

REDUCING REOFFENDING – MEMBER-LED REVIEW FINAL REPORT

To: **Cabinet**

Date: **15th April 2014**

From: **Safer and Stronger Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

Electoral division(s): **All**

Forward Plan ref: **N/A** *Key decision:* **No**

Purpose: **This report sets out the findings and recommendations from a member-led review that investigated the measures that could be undertaken locally to reduce criminal reoffending through increasing employment opportunities for offenders.**

Recommendation: **Cabinet is asked to:**

- a) Consider and comment upon the findings and recommendations contained within the report**
- b) Respond to the recommendations contained within the report.**

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MEMBER-LED REVIEW CHAIRMAN'S FOREWORD

A review was commissioned by the Safer and Stronger Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee in September 2013 to look at measures that could be taken to reduce persistent criminal reoffending. Given my knowledge of this area, the Review group was chaired by me, with support from Councillors Giles, Smith and Bullen.

I presented the group's interim finding to the Committee meeting on 19th December 2013, with a final report being presented on 6th February 2014. Since then, I have been raising some of these issues on a national platform, including discussions with Ministers about the opportunities and risks of the wholesale changes taking place in prison estate management, offender management and rehabilitation. Cabinet Members will be aware that these are very current issues with considerable media coverage.

In commending the report to Cabinet, Overview and Scrutiny Committee Members recognised:

- Some people feel that the priority should be given to supporting and protecting victims, and that offenders deserve no support. Whilst acknowledging this view, successful rehabilitation, leading to former offenders contributing to society rather than reoffending, is a valuable way to support communities, as it leads to fewer victims in the future;
- There are over 2,000 former offenders living in the county¹ who are currently clients of the Probation Service. This includes those who have served custodial sentences, those on Licence, and those on a Community Order;
- Two years after being released from prison, 47% of offenders were on out of work benefits, with 75% having claimed at some point²;
- The high reoffending rate: for adult offenders released from custody in England and Wales in 2011, the reoffending rate was 46.4%, although in Cambridgeshire the reoffending rate was between 25-30%³;
- A significant proportion of offenders have themselves been victims of crime. This in no way excuses the offences, but it highlights the need to break the cycle of offending with positive intervention;
- That given the sweeping changes in probation nationally, and uncertainties with health provision (particularly mental health services), action in this matter would be timely: only one in ten prisoners has no mental health disorder⁴;
- That a first step would be an employer forum or summit in the county, led by and/or facilitated by the County Council, to show its commitment to this issue. This should not wait until the County Council's new Committee system is established in May – the impetus needs to be sustained;
- With the current financial crisis facing local government, County Councils will increasingly move from a delivery to a commissioning and facilitating role. The recommendations of this report provide such an opportunity, which will have strategic economic and social benefit for Cambridgeshire and beyond.

¹ [Cambridgeshire County Council "Victim and Offender Needs Assessment"](#)

² [Ministry of Justice "Offending, Employment and Benefits"](#)

³ [Ministry of Justice "Proven Reoffending Statistics"](#)

⁴ [Mental Health Foundation](#)

The member-led review focused on the barriers faced by offenders seeking employment. It was acknowledged that the issues around offending were more complex than employment alone, but intervention in this area is often a critical element in breaking the cycle of reoffending.

Although there are numerous agencies more directly involved in supporting offenders, it was suggested that the Council with its strategic role of delivering and facilitating many statutory services should take a lead in raising the profile of this issue in the county, and facilitate the sharing of good practice.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank my fellow Committee Members who took part in the member-led review, and the wider Committee for their helpful pointers, challenge and comments.

