

# Report

## Cabinet

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### Part 1

Date: 18 April 2018

**Subject** **Draft, Violence against Women Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Regional Strategy 2017-2022**

**Purpose** For, Cabinet to consider and accept the Regional Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence strategy 2017-2022.

**Author** Head of Children and Young People Services

**Ward** Newport City Council

**Summary** The enactment of the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) 2015 (VAWDASV) requires the public sector in Wales to work together in a consistent and cohesive way to improve the outcomes for individuals and their families subjected to VAWDASV. The Act sits alongside the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 which requires public bodies to think about what actions and activities are required to improve the well-being of current and future generations. Collaboration, preventative activity, the involvement of individuals, and long-term incremental improvements in the services delivered are threaded throughout the legislative landscape.

Newport City Council, through safeguarding, managed the Gwent regional pilot development on behalf of Welsh Government (until 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019).

The development of the strategy has required a Partnership Board to be established and it is on behalf of the Partnership Board that the first regional joint strategy is published. The strategy focus is to tackle VAWDASV by supporting victims and survivors, tackling perpetrators, ensuring professionals have the tools and knowledge to act, increasing awareness of VAWDASV and the support available, and helping children and young people to understand inequality in relationships and that abusive behaviour is always wrong.

This strategy contributes to the national strategy (National Strategy on Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence – 2016-2021) and will reflect the six objectives of the national strategy. The Partnership Board have determined that they will adopt the objectives of the national strategy as their overarching Strategic Priorities.

**Proposal** **For Cabinet to approve the Gwent Regional Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy 2017-2022.**

**Action by** Cabinet

**Timetable** Immediate

This report was prepared after consultation with:

- Strategic Director - People
- Head of Finance
- Head of People and Business Change
- Head of Law and Regulation
- Performance Scrutiny Committee – Partnerships 28 February 2018
- Please see the Strategy document for full list of Partners consulted throughout the development of the strategy.

## Background

The regional VAWDASV strategy is required by the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 which requires the public sector in Wales to work together in a consistent and cohesive way to improve the outcomes for individuals and their families subjected to VAWDASV.

The Gwent Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Partnership Board has been established to carry out the Welsh Government (WG) legislation within the five local authorities that make up Gwent. Newport City Council is the host for the regional development and the VAWDASV regional officers are managed within Newport safeguarding management.

The main aims of the VAWDASV (Wales) Act are;

1. To improve the public sectors response to violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence
2. Give the public authorities (councils and Health Boards) a strategic focus on the issue
3. Ensure the consistent provision of preventative, protective and support services.

The benefits for Newport City Council will be the shared ownership of the regional partnership approach required by Welsh Government to fulfil requirements within the Act.

The Welsh Government timescales for all regional VAWDASV strategies to be scrutinised and agreed by full regional partners and respective Cabinets is May 2018.

The partnership Board are addressing the sustainable funding issues for the strategy to be successful and as yet there is no indicative WG long term funding proposals available. The Delivery plan for implementation of the Strategy will be the next steps once full Cabinet approval is received.

The regional officer's posts for the Gwent pilot implementation for VAWDASV Act is funded by Welsh Government until 31 March 2019.

## Financial Summary

The VAWDASV project is currently being funded from two grants:

Welsh Government Domestic Abuse Services grant	£350,000
Police Crime Commissioner Community Safety Fund	£151,809

This is a regional project, being administered by Newport across the 5 Gwent LA's. 18-19 is the final year of the current Welsh Government grant agreement. The funding levels beyond 18-19 are not currently known. In approving this strategy, Cabinet need to be aware of this on-going funding uncertainty and this may effect implementation of the 'delivery plan' here in the future.

We do know however, that Welsh Government have no funding to pay for any further accommodation (from April 19). The Team are currently using offices at Mamhilad Park, which was previously funded by a separate grant from Welsh Government for a 3 year period. At the outset of the project Welsh Government insisted that the team needed to be based at a location away from the LA offices.

Within the current 18-19 financial year there are potential financial challenges in the region of £20k - £25k as the current grant funding levels are not fully sufficient to cover the current forecasted costs.

## Risks

The risks for Newport Council are small in regard to approving the Strategy. There are no direct financial costs associated with the Strategy and the long term funding for the work in regard to training staff and measurable outcomes is clearly identified for each public body. The E learning for Newport City Council is centrally collated and reported to WG.

Long term risks for further development of services required will be on a regional partnership footing and sustainable funding is already under development with Welsh Government and strategic leaders.

## Links to Council Policies and Priorities

The strategy aims to put in place preventative measures to address violence against women, domestic violence and sexual violence. This is in keeping with the intentions of the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act in particular the sustainable development principles of prevention and collaboration.

Well-being Objectives	Promote economic growth and regeneration whilst protecting the environment	Improve skills, educational outcomes and employment opportunities	Enable people to be healthy, independent and resilient	Build cohesive and sustainable communities
Corporate Plan Commitments	Thriving City	Aspirational People	Aspirational People	Resilient Communities
Supporting Function	Modernised Council	Modernised Council	Modernised Council	Modernised Council

## Options Available and considered

1. Cabinet are asked to approve the regional VAWDASV Strategy with comments from scrutiny to be upheld.
2. Cabinet do not approve the VAWDASV Strategy and either remove Newport City Council from the regional partnership development or propose an alternative Strategy.

