

Report

Council

Part 1

Date: 16 July 2024

Subject **Serious Violence Duty Strategic Needs Assessment and Strategy**

Purpose To consider the draft Strategic Needs Assessment and Community Safety Plan and adopt for publication and implementation.

Author Strategic Director, Transformation and Corporate

Ward All Wards

Summary The Serious Violence Duty set out in the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 was implemented across England and Wales on 31st January 2023. More detailed information about the Duty can be found [here](#). The Duty places a mandatory requirement on certain 'Specified Authorities' (chief officers of police, fire and rescue authorities, health boards, local authorities, youth offending teams and probation services) to work together and plan to reduce and prevent serious violence. This includes identifying the kinds of serious violence that occur in their area, the causes of that violence (so far as it is possible to do so), and to prepare and implement a strategy for preventing and reducing serious violence in the area.

The Duty also requires specified authorities to consult other 'Relevant Authorities' (prison authorities, youth custody authorities and educational authorities) in the preparation of their strategy. The relevant authorities and other key partners such as wider criminal justice partners or those in the 3rd sector are identified as being key to co-operating with specified authorities with the Duty, albeit not legally bound by it. To comply with the above legislation a draft Serious Violence Duty Strategic Needs Assessment and Serious Violence Strategy has been produced and is appended to this report. These drafts were approved by the Cabinet in June 2024.

Proposal **To approve and adopt the draft Serious Violence Duty Strategic Needs Assessment and Serious Violence Strategy appended to this report.**

Action by Strategic Director Corporate and Transformation and Head of People, Policy and Transformation

Timetable Immediate
This report was prepared after consultation with:

- Corporate Management Team
- Strategic Director, Transformation and Corporate
- Safer Newport – Community Safety Partnership
- Head of People, Policy and Transformation
- Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee
- Newport City Council Cabinet Members

Signed

Background

Legal Context

The Serious Violence Duty came into effect in England and Wales on 31st January 2023. The Duty places a mandatory requirement on 'Specified Authorities' (police forces, fire and rescue authorities, health boards, local authorities, youth offending teams and probation services) to work together and plan to reduce and prevent serious violence. This includes identifying the kinds of serious violence that occur in their area, the causes of that violence (so far as it is possible to do so), and to prepare and implement a strategy for preventing and reducing serious violence in the area.

The Duty also requires specified authorities to consult other 'Relevant Authorities' (prison authorities, youth custody authorities and educational authorities) in the preparation of their strategy. The relevant authorities and other key partners such as wider criminal justice partners or those in the 3rd sector are identified as being key to co-operating with specified authorities with the Duty, albeit not legally bound by it.

In Gwent, the following partners are the *specified authorities* for the purposes of the Duty:

- Aneurin Bevan University Health Board
- Blaenau-Gwent County Borough Council
- Caerphilly County Borough Council
- Caerphilly & Blaenau-Gwent Youth Offending Service
- Gwent Police
- Gwent Probation Service (Delivery Unit)
- Monmouthshire County Council
- Monmouthshire & Torfaen Youth Offending Service
- Newport City Council
- Newport Youth Offending Service
- South Wales Fire and Rescue Service
- Torfaen County Borough Council

All Specified Authorities across Gwent are committed to complying with the requirements laid out in the guidance. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Collaborating with relevant partners by attending meetings and sharing relevant data, agency strategies, plans, and other information.
- Contributing to the development of the need's assessment/s and strategy
- Committing to implement the results of the strategy – e.g., commissioning services, delivering prevention/early intervention activities.

Development of the Plan

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 SNA and Strategy provide an evaluation of the current picture of serious violence across the region, with sections specific to Newport.

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 to create a 'Gwent Without Violence'.

1. **Better use of data to inform action** - In Gwent we will strive to achieve a data driven approach to preventing serious violence. Serious violence and organised crime
2. **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.
3. **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.
4. **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

Governance

The strategy is the first iteration of a long-term commitment by all Specified Authority duty holders to prevent and reduce serious violence across Newport and wider Gwent. It provides a broad framework alongside specific actions, within which partners and partnerships can act.

Whilst work to develop the SNA and strategy has been undertaken in collaboration with partners across Gwent, the duty applies to Newport City Council. Within Newport, findings and priorities have been embedded within the Safer Newport Community Safety Plan and through the action plans being developed in the next 12 months with governance provided by Partnerships Scrutiny Committee and Council via annual reports.

The draft assessment and plan were approved by the Cabinet in June 2024.

Financial Summary (Capital and Revenue)

The cost of implementing the Strategy is met out of existing budgets by each relevant service area, alongside funding received for implementation from the Home Office.

