



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

APPROVAL OF RECOMMENDATIONS ARISING FROM A REVIEW OF THE COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE CWM TAF MORGANNWG REGION

28TH JUNE 2023

REPORT OF DIRECTOR – PUBLIC HEALTH, PROTECTION AND COMMUNITY SAFETY

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1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to seek Cabinet approval for the recommendations arising from a review of the Community Safety Partnership arrangements in the Cwm Taf Morgannwg region, and specifically to seek approval for Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council (RCTCBC) to transition to a new Cwm Taf Morgannwg Community Safety Partnership covering the Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT), Merthyr Tydfil and Bridgend local authority areas.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- 2.1 Agrees that RCTCBC work with partners to form a new Cwm Taf Morgannwg Community Safety Partnership covering the RCT, Merthyr Tydfil and Bridgend local authority areas, subject to consent being given by the South Wales Police and Crime Commissioner and an appropriate transition and implementation plan being agreed.
- 2.2. Approves the other recommendations arising from the Review, as set out in Section 4.12, paragraph I-1X of this report.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 There are currently two Community Safety Partnerships operating across the Cwm Taf Morgannwg region. The Cwm Taf Community Safety Partnership covers both RCT and Merthyr Tydfil, whilst the Bridgend Community Safety Partnership covers solely Bridgend.
- 3.2 Recent years have seen an increase in the adoption of regional footprints by Strategic Groups within the overall CSP framework, for example: The Area Planning Board for substance misuse, The Contest (counter terrorism) Board and the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV)

Steering Group. In addition, there is now a single Regional Safeguarding Board and Regional Partnership Board (RPB) for the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Region, and a single Public Services Board (PSB) for Cwm Taf Morgannwg has now been established.

- 3.3 As a result of the above, the population assessment and wellbeing assessments undertaken by the RPB and PSB respectively cover the Cwm Taf Morgannwg region as a whole and priorities identified in respect of community safety will be relevant to all local authorities and strategic partners across the region.
- 3.4 The three local authority Chief Executives and the Chief Superintendent of South Wales Police Mid Glamorgan BCU, agreed that a review of the Community Safety Partnership arrangements for Cwm Taf Morgannwg was required with the aim of consolidating the earlier amalgamation of strategic groups across the region.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The review was commissioned by RCTCBC on behalf of its partners Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council, Bridgend County Borough Council and South Wales Police. The review was undertaken by an independent, external company on behalf of the Region.
- 4.2 The original aim of the review was to consider the opportunity to establish a single Community Safety Partnership for the Cwm Taf Morgannwg region, the governance arrangements required, and any specific infrastructure and funding requirements that will ensure it can operate as a strategic and effective partnership for the benefit of the Cwm Taf Morgannwg region.
- 4.3 The objectives of the review were:
 - Understand and map the existing meeting and partnership landscape for the Bridgend Community Safety Partnership and Cwm Taf Community Safety Partnership respectively. Ensure the current relationship with the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board structures are identified.
 - Understand areas of current Community Safety Partnership joint delivery on a Cwm Taf Morgannwg basis and consider further collaborative opportunities to maximise capability and capacity of all partners.
 - Develop a single Cwm Taf Morgannwg Community Safety Partnership map considering current and emerging statutory functions, challenges, governance and accountability and business benefits. Ensure the new structure identifies the proposed relationship between the Community Safety Partnership and the Safeguarding Board structures.
 - Identify appropriate representation for meetings / subgroups to deliver accountability across the partnership.
 - As far as practicable, ensure any new Community Safety Partnership proposal considers the emerging recommendations from the Home Office review of Community safety Partnership requirements.
 - Identify the strategic planning and delivery arrangements for the Community Safety Partnership and how this will align to the priorities of the Public Services Board and each respective organisations corporate / strategic priorities.

- Identify any opportunities for scrutiny and oversight of the work of the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Community Safety Partnership that need to be established.
- Identify the infrastructure required to facilitate an effective, strategic Community Safety Partnership, specifically considering the costs / benefits / opportunities to provide dedicated analytical capacity and business support / co-ordination capacity.
- To ensure a value for money approach in the operation of a Cwm Taf Morgannwg Community Safety Partnership.
- Ensure that any review and recommendations incorporate not just the serious violence and counter terrorism duties placed upon local authorities and policing, but also the new Welsh Government Strategic Plan in relation to preventing violence against women and girls and domestic violence and abuse.

