

# Report

## Cabinet

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### Part 1

Date: 19 August 2020

**Subject** COVID-19: Gwent Contact Tracing Service

**Purpose** To provide an update on the Gwent Contact Tracing Service and to seek Cabinet approval on the operational delivery structure, governance and finance arrangements for the service

**Author** Regulatory Services Manager (Environment & Community)

**Ward** City Wide

**Summary** Welsh Government's Test, Trace, Protect strategy forms a central part of their Covid-19 recovery plan. Community contact tracing is a key element of the strategy and Welsh Government have asked Local Authorities and Health Boards jointly to put in place contact tracing services in their regions.

Contact tracing has been undertaken in Gwent since the beginning of June by redeployed staff within the 5 Local Authorities and Aneurin Bevan University Health Board (ABUHB). Welsh Government have now confirmed funding arrangements for contact tracing and this report sets out proposals for the next phase for the Gwent Contact Tracing Service moving from a redeployed workforce to a fully employed model to ensure that there is capacity for successful delivery.

**Proposal** That Cabinet approves the operational delivery structure, governance, and finance for the Gwent Contact Tracing Service as detailed in the report and draft Business Case at Appendix 1 subject to a Memorandum of Understanding to be agreed in due course.

That Cabinet also authorises the Head of Law & Regulation to agree any amendments to the draft Business Case subject to consultation with the Cabinet Member for Licensing & Regulation, and authorises the Head of Law & Regulation to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding regarding the Gwent Contact Tracing Service subject to consultation with the Cabinet Member for Licensing & Regulation.

**Action by** Head of Law & Regulation

**Timetable** Immediate

**This report was prepared after consultation with:**

- Head of Law & Regulation
- Head of Finance
- Head of People & Business Change

**Signed**

# 1 Background

- 1.1 The recital of the background to the Covid-19 pandemic does not need rehearsing in this report. Needless to say the Council's response has been organisation wide and it continues to evolve.
- 1.2 Environmental Health services have roles and responsibilities for working with Health partners (both local health boards and Public Health Wales) in dealing with infectious disease. In the main, their work revolves around food and water borne diseases such as Salmonella, Campylobacter, E. coli, Shigella and other infections such as Hepatitis and measles outbreaks etc. The strategic structures and relationships are already in place to deal with the Covid-19 pandemic. However, these structures and relationships need to be significantly enhanced in size and scale given the magnitude of the response potentially required.
- 1.3 On 13th May 2020 WG published their Test, Trace and Protect overarching plan which is supported by the Public Health Wales (PHW) Public Health Protection Response Plan which gives more operational detail on the national-regional-local response. These plans clearly outline that Local Authorities are needed to set up, in partnership with the local health boards, local tracing teams. The main purpose of these teams is to "find, prioritise, act and report". Contact tracing is carried out on receipt of a confirmed Covid-19 diagnosis - a positive test result. The purpose is to contact someone who has tested positive to confirm that they must isolate for 7 days and that their household also needs to isolate for 14 days; the contact tracer will also ask the case to share information about their recent contacts. These contacts are traced and informed that they must isolate for 14 days; during this time daily contact will be established to monitor they develop any symptoms. If they do they are asked to get tested and enter the system as a new case if positive, and so on.
- 1.4 A sub-group of the Local Resilience Forum's Strategic Coordinating Group (SCG), which has led on the Gwent response to the pandemic emergency, was set up in May to coordinate this work. This group is chaired by the Head of Public Protection, Community and Leisure Services (Caerphilly) and contains representatives from Aneurin Bevan University Health Board (ABUHB) and the 5 Local Authorities: Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Monmouthshire, Newport, and Torfaen. The group has also been supported by the Shared Resource Service (SRS) for IT and systems development. The group has worked effectively together to establish the service.
- 1.5 Contact tracing has been undertaken in Gwent since the beginning of June. There are 160 whole time equivalent staff redeployed (across all six organisations) to support the Gwent Contact Tracing Service. The service operates 7 days a week and local contact tracing teams are supported by local authority Environmental Health Officers across the region and by Clinical Leads, Consultants in Health Protection, and Consultants in Communicable Disease from ABUHB and Public Health Wales. The contact tracing teams are supported by Environmental Health Officers (EHOs); the EHOs deal with the more sensitive and high risk cases, such as cases associated with closed settings such as care homes, schools and factories, especially where clusters and localised outbreaks have developed. EHOs from each of the five local authorities share the regional out of hours response to support the contact tracing team and to deal with matters that require escalation and further investigation or control measures.
- 1.6 Training has been delivered to 295 individuals across all partner organisations. An interim data system was developed by Shared Resource Services (SRS) and used for two weeks whilst the national Case Records Management System was developed. From 15 June 2020, the Gwent service has used the national system for all COVID-19 contact tracing activity. From 01 June to 15 July 2020 109 cases eligible to be contact traced have been referred into the service, 108 have been successfully contacted generating 316 contacts. The system operates on the basis that a local authority team will be responsible for tracing and

