
To: North Strathclyde Community Justice Authority

On: 11 December 2015

Report by: Planning Officer

Heading: North Strathclyde Community Justice Authority
Internal Audit – Governance Arrangements.

1. Summary

- 1.1** As part of the 2015/16 audit plan, a review has been undertaken by Renfrewshire Council Internal Audit, of the governance arrangements of the North Strathclyde Community Justice Authority (NSCJA) to ensure continued partner participation during the transition process to the new model for Community Justice.
- 1.2** The objectives of this audit were to ensure that:
- Meetings are arranged in line with the Terms of Reference of the Authority and that partner authorities participate in line with the minute of agreement.
 - Board members receive quarterly performance reports and action plan updates.
 - Action plans are progressing in line with targeted dates to ensure the achievement of expected outcomes.
 - Adequate arrangements are in place to engage with key stakeholders
- 1.3** The overall audit opinion is that NSCJA governance arrangements are operating well, however there have been instances of inquorate meetings. There is a recommendation in the detailed report to address this issue so that key information may be conveyed and timely decisions reached especially in this transition period.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1** Note the content of this report
 - 2.3** Note the Internal Audit Report at Appendix 1
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3. Background

- 3.1** As part of the 2015/16 audit plan, a review has been undertaken of the governance arrangements of the North Strathclyde Community Justice Authority (NSCJA) to ensure continued partner participation during the transition process described below.
- 3.2** The responsibility for the planning and delivery of community justice is to transfer from CJA's to Community Planning Partnerships (CPP's). From 01.04.16 CPP's will assume their responsibilities under a shadow arrangement with full responsibility being conferred from 01.04.17. In order to ensure a successful transition from the current structure to the new model for community justice in Scotland, CJA's will play a key role in raising awareness amongst CPP's of their new responsibilities and provide training where necessary.

Implications of the Report

1. Equality & Human Rights

The Recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report as the report is for noting. If required following implementation, the actual impact of the recommendations and the mitigating actions will be reviewed and monitored, and the results of the assessment will be published on the Authorities website.

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Internal Audit Report



North Strathclyde Community Justice Authority Governance Audit Governance Arrangements

Date	August 2015
Audit Ref:	SYS180/2016

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Management Summary

1. Introduction

- 1.1 As part of the 2015/16 audit plan, a review has been undertaken of the governance arrangements of the North Strathclyde Community Justice Authority (NSCJA) to ensure continued partner participation during the transition process described below.
- 1.2 The responsibility for the planning and delivery of community justice is to transfer from CJA's to Community Planning Partnerships (CPP's). From 01.04.16 CPP's will assume their responsibilities under a shadow arrangement with full responsibility being conferred from 01.04.17. In order to ensure a successful transition from the current structure to the new model for community justice in Scotland, CJA's will play a key role in raising awareness amongst CPP's of their new responsibilities and provide training where necessary.

2. Objectives of audit

- 2.1 The objectives of this audit were to ensure that:
 - Meetings are arranged in line with the Terms of Reference of the Authority and that partner authorities participate in line with the minute of agreement.
 - Board members receive quarterly performance reports and action plan updates.
 - Action plans are progressing in line with targeted dates to ensure the achievement of expected outcomes.
 - Adequate arrangements are in place to engage with key stakeholders.

3. Key audit assurances

- 3.1 Meetings are arranged in line with the Procedural Standing Orders and statutory legislation. Partner authorities participate in meetings in accordance with the Procedural Standing Orders.
- 3.2 Performance reports and quarterly action plan updates are reported at each board meeting. Action plans are progressing in line with targeted dates to ensure the achievement of expected outcomes. In addition, the Board are informed about risks and mitigating actions relating to the transition process through Resilience Reports as well as progress of the actions on the Transition Plan in place to support local transition arrangements.
- 3.3 The CJA continue to actively engage with key stakeholders holders through regular meetings and groups such as the Area Plan Implementation Group.

4. Key risks arising from the audit review

- 4.1 Key decisions may not be made in a timely manner if Board meetings have to be rescheduled as a result of planned meetings being inquorate.

5. Overall audit opinion

- 5.1 NSCJA governance arrangements are operating well, however there have been instances of inquorate meetings. There is a recommendation in the detailed report to address this issue so that key information may be conveyed and timely decisions reached especially in this transition period.

Detailed Report

1. Persons referred to in report

- 1.1 Although not specifically referred to in the report, the following personnel were the main officers who assisted us during the review.

Jim Hunter - Chief Officer, North Strathclyde Community Justice Authority

William Kennedy - Planning Officer, North Strathclyde Community Justice Authority

2. Introduction

- 2.1 As part of the 2015/16 audit plan, a review has been undertaken of the governance arrangements of the North Strathclyde Community Justice Authority (NSCJA) to ensure continued partner participation during the transition process described below.