Councillor Edward Cearns

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Safer and Stronger Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee commissioned a review regarding measures that could be taken to reduce persistent criminal reoffending on 3rd September 2013. This issue was brought to the Committee's attention by Councillor Edward Cearn, who had conducted research into the causes of repeat offending; attended events run by the Howard League for Penal Reform and Department for Work and Pensions and met officers within the Council's Youth Offending Team and partners such as Probation Service officers.
- 1.2 In making his case for a review to the Committee, Councillor Cearn acknowledged that the causes of repeat offending are often numerous, complex and difficult to address (as explained in section 2 below), necessitating a multi-agency, holistic approach. However, he had found that the barriers faced by offenders seeking employment were a critical element of the cycle of reoffending, and that intervention at this point could make a significant difference. Given the time available to the Committee, Councillor Cearn felt that this would be a factor that the Council and its partners could practically address. A wider study could, of course, be undertaken under the Committee system arrangements if Members wish.
- 1.3 Councillors Giles, Smith and Bullen also contributed to the review. Councillor Giles is a member of the Her Majesty's Prison (HMP) / Young Offenders Institution (YOI) Littlehey Independent Monitoring Board (IMB)⁵. Members visited:
- The headquarters of Timpson in Manchester; a company with an employment scheme that operates in several prisons and supports former offenders into employment in factories and branches across the country
 - HMP Thorncross, Cheshire, a Category D Young Offenders Institution (YOI) for males aged 18 – 25, and an adult prison for adults of all ages
 - HMP / YOI Littlehey, Cambridgeshire, a Category C prison⁶ which holds convicted and sentenced adults and young adults within the YOI.
- 1.4 At its meeting on 19th December 2013, the Committee received an update on the interim findings of the review team, and received a steer about the provisional findings and recommendations to date. At that meeting, a Member observed that a key problem faced by offenders on their release was isolation. Whilst it is acknowledged that the review has focussed primarily on securing training and employment opportunities, prior to and following release, and that these are not a panacea, the Members involved in the review felt that employment was often instrumental in reducing isolation for former offenders by bringing them into contact with other people, and addressing both practical and emotional issues such as providing an income and

⁵ IMB members are independent and unpaid. Their role is to monitor the day-to-day life in their local prison or removal centre and ensure that proper standards of care and decency are maintained. Further information can be accessed via this link: <http://www.justice.gov.uk/about/imb>

⁶ Category A: Prisoners whose escape would be highly dangerous to the public or the police or the security of the State and for whom the aim must be to make escape impossible.
Category B: Prisoners for whom the very highest conditions of security are not necessary but for whom escape must be made very difficult.

Category C: Prisoners who cannot be trusted in open conditions but who do not have the resources and will to make a determined escape attempt.

Category D: Prisoners who present a low risk; can reasonably be trusted in open conditions and for whom open conditions are appropriate.

improving self-worth. This belief was borne out in the conversations and interviews that the Members had in the course of the review.

- 1.5 One aspect that the review did not have opportunity to explore the relationship with neighbouring areas. This is one area the future Committee structure may wish to take forward.
- 1.6 The Group would like to thank all those who contributed to the review, particularly Darren Burns, Timpson Foundation Ambassador and the HMP / YOI Littlehey IMB Members that provided the tour of the institution and David Taylor, Governor of Littlehey.

2. POLICY BACKGROUND

Breaking the Cycle

- 2.1 The Government published a Green Paper in December 2010 entitled 'Breaking the Cycle: Effective Punishment, Rehabilitation and Sentencing of Offenders'⁷. This argued that there was a system failure as public safety had not improved, punishments had not been effective and the number of criminals reoffending had not reduced. The following was cited:
 - The prison population has almost doubled since 1993
 - Despite a 50% increase in the budget for prisons and managing offenders in the last ten years almost half of all adult offenders released from custody reoffend within a year
 - 75% of offenders sentenced to youth custody reoffend within a year
 - Overall, one in five offenders spent some time in custody the year after they were released from prison or started a community sentence
 - The National Audit Office has estimated that the social and economic costs of reoffending by those released from short sentences alone are between £7 – 10 billion a year
- 2.2 The Green Paper also stated that a significant proportion of crime is committed by offenders who have multiple problems:
 - 64% of newly sentenced prisoners report using a drug during the four week period before custody
 - 44% of offenders assessed in 2008 had problems with alcohol misuse which may have required treatment

In addition:

- 37% of prisoners have stated that they will need help finding a place to live when they are released from prison
- 12% said they had a mental illness of depression as a long standing illness while 20% reported needing help with an emotional or mental health problem
- 24% said they had been taken into care as a child
- 47% said they had no qualifications
- 13% said they had never had a paid job.

