



Gwent Public Services Board Response Analysis Template

1. Theme

Community Cohesion: including Community Safety and Substance Misuse

The Community Cohesion theme arising from the Gwent Wellbeing Assessment includes the following overarching issues that this response analysis needs to consider:

1. Community safety
2. Cohesive and empowered communities
3. Food
4. Digital futures
5. Supportive local economies

2. Outline of the issues

Overall Context

- 2.1. For the communities of Gwent, the legacy of austerity has already challenged community cohesion, safety and empowerment over the past decade and introduced widening economic, health, wellbeing and other inequalities – as evidenced in the [Gwent Well-being Assessment](#). With the Covid-19 pandemic, the cost of living crisis, geo-political issues such as Brexit and the war in Ukraine, and the increasing impacts of climate change, this arguably presents the greatest ‘perfect storm’ of challenges facing the lives, livelihoods, health, safety and wellbeing of the people of Gwent.
- 2.2. In at least the short-to-medium term – or potentially the whole life – of the Wellbeing Plan, the people of Gwent are likely to experience real-terms reductions in income and living standards; inflationary pressures and disruption to supply chains of goods, services and food; and shocks to the general sustainability and resilience of the local economy. If left unaddressed, this will lead to reductions in health and wellbeing through increased deprivation, substance misuse, mental health problems, civil disorder and crime/ASB. Evidence is already showing this will impact the health and wellbeing of already disadvantaged people and communities the most, who will need additional focus and support.
- 2.3. Against this backdrop, the Wellbeing Plan needs to pull together the array of services available to the PSB to target the underlying issues that undermine community cohesion. This includes not only public services, but vitally must

also include leading a collaboration with the voluntary and private sectors, alongside the communities of Gwent, to ensure a whole-system response.

- 2.4. The issues outlined in the Community Cohesion theme are broad, cross-cutting and beyond the scope of single agencies alone to manage, such as local authorities, policing, health, the voluntary and private sectors. As extracted from the Wellbeing Assessment, the issues across this theme impacting on the wellbeing of current and future generations in Gwent can be summarised as follows:

Community Safety

- 2.5. Community safety, crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour affect us and our communities, which is an important issue for us all. It's not just about solving crimes, but also about looking at what can be done to prevent these activities happening altogether. Public services across Gwent are already working together through community hubs and local partnerships to support victims and those affected by crime and anti-social behaviour, understand the root causes and find solutions to these issues.
- 2.6. Feeling part of, and safe in, your community is vital to everyone's well-being. While councils, health services, the police and others, can support communities, it is the people in them that make them welcoming, diverse and thriving places to live.
- 2.7. Reducing the impact of crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB) on local businesses will help the economy to thrive and will improve how people feel about where they live. Tackling crimes such as fly-tipping will make our green spaces safer for people to meet up and enjoy. Improving road safety will support businesses who rely on the local infrastructure to move raw materials, goods and deliver services as well as reducing the burden on our emergency services. Safe, active travel routes, particularly those which provide commuting potential, will reduce the cost of travel and allow more people to realise the health benefits of being active.
- 2.8. Issues include:
- Link between deprivation and community safety.
 - Increase in criminal damage and arson (year on year prior to pandemic).
 - Increase in hate crimes.
 - Child exploitation occurrences.
 - Rise in cyber enabled crime.
 - Under-reporting of hate crimes or incidents, domestic abuse, sexual violence, anti-social behaviour, low level personal thefts, shoplifting and criminal damage.
 - Violence against women, gender-based violence, domestic abuse and sexual violence.

