

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL
ADULT AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE
CRIMINAL JUSTICE SUB COMMITTEE

Minutes of Meeting of the Criminal Justice Sub-Committee held in Committee Room 2, Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness on Thursday 30 May, 2013 at 10.30am.

PRESENT

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| Mr A Christie | Mr G Mackenzie |
| Mrs M Davidson (arrived 10.45am) | Mr T Maclennan |
| Ms J Douglas | Mrs M Paterson |
| Mrs L MacDonald | Ms J Slater |

Officials in attendance:-

Ms F Palin, Head of Social Care, Health and Social Care Service
Mr J Maybee, Principal Officer, Criminal Justice, Health and Social Care Service
Ms A Macrae, Committee Administrator, Chief Executive's Service

1. Apologies for Absence and Preliminaries

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mrs D Mackay, Mrs L Munro and Ms F Robertson.

On hearing from the Chair, the Sub-Committee **AGREED** that the next meeting be held at HMP, Inverness to allow Members the opportunity to meet with the Governor to discuss current developments. The Sub-Committee **NOTED** that the next meeting would be held on Tuesday 27 August 2013 at 2pm.

2. Declarations of Interest

Mr A Christie declared a non-financial interest in items 3,4,5 and 6 detailed below as General Manager of the Inverness, Badenoch and Strathspey Citizens Advice Bureau.

3. Supporting Prisoners: Advice Network

Ms Melissa Macdonald, Inverness, Badenoch and Strathspey Citizen's Advice Bureau gave a presentation on SPAN Scotland (Supporting Prisoners: Advice Network) which was a partnership project with Shelter Scotland, Inverness, Badenoch and Strathspey CAB and Sacro (Safeguarding Communities, Reducing Offending) aimed at preventing homelessness for offenders and their families and providing support for successful re-settlement to avoid re-offending.

Ms Macdonald advised that the Inverness, Badenoch and Strathspey CAB currently operated as part of multi-agency approach at the Links Centre at HMP, Inverness, providing a holistic advice service to offenders. Enquiries mainly related to housing and homelessness and money advice, but also included other areas such as welfare benefits, employment, and relationship issues.

She advised that the SPAN Project currently involved HM Prisons at Inverness, Grampian and Perth, although it was anticipated it would be rolled out to other establishments in due course. In regard to HMP, Inverness she explained that the Inverness, Badenoch and Strathspey CAB would take on the role provided by SHELTER at HMP Grampian and Perth, and would offer offenders free, confidential and impartial housing advice. She also explained that the project aimed to break the link between the lack of stable accommodation and the cycle of reoffending, and that the project aims were successful life transitions, prevention of homelessness, and creating better life chances. She advised that SPAN was for prisoners who would not be subject to statutory supervision on release.

Ms Macdonald advised that while the CAB would continue to provide a holistic advice service at HMP Inverness, the benefits of the SPAN project was that it would provide a continuation of service for those offenders moving between prisons, and also through SACRO provide through care and resettlement support to assist prisoners with the transition prior to and following release. She advised that while SACRO currently provided this service in Inverness and Nairn areas, it was hoped to expand the service into Ross and Cromarty.

In response to questions Ms Macdonald advised if a client was homeless on release then arrangements would be made to place them in homeless accommodation. She explained there was no system whereby offenders could effectively jump the queue on the housing register. She also advised that if a client had a tenancy then they would receive support to maintain that tenancy.

Thereafter, Members welcomed the SPAN Project as providing a much needed support service for offenders on release and a continuation of service as offenders moved between prisons.

In conclusion the Chair thanked Ms Macdonald for her presentation.

4. Performance Management in Criminal Justice Services

There was circulated Report No CJS/04/13 dated 17 May 2013 by the Director of Health and Social Care, which outlined the current range of performance measures and indicators that Criminal Justice Services report on within the Council, to the Northern Community Justice Authority (NCJA) and Scottish Government. The Report also outlined current performance.

In summary of the report Members were advised that the constituent local authorities within the NCJA, through its Performance and Practice Group, chaired by the Principal Officer, Criminal Justice Highland, had reviewed and developed a comprehensive local authority performance framework and now provided a quarterly performance report to the NCJA. This detailed the performance of each local authority across a range of quantitative and qualitative measures and was designed to evidence the three key outcomes as set out in the National Outcomes and Standards for Social Work Services in the Criminal Justice System, and also the relevant national outcomes set by the Scottish Government.

The Principal Officer reported that the new performance framework had been implemented with effect from September 2012, and that the performance data was now being incorporated into the overall NCJA performance report. He also advised that the link to the most recent NCJA performance report provided useful comparisons with other Criminal Justice Authorities in Scotland and a benchmark as to performance in

the Highlands.

In response to a request it was confirmed that arrangements would be made to circulate Members with the electronic link to the most recent NCJA performance report.

The Chair welcomed the proposal that regular performance reports be submitted to the Sub-Committee, and suggested that it would be helpful if reports included any issues of particular relevance to the Highlands. Members also requested that future performance reports to the Sub-Committee include numbers of individuals and, where appropriate, a more detailed analysis of the statistics provided.