contacting cases associated with their local authority; however, depending on demand the teams will be flexed to support the wider Gwent response as required.

- 1.7 Whilst in normal times this would be considered an immature service it is already in the place where it needs to evolve and move onto the next stage. The first stage was an interim model based on redeployment, the creation and stabilisation of the national system whilst learning as a partnership how the service worked, how data and intelligence needed to flow to establish what was needed to manage an effective service over the rest of the financial year. As the lockdown is eased services are being reintroduced and the redeployed staff will be required to return to their substantive roles.
- 1.8 By reviewing system and process included in the service delivery model the partners are now ready to formalise the service. The Service is explained fully in the draft business case at Appendix 1. This outlines the:
  - Proposed governance and operational delivery model
  - Purpose
  - Strategic aims and objectives
  - Principles on how the partnership will work effectively together
  - Workforce plan
  - Finance model
  - High level measures

## **2 The next stage**

- 2.1 A partnership model for the Service is proposed. Each organisation will have clear roles and responsibilities as outlined in the Business Case and will be formalised through a Memorandum of Understanding. The Business Case contains the Terms of Reference of the various tiers of the Service. The Strategic Board will be the G10 which is a voluntary collective of public sector organisations across the Gwent region with a common interest to provide a strategic leadership forum for public services to achieve better outcomes for the people of Gwent. The Leader and Chief Executive are the Council's representatives. The following organisations are represented at G10:
  - Newport City Council
  - Monmouthshire County Borough Council
  - Torfaen County Borough Council
  - Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
  - Caerphilly County Borough Council
  - Gwent Police
  - Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent
  - Natural Resources Wales
  - South Wales Fire and Rescue Service
  - Aneurin Bevan University Health Board
- 2.2 It is proposed that Scrutiny of the Service will be undertaken through each organisation's substantive Scrutiny arrangements as appropriate. It is proposed that Aneurin Bevan University Health Board be the banker i.e. to receive the funding from Welsh Government and through the method outlined in the MoU to reimburse each organisation's expenditure incurred and to be responsible for monitoring expenditure against budget and produce regular reports to the Leadership Group and G10 as appropriate.