Cohesive and empowered communities

- 2.9. We want people in Gwent to live in inclusive communities where they feel safe and able to be involved and influence the things that affect them. Getting involved in cultural and recreational activities can be a good way of getting to know people. Taking part in activities that improve the local area, such as managing a communal green space, litter picking, organising or participating in local events can also help bring people and communities together.
- 2.10. Community energy projects can provide useful income that can be invested back into the places people live, making them more efficient and nicer places to be, as well as increasing the production of clean energy. The Covid-19 pandemic has seen our communities coming together to support the most vulnerable in innovative and resourceful ways.
- 2.11. Community activity and volunteering can give people a sense of accomplishment and pride, and having the opportunity to meet others, learn new things and improve the local environment can help people to combat loneliness and isolation. Covid19 has shown how important, positive and resilient our communities can be, with informal networks being set up virtually overnight to support everyone, especially the most vulnerable. It has also shown how important digital inclusivity is, and will continue to be, for people to connect with each other and access many of the services they need. Being able to grow or source food locally and affordably can help to bring people of all ages and cultures together as well helping them connect with nature and keep healthy.
- 2.12. Issues include:
- Enabling and supporting volunteering
 - Tackling loneliness and isolation.
 - Supporting diverse groups of people to get on well together.
 - Increasing the number of Welsh speakers.
 - Addressing the barriers that prevent people participating in arts, culture and heritage.
 - Addressing barriers that prevent people participating in sport.
 - Securing and developing the play workforce, ensuring that play is integrated in all relevant policy and implementation and ensuring that accessible and affordable transport options are in place to support equal access to play facilities.
 - Affordability and equitable access to cultural activities.
 - Equitable access to quality greenspace.
 - Combating reducing voter turnout / involvement in democratic processes.
 - Making sure that people feel safe in their communities.

Food

- 2.13. Child hunger, rising diet-related illness, an explosion of demand for food banks and the uncertainty faced by the thousands of people employed in the catering

and hospitality industry have an impact on social and economic well-being, as well as the environmental well-being impact assessed in Gwent.

- 2.14. The Food Foundations report “The Impact of Covid-19 on Household Food Security” is based on data collected from seven rounds of nationally representative UK-wide surveys to monitor levels of food insecurity impacted by Covid-19 undertaken between March 2020 and January 2021. Key findings from the report state that despite vital emergency measures in place, more people are food insecure now than before the pandemic.
- 2.15. Community and voluntary sector groups helped millions of vulnerable people but evidence shows too many food insecure households have struggled to access support. Reliance on overstretched food banks and food aid charities is not a sustainable safety net for individuals and families who can't afford a decent diet. Households with children have consistently found it harder to put food on the table, particularly lone parents, large families, and low-income families. Covid-19 has deepened the financial hardship faced by low income households and has also created a newly vulnerable group who were financially stable pre-Covid.
- 2.16. Issues include:
- Food security.
 - Food supply chains, local growth.
 - Access to good quality, healthy food.
 - Affordability of food.

Digital futures

- 2.17. Being digitally excluded can have a significant impact on people's social well-being as well, with digital communication services making it easier for people who use the internet to participate in their hobbies and interests and stay connected with family and friends online. For those who don't or can't use the internet, digital exclusion can therefore increase the likelihood of loneliness and isolation as well as increasingly excluding access to some essential services. As the Wellbeing Assessment demonstrates, there is still some work to do across Gwent to get all areas above 90% for household access and internet use.
- 2.18. Embracing digital innovation can lead to greater economic opportunities and a more prosperous and resilient society. Equipping people with the digital skills they need and designing services around the user can also improve social cohesion, create a healthier and more equal society with well-connected communities and contribute to a thriving Welsh language. The Welsh Government's Digital Strategy Wales aims to deliver joined-up digital services through collaboration, integration, and good engagement to support the design of user-facing services that provide an efficient and consistent experience for citizens of all ages.
- 2.19. Issues include:

- Ensuring digital inclusion and access to latest technology.
- Non-digital provision.
- Ensuring businesses and citizens are cyber secure.

