



Community Safety Technical Briefing for Public Accounts Committee Members

The following questions were received in advance of an update meeting to Committee members of 12 November 2018, with proposed answers provided.

1. What have been the major improvements in managing and delivering Community Safety in Wales since the Auditor General for Wales reported in 2016?

- Firstly, it should be iterated that community safety is an area which continues to pose significant challenges. The complexity of delivering devolved functions against non devolved competencies is something which impacts across all levels, politically and at an official level.
- It is therefore critical that a holistic approach to the criminal justice system is delivered here in Wales, where Governments can work together for the benefit of making our communities safer and we would like to move away from the current structures and adopt one that is fit for purpose. It is therefore crucial that the Welsh Government and the UK Government work together to explore how a different justice system would operate in Wales and we have begun this discussion with the Ministry of Justice.
- The Welsh Government and Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service Wales have jointly developed **A Framework to support positive change for those at risk of offending in Wales**. The purpose of the **Framework** is to improve services for those at risk of entering or those already in the criminal justice system. The Framework will also promote continued collaboration in order to further reduce the number of offenders entering the criminal justice system, support offenders not to re-offend and to keep communities safe.
- The Safer Communities Programme Board has identified Serious & Organised Crime (SOC) and associated 'county lines' activity and serious violence as the most pressing priority for all partners and areas within Wales and agreed this will be the immediate focus in developing and implementing the Safer Communities Programme in close partnership with the PHW led Police Transformation Fund Early Action Together (EAT) programme.

2. Given the time lag between problems being identified and the development of the joint action plan, when do you anticipate citizens in Wales will see a tangible improvement in community safety services?

- We have already taken tangible steps - multiple work threads have been established under the Safer Communities Programme and are ongoing. Some of these areas, which will have a significant impact for citizens in Wales are:
 - Embedded a "public health" approach at the heart of our programme, in keeping with the Public Health Wales partnership agreement with policing and criminal justice agencies across Wales, ensuring the recognition of ACEs and trauma-informed practice within community safety partnership working;
 - Collaboration between Welsh Government and HMPPS/YJB in the development of "distinct delivery justice blueprints" for young people and women who offend;

- Ongoing work to better align specific aspects of community safety working in WG including; substance misuse, VAWDASV, community cohesion and youth justice, safeguarding, housing and health;
- A workstream has been established to overcome the various identified barriers and issues to partnership data sharing, data development and analysis;
- Establishing a more integrated, collaborative approach to better understanding the strengths and deficiencies of agencies involved in “reducing reoffending” by looking at how they can work together to improve the “whole system” rather than individual components;
- Working with local authorities, police forces and SOC groups (to name but three) to refresh community safety. For example, working with Newport PSB and Gwent PCC to address the threat of county lines activity that has established itself in Pill, Ringland and Always. Local problem profiles for each of the 22 local authorities will be developed.

3. When can we expect to see the specific guidance for community safety in place? What do you think are the major challenges in developing this policy and how will you ensure it aligns with priorities of the Home Office?

- The challenges recognise the significant differences and divergences in the community safety landscape resulting from devolution, and the delivery of non devolved services within a devolved landscape.
- This is particularly prominent given the reliance upon devolved services to achieve non devolved outcomes. Over recent months, this has been particularly evident in the development and launch of a number of UK policies which have a direct impact upon devolved functions, and we have been working hard with UK Government departments to ensure they are relevant and appropriate to Wales. These include the Home Office Serious Violence Strategy and Serious Organised Crime Strategy and the Ministry of Justice Victims Strategy and Female Offending Strategy.
- So the task is not so much about ensuring this work aligns with the priorities of the Home Office, but how we can ensure that the Home Office strategies take account of Wales specific legislative requirements such as the Well-being of Future Generations Act, the Violence against women, domestic abuse and Sexual Violence Act.
- We will be engaging with community safety partners from early 2019, including the policing forces, local authorities and CSPs to identify their requirements for bespoke guidance that meets the needs of Wales, and we expect to have developed and implemented online guidance material by summer 2020.
- The development of the guidance will be achieved in parallel to work to develop an online training resource and database and a Wales wide network of community safety expertise. We make no apologies for taking the time (until 2020) to ensure we get this work right and it is fit for purpose, recognising that material is soon out of date and needs continuous refreshing.

4. How do you intend to demonstrate your performance to citizens, so they are able to judge whether community safety services are improving or not?

- Our work will be demonstrated through the reinvigoration of community safety working embedded in local authorities in collaboration with other key community safety partners to ensure a fully joined up multi-agency service that delivers solutions such as MASH services and solutions to problems locally and regionally such as outlined earlier regarding county lines activity in the Newport area.
- We will ensure there is local partnership involvement in order to provide support around the 'how' they do community safety - which includes citizen involvement and participation. The eventual Welsh guidance will provide more information and effective practice case studies.
- It should also be for local partnerships and partners [not WG] to evidence better performance to citizens as each area is different and will have differing local priorities. We can provide support, guidance and a more helpful strategic framework based on outcomes rather than inputs/outputs (bean counting).

5. What are the major risks facing public bodies in Wales to improving community safety services and how are these being managed and mitigated by the Welsh Government and its partners?