⁷ Available online [here](#)

2.3 The Green Paper proposed a number of reforms, which have subsequently been implemented, or are in the process of being implemented. These included:

- Significant reductions in expenditure to contribute to overall Government savings, resulting in reduced levels of staffing
- Reduction in centralised process based targets, in favour of Payment by Results (encouraging innovation and incentivising providers by paying them on the basis of, for example, reductions in reoffending)
- Increased involvement of the private sector in the provision, for example, of education provision and drug and alcohol support services (linked to reducing resources)
- Increased discipline for prisoners of regular working hours.

Recent Report by the Chief Inspectors of Prisons and Probation

2.4 On 17th December 2013, the BBC News reported on the findings from an investigation by the Chief Inspectors of Prisons and Probation⁸.

2.5 Based on findings from 21 prisons, covering the period April 2012 to March 2013, the inspectors advised that the lack of progress in offender management was 'concerning' and 'Chief Inspector of Probation Liz Calderbank and Chief Inspector of Prisons Nick Hardwick said they had reached the reluctant conclusion that offender management in prisons was failing'.

2.6 The BBC also reported:

The Prison Service is required to make changes under the government's Transforming Rehabilitation strategy, which includes an extension of "through the gate" help where most offenders should be supported by one service provider as they move from prison to the outside world.

But the inspectors said they doubted whether the Prison Service could meet these and other National Offender Management Service (NOMS) expectations.

"We therefore believe that the current position is no longer sustainable and should be subject to fundamental review," they said.

2.7 The BBC quoted the Justice Minister, Jeremy Wright:

Mr Wright said the government realised "some time ago" that management of prisoners must be improved.

He said the system of help for people leaving prison was also being reformed as part of the government's "radical" Transforming Rehabilitation scheme.

Since December, Probation Trusts have received formal Notification of the Termination of Probation Trust Service Contract as part of the Transforming Rehabilitation Programme. From 1st April 2014, a newly created National Probation Service will be place, which should offer every offender released from custody supervision and rehabilitation in the community, including those sentenced to less than 12 months in custody. The Ministry of Justice website states that *"The market will be opened up to a diverse range of new rehabilitation providers, so that we get the*

⁸ The article and TV footage can be accessed [here](#)

*best out of the public, voluntary and private sectors, at the local as well as national level.*⁹

Member Views

- 2.8 The overall sense received by the Group from discussions with officials and partners at all levels was that both the Prison and Probation Services are undergoing a series of dramatic changes. It was clear that many are concerned or at least reticent about the possible impact of these changes, whilst others perceive that there are opportunities to significantly improve services despite reducing resources. Members recognised significant risks in implementing rapid changes on institutions with hitherto relatively inflexible working cultures, but also saw potential opportunities, such as the ability to tap into the energy, innovation and resources of the private sector as they become increasingly involved. There is however the risk that some providers may be pressured into meeting government set outcomes which are not always mutually compatible with meeting the needs of offenders and the communities that they are part of.
- 2.9 Members also believe that it is evident that there is a clear imperative for the Committee, the Council as a whole, and its partners to tackle reoffending as it is a blight on society in human and financial terms. Indeed, just as it makes good business sense for the commercial world to invest in the criminal justice system it makes good business sense for the Council to do what it can to support offenders to break the cycle of reoffending.

3. VISIT TO TIMPSON LTD

- 3.1 Councillors Cearns, Giles and representatives from the Council's Youth Offending Team and the Probation Service visited the headquarters of Timpson in Wythenshawe, Manchester. Established in 1865 in Manchester, Timpson is a family business currently led by John Timpson, Chairman, and James Timpson, Chief Executive. Timpson services include: shoe repairs, house signs, locksmiths services, car keys, photo processing (Timpson owns Max Spielmann stores), dry cleaning, key cutting, locker repairs, engraving jewellery and watch repairs. They have over 900 stores across the UK and Ireland and a turnover of c. £3 – 4 million per week and further expansion is anticipated.
- 3.2 Members visited Timpson because they have an established scheme in place to employ offenders whilst they are in prison, on Release on Temporary License (ROTL, i.e. working outside of prison for Timpson during the day and returning to prison at the end of their shift) and following completion of their sentence. It is Timpson's policy not to appoint sex offenders. A similar scheme does not exist in Cambridgeshire.
- 3.3 Approximately 10% of the Timpson workforce is comprised of current / former offenders and other groups sometimes subject to marginalisation, such as former military personnel and the long term unemployed. Members were advised that this makes good business sense, ultimately in terms of increased profit, but is also part of their corporate social responsibility policy which is delivered through the Timpson Foundation.
- 3.4 The visit was hosted by Darren Burns, Timpson Foundation Ambassador. Darren informed the group that Timpson's work with offenders has been recognised by the

