

To: Safer and Stronger Renfrewshire Thematic Board

On: 31 August 2016

Report by:

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Community Justice Transition Update

1. Summary

1.1 In response to the requirements of the Community Justice Scotland Act 2016 a multi-agency transitions group involving the key partners was created within Renfrewshire; this has now become the Community Justice Steering Group which reports to the Safer and Stronger Board, this group is currently in the process of undertaking and completing the following tasks:

- A Temporary Part time Community Justice Lead Officer has been appointed whose main purpose is to assist the transition process, facilitate the Steering group and stakeholder engagement.
- Establishing an agreed Memorandum of Understanding.
- Creating a Communications and Engagement Strategy.
- Undertaking a Strategic needs assessment.
- Agreeing a branding and clear message with regards to Community Justice Renfrewshire.
- Undertaking an Employability needs analysis of the offender population.
- Liaison with Recruit with Conviction regarding employability of offenders.
- Discussion with Families Outside to provide wide staff awareness raising training sessions.
- Publication of the Renfrewshire Community Justice Transition Plan 2016/2017.
- A thematic event is planned for autumn to look at liaison with the Crown Office Procurator Fiscal Service to promote increased use of diversion and Fiscal work Orders.

2. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Board notes the contents of the report.

3. Background

3.1 The Community Justice Scotland Act 2016 received Royal assent on 21 March 2016. Its purpose, to make provision about community justice, establishing a new national body (Community Justice Scotland) to oversee community justice and introduce requirements in

relation to the achievement of particular nationally and locally determined outcomes, and to provide national, professional and strategic leadership for community justice in Scotland.

Under the new model, the Community Justice Authorities will be disestablished and new community justice arrangements will be put in place at both a national and local level, placing a duty on statutory partners to have regard to the National Strategy for Community Justice. The statutory partners must work together to prepare a plan for their local authority area, to be submitted to Community Justice Scotland by March 2017. They will be jointly responsible for the plan's development and implementation.

The draft National Strategy for Community Justice and Outcomes, Performance and Improvement Framework were published on 04 July 2016 via the Knowledge Hub in order to assist partners in their planning process. The final versions of these will be officially launched at a national event to be held in Edinburgh on 24 November 2016. The documents will thereafter be published on the Scottish Government website.

- 3.2 The work of the community justice steering group is in its early stages and governance arrangements are being explored and established amongst partners. The recent publication of the draft national strategy and outcomes, performance and improvement framework will be helpful in guiding the initial planning of work. Early engagement is taking place with a range of partners in order to begin to explore some of the broad issues affecting persons who have committed offences and their families.

Activity to date has included;

- The Lead Officer Community Justice is now in post and is managed by the Criminal Justice Service Manager and co-located with child and public protection colleagues. Since coming in to post our Lead Officer has worked closely with colleagues from the Chief Executives services, dedicated to community planning who has supported the initial activity in preparation for the transition of responsibility. The Lead Officer has also undertaken widespread familiarisation within community justice partners in Renfrewshire and is soon to undertake training on public engagement to ensure that we maximize the opportunities to engage with relevant individuals in the community.
- The Community Justice Steering Group is now firmly established within Renfrewshire Council's robust Community Planning arrangements. It reports to the Safer and Stronger Board and sits alongside the Community Safety and Public Protection Steering Group. The Community Justice Steering Group is committed to building on the effective partnership approaches within Renfrewshire, to prevent offending and reduce reoffending. There will be a focus on engagement with the community, this will include those who have committed offences, their families and persons affected by crime, in order to make Renfrewshire a safer place to live and work.
- The Memorandum of Understanding is being finalised, work has commenced on a strategic needs assessment which will inform our commissioning strategy and strategic plan. A communication strategy is being developed and discussions are on-going to establish the branding and message for Community Justice Renfrewshire in order to enable public engagement.
- Consideration has commenced within the Council as to how to take forward an analysis of the employability needs of the offender population, and how to develop skills gained through unpaid work to further training and employment. Engagement has also been initiated with Recruit with Conviction to explore how we might engage with local employers to improve the employment opportunities for those with previous offences.

- We are currently liaising with Families Outside regarding staff training. This is to ensure that we create awareness amongst partners about the impact of imprisonment on children and families, so that they are better able to support them.
- A Community Justice link has been created on the Renfrewshire 2023 (Community Planning) website with publication of the Renfrewshire Community Justice Transition Plan 2016/2017.
- The Lead Officer Community Justice is now attending and forms part of the following groups;

Offenders and Prison Health Improvement Group.
National Community Justice Coordinators Steering Group.
Renfrewshire Alcohol and Drug Partnership Delivery Group.
Renfrewshire Gender Based Violence Strategy Group.
- The Lead Officer is involved in the planning of a thematic event to be held in autumn to look at increased use of diversion and Fiscal work Orders as well as communication timescales to assist early bail assessments and reduce remand. This event will involve Crown Office Procurator Fiscal Service, Criminal Justice Social Work, Whole Systems in Renfrewshire and Police Scotland

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