- 2.3 It is proposed that Torfaen County Borough Council become the host and lead organisation for the Programme Management Office (PMO) which will support and ensure the effective delivery of the Service. The PMO will be responsible for:
- Administration and support of the Regional Board, Regional Oversight Group and other task and finish groups
  - Liaison with partner organisations which have specific lead roles within the Service
  - Quality assurance and performance review for the Service
  - Communications strategy and implementation including stakeholder management
  - Risk monitoring and management
  - Training strategy, keeping training materials relevant and in line with latest Standard Operating Procedures and national guidance or changes to the Case Records Management system
  - Strategic HR oversight, monitoring and supporting implementation of organisation specific workforce plans
- 2.4 Newport City Council will be responsible for supporting the regional arrangements and for leading, managing and recruiting its own Contact Tracing Team.
- 2.5 The next phase will be to recruit and train the staff needed to ensure that the Service is effective and efficient. A workforce development plan has been created which will remain a dynamic document to ensure there is flexibility to meet the needs of the Service. This can be seen at Appendix 4 of the draft Business Case. It is recognised the Service must be very responsive should community transmission increase and be able to be scaled up quickly and effectively to ensure continual successful and effective contact tracing.
- 2.6 Assumptions have been made regarding the workforce requirements for the service. Workforce modelling has informed the nature, number, and timing of the staffing requirements of the service which has also been the subject of discussions with Welsh Government. The workforce includes an additional Environmental Health Officer to bolster the Newport (Environmental Health) Response Team.

### **3 Conclusion**

- 3.1 A great deal has been achieved to establish the Gwent Contact Tracing Service in a short period of time. This report sets out proposals for the next phase of the service and demonstrates the central role local authorities have in responding to the Covid-19 pandemic. As we move out of lockdown contact tracing is integral to managing and providing intelligence and data on cases and outbreaks within our communities.

### **4 Financial Summary**

- 4.1 Appendix 5 of the draft Business Case contains a draft high level finance model built to support the Service. In their letter dated 6th July Welsh Government indicated to the partnership that £9.6m would be available to support the service up until 31st March 2021. Welsh Government has also allocated £200,000 additional to the £9.6m to cover capital costs for IT equipment.
- 4.2 As stated above it is proposed that ABUHB will receive the funding from Welsh Government and Newport Council will be reimbursed by monthly claims with evidence of expenditure. This is a tried and tested model and is already in place with the Regional Partnership Board and the social care Integrated Care Fund. The Newport workforce model has been

developed following the principles set out in the draft business case and has been costed, confirming that the costs are within the funding available.

## 5 Risks

Risk	Impact of Risk if it occurs* (H/M/L)	Probability of risk occurring (H/M/L)	What is the Council doing or what has it done to avoid the risk or reduce its effect	Who is responsible for dealing with the risk?
That the Newport Contact Tracing Team fails to operate within the funding available.	High	Low	The Workforce Plan has been costed and is within the funding available. Expenditure will be carefully monitored and monthly funding claims will be made.	Head of Law and Regulation/ Head of Finance
That the Newport Contact Tracing Team does not deliver effective community contact tracing.	High	Low	The interim service is operating successfully and the service going forward will be managed to ensure that it is effective.	Head of Law and Regulation
That Environmental Health resources are insufficient to effectively respond to Outbreaks and Incidents of COVID-19	High	Medium	The funding provides for an additional EHO and efforts will be made to recruit to this position.  Services will be prioritised as necessary to deliver an effective response to a surge in COVID-19 and assistance would be sought from the other Gwent local authorities if required.	Head of Law and Regulation

### Links to Council Policies and Priorities

It will not be possible to achieve the Objectives contained within the Corporate Plan unless the Covid-19 outbreak can be controlled. The work links with the following plans/policies:

Newport City Council's Corporate Plan (the most relevant theme is "A thriving city" and the most relevant Well-being objective is "To enable people to be healthy, independent & resilient. The report is also in line with the Strategic Recovery Aims report, particularly in terms of promoting and protecting the health and well-being of local people.

Well-being Plan 2018-2023. The most relevant Well-being objective is: "Newport has healthy, safe and resilient environments".

### Options Considered/Available

#### Option 1

That Cabinet approves the operational delivery structure, governance, and finance for the Gwent Contact Tracing Service as detailed in the report and draft Business Case at Appendix 1 subject to a Memorandum of Understanding to be agreed in due course. That Cabinet also authorises the

Head of Law & Regulation to agree any amendments to the draft Business Case subject to consultation with the Cabinet Member for Licensing & Regulation, and authorises the Head of Law & Regulation to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding regarding the Gwent Contact Tracing Service subject to consultation with the Cabinet Member for Licensing & Regulation.

