



HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 17TH SEPTEMBER 2024

**SUBJECT: INTERIM STRATEGY FOR SERIOUS VIOLENCE
PREVENTION FOR GWENT 2024-25**

**REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR ECONOMY AND
ENVIRONMENT**

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To update the Scrutiny Committee on the introduction of the Serious Violence Duty and the development of the Interim Strategy for Serious Violence Prevention for Gwent 2024-25.
- 1.2 To seek Scrutiny Committee views on the Strategy prior to presenting it to Cabinet for approval.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 In 2019 the 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.
- 2.2 The Serious Violence Duty commenced across Wales and England on 31st January 2023 and stipulated that each local authority area had to have a strategic needs assessment and strategy for serious violence in place by 31st January 2024. In Gwent, the Police and Crime Commissioner has taken on the lead convener role and has supported the specified authorities in developing a regional needs assessment and strategy. Working collaboratively partners have now developed a Serious Violence Strategy for Gwent which is attached as Appendix 1.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Committee members' views are requested on the strategy prior to presenting it to Cabinet for approval.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 So that Cabinet can consider the views of Housing and Environment Scrutiny Committee prior to approving the strategy.
- 4.2 To comply with the statutory duty of developing a Serious Violence Strategy.

5. THE REPORT

- 5.1 On 28 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
- 5.2 The Serious Violence Duty commenced on 31st January 2023 and stipulates that agencies must work collaboratively and share data and information to put in place a strategy to prevent and reduce serious violence. In addition to the Duty the Government also amended the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to place an explicit duty on Community Safety Partnerships to have a strategy in place to tackle serious violence.
- 5.3 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.
- 5.4 As part of 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 that the Home Office want to see reductions in. In the development of the needs assessment the partners agreed to adopt a broad definition of violence, or areas to focus on 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.

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

5.5 Whilst the needs assessment highlighted that all five local authority areas have experienced increasing trends in serious violent crimes since 2019-20 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 collect regional and local partner serious violence data. There is also a lack of dedicated analytical resource to analyse and interpret the data. This has therefore been highlighted 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.

5.6 The first Gwent Serious Violence Prevention Strategy therefore sets out the priorities to be achieved in 2024-25 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 at Appendix 1.

- 5.7 Discussions have taken place within the working group about where the governance for this work should sit in each of the local authority areas. It has been proposed that Community Safety Partnerships are well placed to oversee the work of the strategies, develop action plans and commission initiatives/services to address the identified priorities. It is therefore proposed that the Safer Caerphilly Community Safety Partnership takes responsibility and ownership of implementing the strategy.

Conclusion

- 5.8 The development of the interim strategy is a positive step in identifying and addressing the serious violence priorities in Caerphilly County Borough. Over the next twelve months the Community Safety Partnership will work to develop an action plan and introduce interventions to tackle this problem and work with partners to ultimately reduce the level of serious violence incidents in the area.

6. ASSUMPTIONS

- 6.1 There are no assumptions associated with this report.

7. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 An Integrated Impact Assessment has been undertaken. The reduction of serious violence in public places across the county borough will benefit children, young people and adults and help provide safer communities for everyone to enjoy. No negative impacts have been identified.

[Link to IIA](#)

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There will be a financial cost of developing and implementing initiatives/services to address the serious violence priorities identified within the strategy. The Home Office has provided a limited amount of funding to support this work which is managed by Police and Crime Commissioners.
- 8.2 Through consultation with partners involved in the Gwent working group it has been agreed that the majority of the grant allocation for 2024/25 will be split equitably across the five local authority areas and each area will receive £24,000.

9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There will be an increase in workload for staff within the Community Safety Team who will oversee the work involved in developing and reviewing the strategy, action plan and commissioning projects to address the priorities.

10. CONSULTATIONS

10.1 The consultees listed below have been consulted on this report and their views have been incorporated accordingly.

11. STATUTORY POWER

11.1 The Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 and the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, as amended.

Author: Robert Hartshorn, Head of Public Protection, Community and Leisure Services

Consultees: Cllr Phillipa Leonard, Cabinet Member for Planning and Public Protection
Councillor Andrew Whitcombe, Chair Housing and Environment Scrutiny Committee
Councillor Shane Williams, Vice Chair Housing and Environment Scrutiny Committee
Dave Street, Deputy Chief Executive
Mark S Williams – Corporate Director, Economy and Environment
Rob Tranter, Head of Legal Services/Monitoring Officer
Stephen Harris, Head of Financial Services and S151 Officer
Lynne Donovan, Head of People Services
Natalie Kenny, Senior Community Safety Officer
Ceri Edwards Environmental Health and Community Safety Manager
Anwen Cullinane, Senior Policy Officer (Equalities and Welsh Language)
Jo Williams, Assistant Director Adult Services
Gareth Jenkins, Interim Corporate Director for Social Services
Nick Taylor-Williams, Head of Housing
Keri Cole, Chief Education Officer
Ch. Insp. Paul Biggs, Gwent Police
Eira Turner, Aneurin Bevan University Health Board
Guy Browett, Probation Service
Sam Slater, Office of Police and Crime Commissioner
Mike Wyatt, South Wales Fire and Rescue Service
Michaela Rogers, Youth Offending Service Manager
Lisa Lane, Head of Democratic Services and Deputy Monitoring Officer

Appendices:

- Appendix 1 - Interim Strategy for Serious Violence Prevention for Gwent 2024-25

Background papers: None