



SOCIAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 1ST DECEMBER 2020

**SUBJECT: DEVELOPMENT OF A MULTI AGENCY SAFEGUARDING HUB IN
CAERPHILLY**

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR – SOCIAL SERVICES & HOUSING

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To advise Scrutiny Committee (Committee) of the proposal to develop a multi agency Safeguarding Hub in partnership with Gwent Police. The Hub will be based in Caerphilly but support the West of Gwent ie covering Caerphilly, Torfaen and Blaenau Gwent local authorities.

1.2 To seek Committee support for the operational and strategic principles underpinning this development.

2. SUMMARY

2.1 Committee Members may be aware that Gwent Police commissioned a review of the way they were delivering their Public Protection functions and specifically their role in safeguarding.

2.2 Through engaging with partner agencies as part of this review, it soon became apparent that there was an opportunity to develop multi agency safeguarding hubs and to support this, a pilot project commenced in Newport in the spring of 2018 involving a Police Decision Maker being co-located in the Council's Information, Advice & Assistance (IAA) Service. Shortly afterwards, the pilot was extended to Blaenau Gwent and learning from both sites has been incorporated into the final review recommendations.

2.3 Based on the work to date, the Review's key recommendation is to have a Police Officer decision maker co-located in each local authority IAA service supported by Senior Officers, Conference Support Officers and Business Support in two regional hubs covering East and West Gwent. It is proposed that the East Hub will be based in Newport covering Newport and Monmouthshire and the West Hub will be located in Caerphilly covering Caerphilly, Torfaen and Blaenau Gwent.

3. RECOMMENDATION

3.1 For Scrutiny Committee to note and support the development of a multi agency Safeguarding Hub in Caerphilly.

- 3.2 For Scrutiny Committee to agree the broad strategic and operational principles that will inform this development.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 To ensure Scrutiny Committee is fully informed and supportive of the proposals to develop a multi agency Safeguarding Hub in partnership with Gwent Police.

5. THE REPORT

Police Review of Public Protection Unit (PPU) functions:

- 5.1 As stated, Gwent Police commissioned a review of their PPU service with a view to making improvements and potentially reconfiguring the way the functions were delivered across the Police Force area. An independent Project Manager was commissioned to lead the review and the final report was presented to the Gwent Police Management Board at the end of August 2020 where it was endorsed in its entirety.
- 5.2 Based on multi agency feedback to the review, Police Officer Decision Makers were co-located in both Newport and Blaenau-Gwent IAA services. These pilots were evaluated and the key findings reported as follows:
- Improved information sharing
 - Improved timeliness of decision making
 - Improvements in the quality of Police referrals
 - Improved integrated service responses
 - Improved and increased referrals to early intervention and prevention services avoiding the need for higher tier statutory interventions.
- 5.3 The review has identified and developed the following key principles for service delivery going forward:
- Services need to be sustainable, resilient and have capacity to respond to demand
 - It was critical to ensure consistency of approach across the Police Force area
 - The aspiration is to support 'all age' safeguarding ie covering both child and adult protection
 - Key focus needs to be on identifying early interventions to prevent escalation
 - Resulting in improved quality of multi agency referrals and responses
 - The revised service needed to incorporate the key functions of the Gwent Missing Children Project

Proposed Hub Model:

- 5.4 The review considered a range of service delivery options and the preferred model based on the two geographical areas consists of the following key functions:
- ✓ Police Officer Decision Maker in each local authority IAA service supported by;
 - ✓ Senior Officers /decision makers based in the two regional Hubs
 - ✓ Conference Support and Business Support Officers based in both Hubs
 - ✓ Joint multi agency screening of all safeguarding referrals

- ✓ Multi agency lateral checks
- ✓ Immediate Strategy Meetings/Discussions within 24 hours

- 5.5 Whilst the two statutory lead agencies for safeguarding are Local Authorities and the Police, the Review incorporated views from all partners and the proposal to develop multi agency Hubs clearly has implications for other agencies.
- 5.6 It is fully acknowledged that there are operational challenges for Aneurin Bevan University Health Board (ABUHB) to support the Hub model in relation to the wide range of databases currently supporting the various service areas. However, link officers will be identified to undertake lateral checks on behalf of Health in the three key service areas of Health Visiting, Midwifery and Mental Health. These link officers will be supported by ABUHB's Central Safeguarding Team to ensure resilience.
- 5.7 In addition, each Local Education Authority is in the process of considering how they can support the Hubs, with the potential in Caerphilly for the Education Safeguarding Lead to be co-located at least part of the working week with the Police.
- 5.8 Early discussions with Wales Probation Service have also been really positive and there is an appetite for them to have an operational presence in the Hubs