⁹ <http://www.justice.gov.uk/transforming-rehabilitation>

Skills Funding Agency, as Timpson's have been granted 'pathfinder' status and £1.2 million funding to support Timpson in providing learning placements (i.e. job opportunities). Timpson also share their experiences with other organisations so that they can learn from them. Timpson is currently working with Greggs, Boots, Marks and Spencer, Iceland, Fujitsu, DHL, Speedy Hire, Village Hotels and Royal Mencap as part of this initiative. Darren advised that the funding had come with certain limitations. However, regardless of funding availability, Darren advised that he would be willing to visit and work with organisations in Cambridgeshire to share Timpson's experiences with offenders, in furtherance of its corporate social responsibility objectives.

- 3.5 Timpson has established a number of workshops and enterprises within Prisons (generally in the North West area). The group visited HMP Thorncross, an open prison near Warrington, to see an example in operation. They spoke to prisoners employed in a centre used for transferring VHS video content (deposited by customers in Max Spielmann stores) onto DVDs. The prisoners were supervised by a (non offender) manager and were engaged in cataloguing the videos on computer databases, operating the equipment to transfer the videos, printing labels and images onto the DVDs and packaging them for return to customers. Members learned that this work was very popular with prisoners as they were paid significantly more by Timpson (£30 per week) than they could be if engaged in regular prison tasks (£7 per week). For many prisoners, this represented their first employment and therefore helped instil a positive work ethic, especially as there was a waiting list of prisoners ready to fill any vacant posts. Prisoners would also have the opportunity to gain qualifications that whilst not of general use, would support their development within Timpson, post release, if they chose to pursue a career with them.
- 3.6 The group also visited a shoe repair workshop close to the Timpson headquarters in Wythenshawe. Members spoke to two prisoners on ROTL who were training as apprentices in skilled shoe repairs, one of whom was using the opportunity as a stopgap as he intends to return to work on the family farm upon release, whilst the other aims to develop a career within Timpson. It was clear that both had gained a great deal from the opportunity and that they had integrated with the wider workforce. Members learned that this was typical across the workforce due to the continual introduction of offenders as employees across Timpson's.
- 3.7 The group spoke at length with Darren to benefit from his knowledge about offenders and their employment. This insight was particularly useful as Darren is a former Police Officer and offender who has spent time in prison. Key points arising from the discussion included:

- **Selection process**

Darren advised that Timpson are very selective about the offenders they choose to work for them. They have established good relationships with Prison staff, who will only put forward prisoners who they believe are ready to work. Of these, only approximately 2 out of 10 candidates will be successful. Timpson's general application form asks applicants whether they have been convicted of a criminal offence and states: 'If your answer is yes this will be discussed at the interview. Convictions don't mean a closed door at Timpson Group'.

- **Zero tolerance to inappropriate behaviour**

Offenders on ROTL (i.e. still in custody but Released on Temporary Licence) working for Timpson sign an agreement that ensures that Timpson can terminate the arrangement immediately if this is deemed necessary. However, Darren stressed that

issues with offenders are rare, and that more non offenders steal from the company than offenders. Foundation members are treated like every other colleague.

- **Staff are treated well and can progress**

The group were impressed by the very wide range of benefits available to staff, which have proven a significant aid to staff retention and loyalty. Examples include: unlimited bonus scheme; one weeks extra paid holiday plus £100 towards the cost of a wedding and a chauffeur driven car; champagne on key birthdays; football tickets; hardship fund; gym, free hair dresser, free chiropody (HQ only), etc. 75% of offenders stay with Timpson longer than 12 months, and 26 Foundation colleagues have become branch managers.

