



Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNCIL

CABINET

23rd October 2024

Report of the Head of Planning and Public Protection

Ceri Morris

Matter for Decision

Wards Affected: All Wards

Health Protection Service – Consideration of the Swansea Bay Service Level Agreement.

Purpose of the Report

To consider the Draft 'Swansea Bay Service Level Agreement' and to seek authorisation to enter into the agreement to deliver a partnership approach to health protection work.

Executive Summary

This report seeks authority to enter into a 'Service Level Agreement' with the Swansea Bay University Health Board to facilitate a partnership approach to the delivery of health protection related work across the regional footprint.

The overall aim of the service will be to deliver a strong, sustainable health protection response for our local population via an integrated, partnership-based approach. The Service Level Agreement seeks to provide clarity around the roles and responsibilities of the Health Board and Local Authorities respectively; outlines key service deliverables (linked to the Welsh Government core principles); and establishes reporting requirements linked to key performance indicators.

Background

In June 2020, Swansea Bay University Health Board, Neath Port Talbot Council and the City & County of Swansea set up the Test, Trace and Protect (TTP) Service on a regional footprint to respond to the Covid-19

pandemic – the approach was funded by Welsh Government. The TTP Service over time saw many changes, adaptations and fluctuations to its workforce structure and delivery purpose since it was originally established.

The publication of the Welsh Government's 'Together for a Safer Future: Wales long-term Covid-19 Transition from Pandemic to Endemic' in March 2022, recognised the need to move beyond the emergency phase, to one where we live with Covid-19 like many other infectious diseases.

Subsequently in October 2022, the Welsh Government commissioned an independent review of the health protection system in Wales. The report was supplemented with an Implementation Plan that identifies the actions and initiatives that will help to deliver the overarching recommendations set out in the report. It includes the need to maintain core public health capacity in order to enable national and local preparedness to manage future threats and risks, especially in the immediate phase of an emergency. It also recommended that local Public Health and Public Protection teams continue to be strengthened with clear description of their core roles and responsibilities.

Welsh Government has therefore continued to provide funding to Health Boards across Wales to support the Public Health response (including Covid-19) and to develop capacity and capability to respond at a regional level. In February 2023 Welsh Government developed a number of core principles for health protection that outlined the expectations for integrated health protection teams to deliver. Subsequently, in January 2024 the Welsh Government confirmed a recurrent discretionary funding allocation for each Health Board in Wales, to continue to support the delivery of these core principles – these core principles will underpin the Health Protection Framework that Welsh Government are currently developing (for partner agencies and Health Boards).

Swansea Bay Service Level Agreement

In this context, Neath Port Talbot Council and the City & County of Swansea have had lengthy discussions with Swansea Bay University Health Board regarding the establishment of a Service Level Agreement (SLA) which seeks to secure formal working arrangements for the delivery of the Welsh Government core principles for health protection – critically, this includes establishing a sustainable workforce that is resilient and has the ability to prepare and respond to health protection matters across the regional footprint of Swansea Bay.

The overall aim of the service will be to deliver a strong, sustainable health protection response for our local population via an integrated, partnership-based approach. The following objectives of the service are highlighted:

- To contribute to the delivery of the Welsh Government Health Protection Core Principles consistently across the Swansea Bay region, meeting relevant requirements of the National Health Protection Framework (when published);
- To enable a resilient response to regional health protection priorities;
- To provide a regional (Swansea Bay) out-of-hours service for Local Authority health protection regulatory responsibilities (under the provisions of the Control of Disease Act 1984 and associated Regulations) in line with the Communicable Disease Outbreak Control Plan for Wales;
- To contribute to an integrated, multi-agency health protection partnership that informs the development and review of the regional priorities and workplans which is influenced by the local, regional, and national intelligence that meets the health and wellbeing needs of our local communities; and
- To provide a more resilient health protection Local Authority service across Swansea Bay by sharing the Local Authority resource across the Health Board footprint. This process will require appropriate authorisation across both Neath Port Talbot and City & County of Swansea.

