

REDUCING REOFFENDING PROGRESS REPORT ON RECOMMENDATIONS

To: Economy and Environment Committee

Meeting Date: 10th March 2015

From: Executive Director - Economy, Transport and Environment

Electoral division(s): All

Forward Plan Ref *Not applicable* **No** Key Decision *No*

Purpose: This report is a follow up to the report presented to the 25th November Committee meeting and details the Council's involvement and role in reducing re-offending.

Recommendation: Committee is asked to:

- a) Note the role of the Police and Crime Commissioners and the establishment of the BeNCH Partnership.
- b) Note the creation of the Community Rehabilitation Partnership.
- c) Note the actions taken in response to the recommendations agreed by Cabinet following the member led scrutiny review.
- d) Note the work done across the Council to support the rehabilitation of offenders and support its continuation.

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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 A previous report was presented to this Committee's 25th November 2014 meeting providing details of the outcomes of an overview and scrutiny review. The review had made recommendations to the April 2014 Cabinet meeting regarding the Council's potential role in helping reduce re-offending, including investigating ways the Council could help in increasing ex-offenders potential employment opportunities.
- 1.2 The November Report provided an update in relation to some of the original, proposed actions and included a new proposal, seeking to set up a small cross party working group to take forward the recommendations. The subsequent debate highlighted that Cabinet had not fully endorsed all the recommendations, as some were not within the County Council's remit and was why, in some areas, no action had been taken. As a result, the Committee agreed to defer the report with a request that officers should address some of the issues raised in a revised report now presented, including whether finding ex-offenders employment, was more appropriately undertaken by the Judiciary and the local Police Commissioner.
- 1.3 There are a number of Council Services which are accessed by ex-offenders and the access is designed so that these clients are not discriminated against and have equal access to all Cambridgeshire County Council Services.
- 1.4 The Police and Crime Commissioners of Bedfordshire, Northamptonshire, Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire are developing a new offender strategy and they have a shared ambition to transform the approach to offending in their areas, and have come together as the 'BeNCH' partnership to achieve this. This partnership represents the new contract area for the Community Rehabilitation Company which has been formed out of the Probation service. The company will be transferred to the private sector shortly with Sodhexo the preferred bidder. This falls within the work stream from the Ministry of Justice known as 'Transforming rehabilitation'.
- 1.5 It is of note that the County Council already undertakes a substantial amount of work which contributes to the reduction of re-offending. Much of this work is embedded in partnership working. For example the County has clear responsibilities as a statutory partner for the Community Safety Partnerships which operate at District Council level. The County co-ordinates a strategic group which draws together the 5 partnerships and Safer Peterborough Partnership. Officers represent the County at each of the CSP's. Agendas regularly include domestic violence, crime reduction, integrated offender management and prevention activity. The County also provides crime research analysis to the partnerships.
- 1.6 The Safer Communities Partnership team has responsibility for community safety activity. The Drug and Alcohol Action Team (DAAT) is responsible for the co-ordination of spend of almost £6M of delegated public health funding for adult and young people substance misuse services. Until recently this also included work in prisons. Strategically this work is led by the DAAT partnership of which the Police and Probation are significant partners at Chief Officer level. A large part of the work of the DAAT is to work to reduce the harm of some of the most difficult and chaotic adult offenders, many of whom

are in and out of prison. The Integrated Offender Management Team is a good example of innovative cross agency working that places substance misuse and mental health staff with dedicated police teams working with some of the prolific and high need adult offenders to engage them in treatment.

- 1.7 The criminal justice landscape has changed with the Police and Crime Commissioner replacing the Police Authority and also attracting new powers and funding to allocate according to priorities which he has set out in the Policing and Crime Plan. The County has worked hard to establish strong and effective partnership relationships with the Police and Crime Commissioner. This has developed opportunities for joint commissioning and joint working which also contribute to the reduction of offending. Recent grants have further supported Integrated Offender Management as well as establishing the victim's hub for Cambridgeshire.
- 1.8 At a more general level the County works with individuals and families through Social Care in case work and statutory support of children, some of whom will be in families where there is an adult involved in the criminal justice system. Likewise the early help services across the Enhanced and Preventative Services directorate contributes to work with families at a preventative and at a targeted stage. This includes the work of the Youth Offending Service and also the Troubled Families initiative which has offending behaviour as one of the qualifying criteria for inclusion for this intervention. Indirectly, and sometimes directly, successful outcomes for these services in Children Families and Adults will impact on the propensity of individuals to reoffend, even if this is not the direct purpose of the work.

2. Key Issues

- 2.1 The Question posed for the County Council is whether it should take a more leading role or continue its supporting role in the management of re-offending.
- 2.2 As set out above extensive work already takes place with re-offenders through existing programmes, but the lead roles and responsibilities in preventing re-offending rests with the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Community Rehabilitation Partnership. It is therefore considered that the Council should not seek to duplicate the work of these bodies, but should continue to work with them in the current supporting role.

