

Community Justice Redesign: Transition plan progress report.

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 From 2017-18 responsibility for local strategic planning and delivery of community justice will transfer from the eight Community Justice Authorities (CJA) to Community Planning Partnerships.

The purpose of this report is to provide members with an update regarding the submission and progress of the transition plan regarding the establishment of local Community Justice Partnerships.

The Transition plan (appendix 1) follows requirements set out by the Scottish Government with a focus on the establishment of links between community justice statutory partners and with the Third Sector, service users and communities.

There are no financial implications for the Council. Transitional funding has been pooled between partner authorities and used to fund a temporary post of Transitions Programme Officer and will also be used to support consultation events and develop partnership initiatives.

- 1.2 It is recommended that the Community Services Committee:
- a) note the progress made under the terms of the Transition Plan 2016-17 with regard to community justice redesign.

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2.0 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 In 2013 Scottish Government consulted on the future model of community justice in Scotland. The outcome of this consultation was that from 2017-18 responsibility for local strategic planning and delivery of community justice will transfer from the eight Community Justice Authorities (CJA) to Community Planning Partnerships.
- 2.2 The transition plan (Appendix 1) has been developed jointly by Argyll and Bute, West Dunbartonshire and East Dunbartonshire Councils. The background to this collaborative approach is that since 2002 the three councils have worked in partnership in relation to the strategic planning and delivery of criminal justice social work. In respect of Community Justice it is recognised that Community Planning Partnerships are the vehicle to bring partner organisations together to plan and delivery community justice outcomes.
- 2.3 The joint approach to transition planning is consistent with established partnership working and high level of inter-authority collaboration in respect of the planning and delivery of the above services. The transition plan draws on this experience and extends the collaboration with community justice partners within the framework of the North Strathclyde Community Justice Authority (NSCJA). The plan accommodates the particular issues affecting the delivery of community justice in the local authority areas, embracing a very wide range of social, economic and geographic diversity. Overlaying these factors are the organisational and service delivery arrangements of statutory partners, almost all of which overlap local authority boundaries; in connection with which there are additional efficiencies to be gained by partnership and collaboration in the transition planning process.
- 2.4 Community Justice is defined by the Scottish Government as *“the collection of agencies and services in Scotland that individually and in partnership work to manage offenders, prevent offending and reduce reoffending and the harm it causes, to promote social inclusion, citizenship and desistance”*. Outcomes for Community Justice will be supported by effective local planning and delivery of services by a range of partners in the public and third sector.

- 2.5 In order to ensure as smooth as possible transition to the new model local authorities were required to submit a transition plan setting out how they plan to manage this process over 2016-17. The Criminal Justice Partnership authorities worked together to create a plan, drawing on the experience of inter-authority partnership and creating efficiencies for partner agencies in terms of consistency. The plan was submitted in January 2016.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Community Services Committee:

- a) note the progress made under the terms of the Transition Plan 2016-17 with regard to community justice redesign

4.0 DETAIL

- 4.1 The issues addressed in the plan follow the requirements set out by the Scottish Government and focus on the establishment of links between community justice statutory partners and with the Third Sector, service users and communities. The plan also addresses governance and accountability and how most effective use will be made of the transition funding offered to local authorities to support the process
- 4.2 We have a clear understanding of the extent and nature of existing links with the current partnership between East Dunbartonshire, West Dunbartonshire and Argyll and Bute. Partners recognise existing strategic and operational relationships and that there is potential within the new arrangements to extend and strengthen the value of these relationships, by drawing on the contributions from a wider field. Therefore, where relationships and links are less well developed, partners will be consulted and engaged with in order to ensure mutual understanding of partner roles and potential contribution to fulfilling the aspirations underpinning community justice. Within this context, the integration of health and social care may afford opportunities for the development of a more consistent approach to strategic understanding of the contribution of health and social care services to community justice outcomes.
- 4.3 We have a clear understanding of the extent and nature of existing relationships with the third sector. There are a small number of commissioned services supporting Criminal Justice Social Work (CJSW) but a larger and more complex set of operational relationships, which are not directly commissioned but, are nonetheless critical to achievement of reductions in offending. The development of a strategic approach to commissioning is critical in terms of assessing and forecasting needs, agreeing desired outcomes, considering options, planning the nature, range and quality

of future services and working in partnership to put these in place. The Criminal Justice Social Work Partnership commissioning strategy and performance planning and improvement framework offers a foundation from which to build an inclusive partnership approach to the achievement of community justice outcomes