### **Option 2**

That Cabinet approves the operational delivery structure, governance, and finance for the Gwent Contact Tracing Service as detailed in the report and draft Business Case at Appendix 1 subject to a Memorandum of Understanding to be agreed in due course.

That Cabinet does **not** authorise the Head of Law & Regulation to agree any amendments to the draft Business Case subject to consultation with the Cabinet Member for Licensing & Regulation, and does **not** authorise the Head of Law & Regulation to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding regarding the Gwent Contact Tracing Service subject to consultation with the Cabinet Member for Licensing & Regulation.

### **Option 3**

That Cabinet does not approve any of the proposals.

## **Preferred Option and Why**

### **Option 1 above.**

This will enable the service to be developed as described in this report and appendix and will formalise the support for the Gwent Contact Tracing Service which was expressed at the G10 meeting on 29 June 2020 by all local authority representatives. It will enable the service to support the delivery of Test Trace Protect in Gwent and across Wales in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

## **Comments of Chief Financial Officer**

This new service is entirely funded by the WG grant funding of £9.6m. A draft budget has been prepared by each partner on a consistent basis for the period July 2020 – March 2021.

Additional costs incurred from deployed staff prior (additional hours and grade differences) to this time will be claimed against this fund as permanent recruitment is lagging behind the budget and that provides headroom to claim those additional costs.

IT costs are capped at £200k over the 'region' and it is anticipated that costs incurred will exceed that. It has not been confirmed at time of writing, but recruitment lag noted above should also allow the excess costs to be absorbed within the core grant budget and discussions with WG to allow this to happen are on-going.

## **Comments of Monitoring Officer**

The proposed action is in accordance with the Council statutory powers to enter into collaborative arrangements with other local authorities and public sector partners to jointly exercise functions and deliver public services. The Council has a statutory duty under the Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984 to deal with outbreaks of notifiable and infectious diseases and Environmental Health officers will continue to exercise this statutory role in relation to the transmission of Covid-19. Although the provision of a contact tracing service is not a specific statutory function for the Council, it has a range of discretionary powers under section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 to do anything which is conducive or incidental to the discharge of its environmental health

functions and, in accordance with its general well-being powers section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000, to do anything which promotes social and environmental well-being. In addition, the Council is empowered under the Local Government Acts to enter into collaborative arrangements with other public sector partners to deliver services jointly. Therefore, the combination of all these specific and incidental powers will enable the Council to enter into the proposed Memorandum of Understanding for the delivery of this Gwent Contract Tracing Service in accordance with the delivery model and governance arrangements set out in the attached Business Case.

Cabinet has already endorsed the interim arrangements for the establishment of the regional Contact Tracing service using existing redeployed Council staff and has agreed to the principle of delivering the Test, Trace Protect service on a partnership basis, subject to agreeing the delivery model and governance structure, and subject to confirmation of grant funding from Welsh Government. The draft Business Case was agreed in principle by the G10 partners, but on the basis that each of the participating authorities would require internal approval before any final binding commitment could be given. Each of the authorities is now taking a similar report through their internal decision-making processes, to secure commitment to proceeding with the regional TTP service.

Welsh Government funding of £9.6 million has been confirmed, to cover the total costs of delivering the regional service until the end of March 2021. The Business Case confirms that there should be sufficient flexibility within the total funding allocation to meet the costs of the service. This is fundamental to the Council's commitment to delivery of the service as there is no residual budget to cover any shortfall in the grant funding.