Supportive local economies

- 2.20. Enabling everyone to gain the skills and education to secure valuable, decent work for the future is important to a person's sense of well-being, allowing them to contribute to their community and provide for themselves and their loved ones.
- 2.21. Gwent has a diverse economy; from high tech manufacturers exporting products around the world to businesses providing the key every-day services that our communities rely on, such as food and care provision. This mixture should allow Gwent to take advantage of the emerging sectors that will play an increasingly important part of the low carbon and climate resilient economy of the future.
- 2.22. Actively contributing to the local economy and improving skills, including those that will be needed in the future, can positively impact on health and well-being. We know that there are people in our communities that are experiencing poverty, including in-work poverty, which has the potential to impact on just about every aspect of their lives and well-being. Having a range of decent work within our communities also helps to make them more cohesive places to live, work and study.
- 2.23. Issues include:
- Developing the foundational economy i.e. products and services we use in our day-to-day lives locally e.g. food, energy, social care etc.
 - Maximising long-term benefits from the Shared Renewal Fund.
 - Maximising opportunities for community wealth building.
 - Maximising the local economic benefit from strategic developments.
 - Maximising the long-term benefits from Cardiff City Regional Deal.
 - Resilience of energy supply - peak energy, market volatility etc.
 - Resilience to shocks in global markets.
 - Resilience of supply chains.
 - Supporting town centres.
 - Long term impact of exiting the European Union e.g. agricultural payments, access to labour, trading restrictions, loss of grant aid.
 - Maximising economic opportunities related to culture, heritage and Welsh language.

3. Well-being objectives to be worked towards under this priority

- 3.1. The analysis from this theme indicates that Gwent PSB should use its collective power and influence to tackle the underlying causes of community cohesion

issues, by focusing on the health of the local economy and taking an early intervention and prevention approach to community safety:

Provide the energy and leadership between the public, private and 3rd sectors, with the people of Gwent, to develop healthy, safe and vibrant places to live, work and visit.

3.2. Examples of what this means in practice includes the following, which will be developed as part of the Wellbeing Plan:

- Developing new and enhancing existing Gwent-wide community problem solving arrangements, with enhanced information sharing and future-thinking predictive analytics
- Ensuring social value and 'by-and-for' principles are built into the goods and services public bodies buy
- Undertake and embed the findings from a review into community safety arrangements
- Maximise and coordinate investment in communities through the Cardiff City Region and Shared Renewal funds and explore other funding and investment opportunities
- Work together to develop joint commissioning arrangements between agencies including the third sector, for example to tackle VAWDASV, substance misuse, early intervention and prevention programmes
- Focus area based investment on improving areas of deprivation (for example housing, green spaces, cultural capital etc) and those communities in most need
- Develop a clear, consistent youth and diversionary services offer across Gwent
- Focus on educational attainment and opportunities for skills, training and re-training opportunities for working age people, particularly the young people of Gwent and the 'forgotten' communities
- Building digital futures, ensuring people and businesses are adopting safe and effective digital technologies
- Encourage, subsidise and promote local food production, seasonal produce and embed social value in supply chains
- Increase affordable housing stock and area strategic plans to focus on areas of highest need rather than highest price
- Invest in improved and interconnected transport infrastructure to counteract isolation, loneliness and connect people and communities

4. What contribution can working towards these objectives achieve for well-being in Gwent?

4.1. The proposed draft well-being objectives under this theme have been designed to reduce inequalities and deliver better well-being outcomes for the people and communities in Gwent. Primarily this approach is focused on tackling the underlying issues impacting on community cohesion and safety, rather than focusing on addressing the visible symptoms, which already have significant investment from agencies to manage.

- 4.2. Due to the wide-ranging nature of the Community Cohesion theme, inevitably this lends itself to a wide-range, strategic and long term response. The objectives identified here offer scope and opportunity for collaborative, innovative and essential action under this theme. However, each of the example opportunities mentioned above will need more specific and targeted interventions to underpin them within the 5 year life of the Wellbeing Plan.
- 4.3. However, it is important that the actions, timescales and resources identified in the Plan to deliver against the well-being objectives are agile and adaptive (as experienced by the impact of the pandemic on daily life since 2020), and ultimately achievable within a potentially variable set of circumstances over the next five years, both foreseen and unforeseen. The current cost of living crisis will be an example of this, which is yet to fully impact the economy and generate a political response from both UK and Welsh Governments. However, we anticipate that this will have a significant impact on the people and communities of Gwent in the next 5 years, which informs the focus of the recommendation above.

