

Management Committee

Date: 31st October 2014
Agenda Item: 6b



Community Justice Reform

1.0 Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update regarding the plans to transfer responsibility for the strategic planning and delivery of community justice to Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs) from Community Justice Authorities (CJAs). It was reported to the management Committee in August 2014 that detailed arrangements were the subject of consultation. This remains the case at the time of writing. Nonetheless work has commenced to plan for the transition to the new arrangements which are scheduled to come into effect in 2016-17.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 It is recommended that the CPP Management Committee note the measures outlined in this report with regard to affecting the transition to local planning and delivery of community justice

3.0 Background

3.1 Under the terms of the management of Offenders (Scotland) Act 2005 CJAs have responsibility to prepare strategic (area) plans in consultation with relevant bodies. CJAs also monitor the performance of local authorities with regard to their duties undertaken principally by Criminal Justice Social Work Services and allocate on behalf of the Scottish Government the grant supporting these services. North Strathclyde CJA covers East Renfrewshire, Renfrewshire, Inverclyde, East and West Dunbartonshires' and Argyll and Bute.

3.2 The local authority brings together and reconciles the relevant areas of national and CJA policy and priorities, with local priorities and service delivery within a unified planning and performance improvement framework. Locally this is achieved within the terms of a formal partnership with West Dunbartonshire and East Dunbartonshire Councils who share a single strategic partnership manager, single budget, and deliver common outcomes within a joint planning and performance framework, commissioning strategy, deliver certain services across authority boundaries and report to a joint committee.

3.3 The previous report notes the establishment by the Scottish Government and COSLA of a Community Justice CPP transitions group, the remit of which is to ensure that CPPs are equipped and ready to fulfil their new obligations.

4.0 Main issues

- 4.1 In establishing the current partnership approach to local planning and service delivery arrangements, the authorities recognised that there was merit in having a joint approach to strategic planning and, with due regard for local circumstances, a consistent approach to operational systems, processes and procedures. Greater management capacity at service manager level permitted a shared approach to strategic management.
- 4.2 The constituent Partnership authorities have continued to deliver services within the structures of local operational accountability, notwithstanding cross authority collaboration and delivery of services, where appropriate and practicable. It should be noted that the Scottish Government's proposals acknowledge the possibility of continuing and/or developing inter-authority partnerships.
- 4.3 Officers are reviewing the current partnership arrangements, recognising a need to strengthen local accountability and agree reporting processes and routes but also recognising the potential merit in sharing resources and delivering certain services.
- 4.4 Officers are also currently considering the impact of the transition to direct allocation of ring fenced grants to local authorities. The funding formula for core services is under review as is the distribution and management of non-core funding. However, the present formula is likely to be in existence at the outset of the new structural arrangements in 2016-17. In this context issues re grant distribution in the short term are compounded by uncertainty regarding the impact of any new funding formula/arrangement. As matters stand the level of grant funding has declined in value against the actual costs of service delivery over a number of years.

5.0 Conclusion

- 5.1 The detail regarding the operation and responsibilities of local community justice partnerships is yet to be confirmed/worked out at a national level and established in legislation. However the legislative framework establishing the duties of local authorities and other agencies in respect of community justice is well established and fully operational as are arrangements in respect of local planning as noted above. Within this context, work has commenced to review current arrangements and consider the implications of the transition.

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