4.4 The review was commissioned in August 2022 and the Consultants appointed produced their final report and recommendations in March 2023. The Review Report is attached as Appendix 1. The methodology for the review comprised of two stages:

- (i) A desktop review which considered the national context and local arrangements, including governance and support capacity, along with progress made to date by the two current Community Safety Partnerships (Cwm Taf and Bridgend). The work at this stage included:
 - Mapping existing structures in which both Community Safety Partnerships currently operate, including relationships with subgroups and wider partnerships.
 - Consider the terms of reference and membership of each Community Safety Partnership and their subgroups.
 - Look at the operation of the partnerships and how this supports strategic delivery.
 - Assess the level of support available to facilitate delivery of Community Safety Partnership business.
- (ii) Engagement and focus groups held with a wide range of individuals including key members of the respective Community Safety Partnership Boards and the local and regional sub-groups supporting the Partnerships.

4.5 During the discussions with stakeholders, issues were identified that were needed to be considered for any new proposed arrangements.

4.6 The National issues that inevitably affect the operations of a successful Community Safety Partnership are:

- Highly significant legislative and policy changes since commencement of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.
- Further changes and duties are currently being developed that will fall under the responsibility of Community Safety Partnerships.
- UK and Wales policy and legislation is driving the agenda for greater collaboration between agencies and at a regional level.

- The specificity of what exactly a Community Safety Partnership is has become opaque as a result of the changes.
- Community Safety Partnerships complexities and priorities have increased but without additional funding or resources.

It was widely recognised that the request for a review and the potential restructure/merger of the Community Safety Partnerships is timely given the wider changes and anticipated new duties that will fall under the remit.

- 4.7 There was found to be an overlap between groups within the structure leading to a duplication of effort and unnecessary complexity. This identified the need for better integration of relevant strategic plans, and better connectivity between locality frameworks and active agencies.
- 4.8 The commitment and engagement of current staff was valued and appreciated. However, whilst enthusiasm by officers is driving the Community Safety Partnership agenda there is insufficient capacity and resource for evidence-based planning, needs analysis, monitoring of progress and assessment of data.
- 4.9 There appears to be widespread support for integration and alignment with other regional arrangements. It was felt that greater economies of scale and critical mass, using a combined and streamlined approach to funding bids, provides potential for more resources and more value for money.
- 4.10 There has been some concern that regionalisation will dominate and diminish local arrangements, with the potential dominance of some larger partners.
- 4.11 Issues were raised in relation to the lack of capacity for effective co-ordination. It was felt a merged business unit supporting regional bodies would deliver benefits, and the potential merger of the Regional Safeguarding Board business unit and adoption of equivalent funding formula.
- 4.12 The Review identified nine specific recommendations:
 - I. Rhondda Cynon Taf, Merthyr Tydfil and Bridgend County Borough Councils should, together with their mutual responsible authorities, seek to establish a regional Cwm Taf Morgannwg Community Safety Partnership Board, focusing on the delivery of strategic priorities agreed between responsible agencies and with appropriate delegated responsibility.
 - II. In formulating the arrangements for the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Community Safety Partnership, responsible agencies need to ensure, in collaboration with their legal departments and in collaboration with Welsh Government officials, that under the proposed arrangements the duties placed upon them by the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, subsequently amended, continue to be fully met in line with the Act and its regulations.
 - III. An agreed regional structure which effectively dovetails with the new Cwm Taf Morgannwg Public Services Board and the Safeguarding Board should

be established for the new Cwm Taf Morgannwg Community Safety Partnership Board.

- IV. Given the broad range of responsibilities placed upon Community Safety Partnerships the thematic subgroups that have emerged at a regional level should be reviewed, and where appropriate, incorporated within the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Community Safety Partnership.
- V. Mechanisms need to be established by the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Community Safety Partnership Board, working with all responsible authorities, to engage with communities paying heed to citizens' voices.
- VI. A business unit should be developed to serve the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Community Safety Partnership Board to fulfil, as a minimum, the functions set out in this report.
- VII. Whether or not the business unit is stand alone for the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Community Safety Partnership Board or integrated with that of the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board, a funding formula should be developed to resource support arrangements.
- VIII. In addition to the establishment of the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Community Safety Partnership Board appropriate local arrangements should be in place to scrutinise regional activity and oversee delivery of activity extraneous to, but supportive of, the identified regional priorities.
- IX. If the preceding recommendations are approved, a detailed plan for implementing the new arrangements should be developed, which would provide for:
 - Further engagement with stakeholders.
 - Co-production of governance and support arrangements.
 - Agreeing terms of reference for and membership of groups within the regional arrangements.