The draft 'Swansea Bay Service Level Agreement' is presented in full in Appendix 2. Members will note that it seeks to provide clarity around the roles and responsibilities of the Health Board and Local Authorities respectively; stipulates the need for an identified lead officer role within each local authority; outlines key service deliverables (linked to the Welsh Government core principles); and establishes reporting requirements linked to key performance indicators.

Financial Impacts

As referenced above, the Welsh Government has confirmed a recurrent discretionary funding allocation for each Health Board in Wales, to continue to support the delivery of the health protection core principles. As part of the development of the Service Level Agreement, the Swansea Bay University Health Board has committed to an agreed recurrent level of funding for both local authorities.

Members should note that the figure for Neath Port Talbot currently stipulated in the agreement (i.e. £95,325) covers the remainder of the current financial year (i.e. 1st October 2024 to 31st March 2025). The agreement will initially be reviewed in March 2025 and annually thereafter.

Integrated Impact Assessment

A first stage impact assessment has been undertaken to assist the Council in discharging its legislative duties under the Equality Act 2010, the Welsh Language Standards (No.1) Regulations 2015, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.

The first stage assessment, presented in Appendix 1, has indicated that a more in-depth assessment is not required.

Valleys Communities Impacts

No implications.

Workforce Impacts

The recurrent funding embedded in the Service Level Agreement will enable the Authority to create a small number of new permanent posts – these posts will be established on the Trading Standards, Food & Health Protection team structure.

Notably, the Agreement stipulates that the Local Authority must provide a Lead Officer in accordance with ‘The Communicable Disease Outbreak Control Plan for Wales’ and such an officer to participate and complete the Wales Lead Officer training programme. This Lead Officer is also to provide expert advice, training, and development to local authority officers on health protection matters, and also to build and develop effective stakeholder relationships internally within the Local Authority and with external partners, ensuring an all-hazards approach to health protection is delivered.

Legal Impacts

No implications. The Service Level Agreement enclosed at Appendix 2 will set out the mechanisms by which the service will operate and the legal requirements included therein.

Risk Management Impacts

Entering into this agreement will ensure delivery against the Welsh Government core principles for health protection, and to establish a

sustainable and resilient workforce that has the ability to prepare and respond to health protection matters across the regional footprint of Swansea Bay.

Consultation

There is no requirement for external consultation on this item.

Recommendations

That having considered the report and having due regard to the Integrated Impact Assessment, it is recommended that:

1. Members note the content of the 'Swansea Bay Service Level Agreement' as presented in Appendix 2 and that delegated authority be granted to the Head of Planning and Public Protection to enter into the agreement with the Swansea Bay University Health Board.

Reasons for Proposed Decision

The decision is needed to establish formal working arrangements to deliver against the Welsh Government core principles for health protection, and to establish a sustainable and resilient workforce that has the ability to prepare and respond to health protection matters across the regional footprint of Swansea Bay.

Implementation of Decision

The decision is proposed for implementation after the three day call in period.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – First Stage Integrated Impact Assessment.
Appendix 2 – Draft Swansea Bay Service Level Agreement.

List of Background Papers

None.

Officer Contact

Mark Thomas – Trading Standards, Food and Health Protection Manager
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Appendix 1: First Stage Integrated Impact Assessment

1. Details of the initiative

Initiative Description and Summary: Swansea Bay Service Level Agreement – Health Protection
Service Area: Planning & Public Protection
Directorate: Environment & Regeneration

2. Does the initiative affect:

	Yes	No
Service users	x	
Staff	x	
Wider community	x	
Internal administrative process only		x

3. Does the initiative impact on people because of their:

	Yes	No	None/ Negligible	Don't Know	Impact H/M/L	Reasons for your decision (including evidence)/How might it impact?
Age		x				It will have no direct impact on protected characteristics.
Disability		x				It will have no direct impact on protected characteristics.
Gender Reassignment		x				It will have no direct impact on protected characteristics.
Marriage/Civil Partnership		x				It will have no direct impact on protected characteristics.
Pregnancy/Maternity		x				It will have no direct impact on protected characteristics.
Race		x				It will have no direct impact on protected characteristics.
Religion/Belief		x				It will have no direct impact on protected characteristics.
Sex		x				It will have no direct impact on protected characteristics.
Sexual orientation		x				It will have no direct impact on protected characteristics.