- **Willingness to defend scheme in the media**

There has occasionally been negative media coverage associated with offender employment. Timpson's have continued with the scheme regardless (in contrast, Members later learned that a work scheme at Littlehey Prison had been cancelled after negative media coverage), which they are able to do as a business.

- **Working relationships with HM Prisons Service**

It was suggested that there is often a defensive, or reactionary attitude and approach amongst some Prison staff who do not believe in offender rehabilitation (as well as staff with opposite views). Timpson have had to be tenacious and adopt a solutions focussed attitude in order to overcome obstacles.

On general issues, key points included:

- The lack of provision of training courses and qualifications within prisons that provide a meaningful likelihood of getting a job upon release
- Associated with the above; too often Prisons deliver against output performance indicators (e.g. the delivery of a course), rather than against outcomes
- A significant proportion of offenders are not ready or are unlikely to ever become suitable candidates for employment. However, there is a significant minority that can achieve positive outcomes with appropriate intervention and support

3.8 Members concluded as follows:

Sharing and promoting Timpson's experiences with businesses and key stakeholders (such as Littlehey Prison) in Cambridgeshire

Members are of the view that the Council should work with partners to convene a meeting¹⁰ with a select group of local businesses who could benefit from establishing schemes that involve the employment of offenders and / or former offenders. Members understand that there has been some discussion between Littlehey Prison and Timpson without success in the recent past. However, given the track record of success in other areas of the country, Members believe that Cambridgeshire should take full advantage of Timpson's willingness to engage with organisations locally and seek to overcome any barriers that may exist. The Council, and partners, could also produce a pack of information that provides answers to key questions and address concerns that businesses may have about employing offenders.

¹⁰ Potentially being expanded into a business summit if there was sufficient interest

Another possibility considered by Members was a scheme similar to the “Make your Mark” scheme, a partnership between the Prince’s Trust and Marks & Spencers¹¹. Although the “Make your Mark” scheme involved young unemployed people rather than offenders, given the evidence from Timpson’s experiences, it is suggested that a similar initiative could be arranged, or put forward at the above event.

3.9 The Council, and its partners, should sign up to the ‘Ban the Box’ campaign.

It is evident that Timpson’s have a successful approach to the employment of offenders and former offenders which in part is based on their willingness not to rule individuals out when sifting application forms (although as stated previously, Timpson’s will not recruit sex offenders). Members are aware of the ‘Ban the Box’ campaign¹² which encourages employers to give people a second chance by removing the tick box from application forms that asks about criminal convictions, on the basis that research suggests that three quarters of employers ‘skip over’ applicants who declare criminal convictions, even though in many instances their crimes have no relationship to the advertised post (for example, a motoring offence would probably not make an individual any less capable or reliable in filling a catering role). According to NACRO, the crime reduction charity, one in three men between the ages of 18 and 55 have a criminal record which provides an indication of the scale of numbers of people who can be affected¹³. During the course of the review, Members were advised that many former offenders choose not to disclose their offences, because of the fear that they will not be considered, with the result that organisations across the country employ offenders without any awareness of the nature of the crimes they have committed.

The Group found that the Council’s online application form currently has a tick box that asks all applicants to specify if they have any unspent convictions or reprimands, which is legally permissible under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act. This legislation makes it unlawful for an employer to discriminate against an individual on the basis of a spent conviction, but does permit consideration of unspent convictions when making selection decisions. However, there are roles that are exempt from the Act, involving working with children and vulnerable adults, which are subject to Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks (which provide information about convictions) as part of the pre-employment checking process.

However, from 16th December 2013, the Council is introducing a change to its online application form, so that there will not be a question about unspent convictions. Conviction information will only be requested from preferred candidates where it is relevant (i.e. for roles that are subject to a DBS check).

Members are supportive of this change, and are minded to recommend that the Council encourages other organisations to adopt this approach by becoming signatories to the ‘Ban the Box’ campaign.