4.13 The Review Report and its recommendations have been considered by the Cwm Taf Community Safety Partnership Board and the Bridgend Community Safety Partnership Board. Each Board has accepted the Report and its recommendations. The Review and its recommendations have been considered by the Regional Safeguarding Board and have been endorsed. The Review Recommendations are now subject to consideration and a decision by each individual local authority, as part of their statutory duties under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.

5. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS / SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

5.1 An Equality and Impact Assessment is not required for this report.

6. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no Welsh Language implications arising from this report.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

- 7.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report. Any financial implications arising from a decision to implement the recommendations of the review will be subject to separate consideration by all agency members of the Community Safety Partnership.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 8.1 Community Safety Partnerships are a statutory function under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. There is a provision for Partnerships to be formed, with a strategic focus, on a regional basis. This relies on ensuring there remains a capability to deal with community safety issues on a local basis. Any decision to operate a Community Safety Partnership covering more than one local authority area is subject to approval by the relevant Police and Crime Commissioner.

9. CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT

- 9.1 During the course of the review, there was extensive engagement with a wide range of stakeholders involved in the community safety landscape. Stakeholders were invited to provide their perspectives on the advantages and disadvantages of current arrangements, what is working well and not so well, aspects that they felt required improvement and the perceived opportunities and threats of the proposed merger.
- 9.2 Engagement took a number of forms including one to one interviews, meetings with small groups and attendance at meetings of relevant boards and other fora.
- 9.3 The process was overseen by a steering group consisting of representatives of all statutory members of a Community Safety Partnership.
- 9.4 RCTCBC's Community and Children's Services (Crime and Disorder) Committee considered and scrutinised the Review and its recommendations on 24th April 2023. Members welcomed the Review and the recommendations, in particular the recognition that citizens and residents should have a voice in determining the work of the new Partnership. Members wished to see further detail on the governance and structures of the new Partnership to ensure the work of a single, strategic CSP filters down to results and changes within the communities of RCT and members commented that the role of the RCTCBC's Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee would remain important going forward. Members commented that crime and disorder issues do not respect boundaries and endorsed the recommendation that RCTCBC should work with partners to form a new Cwm Taf Morgannwg

10. LINKS TO THE CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT

- 10.1 Community safety and the public's positive perception of safety are key in ensuring the Council achieves the priorities set out in the Corporate Plan 2020 – 2024 "Making a Difference".

- 10.2 The work of the Community Safety Partnership Board is directly aligned to the “Places” priority within the Corporate Plan – ensuring the County Borough is one of the safest places in Wales, where people from all backgrounds get along with each other and feel safe.
- 10.3 As community safety, and the feeling of safety, is such an important element for communities to thrive in many ways, it is felt that the review and implementation of the recommendations will ensure effective, strategic co-ordination of action to tackle the community safety priorities for Cwm Taf Morgannwg and contribute to all of the seven goals of The Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

11. STRATEGIC OR RELEVANT TO ELECTORAL WARDS (please specify)

- 11.1 This report relates to a strategic issue and is relevant to the whole of RCT.

12. CONCLUSION

- 12.1 Highly significant and specifically relevant legislative and policy changes have been introduced in the 25 years since the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 introduced the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships which have subsequently become Community Safety Partnerships. The consequence of these changes has been the expansion of the number of authorities involved in the Community Safety Partnership agenda and an increase in the duties placed upon these authorities.
- 12.2 As a result of these changes the importance of community safety has been amplified and the complexity of the necessary partnerships, and priorities, has significantly increased. However, the resource available and targeted at community safety has not kept pace with these increasing demands.
- 12.3 The review of Community Safety Partnership arrangements in Cwm Taf Morgannwg is timely and the review team found a strong weight of support for the merger of both Community Safety Partnerships. Several strategic partnerships already operate on a Cwm Taf Morgannwg basis, including the Public Services Board, the Safeguarding Board and the Area Planning Board.
- 12.4 The potential benefits of merging the Community Safety Partnerships includes the pooling of resources. This may be both financial resources and the workforce capacity and capability existing within the three Local Authorities, which will assist the more effective and integrated delivery of community safety functions.
- 12.5 Finally, it’s important that any review of structures must deliver not only a suitable integrated regional structure but one which ensures that arrangements for local accountability are comprehensive and precise. Therefore, the development of a regional strategic partnership should not impact adversely on those agencies successfully operating locally on community safety matters.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

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Relevant Scrutiny Committee:

Community and Childrens Services - Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee

Background Papers

None

Officer to contact

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