- The complexity and number of groups and organisations at regional and local level pose a significant challenge. The WG, along with its key partners including the WLGA and policing in Wales, are mapping out the different organisations that deliver through the lens of community safety and will be working with them to identify how these groups can better align or co-ordinate activity to ensure resources are used in the most appropriate manner, given that funding constraints and competing budget priorities continue to be an ongoing and significant risk.
- Data – at the moment a multitude of agencies are collecting data but we are not convinced it is the right data or that they are using it in the right way. And agencies are often not sharing it on a multi-agency basis. We have established a workstream that will look further into these issues with the aim of establishing an accord regarding data collection and sharing.
- Resources, in terms of money and frontline staffing, continues to be a major issue. Whilst there are specific pots of grant funding from the Home Office and the like, often this is short term and not long sighted/focused on long term outcomes or solutions. We will work with organisations that have bid for, or intend to bid for funding, include a sustainability element for when the programme funding ends and how they can get best use out of those resources.
- With the continued squeeze on WG budgets, we will also work with these and other organisations to look at how they can deliver services in a smarter or different way. The engagement at local authority level to develop 22 problem profiles will go a long way to achieving this.
- We are still largely unsighted of the risks that BREXIT may pose, as we get ever closer to 29 March 2019.

6. How are you planning to address devolution of policing and justice?

- It is critical that a holistic approach to the criminal justice system is delivered here in Wales, where Governments can work together for the benefit of making our communities safer. We want to move away from the current structures and adopt one that is fit for purpose. It is therefore crucial that the Welsh Government and the UK Government work together to explore how a different justice system would operate in Wales and we have begun this discussion with the Ministry of Justice.
- We want to see coherence, clarity and stability in our system of policing and justice governance and accountability that is currently lacking as a result of the current poor settlement and the ‘jagged edge’ between Welsh and UK Government responsibilities. Only then can we achieve better outcomes for victims, offenders and communities in Wales.
- The Cabinet Secretary for Local Government and Public Services will later this week give evidence to the Justice Commission where he is likely to say that we want to see a different approach to justice policy in Wales; a criminal justice system that is rooted in locality, in family, in rehabilitation, in support, in community. We need to gain a better understanding of why people end up in the criminal justice system and what preventative measures we can take to stop them taking this path.
- We see a system predicated on the basis of early intervention and prevention; considering how we can further divert people away from crime in the first place, but where we do have to work with offenders, that we do so in a holistic and rehabilitative way ensuring that all of us who have involvement in crime and justice consider the circumstances behind the crime and not only the crime itself.
- We will work closely with the UK Government, at Ministerial and official level, following the publication of the Thomas Commission report next year and if that recommends further devolution of policing and justice services to Wales we will make representation in the strongest possible terms for further reform and devolution of justice policy to Wales.

7. What mechanisms are you putting in place to support partners to address past ineffective and unsuccessful consultations (Page 63 of the Review Report)?

- The programme is being developed along the key themes of ensuring it is (i) evidence based and intelligence led (ii) supported by appropriate skills and knowledge (iii) sustainably resources and locally appropriate (iv) engaging and involving citizens (v) preventative and intervening as early as possible (vi) focused on long term improvements and benefits. We will ensure extensive citizen engagement to achieve these outcomes and develop more appropriate and effective collaborative outcomes frameworks to enable partners/partnerships to better measure performance and results.
- We will produce relevant “citizen focused” products (eg toolkits, guidance, case studies and training).
- We will aim to remove unnecessary duplication in citizen involvement approaches (eg Tell Us Once & Ask Cardiff approaches).
- We will aim to improve capacity of public bodies and partnerships to engage, consult, involve and facilitate participation.

8. What are you proposing to do to secure longer-term and better integrated funding of community safety?

- The programme will look at how best to make more effective use of the limited resources and funding, with a focus on strengthening collaborative service planning and commissioning arrangements that eliminate silos and duplication and focus on place based, person centred public service provision.
- While more money is welcome (end to public sector austerity) it's more about better public services planning and commissioning based on better evidence and intelligence, more focused on prevention and early intervention etc.

9. Given the wide range of activities set out in the Way Forward section of the Safer Communities Review, how does the Welsh Government plan to oversee and manage performance and what role do you see for the Public Accounts Committee in scrutinising performance?

- The Programme Board under the leadership of the Cabinet Secretary for Local Government and Public services will continue to oversee performance and programme delivery. A board member has been appointed as SRO for each of the workstreams and will be accountable to the Board and will be expected to ensure and report on delivery.
- In addition, a management group consisting WG, WLGA & PCC officials meet monthly to ensure the programme is on track.
- A virtual team comprising officials from WG, WLGA, PCCs, Home Office & PHW meet monthly to review and develop each separate work strand.
- We are open to discussing and agreeing with the Committee what role it envisages in the scrutiny of the programme, recognising that delivery is medium term to 2020 and will not be achieved at pace given the historic and endemic nature of community safety working.

10. What actions are you planning to address strengthen preventative and early intervention activities?

- As stated previously, we will aim to ensure a more joined up commissioning approach but also we are working to try and ensure local and regional activity/delivery and national policy and strategy better aligns with Aces, E.A.T., team around family, safeguarding and addressing vulnerability.

11. Given the importance of all partners playing their role, how do you intend to address mixed levels of engagement from health partners and inequitable relationships with third sector partners and service providers, particularly related to service planning and commissioning?

- We will consider this further as the programme develops further. We will review these matters and provide a robust and definitive leadership role.