



ACCOUNTABILITY AND ASSURANCE BOARD

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CRYNODEB GWEITHREDOL | EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report sets out the force's 2025/26 Engagement Strategy and summarises progress in strengthening trust, confidence, legitimacy and accessibility across communities, partners, victims and the workforce. Engagement is now embedded as a core operating principle within neighbourhood policing, problem-solving, partnership working, PDR objectives and departmental plans.

Key achievements include improved visibility of neighbourhood teams, increased use of social media, community surgeries, councillor and elected representative engagement, specialist engagement with rural, business, retail and night-time economy communities, and strengthened problem-solving through the Problem-Solving Hub, Operation Lockwood and the Community Action Team.

Next steps will focus on embedding Neighbourhood Matters to improve two-way engagement, strengthen the recording and analysis of community feedback, support local priority setting, and provide clearer evidence of impact.

CYFLWYNIAD A CHEFNDIR | INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

Community engagement is a cornerstone of effective policing. It is underpinned by legal duties set out in the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011, which mandates that police forces must engage with the public to understand their concerns, build trust, and ensure accountability. The Chief Constable, as the operational leader of Gwent Police, is legally responsible for delivering policing that reflects the needs and expectations of the communities served.

This report outlines the strategic approach to engagement for 2025/26 and highlights the activity delivered to strengthen trust, confidence, legitimacy and accessibility across communities, partners, victims, and the workforce.

MATERION I'W HYSTYRIED | ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

In the Autumn of 2024, the Chief Constable, on his appointment, set out a mission to build trust and confidence in Gwent Police. The approach would put a strong emphasis on community engagement, as well as improving force performance and building the right culture.

The first major task was to implement a review of the force operating model. This has resulted in significant changes to the way the resources of the force are now

organised and led. The structure now includes three operational pillars, which are: Response Policing; Neighbourhood Policing; and Crime.

A new Neighbourhood Policing Strategy was developed, which sets out the actions the force will take to ensure community policing is delivered effectively and efficiently, in line with HM Government's Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee. Engagement sits at the very heart of the strategy alongside problem solving and targeting activity.

A new Engagement Strategy was also developed, which describes the work that will be done over the next three years to ensure that the organisation listens and responds to the needs of its workforce, its communities, and victims of crime.

The following paragraphs describe how the Chief Constable and his team are delivering on these commitments and the improvement work that is being done to build on this.

Engagement also sits as one of three core PDR objectives for officers and staff and firmly embedded within 'Plan on a Page' documents within the respective Pillars and Enabling Functions departments. This has ensured that engagement is not treated as a standalone activity, but as a core operating principle which informs local visibility, problem-solving, partnership working and the service provided to victims and communities.

During 2025/26, the amalgamation of Specialist Operations and Neighbourhood Policing into a single Neighbourhood pillar has provided a clearer focus on improving engagement, local visibility, and problem-solving. This has strengthened the connection between neighbourhood teams, specialist capabilities, and community-facing activity, ensuring that engagement is supported by practical operational delivery.

The Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee has provided a clear national framework for improving public contact, visibility, local priority setting and accountability. In Gwent, this has been supported by police officer uplift within neighbourhood teams, the creation of additional problem-solving capacity, and a continued focus on ensuring that communities know who their local officers are, how to contact them, and how local concerns are being addressed.

Residents in Gwent have access to information about their local Neighbourhood Team, primarily through Single Online Home, which is the agreed platform for communities to find out about Neighbourhood Policing in their area across England and Wales.

Single Online Home in Gwent provides details of named officers from the local Neighbourhood Team and details of how to contact them directly. It also provides



data about crime trends in the local area and a summary of the local policing priorities. Single Online Home also has details of local police stations and the dates and locations of police surgeries in each area.

Local policing priorities are set with regards to a range of sources, including: the Police and Crime Commissioner's Policing, Crime and Justice Plan; the Chief Constable's Operational Delivery Plan; Home Office initiatives; local crime data; police intelligence; and community feedback.

The force recognises that it needs to improve the way in which it captures information from community engagement and how it uses this to inform local priority setting.

For this reason, in autumn 2025, the force invested in Neighbourhood Matters, a secure system designed to transform how neighbourhood teams capture community feedback, undertake surveys, analyse local concerns and provide residents with timely updates on the issues that matter to them. The system will strengthen two-way engagement, support more informed local priority setting, improve the recording of engagement activity, and provide a clearer evidence base to demonstrate how community insight is shaping interventions, problem-solving activity, and confidence in local policing.

One of the strengths of Neighbourhood Policing in Gwent is the engagement the force has with communities through local events and projects across the force area. This helps with building positive relationships, offering crime prevention advice, and provides opportunities for people to discuss issues and concerns with their local policing team.

