



## BRIEFING PAPER

<b>***FOR NOTING AND ENDORSEMENT ***</b>			
Disclosable under FOISA 2002	<b>YES</b>		
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Date Created	<b>05.05.16</b>	Telephone	<b>01436 633650</b>
Attachments: N/A			

### **Proposal to introduce Youth Engagement Officers within designated secondary schools within the Argyll & Bute area.**

#### **1. Purpose**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide background information to the Argyll and Bute Community Planning Partnership Management Committee in relation to the proposal to introduce designated Police Scotland Youth Engagement Officers at identified secondary schools within the Helensburgh, Dunoon and Oban areas. If agreed, a Service Level Agreement between Police Scotland and Argyll & Bute Council will be developed and implemented.

#### **2. Background**

- 2.1 Police Scotland has held discussions with Argyll & Bute Council regarding the proposal to deploy Youth Engagement Officers (formerly known as Campus Officers) in three secondary schools in Argyll and Bute. Campus Police Officers had previously been successfully deployed in our schools until budget reductions resulted in their removal. The proposal offers significant benefits to the schools in question, and the positive benefits of the role is acknowledged by Education Services.
- 2.2 Police Scotland is committed to working in partnership with Education Services, and improving our engagement with young people, thereby supporting the principles of GIRFEC and Early Intervention. Our interest in introducing Youth Engagement Officers in a limited number of Argyll and Bute secondary schools - Hermitage Academy, Dunoon Grammar School and Oban High School, further supports this ethos. Preliminary discussions have taken place with the Head Teachers, Youth Workers and Youth Services, the findings of which inform the content of this paper.
- 2.3 In 2002, Campus Police Officers were deployed for the first time in Scottish schools and several were successfully placed in Argyll and Bute until factors, including budget constraints and policy changes, led to their withdrawal. This period of deployment provided evidence that having strong relationships within

schools created safer environments and contributed to effective learning and enhanced wellbeing for young people. It must be stressed that the main purpose of introducing Youth Engagement Officers is not in response to criminal activities, but rather to create positive relationships and break down barriers between young people and the police through engagement with pupils within schools and the wider community. Youth Engagement Officers will have the opportunity to work directly with a large number of young people on a daily basis and will positively influence behaviour and provide support to pupils, teachers and partners to achieve better outcomes for all.

- 2.4 Secondary schools in Argyll and Bute have Youth Workers and other partner agencies routinely working within them. It is widely recognised that the use of Youth Engagement Officers is another way in which education and police services can work together to help young people to engage in positive behaviour and improve wider community safety.

### **3. Detail**

- 3.1 Following initial discussion and consultation between Argyll and Bute Education Services and Police Scotland, all parties were extremely positive about the prospect of the deployment of Youth Engagement Officers with the identified schools in Argyll with several professionals describing encouraging experiences of previous schemes.
- 3.2 Crucial to the success of the role is identifying an officer with the essential skills and characteristics to engage with young people and the wider community alike. The Officer will be required to work in the educational environment, and be able to adapt to, and embrace the different culture, philosophy and ethos of that sector. It is recognised that there has to be a balance between engagement and authority, i.e. "firm but fair". Being tolerant, patient, a good listener, an influencer and negotiator as well as having a good sense of humour were all identified as important attributes of a Youth Engagement Officer.
- 3.3 A job description has been developed, based on the previous post of School Based Campus Officer, which reflects the skills and attributes essential for the role of a Youth Engagement Officer. This job description is flexible enough to tailor the role to the individual needs at each school and allows for Education Staff to be involved in developing school specific tasks and outcomes.
- 3.4 It is recommended that the Youth Engagement Officer will work in uniform with the general consensus being that this would be helpful to maintain a high profile.
- 3.5 There is also considerable potential for the Youth Engagement Officer and Youth Workers to work together on areas of work such as drugs and alcohol awareness, internet safety, bullying, and safety programs such as PREVENT, WRAP etc. The different relationships and approaches to working with young people will complement and enhance activities and outcomes for our young people.
- 3.6 It is envisaged that the Youth Engagement Officer would positively contribute to a wide range of activities both within and outwith school, including:

- Early intervention;
- PSE Classes;
- Input to curriculum classes such as Law and Order/Crime and Punishment and Princes Trust XL;
- Parent Nights;
- Providing advice to teaching staff on legal issues (criminal);
- School Assemblies;
- Dealing with antisocial behaviour;
- Internet/Social Media awareness;
- Addressing “hotspots” i.e. locations near to schools where young people congregate
- School Clubs
- Community based diversionary activities.

3.7 Prior to the deployment of Youth Engagement Officers, consultation will take place with the respective Parent Councils in respect of the role and responsibilities of the Youth Engagement Officer. Pupils will also be informed at school assemblies and through engagement with the Pupil Councils and inputs will be provided to the Educational staff. The wider community of parents will be informed by letter from the Education Department and will be afforded the opportunity to meet the Youth Engagement Officer at Parents' Evenings. A media launch will also be arranged for August 2016 in order that the wider local community can be informed.

#### **4 Recommendations**

4.1 It is recommended that the Argyll and Bute Community Planning Partnership Management Committee note and endorse:

- The introduction and deployment of Youth Engagement Officers in Hermitage Academy, Dunoon Grammar School and Oban High School.
- The development of a Service Level Agreement in respect of the roles and responsibilities to be undertaken by the proposed Youth Engagement Officer.
- The development of a communication and media strategy to raise school and community awareness of the creation and deployment of Youth Engagement Officers.

#### **5. Conclusion**

5.1 I respectfully request this report is forwarded to the Argyll and Bute Community Planning Partnership Management Committee for information and endorsement.