

Minute of Meeting Sheriff Principal and Sheriffs of North Strathclyde Sheriffdom and Chief Social Work Officers

| Date | Time | Venue |
|--------------------------|-------------|------------------------|
| Friday, 17 November 2017 | 14:00 | Paisley Sheriff Court, |

PRESENT

Sheriff Principal Murray, Sheriff Pender (Dumbarton), Sheriff Hamilton, (Greenock), K Rocks and L Gaff (East Ayrshire Council); C O'Byrne (West Dunbartonshire Council); S McAlees (Inverclyde Council); and P MacLeod, A Scott, B Leslie and A McNaughton (all Renfrewshire Council).

CHAIR

Sheriff Principal D L Murray presided.

APOLOGIES

Sheriff Spy (Paisley); Sheriff McDonald (Kilmarnock); A Taylor (Argyll & Bute Council); S Taylor (East Ayrshire Council) and D MacRitchie (North Ayrshire HSCP).

1 **MINUTE**

There was submitted the Minute of meeting between the Sheriff Principal, Sheriffs of North Strathclyde Sheriffdom and Chief Social Work Officers held on 19 May 2017.

It was proposed that as Sheriff McDonald had not submitted an apology, her name be removed. This was agreed.

DECIDED: That, subject to the above correction, the Minute be approved.

2 **MATTERS ARISING**

There were no matters arising from the Minute that were not already listed on the agenda.

DECIDED: That it be noted that there were no matters arising that were not already listed on the agenda.

3 **PENAL POLICY IMPROVEMENT POLICY**

Under reference to paragraph 3 of the Minute of the meeting held on 19 May 2017, the Sheriff Principal advised that he had, only yesterday, received the final outcome report relative to Penal Policy Improvement.

It was noted that the report did not include the full representations made by Linda Pollock and did not address the level of funding that was required to deliver the initiative's supported bail arrangements. P Macleod suggested that further discussions be sought with Scottish Ministers on how to bridge the funding gap.

The Sheriff Principal read out the terms of his letter of response which emphasised the lack of clarity on how the initiative was to be funded by local authorities.

DECIDED: That publication of the final outcome report and the terms of the Sheriff Principal's letter be noted.

4 **AWI ISSUES AND SCHEDULE 2 MENTAL HEALTH REPORTS**

Under reference to paragraph 4 of the Minutes of the meeting held on 19 May 2017, P Macleod advised that the Scottish Government consultation on reform of the AWI Act was expected to be published by the end of January 2018. It was noted that a QC had now been appointed to scrutinise the legal implications arising from any proposals to reform the Act and P MacLeod undertook to provide the Sheriff Principal with further information on this appointment.

Concerns were raised about the influence already exerted on the Scottish Government from strong lobbying by interested parties.

During discussion, it was further noted that demand on local authorities to deliver ever-increasing levels of AWI activity were stretching resources and budgets. Under the current system, blockages could occur at various points in the process, adding pressure on local authorities to deliver services within already challenging timescales. The need for a comprehensive review of the process and the funding required to sustain and support the delivery of AWI activity was necessary.

The use of Guardianship orders for short periods (2-3 years) and the need to keep these under review added further pressure on the service and it was noted that such orders were beneficial for some, but not all, cases.

It was proposed that, once the closing date for submissions to the Government's consultation was known, P Macleod submit a report to the next meeting mapping the key proposals and proposing appropriate responses. This was agreed.

It was also proposed that the next meeting be brought forward to 27 April 2018, in order to consider a response to the consultation and that this date be subject to change depending on the timescale for receipt of submissions.

DECIDED:

(a) That it be agreed that P Macleod submit a report to the next meeting mapping the key proposals of the Government consultation and appropriate responses; and

(b) That in order to consider the terms of a response to the consultation by the due date, the next meeting be brought forward to 27 April 2018 or a suitable alternative date to be determined once the date for receipt of submission was known.

5 BAIL SUPERVISION FOR WOMEN (SACRO)

A Scott advised that, due to funding reductions, delivery of this service had ceased in Paisley in July 2017. It was recognised that this service was still available in Kilmarnock.

P Macleod advised that representations had been made by the local authority and Safeguarding Communities – Reducing Offending (SACRO) to the Justice Directorate about the level of funding required to deliver this service and raising concerns that a new funding formula was required.

The Sheriff Principal advised that West Dunbartonshire Council was examining solutions to address the impact of funding reductions.

It was noted that A Scott had already written to the Sheriff Principal and Sheriff Spy advising that due to funding reductions this service could no longer be provided.

DECIDED: That the advice be noted.

6 TRANSITIONAL ARRANGEMENTS & REPRESENTATION ON THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE BOARD

Representation on the Criminal Justice Board, previously attended by Chief Officers from North Strathclyde Criminal Justice Authority and South West Scotland Criminal Justice Authority was discussed.

P Macleod advised that he would write to the relevant local authorities to ascertain criminal justice representation on the Criminal Justice Board given that the boundaries for community justice were now at local authority level.

After discussion, it was proposed that an invitation be extended to Karyn McCluskey to attend a Criminal Justice Board meeting in 2018 to update members on their approach.

DECIDED:

(a) That P MacLeod ascertain from the relevant local authorities their criminal justice representation on the Criminal Justice Board and advise the next meeting of the outcome; and

(b) That an invitation be extended to Karyn McCluskey to attend a Criminal Justice Board meeting in 2018 to update members on their approach.

7 AOCB

S McAleese intimated that Inverclyde Council had received negative attention from national and local press agencies following publication of a report to members on funding challenges surrounding the delivery of the sex-offenders programme. Press articles had speculated that Inverclyde was unable to cope with sex-offenders.

Whilst, the report had advised that the resilience in Inverclyde was not strong, the Council was seeking to remodel/reshape the service and strengthen resilience.

DECIDED: That the information provided be noted.

8 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

With reference to item 4 above, it was noted that the next meeting would be held on 27 April 2018 at 2.00 pm within Paisley Sheriff Court, St James Street, Paisley, or on a suitable alternative date to be notified.

DECIDED: That it be noted that the next meeting would be held on 27 April 2018 at 2.00 pm within Paisley Sheriff Court, St James Street, Paisley, or on a suitable alternative date to be notified.