**Gwent Strategic Safer Communities Partnership Board**

**Terms of Reference**

**Purpose**

The purpose of the Board is to provide strategic oversight and support to the various boards and partnerships in Gwent that are focused on protecting communities, preventing crime, pursuing and reforming offenders, and protecting and supporting victims and the vulnerable.

*(For ease, these boards and partnerships will be known as ‘Strategic Safer Communities Partnerships’ or SSCPs, which are listed below)*

This Board will ensure that:

* SSCP arrangements are compliant with relevant UK and Welsh Government legislation and regional priorities, and
* the collective work of the SSCPs is delivered in the most effective, efficient and joined-up way possible to maximise outcomes for communities.

The Board will also act on behalf of, and provide assurance to, the Gwent Public Service Board in delivering the Gwent Wellbeing Plan goal: *everyone lives in a place they feel safe*.

By working better, together, within and across a range of partnerships, this will help achieve better outcomes for the people and communities in Gwent.

**Key Roles and Responsibilities**

The Board will be responsible for:

* Ensuring SSCPs comply with their relevant statutory duties and responsibilities stated in either UK and Welsh Government legislation, and intervening to remove barriers when this is not the case
* Ensuring effective partnership working within and across SSCPs by:
  + de-conflicting competing priorities and demands
  + securing opportunities to reduce duplication of effort
  + minimising the likelihood of silo working, and
  + enabling effective collaboration
* Providing an escalation route for SSCPs to resolve issues that either cut across multiple partnerships or that a single SSCP is unable to resolve independently
* Providing cross-SSCP strategic prioritisation and direction, where required, in order to remove barriers and close any gaps or challenges in resources
* Agreeing opportunities for the sharing of resources and applications for joint funding, which either sit outside of the responsibility of a single SSCP or cut across multiple SSCPs
* Agreeing the most effective and efficient approach to managing new UK or Welsh Government policy initiatives that cross-over the remit of multiple SSCPs
* Tasking specific work programmes related to UKG, WG and regional priorities, either into an SSCP, lead agency or through a relevant task and finish group (or new partnership structure where this is agreed to be the best approach)
* Seeking to align activity with other non-SSCP partnerships across Gwent in order to provide a joined-up approach to the efficient use of resources and effective delivery of priorities whilst minimising the likelihood of duplication

*The Board is* ***not*** *responsible for discharging the relevant statutory requirements and responsibilities placed on individual agencies and partnerships, nor delivering their relevant commitments and assigning resources that an SSCP is responsible for managing.*

**Relevant Strategic Safer Communities Partnerships**

The Boards and Partnerships that will be connected into this Board are:

* Blaenau-Gwent Community Safety Partnership
* Caerphilly Community Safety Partnership
* Gwent Area Planning Board
* Gwent CONTEST Board
* Gwent Safeguarding Board
* Gwent Serious Organised Crime Partnership Group
* Gwent Serious Violence Duty Working Group
* Gwent Strategic Criminal Justice Board
* Gwent Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) Board
* Monmouthshire Community Safety Partnership
* Newport Community Safety Partnership
* Torfaen Community Safety Partnership

This list will be subject to review.

**Strategic Priorities**

The strategic priorities of the Board will be agreed annually, and the relevant work plan will be published. The priorities will identify those specific issues the Board will seek to resolve and relevant long term objectives it seeks to address.

**Board Approach**

This Board has no direct statutory remit over the SSCPs connected to it other than through the attending members. As such, in the spirit of strong collaboration and partnership working, it’s important to emphasise the expectations and approaches that will be adhered to by the Board and its members.

Therefore the Board will:

* Act as a strategic decision making and direction body, which is not expected to carry an ongoing workload beyond specific task and finish activity and ***will not create additional workload for relevant SSCPs unless absolutely necessary and agreed with them***
* Provide overall oversight of SSCPs on behalf of the Public Services Board and report to the PSB for assurance purposes
* Provide SSCPs with the requirements needed to report into the Board and escalate issues
* Approach decision making, funding and resource allocation in the spirit of strong collaboration and partnership working
* Recognise that each SSCP has its own separate governance pressures, work programmes, resource commitments and other requirements from Welsh and/or UK priorities
* Not interfere or intervene with any SSCP activity unless either necessary or when requested by members - with a philosophy of adding value to existing partnership arrangements
* Expect open and constructive engagement and communication from all members
* Expect all partners and partnerships to have responsibility to hold each other to account in a constructive manner

**Membership**

Engaging partners at the appropriate level is crucial to discharge the responsibilities of the Board effectively. Therefore, as a minimum, the Chairs of relevant SSCPs are required to attend, along with other key strategic stakeholders at a minimum of Director level within organisations.

