

COMMUNITY & ADULT SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

12 JANUARY 2022

Present: County Councillor Jenkins(Chairperson)
County Councillors Carter, Gibson, Philippa Hill-John, Lent,
Lister, Mackie and McGarry

45 : APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllr Ahmed.
Cllr Lister had advised that he would be late joining the meeting due to work commitments.

46 : DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None received.

47 : MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 December 2021 were agreed as a correct record.

48 : PREVENTING SERIOUS VIOLENT CRIME IN CARDIFF

The Chairperson welcomed:

For the Community Safety Partnership panel, Police and Crime Commissioner, Alun Michael and Cllr Lynda Thorne who are Co-chairs of the Community Safety Leadership Board, and Chief Superintendent Wendy Gunney, Co-Chair of the Community Safety Delivery Group,

From South Wales Police, Superintendent Tim Morgan.

From the Violence Prevention Unit, Deputy Director Daniel Jones

And Officers, Sian Sanders Operational Manager for Community Safety, Cohesion & Engagement and Jenny Rogers, Community Safety Manager.

The Chairperson invited Police & Crime Commissioner as Co-chair of the Community Safety Leadership Board and Cllr Thorne, as the other Co-chair to make statements.

Members were provided with a presentation on the local context.

The Chairperson invited Superintendent Tim Morgan to outline his presentation after which Members were asked to make any comments/observations or ask any questions.

The Chairperson opened up a Q&A session to discuss the impact of serious violent crime and welcomed:

- Charlotte Singleton, Victim Focus Manager at Victim Support;
- Bernie Bowen Thomson, CEX at Safer Wales and;

- Simon Borja, Director for Project Development at Safer Wales.

The Chairperson invited witnesses to make opening statements after which Members were asked to make any comments/observations or ask any questions.

Definitions and Impact of Violent Crime

Due to the broad nature of offences classified as violent crime, Members raised concerns that this would undoubtedly result in significant demand and excess pressure for responsible bodies. Which in turn, could impact their ability to effectively realise core responsibilities, and, most notably, hamper outcomes. In addition to the scope of offences classified as violent crime, certain offences in this category, which could be of the more low-level nature, may generate high levels of public interest. As a result, this could again, present subsequent pressure and demand for responsible bodies and potentially lead to a misallocation of resource. In line with this, Members explored how the Partnership manages potentially, low level offences to ensure they do not impact resources and core responsibilities.

Members noted this challenge was recognised by Witnesses, and it is managed through a collective, aligned working arrangement between all responsible bodies. In addition, Members also heard how this aligned partnership working is also supported by the insight offered by the Violence Prevention Unit, whose work helps to ensure the right focus and resource is applied by relevant bodies. Although the partnership working in place to manage this challenge is welcomed, Members did wish to stress the importance of remaining mindful to this challenge to ensure robust, effective outcomes are continually achieved, and responsible bodies resources are utilised effectively. Providing victims with high quality, accessible support is vital, and Members explored if there was a way of ascertaining data around individuals who have been through the criminal justice system but have not sought support. Although Members recognised this may be difficult to measure, Members noted, and welcomed, the comments made at the meeting regarding the approach organisations take to proactively identify and encourage individuals to access services. However, Members believed this was a particularly useful avenue to explore to understand baseline trends and provide initial indication into reasonings why individuals may not come forth for support. As such, Members strongly urged the Violence Prevention Unit to consider this further. In addition, Members were pleased to note organisations who offer support to individuals, proactively seek their satisfaction levels on how their case was dealt with, which is then shared with relevant bodies to inform future work.

Partnership Structure

Regarding the structure of the Partnership, reference was made to the Regional Partnership Board, which can be perceived as complex and difficult for members of the public to understand. In addition, it could also be argued that complexity within such structures inadvertently distributes accountability and responsibility to such an extent that it results in confusion around who's responsible for what. Members noted that partners within the structure feel the current arrangements are effective. However, Members wished to stress the importance in members of the public being able to understand the operations and working of the Partnership, and the need for it to remain accessible and transparent. Members also explored how the work of the Partnership is evaluated and noted evaluation of its work will be used to inform the

upcoming Violence Prevention Strategy. Members stressed the importance that in the interest of transparency, the Partnership's reporting arrangements, and detail of its evaluation process, is clearly set out within the upcoming Violence Prevention Strategy. In addition, Members welcomed the recognition provided at the meeting that to ensure no overlap or duplication occurs, a potential refresh of the Partnership's structure was being considered.