- 4.4 In consulting with partners it was recognised that there are quite strong operational links between criminal justice social work and local third sector organisations. The challenge of bringing the benefit of these operational relationships to the table in the context of developing local community justice plans was recognised in terms of limited strategic capacity in smaller organisations. Support to improve this could be achieved in the short to medium term through the resource provided through the transition funding.
- 4.5 Community justice services require to develop a fuller understanding of the views of service users, including Sentencers, people with convictions who may be reluctant recipients of services and the public, including those who may be or have knowledge of victims of crime and whose views may be influenced by media reporting and portrayal of crime. Lessons may be learned from existing systems and consultation processes and the gaps identified in terms of public engagement through a variety of means. The local third sector partners potentially could support the extension of the range and reach of consultation in a number of areas.
- 4.6 The process of transition has been supported by the work of the (national) Community Planning Partnership Transitions Group. Community Justice Authorities (CJA) are involved in this group and have produced a toolkit /resource pack to support Community Planning Partnerships (CPP) staff. National events have also been held.
- 4.7 Within a local context North Strathclyde Community Justice Authority (NSCJA) has engaged with all Community Planning Partnerships (CPP) and partners collectively and individually in terms of information exchange, briefing and consultation. Over the period of transition, whilst engagement at national and regional level with Community Justice Authorities (CJA) will continue, the focus will shift to those matters critical to efficient local transition. The experience of the Criminal Justice Authorities (CJA) in relation to the development of strategic partnerships will be essential. Over the period of transition the local authorities involved in our local partnership will be determining priorities and identifying the means and capacity to effect continuity.
- 4.8 The present situation is that Criminal Justice Social Work Service provides progress reports on Single Outcome Agreement (SOA) priorities to the relevant outcome groups in each authority. In relation to the local authorities' responsibilities the Partnership Joint

Committee has delegated oversight and decision making powers. Accountability in relation to performance improvement is achieved via reporting on a balanced scorecard to the Joint Committee.

- 4.9 It is the intention that accountability and governance should so far as possible fit within existing arrangements. The Criminal Justice Social Work Service remains accountable to and subject to governance by the organisational arrangements which accommodate Social Work Services within each local authority. This includes any cross authority accountability which may be required or developed.
- 4.10 In terms of accountability for community justice outcomes there will be a clear link to existing relevant Single Outcome Agreement (SOA) outcome groups. This will involve a review of current arrangements. The Service will be consulting internally and with partner agencies in order to fully develop proposals in relation to the best governance arrangements to ensure the appropriate location, level and focus of accountability, (legal, financial, outcomes). The guiding principles are that there will be;
- clear arrangements for performance reporting on achievement of outcomes;
 - clear lines of accountability for policy and resourcing decisions;
 - a Commissioning Strategy reflecting the new community justice partnership landscape;
 - that resources meet operational needs in relation to effective delivery of statutory services and outcomes;
 - opportunities for shared services and systems are identified and appropriate protocols developed.
- 4.11 For Community Justice it is proposed that the reporting arrangements will collectively go to a Community Justice Partnership Committee. From there, each Local Authority will consider their internal reporting arrangements to their respective Community Planning Partnership (CPP). Within West Dunbartonshire and Argyll and Bute this reporting will be to the respective Community Planning Partnership Management Committee on an Annual or bi-annual basis; within East Dunbartonshire to the Community Planning Executive Group. Reporting of specific outcomes and performance for Community Justice will continue under local reporting arrangements in relation to Safe, Strong and Included outcomes.
- 4.12 Prior to the formal transition process outlined in this document the Service has begun to identify organisations and individuals with whom to work in partnership. This transition plan was informed through consultation with key statutory partners and representatives of local third sector providers. It is the intention that future planning activity will be informed by a wider representation and will draw in views from a constituency of interested parties including the public and service users.