3. Cabinet Review Update

- 3.1 After a member led scrutiny review and a formal response to this under the previous Cabinet system, the following details progress on the Cabinet decisions.
- 3.2 **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.

This recommendation was partially accepted by Cabinet.

As a large employer and commissioning authority the Council has opportunities to seek to use its purchasing and commissioning powers to seek employers and contractors who will make a positive choice to employ ex-offenders as suggested. However the Council cannot positively discriminate directly in contracting when guided by European procurement rules, nor can it over ride the duty to achieve best value for the Council. Further advice can be sought from the Procurement and Contracts Team to determine the extent to which contracts can specify or at least encourage employers to take on ex-offenders.

Update - The County is participating in the coordination of an offender strategy with the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner. This will set local aspirations and set priorities to reduce re-offending. Access to employment will be one part of this work, not least as it is one of the most protective factors in preventing offending. The strategy is now in draft form and will be formally adopted by the BeNCH partners in the spring.

- 3.3 **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

This recommendation was accepted by Cabinet as follows.

It is suggested that the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) might seek to take a lead on such an event given their promotion of economic development and employer engagement. It may also prove that the Council seeks to work with the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner to co-facilitate or sponsor an event. Certainly the contacts made at Littlehey and with Timpson's Ltd may be a good place to start. It is of note that Job Centre Plus is seconding staff to work with the Together for Families Project which is targeting worklessness in families as part of the Troubled Families Initiative. There is a working group about to be initiated to establish working practices for supporting the families of prisoners and a policy should be one of the results of this work

Update – Whilst the above remains an aspiration the County Council has limited capacity to develop this stream of work and the ambition may be too high in regard to employer engagement. The placement of Job Centre Plus staff within the Troubled Families Initiative is being seen as a success with staff well embedded and supporting families where prolonged worklessness is a feature. The work on prisoner families continues with a short term funded project underway.

- 3.4 **Recommendation 3:** The Council should work with Her Majesty's Prison (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

This recommendation was fully accepted by Cabinet.

The County can take a facilitative role with employers as well as use forums for economic development to promote engagement in visits to HMP Littlehey. Should it be possible to secure development grant support to enable Timpson's to extend their involvement to HMP Littlehey this would be encouraged.

Update – HMP Littlehey is a specialist sentence prison with a high number of sex offenders serving their sentence there with the possible expansion of this resource. One of the aspirations of the transforming rehabilitation programme is to place sentenced adults closer to their home area and to establish a more localised system. To this end HMP Peterborough will take more local prisoners. Whilst continuing to support the good work that Members saw at HMP Littlehey, the development of a stronger relationship with HMP Peterborough may prove more beneficial.

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

This recommendation was partially accepted by Cabinet.

Update - This can only be partially accepted as the County has no direct influence over the operational functioning either of HMP Littlehey or on commercial contractors who may be working with them. Clearly the Council would support the aspiration that these obligations are met but it has no power to do so.

- 3.6 **Recommendation 5:** The Council, and its partners, should sign up to the 'ban the box' campaign.

This recommendation was partially accepted by Cabinet.

Update - this recommendation has been actioned as detailed in the previous report to the Committee on 25th November.

- 3.7 **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.

This recommendation was partially accepted by Cabinet.

Update - The DAAT service is no longer responsible for this area. It is now the responsibility of NHS England. National work is being undertaken to look at the issue of funding for Prison Libraries.

4 **ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PRIORITIES**

4.1 **Developing the local economy for the benefit of all**

Providing support to individuals will increase their ability to find work and reduce dependency on Council and other public services which in turn will benefit the local and national economy.

4.2 Helping people live healthy and independent lives

Personal health and independence generally improves through greater job prospects and greater self esteem, which can be developed through increasing opportunities available.

4.3 Supporting and protecting vulnerable people

Increasing support to prevent re-offending improves life chances.

5. SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Resource Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.

5.2 Statutory, Risk and Legal Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.

5.3 Equality and Diversity Implications

It is important that the County Council makes its services available to all sectors of the community. Through the work of this review and the subsequent actions, areas where this could be enhanced in relation to offenders have been identified and are being implemented where possible.

5.4 Engagement and Consultation Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.

5.5 Localism and Local Member Involvement

There are no significant implications within this category.

5.6 Public Health Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.

SOURCE DOCUMENTS GUIDANCE

Source Documents	Location
Safer and Stronger Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee 6th February 2014 : Overview and Scrutiny Report and Minutes	Democratic Services Link to County Council website: http://www2.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/CommitteeMinutes/Committees/Meeting.aspx?meetingID=700
15th April 2014 Cabinet Report and Minutes	Attached as appendices 1 and 2 to the 25 th November Economy and Environment committee and also available at the following link on the Council website: http://www2.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/CommitteeMinutes/Committees/Meeting.aspx?meetingID=731
Report and minutes of Economy and Environment Committee 25th November 2014	The report and minutes can be found on the Council website at the following link: http://www2.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/CommitteeMinutes/Committees/Meeting.aspx?meetingID=870