This level of seniority is required to ensure an appropriate level of accountability exists for the Board, that actions can be delivered, resource potential unlocked, strategic insights provided, and direction taken into partner organisations and SSCPs.

The list of partners required to attend are:

* Gwent Police and Crime Commissioner
* Assistant Chief Constable, Gwent Police
* Executive Director of Public Health, ABUHB
* Five Local Authority Director Level Representatives (e.g. Dir of Education and/or Social Services)
* Assistant Chief Fire Officer, South Wales Fire and Rescue Service
* Head of HMPPS Probation Delivery Unit for Gwent
* Chief Executive of Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations
* Chairs of:
  + Five Community Safety Partnerships
  + Gwent Area Planning Board
  + Gwent CONTEST Board
  + Gwent Safeguarding Board
  + Gwent Serious Organised Crime Partnership Group
  + Gwent Strategic Criminal Justice Board
  + Gwent VAWDASV Board

Where a member is also the Chair of another SSCP and/or other listed member, they can represent multiple interests without needing additional attendees.

Attendance can only be delegated to a deputy in exceptional circumstances and when agreed by the Chair. Should a deputy be in attendance, they must come with the delegated decision-making authority of the member they are representing.

Invites may be extended to other interested parties, for example:

* Welsh Government Ministers or officials
* UK Government Ministers or officials
* Chair and/or Head of the Wales Safer Communities Board and Network
* Director of the Wales Violence Prevention Unit
* Third sector representatives
* Guest speakers, project and programme delivery leads

These invites will be extended for specific purposes and will be ad hoc.

**Quorum**

To be quorate for the meeting to proceed will require the Chair or Vice Chair, plus a minimum of five other members. To be quorate for decision making purposes, the Chair/s of the relevant partnership/s most impacted must also be in attendance.

**Chair**

The Chair of the Board will be the Police and Crime Commissioner, due to their convening responsibilities under the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 (and others).

The Vice Chair of the Board will rotate annually and be selected by majority vote from members.

The Chair and Vice Chair are expected to possess relevant experience in the priority areas and maintain impartiality. In exceptional circumstances, members may request a change in leadership, subject to a majority vote to elect a new Chair.

**Administration**

* Board administration will be provided by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner
* The board will meet on a quarterly basis, scheduled and booked in advance with all members
* The agenda, supporting documents and reports will be circulated to all members seven days prior to the meeting taking place
* Items under AOB will be allowed at the discretion of the Chair
* Extraordinary meetings may be convened if necessary
* Declarations of interest must be disclosed prior to each meeting
* Meetings will not be held publicly, but minutes will be kept on the OPCC website for 6 years

**Review**

The Terms of Reference will be reviewed on an annual basis.

**Annex A – Background**

**UK Government legislation and policy:**

The **Crime and Disorder Act 1998**, along with its subsequent amendments, introduced the idea of a statutory partnership working to tackle local community safety issues. This initiative led to the creation of the local **Community Safety Partnership (CSP)**, which comprises the five 'responsible authorities' that provide empowered and effective leadership to address:

* Crime and disorder
* Anti-social behaviour and behaviour affecting the local environment
* Misuse of drugs, alcohol, and other substances
* Re-offending
* Serious violence and instances of serious violence
* Conduct domestic homicide reviews

The **UK Counter-Terrorism Strategy known as CONTEST** was introduced in 2003.  The CONTEST strategy has four key elements:

* Pursue – to stop terrorist attacks
* Prevent – to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting violent extremism
* Protect – to strengthen our protection against terrorist attack
* Prepare – where an attack cannot be stopped, to mitigate its impact

All relevant statutory and voluntary organisations work together locally through the **Gwent CONTEST Board**, with duties also placed on CSPs in relation to Prevent.  The board oversees the local implementation of CONTEST, which links to the relevant community safety partnerships to help them carry out their duty to prevent terrorism.

The **Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011** introduced **Police and Crime Commissioners**, who’s remit extended into community safety, including commissioning services to prevent and reduce crime, convening partners and partnerships, engaging with and at times monitoring and scrutinising various aspects of community safety partnerships. In England this included the power to establish a CSP at police force area level.

The Act also set out a duty on PCCs and criminal justice agencies to work together to provide an efficient and effective criminal justice system via existing, informal, **Local Criminal Justice Board (LCJB)** arrangements. The PCC is the chair of the LCJB in Gwent and legislation is currently being developed to put LCJBs on a statutory footing, with PCCs as chair.

