

Committee: **Council**

Date of Meeting: **23rd July, 2020**

Report Subject: **Establishing the Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council Contact Tracing Service**

Portfolio Holder: **Cllr N Daniels, Leader / Corporate Services**

Report Submitted by: **Anne-Louise Clark, Chief Officer Commercial**

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Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
	16/07/2020						23/07/2020	

1. **Purpose of the Report**
 - 1.1 To seek agreement to the establishment of a Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council Contact Tracing Service.
2. **Scope and Background**
 - 2.1 On 13th May Welsh Government (WG) published their Test, Trace and Protect overarching plan which is supported by the Public Health Wales (PHW) Public Health Protection Response Plan. These plans clearly outline that Local Health Boards and Local Authorities' are central in the strategy to set up regional and local contact tracing structures in our efforts to get out and stay out of lockdown. The overall purpose of the plan and the creating of a new service is to "find, prioritise, act and report". As evidenced elsewhere around the world a successful and effective contact tracing service can make a significant contribution to the R rate, the resilience and sustainability of our vital services needed to support those in need, to aide economic recovery and to allow our residents to realise a new freedom in these uncertain times. Its importance therefore cannot be overestimated or exaggerated. This is a critical element of our response and recovery plans with Local Authorities being at the heart of a local service.
 - 2.2 To meet the Welsh Government Test, Trace and Protect Plan contact tracing started in Gwent on 1st June 2020. A sub-group of the Strategic Coordinating Group (SCG) which has led on the Gwent response to the declaration of the pandemic emergency was set up in May to coordinate this work. This group is chaired by Caerphilly CBC and contains representatives from Aneurin Bevan University Health Board (ABUHB) and the 5 Local Authorities Blaenau Gwent (BG), Caerphilly (CCBC), Monmouthshire (MCC), Newport (NCC) and Torfaen (TCBC). The group has also been supported by the Shared Resource Service (SRS) for IT. The group worked effectively together to set this service up in 4 weeks.

- 2.3 For 2 weeks an interim system specifically developed by the SRS was used to contact trace locally whilst a national system was being developed and implemented. On 9th/10th June the teams switched over to the national system.
- 2.4 As at 10th June 2020 there are over 120 people successfully redeployed, trained and contact tracing in Gwent. The service is able to be covered 8am-8pm 7 days a week. Redeployments have come from across the 6 partner organisations to create the service. All partners agree that this is not a sustainable model for the long term as organisations return to business as usual and services resumed. It was agreed that this interim solution be in place for 3 months up to 31st August to allow for the development of the longer term strategy to be developed, agreed and implemented.
- 2.5 The Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council team commenced contact tracing on 10th June 2020 when the national data management system went live. Redeployees from across the organisation and from Tai Calon have come together to create a team of 30 people contact tracing and contact advising. The interim arrangement has been line managed by Commercial Services with Project Management support from the Regeneration and Community Services. Regional support is provided through the Public Protection Team.

3. Future operating model

- 3.1 In late June a business case was submitted to Welsh Government outlining the proposed operating model for the Gwent Contact Tracing Service (GCTS) to cover the ABUHB area. On 6th July Welsh Government confirmed a £9.6m funding envelope for the service up to 31st March 2021.
- 3.2 The model for the GCTS is based on an integrated model whereby the Local Authorities take lead responsibility for their respective local teams and Aneurin Bevan University Health Board (ABUHB) take lead responsibility for the Regional response. A Regional Programme Management function will be led and hosted by one of the Local Authorities to provide support for the regional response. The Regional Programme Management function will also provide data management resources, training and support with the National Data Management System for the local contact tracing teams.
- 3.3 In line with the workforce modelling included in the business case and the funding available from Welsh Government Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council need to agree the establishment a local team. This team will be employed directly by BGCBC with funding being drawn from the ABUHB. This funding is available for staffing and non-staffing costs. BGCBC are also able to claim for costs already incurred during the establishment of the interim arrangements.
- 3.4 Based on the experiences of providing the interim solution the team structure will be made up of three new roles:

1. Team Manager to provide operational leadership and management
2. Contact tracers and contact advisors
3. Shift Co-ordination providing daily support to the contact tracers and advisors.

3.5 If there is agreement to establish the service, there will be a phased recruitment enabling redeployed staff to return to their substantive posts. Based on the current model and using redeployed staff the service will be at 50% in July and August. The service will be at 75% capacity from 1st September 2020 and 100% capacity from 1st October 2020. At full capacity the service will consist of:

- Team Manager x 1 FTE
- Contact Tracers x 6 FTE
- Contact Advisors x 30 FTE
- Shift Co-ordination and supervision x 2

3.6 Epidemiological expertise (Clinical lead or Infection Control Lead) will be provided by ABUHB and could be a Senior EHO role with expertise in Infection Control.