5. Where are we now?

- 5.1. The current evidence base for this theme can be found in the [Gwent Well-being Assessment](#). The Assessment provides us with a picture of well-being in Gwent as it relates to the issues listed above. Through conducting this response analysis, we have identified factors for consideration in relation to this theme which should inform the actions, timescales and resources identified in the Gwent Well-being Plan.
- 5.2. The information contained in this section is by no means exhaustive and should be considered as the starting point to a series of much wider, more robust opportunities for mapping and planning conversations.
- 5.3. There is already a significant amount of work already taking place and/or planned across this theme. In general, it is quite difficult to identify any issue that doesn't have at least some work trying to tackle it, if not significant amounts of work. As examples, each local authority has its social housing strategy and delivery plans, the VAWDASV Commissioning Board has oversight of those arrangements, and the area planning board is trying to tackle substance misuse. Further examples include:
- Community Safety Review being undertaken on behalf of the PSB
 - National (UK) Community Safety review, may have implications for the partnership arrangements in Wales too
 - Local Authority strategic housing reviews
 - Multiple projects are underway through the UK Renewal Fund and Cardiff Capital Region fund
- 5.4. Furthermore, a range of legislative and policy drivers (including those known/expected in the next five years) will impact this theme. They are too numerous to mention, but examples include:
- UK Levelling Up agenda

- UK Drugs Strategy
 - Victim's Bill
 - Welsh Government VAWDASV Strategy
- 5.5. The third sector, encompassing both large and small charitable or community based organisations is already supporting people in communities across the whole region with a wide range of social, cultural sporting and environmental activities. There is the opportunity through timely communication and collaboration to harness this experience and expertise to support the priorities of the Well-Being Plan. We already have the evidence of community initiatives and volunteering throughout the pandemic and it is important that this good will is not lost. Mapping of provision will need to include the third sector.
- 5.6. There is the potential to develop a Gwent-wide action group of leading third sector organisations to support the priorities of the PSB supported by the development of the Gwent Third Sector Partnership Agreement
- 5.7. Opportunities and resource allocation that could support delivery (including those known/expected in the next five years)?
- Community spaces and venues could be utilised far more for direct service delivery and community support, therefore improving the sustainability of organisations hit hard by rising costs and providing support close to where people live
 - Involvement of people in communities and third sector organisations in problem solving at the earliest stage using co-production principles and utilising participatory budgeting to focus on identified priorities
 - Working with third sector organisations opens up the possibility of funding through grants to the sector but the longer term sustainability of those organisations must be considered when looking at resources
 - Agencies from the PSB would need to determine what additional, or re-purposed, resource allocation could be identified to deliver this recommendation once clear deliverables and outcomes are identified.
- 6. What could be done (steps)?**
- 6.1. Potential options and opportunities for delivering the recommendation in this theme are listed in 3.2 and will be developed further once the Gwent PSB agrees the general approach to this theme.
- 6.2. Targeted engagement with third sector and community organisations will be needed to identify those activities that support the priorities that are already taking place, opportunities to expand that work and identify gaps.
- 6.3. We also need to identify and deal with any barriers to collaborative working between the third sector and PSB partners, and more generally break down barriers between agencies to deliver, for example, joint commissioning arrangements, information sharing and problem solving arrangements.
- 7. How have you engaged with stakeholders?**

7.1. Third sector engagement has taken place with a small number of leading organisations and officers across Gwent including GAVO and TVA but further engagement with the wider third sector will be required as the plan is developed

7.2. All of the theme leads have been consulting through their local networks, GSWAG and elsewhere. However, due to the strict timescales, it has not been possible to consult as far and wide as desirable. Given there is more work needed to refine the recommendations further, more consultation will be undertaken in those next steps.