The delivery model assumes a partnership arrangement, with each local authority employing separate local contact tracing teams within their respective areas, overseen by regional programme management and regional cells, with health and environmental health professionals. Strategic oversight and governance will be provided by the G10 partners constituted as a Strategic Board. ABUHB will act as the financial lead and will discharge the "banker" role as the recipients of the grant money, and they will distribute the funding to each local authority to reimburse them for the costs of the local teams, similar to the current ICF arrangements. Torfaen CBC will act as the Lead authority for the purposes of programme management and co-ordination. Therefore the delivery model will be unique in the sense that there is no single lead authority or body, which will employ the staff and provide the services. Each of the partners will have a separate role to play in the delivery of the joint service and, therefore, these separate roles and responsibilities will need to be clearly identified in a joint Memorandum of Understanding which sets out the legal basis of the collaborative working. The functions to be exercised by the Leadership Group and Strategic Board will also need to be agreed. However, because the G10 group will comprise other partner organisations, then it cannot be constituted as a Joint Committee exercising delegated functions on behalf of the local authorities. It can provide strategic direction and oversight, but any executive decisions or financial issues would have to be referred back to the individual partners. The MoU will also need to be underpinned by a raft of data sharing protocols to ensure data protection and security.

If Cabinet are minded to agree to the principles set out in the draft Business Case, then it is recommended that the final sign-off of the MoU should be delegated to officers, together with any minor changes to the final Business Case, provided that this is in accordance with the terms approved by Cabinet.

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

This report is in line with the Strategic Recovery Aims report, particularly in terms of promoting and protecting the health and well-being of local people.

There are a number of human resources and workforce planning implications as outlined in the report as Newport City Council will be responsible for supporting the regional arrangements and for leading, managing and recruiting its own Contact Tracing Team.



## Scrutiny Committees

No consultation with Scrutiny Committees has been undertaken.

## Equalities Impact Assessment and the Equalities Act 2010

No Equalities Impact Assessment is necessary.

It is recognised that the contact tracing operating framework will need to ensure appropriate communications exist. For some individuals in Gwent conventional approaches may be less effective. This could be due to pre-existing health problems, language barriers, lack of access to technology, challenges in adhering to prevention guidance or other factors, such as legal and residential status. It will be necessary to modify and adapt methods of communication to account for the differing needs of contacts especially in stressful and difficult situations.

To mitigate against these risks and protect population health whilst also safeguarding against worsening inequalities among Gwent residents, a protocol has been developed linking testing and tracing teams with networks in the community who given their knowledge and links with these groups can assist with engagement and facilitate these groups with case-finding, testing and contact tracing. The Case Records Management system has access to the “The Big Word” which is a translation service that may be used to engage with individuals whose first language is not English. This service has been used successfully in Gwent.

## Children and Families (Wales) Measure

The proposal set out in this report has no more impact on children or families than any other group or individual.

## Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

Contact tracing is a central element of Welsh Government’s Test Trace Protect strategy and as such contributes towards all of the Well-being Goals within the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015.

Well Being Assessment:

- **Long term:** The response to the Covid-19 pandemic is a short-term measure but one which will have long-term impacts.
- **Prevention:** The Test, Trace and Protect strategy has Contact Tracing as a fundamental part, which aims to reduce the spread of the disease and prevent many people from becoming ill and significant numbers from dying.
- **Integration:** The strategy will have a major impact on our Well-being Objectives and the Well-being Goals.
- **Collaboration:** The proposed contact tracing service in Gwent is as partnership between the 5 local authorities in Gwent and the Aneurin Bevan University Health Board under the auspices of the Welsh Government Test Trace Protect Strategy and structures including input from Public Health Wales.
- **Involvement:** The process of Contact Tracing is public-facing and can only have the desired impact with cooperation from the population it is striving to protect.

## Crime and Disorder Act 1998

The proposal set out in this report has no impact on crime and disorder.

## **Consultation**

No consultation is necessary.

## **Background Papers**

The Public Health Protection Response Plan

<https://phw.nhs.wales/publications/publications1/public-health-protection-response-plan/>

Dated:

**Appendix 1**

**Draft Business Case for the Creation of the Gwent Contact Tracing Service**