4. VISIT TO HMP / YOI LITTLEHEY

- 4.1 Based near Perry, Huntingdon, HMP / YOI Littlehey holds up to 726 Category C prisoners, the largest proportion of whom have been convicted of sex offences. The prison also holds 480 young offenders imprisoned for a wide range of offences. The

¹¹ http://www.princes-trust.org.uk/support_us/corporate_supporters/our_partners/marks_and_spencer.aspx

¹² The campaign website is [here](#)

¹³ NACRO statistics available [here](#)

two groups are physically separated. Approximately 18% originate from Cambridgeshire; a large proportion are from London.

Discussion with IMB Members

- 4.2 At the beginning of the visit, the group met IMB members to learn about the role of the IMB (formerly known as the Board of Visitors) and generally discuss issues that they felt were pertinent in tackling reoffending. Key points included:
- Early intervention is critical. Education services and the Youth Offending Team have a key role to play, and it was suggested they could be more targeted and effective in their activities
 - Reinforcing the above point – 60% of prisoners did not finish school and have no qualifications. A third of the prison population are dyslexic. Many prisoners find that prison provides the first opportunity for them to receive the level of support they need to read and write
 - Mental illness and substance misuse are other common factors prevalent amongst the prison population
 - Mentoring programmes, where volunteers provide help and support on a one to one basis with offenders, have a proven track record of reducing reoffending. Offenders who have received mentoring through the Trailblazer YOI pilot are far less likely to reoffend – 11% compared to the national figure of 70%. Sova, a charity that facilitates mentoring arrangements, has recently started a programme that is expected to reduce reoffending to 7% in the Peterborough area.

YOI Workshops and Classrooms

- 4.3 The group then started their tour of the prison by visiting the workshops and classrooms provided, which included facilities for barbering, woodwork, catering, music technology and mathematics and literacy attended by small groups of prisoners. The prison commissions an external organisation to employ tutors to deliver the training. These tutors described the nature of the courses, which were introductory in nature, typically at levels 1 and 2, and Members were advised that whilst these courses would not typically be sufficient to satisfy potential employer requirements, they did provide a platform for future advancement.
- 4.4 However, Members were disappointed to find that several workshops were not running during their visit, which appeared to be a result of staff shortages within the commissioned organisation. The effect of this was that prisoners had to remain in their cells rather than being engaged in learning and development activities. Members were advised that sometimes workshops are unable to run because of a lack of officers available to escort prisoners (although this was not the case on the day of their visit) and Members believed that this issue should be addressed. It was apparent that there was an awareness and commitment to tackle this issue in later discussions with senior Officers, including the Governor.
- 4.5 Members also learned that transfers between prisons could disrupt prisoner learning so that they would have to restart courses or choose different courses if the prison they moved to did not have the same course available (although this is less likely now as the contractors draw down funding only when a qualification is achieved and / or a course is completed). It was also noted that some courses did not take account of prisoner learning requirements. For example, black prisoners attending the barbering course indicated that they would like to learn Afro Caribbean barbering, but this was not an option.

Prison Libraries

- 4.6 Members also visited the library, which is staffed by Council Officers, with some tasks undertaken by prisoner orderlies, and learned about the high esteem in which this service is held by many prisoners. The library is small in size, but has access to the wider stock available to Cambridgeshire's other libraries. A second library is similarly provided for the Adult Category C wing of the prison. However, the orderlies at that library informed the group that the expected library opening hours were not always adhered to because of a shortage of Prison Officers available to supervise.
- 4.7 After the meeting, Members learned that the Prison libraries (including the library at HMP Whitemoor) are entirely funded by the Ministry of Justice (MoJ). The MoJ have indicated that funding will reduce in future, which will reduce the capacity of the Council to staff the libraries. Plans are therefore in development to identify the service level that can be provided within the resources available.

YOI Gymnasium

- 4.8 The group spent time talking with Prison Officers who supervise activities in the Gym, a popular place for prisoners, and were advised that cuts in funding through the Prison 'benchmarking' process (a method of finding efficiencies and rationalisation across the Prison Estate) had resulted in a reduction of staff and a consequent reduction in the provision of Physical Training courses (which had enabled Prisoners to attain qualifications equivalent to 2 A Levels).