8. How does this area link with the other response areas?

8.1. Each well-being theme under which a response analysis has been undertaken is dependent on factors which relate to the other two. To look at any one of Environment, Health Inequalities or Community Cohesion in isolation results in a limited picture of well-being, one that is not considered 'in the round'. It is essential that such cross-cutting topics are looked at and planned for in an integrated, holistic way.

8.2. The Health Inequalities theme recommends Gwent becomes a 'Marmot' region – a framework for action to reduce health inequalities. The proposal is to develop a Gwent-wide plan and delivery response to the 8 principles underpinning the Marmot framework. The 8 principles are:

- Give every child the best start in life
- Enable all children, young people and adults to maximise their capabilities and have control over their lives
- Create fair employment and good work for all
- Ensure a healthy standard of living for all
- Create and develop healthy and sustainable places and communities
- Strengthen the role and impact of ill-health prevention
- Respond to climate change
- Address structural racism

8.3. There is clear crossover with of the recommendations within the Health Inequalities and Community Cohesion response analyses. Like this response analysis, the general principle of tackling the underlying factors impacting wellbeing, rather than the resulting symptoms, dovetail very neatly into the 8 principles above.

8.4. The recommendations arising from the Environment theme are as follows:

- Reducing the environmental impact of production and consumption so that progress is made towards establishing and sustaining a regenerative local economy which contributes to national and global sustainability
- Declaring a nature emergency in Gwent and using this to drive the enhancement of Gwent's natural areas and address the root causes of biodiversity loss

- In response to the climate emergency, focusing on the protection of communities from environmental risks associated with climate change

8.5. Again, these are heavily interlinked with Community Cohesion, particularly in relation to improving the health and resilience of the local economy, food production and security, and improving the 'Places' across Gwent that the communities live and work.

8.6. Through these response analyses, it will be important to identify where the cross-cutting recommendations and the actions underpinning them need to link closely together to reduce duplication of effort and ensure a whole-system approach is taken when developing the wellbeing plan.

9. Conclusions and recommendations

9.1. **The recommendation is noted above in section 3. The fundamental principle is to work across sectors on the health of the local economy and taking a more early intervention and prevention approach to community cohesion and safety issues. This is particularly pertinent given the cost of living crisis, covid recovery and other factors that are likely to be the dominant factors impacting this theme in the next 5 years.**

9.2. **However, it must be noted that the very nature of this theme, incorporating a large volume of fairly distinct issues, means that the recommendation is broad and visionary in its approach. Furthermore, there is clear crossover with the other theme areas. Therefore more work will be needed to focus the deliverables and outcomes from these recommendations, to be reflected in the Wellbeing Plan, and ensure they are joined up with the Health Inequalities and Environment themes.**

10. Links to other potential PSB priority areas

10.1. The review into community safety has already been commissioned by the PSB, which fits directly into this recommendation.

11. References

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Please now complete the table on the next page outlining what initial steps could be taken to achieve each potential objective.

If the PSB chose this as a well-being objective, what key steps should be undertaken in the first 12 months, and by whom? (We acknowledge that the objective is a long-term issue, but identifying some initial steps will help the PSB to understand what could be done)

Objective 1: Steps	Partners involved	Lead organisation	Target Date	Comment

If the PSB chose this as a well-being objective, what key steps should be undertaken in the first 12 months, and by whom? (We acknowledge that the objective is a long-term issue, but identifying some initial steps will help the PSB to understand what could be done)

Objective 2: Steps	Partners involved	Lead organisation	Target Date	Comment

If the PSB chose this as a well-being objective, what key steps should be undertaken in the first 12 months, and by whom? (We acknowledge that the objective is a long-term issue, but identifying some initial steps will help the PSB to understand what could be done)

Objective 3 (if needed): Steps	Partners involved	Lead organisation	Target Date	Comment

END