Following on from the above Members referred to the benefits associated with the Community Payback Scheme for both offenders and local communities, and welcomed the range of works and projects being progressed through the Scheme.

In this regard and on hearing from the Chair, it was **AGREED** that arrangements be made for the Sub-Committee to receive a presentation at a future meeting from an offender in regard to how they had benefited from the Criminal Justice Service.

Thereafter, and in response to questions, the Principal Officer explained that there was greater flexibility on the type of work that could be carried out through Community Payback Orders than in the past. He indicated that the national standards were clear in that Criminal Justice Services could not undertake works that other people were employed to do. However the Service could carry out works where a service was no longer provided by the Council, or staff were no longer employed to do a particular job.

The Head of Social Care also provided examples where the Criminal Justice Services had assisted the Council's TEC Services, for example, with snow clearance works, and the Principal Officer confirmed that the Scottish Government was keen to promote this type of assistance.

Following on from the above an update was sought on the local impacts associated with the opening of HMP Grampian next year. The Head of Social Care reported that her understanding was that young offenders and some women from Highland would be placed in HMP Grampian, and that male offenders could be placed anywhere across Scotland. The Principal Officer also reported that he was a member of the HMP Grampian Steering Group and had raised concerns in relation to its location and issues of accessibility for some families, and also the logistical problems some offenders may experience in returning to the Highlands. He confirmed that he would continue to raise these concerns at future meetings of the Steering Group.

Members also sought an update on the status of the ongoing review of Criminal Justice Service in Scotland, and the Head of Social Care advised that it was anticipated the Scottish Government would make an announcement towards the end of the year in regard to its intentions.

Thereafter, it was **AGREED** that regular performance monitoring reports be submitted to the Sub-Committee.

5. Substance Misuse in Criminal Justice Services

There was circulated Report No CJS/05/13 dated 21 May 2013 by the Director of Health and Social Care which outlined the range of substance misuse services funded and delivered by Criminal Justice Services. The report also detailed the recent re-structure of these services into one substance misuse team to ensure services were delivered efficiently and effectively and link to developments with women offenders.

Members welcomed the development of an integrated substance misuse team as outlined in the report, and particularly the revised model of delivering services to women offenders to meet the key proposals contained in the Commission on Women Offenders report on the treatment of women in the Scottish Criminal Justice System.

In discussion an assurance was sought that there was capacity within the new Team to deliver the proposed service. The Principal Officer advised that he was confident the new Team had the required knowledge, experience and levels of training to deliver the service. The Head of Social Care also referred to the opportunities for the Team, through their expertise, to enhance the knowledge of other members of staff, and also to develop links with other organisations providing substance misuse support and alternative therapies.

Discussion followed on how the outcomes for substance misuse would be measured, and whether any follow up studies were carried out with regard to the success of the interventions provided.

The Principal Officer explained that due to resourcing issues the Service was unable to conduct follow up studies. However, clients were provided with exit questionnaires and the data gathered would feed into the Criminal Justice Authority's performance framework and therefore included in future performance monitoring reports to the Sub-Committee. Additionally the Criminal Justice Service was participating in a Public Services Improvement Framework review which would help determine and shape the outcomes for substance misuse and criminal justice services.

Thereafter, the Sub Committee welcomed and **NOTED** the development of the Criminal Justice Service Substance Misuse Team and the links with improving services for women offenders.

6. HMP and YOI Grampian – Family Centre and Help Hub – Request for Funding

There was circulated letter dated 3 May 2013 from the Director of Health and Social Care, in response to a request from the Chief Officer of the Northern Criminal Justice Service Authority (NCJA) for a financial contribution from the Council for the Family Centre and HUB at HMP and YOI Grampian. The letter confirmed to the Chief Officer that it was not intended that adult male prisoners from Highland would serve their sentence at HMP Grampian, and that while some women from Highland may do so, others may remain at Cornton Vale Prison. On that basis it was felt that if Health and Social Care Services in Highland were directing resources to improve family contact with prisoners, this should be done locally at HMP, Inverness, but that the matter would be referred to the Sub Committee for consideration.

The Chair confirmed that the level of funding being sought was £4,200 in the first year and then £12,000 per annum thereafter.

The Head of Social Care explained that in terms of the response to the NCJA it was felt that the focus should be on improving facilities locally, noting that at this stage it was still not known which prisoners would be sent to HMP Grampian. In response to questions she confirmed the NCJA intended to provide support, volunteers and equipment at the Family Centre and Help Hub and therefore had written to all the community planning partners with the same funding request.

In discussion Members expressed their support for the terms of the Director of Health and Social Care's letter and particularly the need to direct resources into improving family contact with prisoners locally at HMP, Inverness.

Thereafter, the Sub Committee **AGREED** that no funding award be made to the Northern Criminal Justice Authority towards the HMP and YOI Grampian, Family Centre and Help Hub for the reasons outlined above.

The meeting ended at 11.25am.
