referrals to and from Housing and housing-based support – swimming further downstream and identifying residents who wish to maintain their independence e.g. preventing homelessness, moving home; assistive technology, housing support, disabled adaptations, handyman services, loans and grants.
- Practical Support - "that little bit of help" which promotes health, wellbeing, and quality of life and managing/maintaining accommodation. Includes gardening, cleaning, keeping home safe, warm and secure, accessing foodbank and/or community fridges, befriending, community and public transport, active ageing events e.g., exercise classes, volunteering, and education; accessing GP or hospital appointments.
- Advice and information - for people to access benefits, services, help identify people at potential risk of homelessness (perhaps due to debt, arrears, domestic abuse etc) and assistance such as advocacy, welfare rights, healthy eating, staying warm (including potentially accessing any energy efficiency initiatives such as ECO4), dealing with bogus callers, home safety and specialist services provided e.g., by Age Cymru;
- Availability of and access to community-based services - which improves quality of life and encourages wellbeing. Includes libraries, leisure centres, community centres, community activities, public toilets etc.; and
- Collaboration and Partnership Working – Working side by side with new and existing partners, creating a shared resource, understanding and collective focus, including joint training and awareness raising. Working collaboratively with partners on projects such as Together Works-ensuring clear roles, responsibilities and exit strategies are in place.

3.9 **Current Team Structure**

3.9.1 The recent review of the team has highlighted the need for clarity. The work of the team is vast and varied and therefore can appear confusing and the current structure of the team appears to amplify this. A less complex structure is therefore required to remove any ambiguity and provide a clear remit and direction for the future whilst ensuring a focus on early intervention and prevention. Diagram Two below details the current team structure:

Diagram Two – Current Team Structure – Communities and Social Justice Team



Issues and challenges of Current Structure

3.9.2 Distribution of responsibilities – There is currently inconsistency and an imbalance of responsibilities within the team. Lead Officer titles are different, responsibilities are scattered and at times are unequal. The proposal is therefore to align the job descriptions of each Lead Officer with the title of Community Support Network Lead, with each lead being based in one specific geographical area of the County to improve efficiency and effectiveness i.e., North, Central and South.

In addition, it is proposed the job descriptions of the current Wellbeing Links Workers and Wellbeing Development Lead are also aligned and those positions become Community Support Network Coordinators. The three posts will take the same approach as the Lead Officers - North, Central and South. This will create a two-officer team approach to each geographical area. At present the Wellbeing Lead post is on a higher banding than the Wellbeing Links Workers due to added project lead responsibilities which will need to be addressed as part of the service redesign process .

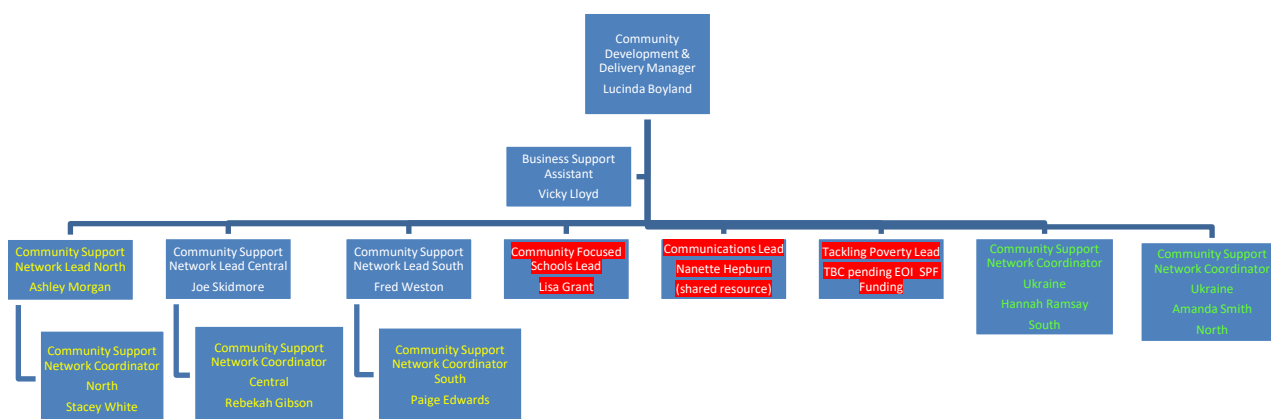
3.9.3 Duplication of functions – Whilst the previous integration of the Aligning Placed Based Care wellbeing team has been a positive step, the changing landscape for care and support requires a realignment of roles, particularly that of the dedicated, registered Social Work practitioner. Going forwards, in line with the hierarchy of support, this post is better placed within the Social Care and Health Directorate, with a focus on managing demand and reviewing provision. It is also recognised that the two Ukrainian Well Being Links workers are doing similar work to Link workers based within the Housing Gateway, a service realignment is therefore required to reduce duplication.

