

Committee: **Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee**

Date of meeting: **16th April 2021**

Report Subject: **Test Trace and Protect Service**

Portfolio Holder: **Councillor Nigel Daniels, Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Services**

Report Submitted by: **Bernadette Elias, interim 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)
w/c 22/3/21	25/3/21	01.04.21			16/4/21			

1. Purpose of the Report

1.1 To provide a progress update on the Test, Trace and Protect (TTP) Service.

The TTP Service main aims and objectives are to enhance health surveillance in the community, undertake effective and extensive contact tracing, and support people to self-isolate where required to do so.

2. Background

2.1 Welsh Government set out its Strategy for leading Wales out of the coronavirus pandemic in May 2020 based on 3 pillars:

- The measures and evidence by which current infection levels will be judged upon and transmission rates for coronavirus in Wales;
- The principles by which proposed measures will be examined to ease the current restrictions;
- Enhancing public health surveillance and response system to enable prevention of infection and track the virus as restrictions are eased.

2.2 Contact Tracing within the TTP service has been, and is being used in countries around the world to limit the spread of the virus in the community by breaking the link in transmission.

2.3 Contact tracing starts with self-reporting of symptoms, followed by testing suspected cases, tracing the contacts of those who have tested positive and then protecting families, friends and communities through self-isolation.

2.4 In Wales we have a robust public health system delivered by local health boards. As local authorities have significant expertise in contact tracing the TTP services are being run from within local authorities unlike England.

2.5 Blaenau Gwent TTP Service is a regional approach with four other local authorities across Gwent (Caerphilly, Newport, Monmouth and Torfaen) all working in partnership with Aneurin Bevan University Health Board and Public Health Wales.

3. **Current Position**

3.1 TTP service is in operation 7 days a week, 8am to 8pm, operating across bank holidays and currently deals with:

- New cases for tracing by Tracers, where contacts are identified;
- Contacts of positive cases identified are contacted by Advisors who carry out daily check ins over the period of isolation. The Advisors will look out for symptoms, give advice around self-isolation making sure this is maintained through the isolation period. Also link into the Locality Response Teams and Benefits Teams for the Self Isolation payment scheme;
- Backward tracing of cases;
- Heavily involved in the variant tracing;
- Recent commencement of Lateral Flow Testing, (to note 10 received to date with all PCR tests being taken within 24 hours of Lateral Flow Test).

4. **Options for Recommendation**

That the Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee:

4.1 **Option 1:**

Considers and accepts the progress update.

4.2 **Option 2:**

Considers the progress update and provides specific comment on the report.

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

5.1 The TTP service is a critical part of the organisational strategy for fighting the pandemic and supports the statutory responsibilities of the organisation.

5.2 It supports Welsh Government's strategy and its framework for recovery and leading Wales out of the coronavirus pandemic.

6. **Implications Against Each Option**

6.1 ***Impact on Budget (short and long term impact)***

There is no direct impact on budgets.

The TTP Service is fully funded by Welsh Government.

6.2 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***

The risks associated with underperformance against the strategy will be mitigated through a whole Council approach.

6.3 ***Legal***

Where alternative delivery models are explored due diligence will be undertaken before any decisions are made.

6.4 ***Human Resources***

6.4.1 Blaenau Gwent set up the TTP service within the Commercial Services directorate in June 2020 with the first positive case being traced on June 9th 2020.

6.4.2 The initial service was set up utilising redeployed staff from within the Local Authority, staff who were unable to carry out their substantive roles due to the COVID19 pandemic.

6.4.3 The team consisted of around 10 members of staff and also included 3 members of staff from Tai Calon Housing.

6.4.4 In July 2020 an extensive recruitment campaign was undertaken to appoint staff into the service to replace the redeployed staff who were looking to return to their substantive roles in September 2020.

6.4.5 The recruitment campaign resulted in a high volume of applications being received and the first phase of recruitment was completed by September 2020.

6.4.6 Due to high volumes of positive cases across the borough a second phase of recruitment was undertaken in November to increase capacity to deal with the high numbers, this was concluded by middle of December and a bolstered team was in place to cover the Christmas period.

6.4.7 The current TTP service employs 90 members of staff, in a mixture of Tracer, Advisor and Shift Supervisor positions.

7. **Supporting Evidence**

7.1 ***Performance Information and Data***

Key activity undertaken in Blaenau Gwent TTP service since its inception in June 2020 to March 20th 2021:

- 6,206 new positive cases have been identified and passed to the team for tracing, of which;
- 5,497 have been eligible for tracing by the team (some are not eligible as have been in hospital, passed away);
- 13,000 contacts have been identified by the team from the new positive cases;

- 100% of new eligible cases were successfully followed up;
- 94% of new contacts were successfully followed up;

Performance of Gwent TTP service overall as a region is in top quartile. Performance data for the period June 2020 to March 20th 2021

- 41,113 new positive cases identified and passed to the teams for tracing, of which;
- 37,000 have been eligible for tracing and passed to the teams;
- 68,000 contacts have been identified from new positive cases;
- 100% of new eligible cases were successfully followed up;
- 97% of new contacts were successfully followed up across the region.

7.2 **Expected outcome for the public**

The Test, Trace, Protect Service main aims and objectives are to enhance health surveillance in the community, undertake effective and extensive contact tracing, and support people to self-isolate where required to do so.

7.3 ***Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)***

As a key part of the commissioning cycle to ensure service specifications take account of the needs of service users. Any changes to service delivery models will be consulted on in the usual way.

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

The strategy is at the heart of the medium and long term planning for Blaenau Gwent and recognises not only where the Council needs to seek new income streams but also where it needs to review how it deploys its current expenditure.

7.5 ***Preventative focus***

The TTP Strategy is designed to prevent future spread of COVID19 and supports future delivery models.

7.6 ***Collaboration / partnership working***

There are opportunities through this strategy to further consider advantageous ways of working across local authorities and the Public Service Board.

7.7 ***Integration (across service areas)***

The strategy takes a whole council approach. It promotes transparency across the organisation, building best practice outside of directorate silos and promotes the maximising and sharing of skills and learning.

7.8 ***EqIA***

Screening for impact on protected characteristics will be undertaken as per usual procedures. In addition, individual procurements consider the ability to realise social, environmental and economic benefits through the inclusion of Community Benefits and Social Value contractual clauses

Monitoring Arrangements

Progress is monitored and reported internally.