Engagement activity has included community surgeries, councillor meetings, monthly councillor sector packs, mosque leaders' meetings, engagement events, ride-along opportunities, and regular contact with elected representatives. The Chief Superintendent for Neighbourhoods has also held monthly engagement meetings with Members of Parliament and Members of the Senedd, providing a clear route for local issues, community concerns, and emerging risks to be escalated and acted upon.

Details of the neighbourhood policing team's community engagement activities are widely publicised on social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram.

Local teams have delivered a significant increase in social media content and reach, using digital channels to promote local priorities, engagement opportunities, crime prevention messages, operational results, and reassurance activity. This has strengthened the ability of neighbourhood teams to communicate quickly and

consistently with communities, including those who may not attend traditional engagement events.

Moving forward, Neighbourhood Matters will build on this good work and see a greater degree of pro-active engagement with residents on their doorsteps, as well as at community events and public spaces.

Neighbourhood Policing Teams are supported on a range of specialist topics by a Problem-Solving Hub, and the Equalities, Diversity, and Inclusion team.

The Problem-Solving Hub provides specialist resources and tactical advice to help with addressing issues such as rural crime, heritage crime, business crime, and a range of other crime prevention initiatives

Problem-solving has been strengthened using problem-oriented policing plans, the work of the Problem-Solving Hub, Design Out Crime Officers, Demand Reduction Officers and force-wide targeted hot-spot patrol activity under the Home Office funded Operation Lockwood. These approaches support evidence-led engagement by ensuring local concerns are translated into practical plans, partnership activity, and visible interventions.

Recognising the importance of visible, responsive, and evidence-led problem-solving, the Chief Constable has used Home Office funding through the Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee to create a Community Action Team. The team works alongside existing Neighbourhood Policing Teams across Gwent, providing flexible additional capacity to tackle anti-social behaviour, acquisitive crime and other issues that cause harm to communities. By supporting local engagement, responding to emerging concerns, targeting those who cause the greatest harm and delivering visible reassurance activity, the Community Action Team strengthens the link between community feedback, operational tasking, and practical neighbourhood interventions.

Specialist engagement has also been delivered through rural crime activity, We Don't Buy Crime, business and retail crime prevention work, licensing activity and engagement with the night-time economy and licensed premises. These areas have supported local prevention, strengthened relationships with businesses and rural communities, and provided practical reassurance in areas of high public concern.

Seasonal engagement and operational activity have included the Safer Summer Streets initiative and winter campaigns focused on anti-social behaviour, retail crime and violence against women and girls. These campaigns have combined prevention messaging, partnership activity, targeted patrols and visible engagement to address issues that have a direct impact on public confidence and feelings of safety.



The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion team provides support to Neighbourhood Policing Teams and the wider force through the provision of specialist advice on a range of ED&I topics. Both maintain direct contact with individuals and community organisations that act as 'critical friends' to the force.

An example of this is the Independent Advisory Group, who advise and challenge senior leaders on policing operations and the development of policy. Members of the IAG have been invited and indeed have sat in on a number of Critical Incident Gold Groups.

The Community Tensions Monitoring Group is another example of members of the community coming together with senior leaders every two weeks to discuss ongoing or emerging issues of concern, which affect minority communities.

The Youth Independent Advisory Group is now active within Gwent, giving young people a direct opportunity to have a say in how policing works in their area and providing senior leaders with valuable insight into the issues, experiences and expectations of children and young people.

Citizens have opportunities to be directly involved in policing through a range of opportunities within our Special Constabulary and Police Support Volunteer roles. Children and young people are actively involved in the force through the Cadets and Heddlu Bach initiatives.

The Special Constabulary, volunteers and Citizens in Policing have contributed to engagement through visibility, community events, and support to local policing activity. These roles provide an important bridge between policing and communities and help increase the reach, accessibility, and legitimacy of local engagement.

The force has dedicated Schools Advisors embedded within its Neighbourhood Policing structure. Each Neighbourhood Policing Team has arrangements for listening and responding to the needs of each school in its area, based on an assessment of incidents reported from the school and the risks and issues identified there, and in the wider community, which may affect children attending the school.

The Safer Schools Programme is now embedded within Neighbourhood Policing Teams, who are responsible for engagement with the 242 schools across Gwent. This ensures that schools' engagement is locally owned and aligned to neighbourhood priorities, with teams working with schools to identify risk, respond to concerns, support safeguarding, and maintain trusted relationships with children, young people, and education partners. Engagement activity is captured through a dedicated schools engagement portal, which has evidenced a significant increase in engagement since the changes introduced through the restructure.

Welsh language considerations are being embedded within engagement activity, including the ability for residents to receive updates in their preferred language through Neighbourhood Matters. This supports accessibility, inclusion, and the delivery of engagement in a way that reflects the linguistic needs of communities across Gwent.

To ensure executive oversight of engagement activity, the force has implemented an Engagement Board, chaired by the Assistant Chief Constable, which forms part of the force governance structure and provides accountability for the delivery of engagement activity across the force. Outcomes from the board are reported through to the Chief Constable, ensuring strategic visibility, scrutiny, and clear ownership of progress.