Substance Misuse Services

- 4.9 Members then met Ann-Marie Carter, Drug and Alcohol Recovery Team (DART) Service Manager. Ann-Marie explained that Department for Health funding is allocated to Drug and Alcohol Action Teams (DAAT) across the country, which in Cambridgeshire is located within the County Council. The DAAT role is to commission services by assessing local need, designing specifications, testing the market and awarding contracts. In Cambridgeshire, the contract was awarded to Ann-Marie's employer, 'Inclusion', which is a specialist directorate of South Staffordshire and Shropshire NHS Foundation Trust.
- 4.10 DART work with referred prisoners to identify realistic goals and produce personalised recovery (care) plans that enable prisoners to address their substance use. DART also facilitates group work to provide information, raise awareness and promote understanding about substance use. There are also several support networks; a programme of activities based on Cognitive Behavioural Therapy; signposting to other services and release planning.
- 4.11 Members were impressed with the services provided by DART (on behalf of the County Council) and asked the Scrutiny Officer to enquire about the security of future funding. The Scrutiny Officer found that (at the time of writing) that the funding for this service was subject to a decision by NHS England, as the funding provider. The Officer was advised that whilst no firm decisions had been reached, there is a significant likelihood that the service will be subsumed within the wider Prison Health commissioning programme planned by NHS England (without any consultation with the County Council), and it is currently uncertain whether this will have an impact on the level of services provided at HMP Littlehey (and Whitemoor) beyond 2015.

Whilst this service area was not the original subject of the review, it is suggested that within the new Committee structure, it is recommended that the possible implications of any service changes should be explored further, with the Chairman highlighting this area of work to the appropriate Committees.

Discussion with Head of Reducing Reoffending

4.12 The group met Kevin White, Head of Reducing Reoffending, and his colleague Linda Callender, Education Contract Manager. The following is a summary of the key points raised:

- Acknowledgement that not all YOI classes were running, and that the problems were being addressed
- Willingness to re-engage with Timpson, although discussions held over the summer had not resulted in any agreement
- Referred to the importance of the 'Breaking the Cycles' Government report and the opportunities to become more efficient and effective in tackling reoffending through the new changes being introduced across the Prison Service
- The prison undertakes a wide range of activities to support offenders into employment. For example, there are links with Amazon, Halfords, Waitrose and Sue Ryder
- Distance learning courses and level 1 and 2 qualifications are provided
- Employer Forums are arranged (there is the potential for this to be expanded in future)
- There are several facilities across the Prison, such as the print room, which have spare capacity to provide services for external organisations. Councillors suggested that the County Council could purchase some services, or arrange for some of its contractors to sub-contract a proportion of their work through the Prison, as this could be mutually beneficial.

Adult Workshops / Classrooms

4.13 The group spent most of the afternoon visiting the wide range of workshops and classrooms provided for use by the Adult Category C prisoners. These included classes covering woodwork, IT, music, car mechanics, printing, forklift training, plastering and bricklaying.

4.14 The tutor for the car mechanics course explained that they work on cars provided to them that have been used on race circuits, but they are always in need of more because parts become worn as they are worked on by the prisoners. He suggested that Local Authorities with vehicles they need to dispose of could allow the Prison to make use of them.

4.15 Members were impressed with the highly skilled needlework work being undertaken in one workshop, in which prisoners were completing orders for Finecell, a social enterprise that pays prisoners for their work¹⁴.

NACRO

4.16 Members spoke to a NACRO worker, whose role is centred around ensuring there are transitional arrangements for prisoners so that they have accommodation upon their

¹⁴ Finecell's website is accessible [here](#)

release. Members learned about some of the key issues and challenges faced by this service:

- Release dates can be confirmed at short notice, giving little time to arrange accommodation
- Finding accommodation provided by social projects for prisoners can be difficult when they have a poor track record with relevant organisations before their imprisonment
- It is often beneficial for offenders to move to a different area from their original home so that they do not fall back into a negative pattern of behaviour. However, many Local Authorities are not supportive of this
- Housing benefit is not available until after release, which increases the difficulty of providing a deposit for some accommodation
- It is particularly difficult to arrange accommodation for sex offenders. There are occasions where offenders are released without any fixed abode.