4. Does the initiative impact on:

	Yes	No	None/ Negligible	Don't know	Impact H/M/L	Reasons for your decision (including evidence used) / How might it impact?
People's opportunities to use the Welsh language		x				It will have no impact on Welsh language related matters.
Treating the Welsh language no less favourably than English		x				It will have no impact on Welsh language related matters.

5. Does the initiative impact on biodiversity:

	Yes	No	None/ Negligible	Don't know	Impact H/M/L	Reasons for your decision (including evidence) / How might it impact?
To maintain and enhance biodiversity		x				It will have no impact on biodiversity related matters.
To promote the resilience of ecosystems, i.e. supporting protection of the wider environment, such as air quality, flood alleviation, etc.		x				It will have no impact on biodiversity related matters.

6. Does the initiative embrace the sustainable development principle (5 ways of working):

	Yes	No	Details
Long term - how the initiative supports the long-term well-being of people	x		The initiative aims to be part of a system to deliver the core principles will underpin the Health Protection Framework that Welsh Government are currently developing (for partner agencies and Health Boards) and include:

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with local government partners to sustain agile, integrated teams who work on a health board footprint using an ‘all-hazards’ approach to support health protection measures and respond to future threats. • Respond to outbreaks and wider threats using the agreed process outlined in the Communicable Disease Outbreak Control Plan for Wales, recognising that there will be peaks of activity through the year according to national and regional demand. • Respond and deliver on our national approach for respiratory viruses for winter and increases in COVID-19 cases throughout the year. • Have preparedness plans in place to scale up in the event of a threat and future pandemic scenario, within the context of a national framework. • Deliver on the National Immunisation Framework for Wales and ensure a high take up of vaccination across our programmes, including by ensuring equitable access to and opportunity for vaccination. • Deliver a sustained increase in the provision of prevention, testing and treatment to meet the World Health Organisation’s 2030 global disease elimination targets which include TB, Hepatitis B and C (by progressing actions identified in WHC/2003/001 and Joint Recovery Plans developed in 2023) and HIV (by progressing actions in the HIV Action Plan). • Undertake wider health protection work delivering a local approach under national frameworks and guidance. For example, to support those seeking refuge in Wales, support messaging in schools, provide support to care homes etc. • Work together locally and nationally to support and deliver work to address equity of access and opportunity.
Integration - how the initiative impacts upon our wellbeing objectives	x		Well-being Objective 2 – all communities are thriving and sustainable focusses on people living healthy, long and good lives in sustainable communities. The Health Protection framework and priorities (above) are central to achieving this objective.
Involvement - how people have been involved in developing the initiative	x		National framework agreement with representatives from Health Board, Public Health Wales and Local Authorities, set out priorities with Welsh Government. Senior Management from Swansea Bay University Health Board, NPTCBC and Swansea Council discussed and put forward agreement within budget allocated to area.
Collaboration - how we have worked with other services/organisations to find shared sustainable solutions	x		National framework agreement with representatives from Health Board, Public Health Wales and Local Authorities, set out priorities with Welsh Government. Senior Management from Swansea Bay University Health Board, NPTCBC and Swansea Council discussed and put forward agreement within budget allocated to area.

Prevention - how the initiative will prevent problems occurring or getting worse	x		The delivery of the workplan is outside of the statutory functions of the Authority and aim to proactively improve health protection through more enhanced investigations and project work which will be developed in a collaborative forum with partners
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7. Declaration - based on above assessment (tick as appropriate):

A full impact assessment (second stage) is not required	x
Reasons for this conclusion: Service level agreement to enhance health protection in regional area with funding agreement	
A full impact assessment (second stage) is required	
Reasons for this conclusion	

	Name	Position	Date
Completed by	Mark Thomas	Trading Standards, Food & Health Protection Manager	12/9/2024
Signed off by	Ceri Morris	Head of Planning & Public Protection	16 th September 2024