Governance:

- 5.8 The review outcomes have been presented at both the Gwent Safeguarding Board and the Regional Partnership Board and both Boards have given their full support to the proposals requesting periodic updates to be reported back to them.
- 5.9 A strategic Delivery Board consisting of all the statutory partners has been established to provide oversight and scrutiny for the development and implementation of the Hub service model.
- 5.10 Two Delivery Sub Groups have been established to correspond with each of the geographical Hub footprints. These Groups provide ownership and delivery of the model at a local level which will enable effective responses to different demographics, referral pathways and service landscapes. These Groups report directly to the Delivery Board.

Caerphilly (West Gwent) Hub proposals:

- 5.11 Caerphilly's IAA Service is currently based in Foxes Lane, Oakdale. In line with the Corporate Property and Asset Rationalisation drive, various Council properties were considered to accommodate the Hub including Ty Penallta. The IT infrastructure requirements for an IAA service are significant, the need for the Police to have a confidential, secure environment and the need for video conferencing facilities require a dedicated space to be allocated and so, on balance, it was agreed to use Foxes Lane as the location for the Hub.
- 5.12 The co-location of Gwent Police will require significant infrastructure investment and they have confirmed that they will cover the costs of this together with investment in a dedicated virtual conference facility. Based on demand data, it would be beneficial to have a second virtual conference facility and it is proposed that the Directorate fund the cost of this. In order to progress this, Digital Services will be working closely with Gwent Police.

5.13 Social Services Senior Management Team want to take this opportunity to develop a whole service safeguarding Hub by re-locating the following services from Ty Penallta to Foxes Lane:

- Adult Safeguarding Team
- Children's Safeguarding Team
- Safeguarding & Review Business Support Team

5.14 In order to achieve this, the Intensive Support Team that is currently based in Foxes Lane will need to be relocated to Ty Penallta. The moves will need to be supported by both Property Services and Digital Services and may need to be prioritised to fit in with agreed timescales.

5.15 **Key strategic principles:**

1. Support the proposal for the multi agency Safeguarding Hub to be located with IAA at Foxes Lane
2. Support the movement of Social Services Teams to enable all safeguarding functions to operate from the Hub
3. Support the required infrastructure investments and office moves in line with an agreed strategic timeline

6. **ASSUMPTIONS**

6.1 All proposals linked to office accommodation are based on Covid experiences so the principles of hot desking, office/home working balance and continued use of virtual meetings have been fully incorporated.

6.2 Committee may recall that the Directorate has allocated funding to employ a fixed term Senior Practitioner to support Caerphilly decision making in the Hub during the transition to the new service. This role will be evaluated in due course.

6.3 This proposal is based on Caerphilly County Borough Council providing the accommodation for the Police at no cost. The Police have committed to fund the IT infrastructure costs and there will be ongoing contributions required for utilities, particularly telephone line rental and internet connection costs.

7. **LINKS TO RELEVANT COUNCIL POLICIES**

7.1 Social Services & Well Being (Wales) Act 2014

7.2 Well-Being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015

7.3 **Corporate Plan 2018-2023.** The content of this report contributes towards Well Being Objective 6: Support citizens to remain independent and improve their well-being.

8. **WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS**

8.1 The content of this report contributes to the following Well Being Goals:

- A resilient Wales
- A more equal Wales

- A Wales of cohesive communities

and is consistent with the five ways of working as defined within the sustainable development principle in the Act.

9. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The Council's full Equality Impact Assessment process does not need to be applied

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 As stated in section 6 above, this proposal is based on an assumption that there will be no charge to Gwent Police for co-locating their staff in Foxes Lane apart from the additional telephony and internet line rentals
- 10.2 Further, with Scrutiny Committee support, Service Specific reserves will be used to invest in a second virtual conference facility at Foxes Lane.

11. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 There are no Personnel or HR implications arising from this report

12. CONSULTATIONS

- 12.1 The views of consultees are incorporated into the report.

13. STATUTORY POWER

- 13.1 Social Services & Well Being (Wales) Act 2014

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