## Preferred Option and Why

Option 1 is the preferred option to safeguard the Council's requirements under the VAWDASV Act and up hold WG's directive for regional partnership and collaborative working. The VAWDASV Partnership Board has provided a diverse and inclusive membership that has recognised that people do not experience VAWDASV in a vacuum and neither can services, nor wider society, tackle such issues in isolation.

With a strong focus on preventative, protective and supportive mechanisms the aim is to work with survivors to ensure meaningful delivery of the strategic plan.

Strong leadership and accountability is required by us all to ensure that the priorities identified are translated into actions that can make a real difference to the well-being and safety of people living in Newport and wider Gwent both now and in the future.

## Comments of Chief Financial Officer

The funding for the regional team is WG funded until March 2019. Whether or not there will be further funding for the officers afterwards is unclear therefore all employees are on fixed term contracts until

March 2019 enabling deletion of posts if funding discontinues. The service has been informed that Welsh Government is exploring sustainable funding for a variety of developments but these are yet to be confirmed.

Therefore, in agreeing this Strategy, the funding uncertainties and the consequential potential impacts on its 'delivery plan' should be noted by Cabinet.

## **Comments of Monitoring Officer**

There are no specific legal issues arising from the report. The Regional Strategy has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Violence against Women Sexual Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015. The strategic priorities within the plan reflect national objectives and regional needs assessments.

## **Comments of Head of People and Business Change**

There are no specific human resources issues arising from the report which supports the Council's requirements under the VAWDASV Act, including online training for Council employees.

As outlined in the report a number of the Well-being Goals set out in the Well-being of Future Generations Act are contributed to along with the Council's Well-being objectives. Partners and stakeholders will work in collaboration to ensure actions, objectives and targets are met. Listening to victims, survivors and their families is integral to understanding their experiences of the support offered to them to be able to continually review and make improvements.

## **Comments of Cabinet Member**

The Cabinet Member has approved the report for consideration by cabinet.

The Cabinet Member notes that a great deal of work has been achieved and will be continued but with no guarantee of continuing funding.

It is positive that there will be Member's training.

Further consideration of the position of men would be useful.

## **Scrutiny Committees: Performance Scrutiny Committee-Partnerships 28/2/2018**

### **Comments to the Cabinet**

- 1) Monitoring arrangements – Noting the statutory role of the Local Authority for this strategy, the Committee agreed to include an update on this on its work programme for a years' time, to assess the progress of its implementation and how it has impacted on Newport. When this update is presented to the Committee, it was requested that Representatives from the Partnership Board be invited to attend alongside the Officers from NCC.
- 2) The Committee discussed whether it would be beneficial for there to be Member representation on the Partnership Board to ensure support at an Elected Member level for the implementation of the strategy. The Committee recommends that the Cabinet and the Officers on the Board consider whether this would be beneficial and appropriate.
- 3) The Committee recommends that the Council nominates a Member Domestic Abuse Prevention Champion who can champion and promote the work within this area. This nominated Member would then be invited to attend the Performance Scrutiny Committee – Partnerships when this matter is considered in the future.
- 4) The Committee recommends that the training outlined that had been provided for Council staff be

rolled out to all Members of the Authority. Elected Members were key links with their communities and any training that would equip Members to support their community would be useful

## **Equalities Impact Assessment and the Equalities Act 2010**

Completed and attached.

## **Children and Families (Wales) Measure**

Children and young people have been consulted through engagement activities via partnership working through the South Wales Safeguarding Board event in Newport, and will be part of future development to have a voice as the strategy rolls out through the delivery plan.

## **Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015**

The five year Strategy will mirror the Well-being and Future Generations (Wales) Act and has addressed the five things public bodies need to think about to show they have applied the sustainable development principle put into place by the Act.

The Strategy considers the long term outcomes for victims, survivors and their families while ensuring that short term needs continue to be met whilst any long term reconfiguration is undertaken. Early intervention and prevention is recognised as a primary overarching principle to tackling VAWDASV and improving outcomes for victims and those closest to them.

A number of the Well-being goals set out in the Well-being of Future Generations Act are contributed to along with the Council's Well-being objectives. Partners and stakeholders will work in collaboration to ensure actions, objectives and targets are met. Listening to victims, survivors and their families is integral to understanding their experiences of the support offered to them to be able to continually review and make improvements.

## **Crime and Disorder Act 1998**

Section 17(1) of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 imposes a duty on the Local Authority to exercise its various functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent, crime and disorder in its area.

## **Consultation**

No elected Member comments received outside of Scrutiny comments.

## **Background Papers**

Please find attached the Draft regional VAWDASV Strategy document.

This has been out for public consultation since November 2017.

Dated: 03/04/2018