- 4.13 The Service recognises the opportunity to identify existing connectivity to strengthen the links and to develop new ones where appropriate. This activity will require to be informed by the priorities developed within the national strategy. In relation to individuals and communities affected by crime and those involved in committing offences, common themes such as access to employment opportunities, housing and health services have been identified.
- 4.14 Beyond the period of transition it is recognised that a constructive approach to community justice will require partnerships to look beyond the formal response to crime through the criminal justice system. Consideration will be given to the factors which support desistance from crime in relation to those already involved, and to early intervention which may divert and prevent criminal activity.
- 4.15 In the short to medium term the transition funding (£50,000 to each Local Authority) has been pooled to maximise capacity to support transition and future planning activity. A key aspect of this is the appointment in December 2015 of a Community Justice Transitions Programme Officer post hosted by West Dunbartonshire Council and managed by the Partnership Manager. The post holder reports to an executive group comprising the Criminal Justice Partnership Strategic Management Group and Community Planning Managers
- 4.16 The Programme Officer's work refers directly to the transition plan. The first task identified was to undertake a mapping of the current landscape of partnership engagement with key services. This initial exercise has been completed and will be reviewed at relevant times to ensure account is taken of any changes made in the Community Justice (Scotland) Bill in its final form.
- 4.17 The Programme Officer has begun to establish contacts with and meet representatives of local third sector organisations and with the national Community Justice Voluntary Sector Forum. The Partnership is also utilising opportunities and experience afforded by the Community Justice Authority (CJA) and our relationship with the various Public Service Partnerships to provide insight into and network with a range of partners.
- 4.18 The Programme Officer has met with the CJA Planning Officer and arrangements have been made for the executive group to meet with the CJA Chief Officer. The primary purpose of establishing and developing these relationships is to ensure that continuity of involvement in and, where appropriate, leadership of strategic and operational partnerships are prioritised.
- 4.19 The question of how partner resources will be leveraged to support change and innovation is critical and ultimately will be a key factor in the measurement of success and achievement of the aspirations

underpinning the change. An element of this, referred to in the forthcoming legislation, will be access to support from general services; housing, education, employment health etc. There are in many instances good operational links which require developing to ensure consistency, sustainability and clarity with regard to their contribution to Community Justice outcomes.

- 4.20 The provision of funding to facilitate the transition to the new model was noted above. The funding commenced in 2015-16 and was recently confirmed as continuing into 2016-17 and, subject to review, into 2017-18. Part of this funding is being used to employ a Programme Officer. The balance will be utilised to fund consultation events and opportunities and, subject to the terms of the funding, could be used to support the establishment of partnership initiatives for instance involving local third sector organisations individually or collectively and or partnership between national and local service providers. It is intended that the first phase of consultation with statutory and other partners due to commence in March/April 2016 will help in identifying potential initiatives of this type.
- 4.21 In summary, Criminal Justice Social Work and Community Planning Partners were required by Government to indicate, by January 2016, how they will manage the transition from current arrangements to a local community justice model by 2017 and how transitional funding would be used to support this.
- 4.22 The Plan (appendix 1) addresses 5 key questions set out by the Government and focusses on how we will build links and engage with partners, the Third Sector, service users and communities; how we intend to work with the outgoing Community Justice Authority; and how we will engage with partners to support change and local innovation.
- 4.23 A Transitions Programme Officer has been recruited to carry forward the transitions plan and report to Criminal Justice and Community Planning managers. It is early days but work has begun scoping out and mapping existing partners and structures within the three Local Authorities. This initial work is expected to be concluded by March this year with more detailed consultative and developmental sessions throughout the summer and into 2017 in respect of the 5 key areas. Governance of the plan rests with the Community Justice Partnership Executive Group (comprising of Criminal Justice social work and Community Planning managers from all three Local Authorities). The plan, currently on target, highlights key tasks and timescales leading to full transition to the new arrangements in April 2017.

transition and beyond. However, it should be noted that the National Strategy for Community Justice and National Performance Framework will not be available until mid-2016 with a consequent impact on the timeframe for the detailed development of local Community Justice plans for the period from 2017 due to be submitted by the end of this year.

- 6.7 Customer Service The redesign of Community Justice to deliver local outcomes will attract improved consultation and planning with service users.

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APPENDICES

1. ABD CJ Transition Plan 2016-17 Final draft