Chaplaincy

- 4.17 The Group spoke to the Prison Chaplain who provides support on a multi-faith basis. The Chaplain reiterated several of the points raised by the NACRO worker, stressing the following three key factors as being critical aspects necessary to avoid reoffending:

- Accommodation
- Positive support networks
- Employment

Governor

- 4.18 At the end of their visit, the group briefly visited the Prison Governor, David Taylor. The Governor welcomed the review and expressed a willingness to work with the group. He suggested that the group look into the 'Through the Gate' Programme which seeks to tackle youth reoffending, and referred to key changes facing the Prison Service. These included the introduction of Payment By Results contracts (from next year); the contracting out of 70% of the Probation Service; moving to longer working hours for prisoners and the likely changes in configuration of prisoner allocations across the country.

5. FEEDBACK FROM PUBLIC HEALTH COLLEAGUES

- 5.1 The interim report stated "the group will examine these issues further and provide their findings in the final report to be submitted to the Committee on 6th February 2014". Cllr Cearns has taken this up with Dr Val Thomas, a Public Health consultant employed by the County Council. Dr Thomas's comments reinforce the findings of the review. Below are the main points that she raises:

- The challenge is how to best provided opportunities for individuals not to re-offend, by ensuring that their employment, education, social and health and well-being needs are met.
- From a public health perspective, since April 2013 commissioning prison health care now lies with NHS England (NHSE). The Drug and Alcohol Services were formally commissioned through the DAAT. When the responsibility was transferred to NHSE a Section 75 Agreement was established between the DAAT

and NHSE that would maintain the contract that the DAAT had already established with the current provider of Drug and Alcohol Services.

- As NHSE moves forward with its plans to re-commission healthcare services in prisons it will be important that good communication is maintained between the DAAT and NHSE. This is particularly important for as the paper indicates many ex-prisoners use when in the community. There needs to be good pathways between prison services and community substance misuse services and therefore good links between commissioners.
- As prisoners experience a range of health inequalities across physical and especially mental health this commissioner communications would be beneficial across all services to ensure that any care commenced in prison is maintained in the community.
- Local authorities can use their links to usefully promote the opportunities for employers, and this should be presented a win-win relationship.
- More information is required about the adverse publicity certain prison employment schemes have received and the reasons for this. In addition, whilst the Timpson scheme appears to be excellent and reports good outcomes, it would be helpful to have further evidence of successful schemes involving employers.
- Dr Thomas's experience of working with prisons is that they are very stressful places for both prisoners and staff. The report describes shortages that prevent many prisoners accessing education and other opportunities. There is good evidence that education is protective of health and social well-being. The Library Service plays a key role is supporting education in prison, and it would be good to maintain this service.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1: The Council, and its partners, should positively consider:

- a) Opportunities to engage prisoners to complete work where they have the facilities to do this (e.g. printing)
- b) Opportunities to work with relevant contractors who are willing to sub contract some of their activities to the Prison: this could be indicated in tender documentation to show that the Council welcomes partners who have a positive approach to reoffending.

Recommendation 2: Share and promote Timpson's experiences with businesses and key stakeholders (such as Littlehey Prison) in Cambridgeshire, through facilitating a County wide summit to promote opportunities for employing offenders/ ex-offenders.

Recommendation 3: The Council should work with HMP Littlehey to facilitate an expansion of the number of employer visits to HMP Littlehey (possibly through expansion of the existing employer forums). If possible, Timpson's could be encouraged to extend their involvement to HMP/YOI Littlehey.

Recommendation 4: Give support to Littlehey Prison in ensuring that training providers/contractors deliver on their obligations.

Recommendation 5: The Council, and its partners, should sign up to the 'Ban the Box' campaign.

Recommendation 6: The Council proposes to the Ministry of Justice that they maintain funding for the provision of Prison libraries.
The Council also proposes to the Department of Health to maintain funding for Substance Misuse services and include such provision in the tendering of contracts under the probation service reform.

Source Documents	Location
Referenced throughout the report	