The **Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022** created a new **Serious Violence Duty** placed on the core community safety partners (plus some others) to work together to prevent and reduce serious violence. It also placed a requirement on CSPs to include serious violence as a strategic priority and for PCCs to convene partners and oversee arrangements and implementation of the various requirements. At present, a **Gwent Serious Violence Duty Partnership Working Group** works on behalf of CSPs to manage the bulk of the requirements under the Duty.

**Welsh Government legislation and policy:**

In 2010, the **Substance Misuse Strategy ‘Working Together to Reduce Harm’** established **Area Planning Boards (APBs)** as part of the new arrangements to deliver the Strategy. The APBs are intended to provide a regional framework to strengthen partnership working and strategic leadership in the delivery of the substance misuse strategy, and enhance and improve the key functions of planning, commissioning and performance management.

The **Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014** provides the legislative framework for care and support in Wales. The Act aims to improve the well-being of people who need care and support, and carers who need support, and for transforming the way in which services are commissioned and delivered. The Act requires local authorities and local health boards to establish **Regional Partnership Boards (RPBs)** to manage and develop services to secure strategic planning and partnership working and to ensure effective services, care and support are in place to best meet the needs of their respective population.

The Act also focused on Safeguarding arrangements, placing duties on relevant devolved partners to ensure arrangements are in place for ‘children at risk’ and ‘adults at risk’, which includes abuse and neglect. The Act places duties on six **Regional Safeguarding Boards** to be responsible for making sure safeguarding is at the core of all services provided across the region.

The **Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015** placed a duty on Welsh Government, local authorities and local health boards to improve arrangements for the prevention of gender-based violence, domestic abuse and sexual violence; arrangements for the protection of victims of gender-based violence, domestic abuse and sexual violence; and support for people affected by gender-based violence, domestic abuse and sexual violence. The Act created a new framework for delivery including the **Gwent VAWDASV Board** and lead advisor.

The **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015** aims to improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. The Act puts in place seven well-being goals. Each public body listed in the Act must work to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. To do this they must set and publish well-being objectives. The Act also requires public bodies to act in accordance with ‘the sustainable development principle’. This means that public bodies must act in a manner which seeks to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The Act also established **Public Services Boards (PSBs)** for each local authority area in Wales and imposes a duty on PSBs to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of its area by contributing to the achievement of the well-being goals.

**Position in Gwent**

**In Gwent, to manage the complexity of both UK and Welsh legislation there now exists:**

* A regional Public Service Board, established in 2022. Each local authority area retains a ‘Local Delivery Group’ since the PSB was regionalised and the regional PSB is supported by an officer level Gwent Strategic Wellbeing Action Group (GSWAG).
* A Regional Partnership Board, which includes statutory bodies set out in the Act, but does not include invited devolved partners like the Police or PCC.
* The Area Planning Board (with subgroups), bringing all the relevant statutory partners (Wales) plus non-devolved agencies including Police, PCC and Probation Service
* The VAWDASV Board (with subgroups), which includes relevant Welsh statutory partners and includes Gwent Police, PCC and Probation Service.
* The Safeguarding Board with all statutory partners (UK and Wales), which acts as the Gwent-wide Adult Safeguarding Board and South East Wales Safeguarding Children Board. The Safeguarding Board also has a number of subgroups and each local authority area has a Local Safeguarding Network
* Five Community Safety Partnerships, which include all of the relevant statutory partners plus invited attendees such as the PCC and the third sector – each CSP has a variety of subgroups based on local need
* The Gwent Strategic Criminal Justice Board, chaired by the PCC and bringing together relevant criminal justice agencies, plus connecting to local authorities and devolved partners
* The temporary Gwent Serious Violence Duty Partnership Working Group works on behalf of CSPs and the PCC to manage the bulk of the requirements under the Duty.
* The Gwent Contest Board bringing statutory partners together as described above
* A new Gwent Serious Organised Crime Partnership, that brings together community safety partners to help tackle organised crime in local communities.

To a greater or lesser extent, all of these partnerships are seeking to improve the health and safety of the people of Gwent. As part of their duties, each of these partnerships are required at various times to: undertake problem profiles, needs assessments and analysis of local populations and issues; develop strategies to tackle the issues identified; improve the core business and operational functions of members; fund and commission services and interventions in line with those strategies; and monitor these arrangements through various boards and meetings. There is considerable cross-over and duplication between all of these partnerships, priorities, workloads and the requirements placed on organisations to work within them.

As part of a review commissioned by the Gwent Public Service Board when it was established, it was agreed to establish a new mechanism to support these partnerships to undertake their statutory functions. The aims of this new mechanism are to address concerns about the need for a more coordinated approach to some of these issues they face, reduce duplication of effort by ensuring links between different partnerships are effective and proportionate, and provide an escalation route for issues that individual partnerships cannot resolve in isolation.