The Chief Constable takes an active interest in the delivery of Neighbourhood Policing and engagement and receives a monthly presentation directly from the neighbourhood Inspectors. Inspectors also disseminate this document to elected officials and other notable stakeholders within their respective areas.

CYDWEITHIO | COLLABORATION

Any collaboration identified is contained within the report.

CAMAU NESAF | NEXT STEPS

The next phase of delivery will focus on fully embedding Neighbourhood Matters, strengthening the consistency of engagement recording and ensuring that community insight is routinely used to inform local priorities, problem-solving plans and partnership activity.

Neighbourhood Matters will provide opportunities for enhanced levels of engagement with residents. Neighbourhood Policing Teams will have the tools to accurately capture the results of door-to-door surveys, which in turn will provide a reliable evidence base for local priority setting.

The results of surveys will provide a rich source of information about crime, anti-social behaviour, and other policing problems that people are experiencing in their area. This in turn will provide a reliable evidence base for local priority setting.

The Neighbourhood Matters system will allow for the accurate recording of all engagement activities in the force and will provide evidence of the number of people who have provided feedback in an area. This will ensure that the voice of the community is representative, it will allow for enhanced performance monitoring, and for better scrutiny arrangements.



Another benefit of the Neighbourhood Matters initiative is that residents will be able to receive timely and relevant updates about the issues they are concerned about, via a two-way messaging system. Residents can sign up and indicate which language they would like to receive updates in. They will also be added to 'recipients lists' which will provide updates to them on any issue that they raise in a survey, or are otherwise interested in.

To ensure the capacity exists to deliver the Neighbourhood Matters initiative, the force is implementing measures to monitor and reduce the abstraction of resources from Neighbourhood Policing Teams to other policing duties.

The force will continue to assess and respond to feedback from schools, communities, victims, partners, elected representatives, and advisory groups to ensure engagement activity remains visible, inclusive, evidence-led and focused on improving trust and confidence.

Further work will be undertaken to develop the evidence base for engagement outcomes, including improved use of social media analytics, engagement data, community feedback, councillor sector packs, partnership feedback, and victim insight. This will support stronger scrutiny, better identification of gaps and clearer demonstration of impact.

The force will also seek to utilise Welsh Government funding to further enhance the Safer Schools Programme and strengthen the link between school engagement and local community concerns. This will support neighbourhood teams to work more consistently with schools, children, young people and education partners to identify emerging issues, understand risk and vulnerability, and ensure that concerns raised within the school environment are connected to wider neighbourhood problem-solving activity. This approach will help ensure that school engagement is not undertaken in isolation but is used as a key source of community insight to inform local priorities, safeguarding activity, prevention work, and partnership responses.

YSTYRIAETHAU ARIANNOL | FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The force has made provision within its budget for an initial three-year investment in the Neighbourhood community messaging system.

YSTYRIAETHAU PERSONÉL | PERSONNEL CONSIDERATIONS

Any personnel considerations are contained within the report.

YSTYRIAETHAU CYFREITHIOL | LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

Any legal considerations are contained within the report.

YSTYRIAETHAU CYDRADDOLDEB A HAWLIAU DYNOL | EQUALITIES & HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS

This report has been considered against the general duty to promote equality, as stipulated under the Strategic Equality Plan and has been assessed not to discriminate against any particular group.

In preparing this report, consideration has been given to requirements of the Articles contained in the European Convention on Human Rights and the Human Rights Act 1998.

RISG | RISK

Any risks identified are contained within the report.

ATODIADAU | ANNEXES

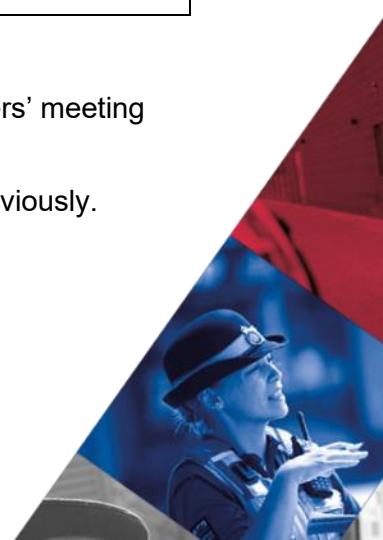
None to note.

BUDD Y CYHOEDD | PUBLIC INTEREST

In producing this report, has consideration been given to 'public confidence'?	Yes ☒ No ☐
Are the contents of this report, observations and appendices necessary and suitable for the public domain?	Yes ☒ No ☐
If you consider this report to be exempt from the public domain, please state the reasons:	

I confirm this report has been discussed and approved at a formal Chief Officers' meeting 08.09.2026.

I confirm this report is suitable for the public domain for the reasons stated previously.



Signature	
Date	23.09.2026