3.9.4 Short-term funding of specific roles – The Tackling Poverty and Inequalities Lead has left and as this post has been reliant on funding pulled from many different and at times, uncertain funding streams, it would not be good practice to advertise this role in a 'like for like' capacity. This is however recognised as a vital role, so a decision has been taken to split the role into two part time positions. One focussing on food poverty and sitting with the Sustainable Food Team and the other Tackling Poverty role to sit within the restructured Community Development team. In addition, short term funding has been identified for a shared Communications Lead who is going to help ease the pressures of the work and this post will take up much of the communications work for the Cost of Living Support activities.

3.10 **Proposed Team Structure from January 2024**

Diagram Three below details the proposed new structure which seeks to address the issues raised in section 3.8 above:

Diagram Three – Proposed Team Structure – Community Development Team



Core Funded

RIF Funded

Other Grant or short-term funding

Ukrainian Funding

Solutions offered through revised Structure

3.10.1 Distribution of responsibilities –The redistribution of line management responsibilities provides a much flatter and clearer structure with each Community Support Network Lead line managing a Community Support Network Coordinator who will work with them, in a specific area. This also has the advantage of reducing travel costs where Officers were previously travelling all over the County.

3.10.2 Duplication of functions – Duplication no longer exists and therefore costs are reduced. The Social Worker will be moved back to Social Care and Health to undertake duties more aligned to their specialisms. The two Ukrainian Well Being Links workers, now renamed to Community Support Network Coordinators Ukraine, in line with wider team role title changes, will work alongside workers based within the Housing Gateway. Line management support will continue to be offered by the Community Partnership and Wellbeing Lead, now renamed Community Development and Delivery Manager, in line with the proposed team name change.

3.10.3 Short-term funding of specific roles – The work of the Tackling Poverty and Inequalities Lead has been redistributed throughout the remaining team members until a replacement has been identified.

Cross Directorate Service Management – Establishment of the Early Intervention and Prevention Board

3.11 The success of the restructure of the Community Development Team and the important first step in developing the ‘one team, one approach’ methodology, is dependent upon a collection of services working together. To ensure alignment with Community Development, an Early Intervention and Prevention Board is proposed to include Officers from Housing Gateway, Housing Support and Housing Options, Compass (Youth Homelessness) and the Community Development and Delivery Manager to coordinate activity and reduce the potential risk of duplication.

4. EQUALITY AND FUTURE GENERATIONS EVALUATION (INCLUDES SOCIAL JUSTICE, SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING):

4.1 An evaluation is not required for this paper as no policy or service change for the customer is proposed. However, the proposal does seek to build resilience, reduce service duplication and reduce costs.

5. OPTIONS APPRAISAL

5.1 Table One below provides an options appraisal of the proposal:

Table One: Options Appraisal

Options	Benefits	Risks
Do Nothing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff will become disillusioned with the lack of parity and clarity across the team. • Team will become unstable, and performance may be affected.
Implement restructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce ambiguity and provide clarity. • Alignment with policy changes • Reduce service duplication. • Reduce revenue costs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff may be uncomfortable with proposed changes initially; however, a thorough consultation will be undertaken to put staff at ease.

6. REASONS:

6.1 The current team structure is no longer fit for future purpose following extensive changes in a relatively short space of time.

6.2 A revised structure is therefore required to align with policy changes, providing more focus on early intervention and prevention whilst ensuring that a more tailored, place-based approach to community development is available to Monmouthshire's communities.

7. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

7.1 There are no resourcing implications associated with the proposed restructure. The RIF funding for the Social Worker will be transferred with the role; the Community Wellbeing Link Workers will also remain funded via RIF as they will maintain their individual case loads and it is hoped that a funding extension can be identified for the Ukrainian Wellbeing Links Workers. There is the potential that the RIF funding may be tapered in the future which could have an impact on the MTFP however no details have been released yet.

7.2 It is however hoped that as further steps in the 'one team, one approach' methodology are taken, areas of service duplication will be identified which may lead to cost efficiencies.

8 CONSULTEES:

SLT

Communities and Place DMT

Social Care and Health DMT

Enterprise and Community Animation DMT

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS: N/A

10. AUTHORS:

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