3. Background

- 3.1 The NSCJA was one of eight CJA's established in Scotland in April 2006 with the aim of making communities safer and to provide a consistent and integrated approach to managing offenders both in the community and whilst in custody in order to reduce reoffending.
- 3.2 On 16 December 2013 the Cabinet Secretary announced that responsibility for the planning and delivery of community justice is to transfer to Community Planning Partnerships (CPP's), and that a new national body is to be established to provide independent assurance on delivery of outcomes and to undertake the strategic commissioning of services where appropriate. Community Justice Authorities (CJA's) will therefore cease to exist.
- 3.3 From 1 April 2016 CPP's will be able to assume their responsibilities under the new model under a shadow arrangement with full responsibility being conferred from 1 April 2017 once the required legislation has been enacted. In order to ensure a successful transition from the current structure to the new model for community justice in Scotland, CJA's will play a key role in raising awareness amongst CPP's of their new responsibilities and provide training where necessary.

4. Objectives

- 2.2 The objectives of this audit were to ensure that :
- Meetings are arranged in line with the Terms of Reference of the Authority and that partner authorities participate in line with the minute of agreement.
 - Board members receive quarterly performance reports and action plan updates.
 - Action plans are progressing in line with targeted dates to ensure the achievement of expected outcomes.
 - Adequate arrangements are in place to engage with key stakeholders.

5. Scope

- 5.1 Discussions were conducted with key members of the NSCJA and Renfrewshire Council's Democratic Services to ascertain background information.

- 5.2 Source documents including relevant plans and minutes were identified and reviewed.
- 5.3 Prepared and undertook a series to confirm the adequacy of the governance arrangements in place.

6. Basis of opinion

- 6.1 In arriving at our opinion we comply with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards. We planned and performed our audit so as to obtain all the information and explanations which we considered necessary in order to provide us with sufficient evidence to give reasonable assurance.
- 6.2 For the area under review we consider the overall adequacy and effectiveness of risk management, control, and governance processes. Collectively we refer to these activities as “the system of internal control”.
- 6.3 The audit was based on sampling and therefore errors and/ or omissions may exist which have not been identified.

7. Key audit assurances

- 7.1 Meetings are arranged in line with the Procedural Standing Orders and statutory legislation. Partner authorities participate in meetings in accordance with the Procedural Standing Orders.
- 7.2 Performance reports and quarterly action plan updates are reported at each board meeting. Action plans are progressing in line with targeted dates to ensure the achievement of expected outcomes. In addition, the Board are informed about risks and mitigating actions relating to the transition process through Resilience Reports as well as progress of the actions on the Transition Plan in place to support local transition arrangements.
- 7.3 The CJA continue to actively engage with key stakeholders holders through regular meetings and groups such as the Area Plan Implementation Group.

8. Key risks arising from the audit review

- 8.1 Key decisions may not be made in a timely manner if Board meetings have to be rescheduled as a result of planned meetings being inquorate.

9. Detailed findings

9.1 Board Meetings

- 9.1.1 The auditor noted that there have been 10 scheduled Board Meetings since 14 June 2013, of these 4 were inquorate and therefore had to be rescheduled. Audit Scotland have also highlighted the number of inquorate meetings in the 'Issues and Risks' section of their Annual Reports for both 2013/14 and 2014/15. It is considered critical that in this transition period scheduled meetings take place to ensure that issues are raised and decisions taken in a timely manner.

Recommendation 1

The Chief Officer should request that the Convenor consider writing to all board members to encourage attendance at board meetings during the transition period so that issues are raised and decisions taken in a timely manner.

10. Overall Audit Opinion

- 10.1 NSCJA governance arrangements are operating well, however there have been instances of inquorate meetings. There is a recommendation in the detailed report to address this issue so that key information may be conveyed and timely decisions reached especially in this transition period.

Action Plan

Rec No.	Recommendation	Responsible Officer	Agreed Completion Date	Response	Priority
Board Meetings					
01	The Chief Officer should request that the Convenor consider writing to all board members to encourage attendance at board meetings during the transition period so that issues are raised and decisions taken in a timely manner.	Chief Officer	09.12.15	Recommendation accepted. The Chief Officer will discuss the issue of writing to board members to encourage attendance at board meetings with the Convenor.	B

Priority Key:

A = Critical Recommendation - Addresses a significant risk, impacting on the area under review

C = Good Practice Recommendation – Implementation will contribute to the general effectiveness of control.

B = Important Recommendation – Implementation will raise the level of assurance provided by the control system to acceptable levels

I = Service Improvement – Implementation will improve the efficiency / housekeeping of the area under review.