4. Governance Arrangements

4.1 Appendix 1 provides details of the governance arrangements highlighting that the Strategic Co-ordinating Group are key to the successful delivery of the GCTS.

4.2 The development of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is to be finalised. This will layout the partnership arrangement for both the legal and financial aspects of the partnership. It is proposed that the Chief Officer – Commercial is given delegated authority to sign off the final MOU following due diligence checks, in consultation with the Executive Member for Corporate Services.

4.3 The new Service will be performance managed locally in line with the Council's Performance Management Framework.

5. Options

5.1 Option 1: (Preferred option) Council agrees the proposals for the establishment of the local authority Contact Tracing Team, as part of the Gwent regional service.

5.2 Option 2: Council defer the agreement pending more information or amendments.

6. Evidence of how does this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan

6.1 This report supports the Council Priority, Strong and Environmentally Smart Communities, the delivery of operational plan for Contact Tracing set out by the Gwent SCG and the partnership arrangements in the Gwent Contact Tracing Service business case submitted to Welsh Government in June 2020. It also supports the Blaenau Gwent well-being plan - Blaenau Gwent want to encourage and enable people to make healthy lifestyle choices in the places that they live, learn, work and play. - A place where people live longer with better health, a place where healthy behaviours is the 'norm'.

7. Implications Against Each Option

7.1 Impact on Budget (short and long term impact)

WG have confirmed £9.6m funding for the regional service to 31 March 2021, therefore there is no direct impact on the Council's budget as the service will be fully funded by Welsh Government. This report supports our efficient council priority by ensuring that we are getting the best impact from the funding available from Welsh Government by creating a well-managed Contact tracing service that supports the regional response.

7.2 Risk including Mitigating Actions

A sustainable contact tracing service for the residents of Blaenau Gwent is critical to the management of life during the COVID19 pandemic. The risks associated with not being able to deliver this service are significant including risks to life, livelihood and access to education. This service sits within the governance arrangements across Gwent and is accountable to the SCG and ultimately to Welsh Government. This level of governance ensures robust oversight, with the ability to escalate issues rapidly if required.

7.3 Legal

The Memorandum of Understanding between the Gwent Contact Tracing Service and the ABUHB is a legally binding agreement designed to protect all parties both legally and financially.

7.4 Human Resources

The workforce model is detailed in the body of the report. Additional costs for staffing and any non-staffing costs will be met from the funding from Welsh Government.

7.5 *Expected outcome for the public*

The report describes the establishment of a new service designed to help protect the public from exposure to the COVID19 infection through delivering effective test, trace and protect infection control arrangements.

7.6 *Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)*

Ongoing review of the performance of the Gwent Contact Tracing Service will be reported to the SCG and Welsh Government. Regular reports will also be provided to the Executive and Council as part of the recovery plan monitoring.

7.7 *Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)*

The decision for Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council to create a team to support the Gwent Contact Tracing Service is in line with the Welsh Government Test, Trace and Protect overarching plan which is supported by the Public Health Wales (PHW) Public Health Protection Response Plan. It is vital that our residents and business can re-start their lives safely during the COVID19 pandemic. This service is an essential element of protecting our residents and preventing further lock down situations.

7.8 *Preventative focus*

As above the Gwent Contact Tracing Service is in line with the Welsh Government Test, Trace and Protect overarching plan and supported by the PHW Public Health Protection Response Plan. This service is an essential element of preventing further lock down situations.

7.9 *Collaboration / partnership working*

The establishment of the local Blaenau Gwent Contact Tracing team is part of the wider Gwent effort and as such collaboration and partnership working are at the heart of the ways of working. The integrated model provides a resilient approach working across 5 LA's and the Health Board. Each shift is supported by multi-disciplinary teams focussed on delivering outcomes for the residents and businesses across Gwent.

7.10 *Integration(across service areas)*

The shared goals in the Memorandum of Understanding identify that the integrated approach builds a strong delivery model. Internally the services links across a number of professional disciplines.

7.11 *EqIA(screening and identifying if full impact assessment is needed)*

A full impact assessment will be undertaken following the agreement to establish the new service.

8. Monitoring Arrangements

- 8.1 The monitoring of the service will be through the SCG and Welsh Government monitoring arrangements. Then locally using the Council's Performance Management Framework.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

Appendix

1. Governance structure