Decision making

With regard to decision making, Members explored how decisions toward tackling violent crime, may not always be informed by data, but may sometimes occur in response to a singular crime which had severe ramifications, particularly on public perception. During the discussion Members were interested to note that when decisions or responses have been made on the back of a particular incident, it has in turn led to an increase in reporting and subsequent data.

Prevention Work

Members found the work of the Partnership's early intervention programmes detailed at the meeting was interesting to note. Members were also assured that the Wales Police School Programme, which engages with over 90% of schools, includes topics such as the carrying and use of weapons in a bid to prevent such activity occurring. However, many of the schemes and initiatives referenced at the meeting, and in the meeting's papers, were not familiar to Members. This clearly indicates a need for the Partnership to strengthen its communication on the services available, and how such services are accessed. Members believe stronger direct communication with both Elected Members and the wider public, must be a key element of the upcoming Violence Prevention Strategy. In addition, communication between Elected Members and the police must also be improved for the benefit of both parties. As such, Members recommend streamlined processes are introduced to ensure regular and direct communication between Elected Members and their local policing inspectors. Along with providing information on serious instances, this communication must also include general updates, planned initiatives and staff changes. During the meeting, Members also explored the potential correlation between victims of violent crime and family breakdowns and, as they have done previously with Welsh Government, Members wished to reiterate the need to ensure that within the Welsh Government's, 'Resilient Communities' body of work, the concept of 'Resilient Families' is strengthened.

Police Operations

Members considered the information provided at the meeting on what can be achieved through police operations was notable, and found it interesting to explore how decisions around police operations are made. Members welcomed that horizon scanning is consistently utilised to inform operations, with potential, forthcoming, or emerging issues also escalated through the Partnership's framework. Further to this, Members noted the decision making around where operations are deployed tends to be intelligence and demand led. Though the achievements of police operations are reassuring, when a police operation, or intensified focus within a particular area disperses, the underlying issues and subsequent ramifications can remain in the community. Although resource constraints are recognised, Members wished to reiterate the importance of responsible bodies not mounting away infrastructure

immediately. As this provides the impression to residents, that a particular issue is no longer a priority, or being addressed. It is crucial that residents understand tackling the cause of an issue remains a priority and this must be clearly reiterated and displayed. Within the discussion it was interesting to note University research has shown “15-minute patrols” can reduce serious violence by 14%, and this is currently being piloted across the city.

Male Victims & Domestic Abuse

Within the meeting’s papers, Members were informed that men are most likely to be victims of violent crime in Wales, and on this basis, Members explored why ‘violence against men’ is not stipulated as a priority area for the Partnership. Within the response, Members noted this work was captured within the Partnership’s subgroups such as the Night-time Economy or Serious Violence and Organised Crime. Although this was noted, Members wished to reiterate the importance that the Partnership works to ensure no disparity occurs between the recognition, support, and services available for male or female victims and you continually demonstrate that services for both sexes are of equal importance. Members were aware that as part of the Cardiff & Vale of Glamorgan Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy 2018-2023, a regional service for male victims was due to be launched by July 2021. However, at the Committee’s October 2021 meeting, Members were informed by the Council’s executive that the launch of this service had unfortunately been delayed. Domestic abuse is a serious crime and Members sought insight from the Community Safety Partnership on why this service has been delayed, along with its expected launch date.

RESOLVED: That the Chairperson writes to the Cabinet Member on behalf of the Committee expressing their comments and observations during the Way Forward.

49 : URGENT ITEMS (IF ANY)

None received.

50 : DATE OF NEXT MEETING - MONDAY 21ST FEB 2022, 1:30PM

The meeting terminated at 7.25 pm