Risks

Risk Title / Description	Risk Impact score of Risk if it occurs* (H/M/L)	Risk Probability of risk occurring (H/M/L)	Risk Mitigation Action(s) What is the Council doing or what has it done to avoid the risk or reduce its effect?	Risk Owner Officer(s) responsible for dealing with the risk?
Gwent Serious Violence Strategy not formally adopted or published	H	L	This Serious Violence Strategy has been developed and taken through relevant governance processes for approval	Executive Board, Head of People, Policy and Transformation
Gwent Serious Violence Strategy is not implemented or reviewed	H	L	Delivery of the plan is the responsibility of Safer Newport – the Community Safety Partnership and wider Gwent Partnership arrangements. And will be supported by associated multi agency groups.	Safer Newport CSP Policy and Partnership Manager, Senior Policy and Partnership Officer
Developed Objectives and Actions are not completed within the period	M	L	This is a low risk as the strategy has been developed based on reasonable and deliverable timescales with the identified need priorities.	Head of People, Policy and Partnership, Policy and Partnership

				Manager, Senior Policy and Partnership Officer
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* Taking account of proposed mitigation measures

Links to Council Policies and Priorities

[Corporate Plan 2022 - 27](#)

[People Plan 2023 - 28](#)

Options Available and considered

1. To approve the attached report and publish on the council’s website.
2. To request further information or not approve the attached report and redraft.

Preferred Option and Why

1. To approve the attached paper and publish on the Council’s website in order to comply with the Council’s statutory obligations.

Comments of Chief Financial Officer

There are no direct financial implications arising from the proposal to approve the strategy, as the cost of implementing the strategy will be met from existing service areas budgets.

Comments of Monitoring Officer

The Council’s legal duties as regards the adoption of the strategy are set out in the report. This is an interim strategy pending further data and analysis as set out in the strategy document and it will therefore be necessary for the Council to adopt a substantive strategy based on that information in due course.

Comments of Head of People, Policy and Transformation

The Serious Violence Strategic Needs Assessment and Strategy sets out a new long-term commitment by specified partner agencies to prevent and reduce serious violence across Newport and wider Gwent. It provides a broad framework alongside specific actions, within which partners can act. In Newport actions have also been embedded within the Safer Newport Community Safety Plan.

The Council engaged with a wide range of internal and external stakeholders in the development of the strategic needs assessment and strategy. The implementation of this strategy and community safety work contribute to achieving a range of well-being objectives set out in the Council’s Corporate Plan.

There are no direct human resources implications in this report.

Scrutiny Committees

The **Serious Violence Strategic Needs Assessment and Strategy** was presented to the Council’s Partnerships Scrutiny Committee on 20 March 2024. The full details will be published in the minutes of the Committee meeting on the Council’s democracy pages.

The Committee thanked officers for their work and made the following comments and recommendations:

- The Committee commended the report stating that it was very accessible and informative.
- The committee noted a discrepancy on page 179 of the report regarding “Weapon-related crime” and “Rape and Sexual offences” statistics, which appeared to show the same figures for both Newport and Gwent as a whole. They recommended a clarification or correction of this data.

- The committee suggested including a detailed breakdown of the ethnicity of targeted groups in hate crimes within the Safer Newport Strategic Needs Assessment (SNA). This analysis will help contextualise the link between hate crimes and serious criminal activities, enhancing the overall effectiveness of the assessment in addressing these specific issues.
- The committee observed that presenting data as percentage increases (e.g. a 300% increase in homicides) could be misleading due to the small numbers involved. They suggested that presenting the actual figures might provide a clearer and less alarming picture.

In line with Council's Partnerships Scrutiny Committee recommendations, the OPCC have taken onboard the feedback and will consider updates within future iterations of the SNA and Strategy.

Fairness and Equality Impact Assessment:

- **Wellbeing of Future Generation (Wales) Act**
- **Equality Act 2010**
- **Socio-economic Duty**
- **Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011**

In terms of the Wellbeing of Future Generation (Wales) Act and consideration of the sustainable development principle, 5 ways of working:

Long Term - The implementation of the Strategy and associated actions aim to influence the way that the Council makes decisions that have a long-term impact on communities.

Preventative – The Strategy seeks to not only respond the current needs but to also consider wider thematic trends to ensure that preventative measures can be taken and implemented.

Integration – While the Strategy cuts across all of Wales well-being goals, this will particularly support progress to achieve the vision for A Wales of cohesive communities. Similarly, the implementation of the Strategy and work within this area align with and contribute to achieving the well-being objectives in the Council's new Corporate Plan.

Collaboration - Collaboration is key to delivering against the Strategy. As a Community Safety Partnership, collaboration is at the heart of all that is done. This is seen in every associated group by working as a multi agency partnership. Safer Newport also ensure that this work is community focused and will continue to seek engagement and participation from the residents of Newport.

Involvement – The Council and other partners engaged with a wide range of internal and external stakeholders in the development of this strategy. Engagement and consultation with key stakeholders, including Newport residents, Safer Newport members, all of which will remain vital collaborators throughout the implementation of this strategy.

Background Papers

Serious Violence Duty Strategic Needs Assessment.

Serious Violence Strategy

[Cabinet Report](#)

Crime and Disorder Act 1998

The Serious Violence Duty in the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 (PCSC Act) includes a requirement for local partnerships to complete a strategic needs assessment (SNA) to understand how violence is affecting their communities and to help them develop a violence prevention strategy.

Consultation

Consultation was undertaken with stakeholders across Gwent, with scrutiny committee members and with Cabinet members.

Dated: July 2024