

**THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL**  
**EDUCATION, CHILDREN AND ADULT SERVICES COMMITTEE**  
**CRIMINAL JUSTICE SUB COMMITTEE**

Minutes of Meeting of the Criminal Justice Sub-Committee held in Committee Room 4 in Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness on Thursday 3 March, 2016 at 10.30am.

**PRESENT**

Mrs I Campbell  
Mr D Fallows  
Mr M Green

Mrs D Mackay  
Mr D Millar  
Mrs M Paterson

Officials in attendance:-

Ms F Palin, Head of Adult Services, Care and Learning Service  
Mr J Maybee, Principal Officer, Criminal Justice, Care and Learning Service  
Ms A Macrae, Committee Administrator, Corporate Development Service

Also in attendance:-

Mr G Cooper, Action for Children Scotland

**Mr D Millar in the Chair**

**1. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mr A Christie, Mr S Fuller, Ms G Ross, Mr G Ross and Ms K Stephen.

**2. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**3. Performance Report – Quarter 2 15/16 Northern Community Justice Authority & Quarter 3 The Highland Council 15/16**

There had been circulated Report No CJ/01/16 dated 17 February 2016 by the Director of Care and Learning which provided the most recently available performance and monitoring information for Criminal Justice Services. This covered Quarter 2, 2015/16 as reported to the Northern Community Justice Authority and Quarter 3, 2015/16 as reported to the Chief Executive, Highland Council respectively.

In presenting the report, the Principal Officer reported that performance remained consistent overall with the exception of performance in Quarter 3 2015/16 in respect of the proportion of Criminal Justice Social Work reports submitted to Courts by the due date. Analysis had shown that the indicator had been adversely affected by an issue in one criminal justice social work team where the majority of reports were written by one social worker, and therefore action had been taken to amend the business process to

avoid a repetition.

The Principal Officer also referred to a decline in performance in terms of the performance indicator relating to Community Payback Order (Supervision) cases seen within five working days of the date of the order. He reported that issues of data latency had been identified on the basis that returns were due soon after the end of the period (as required) and there was an inevitable delay in entering data. In addition one of the largest criminal justice social work team's performance had affected overall performance and a potential process issue had been identified around the fact the team did not have a reporting clinic. These matters were being considered and addressed in conjunction with the team managers to effect improvements.

In conclusion, the Principal Officer advised that the number of CPOs in Highland had fluctuated considerably over the past four quarters and therefore it was important to build resilience into the system given the increased pressures placed on services in the event there was a significant increase in numbers.

In discussion, it was suggested that to allow trends to be examined it would be helpful if any future reports could provide where possible both a historical perspective and the ability to make comparisons with other authorities across the range of indicators.

Thereafter, the Sub-Committee **NOTED** the performance report.

### **3. Redesigning the Community Justice System**

There had been circulated Report No CJ/02/16 dated 12 February 2016 by the Director of Care and Learning which updated Members on progress in relation to the redesign of Community Justice in Scotland, transition arrangements and plans for the future governance of Community Justice in Highland.

The Head of Adult Services reported that the Scottish Government continued to anticipate that Community Planning Partnerships would be able to assume their responsibilities under the new model in transition from 1 April 2016, with full responsibility being conferred from 1 April 2017. The Transition Plan for 2016/17 for Highland, which was attached as Appendix 1 to the report, had been submitted for comment to the Scottish Government.

The Head of Adult Services continued that the Highland Community Planning Partnership and the Council's Education, Children and Adult Services (ECAS) Committee had agreed to build on the existing arrangements for scrutinising Community Justice in Highland, the intention being to widen the remit of the Sub-Committee. She explained that a shadow Committee required to be established in 2016/17, with a full Committee meeting from April 2017. It was proposed that the Committee to be known as the Community Justice Partnership would be composed of: Highland Council Elected Members (6); NHS Highland (2) Police Scotland (2); Scottish Prison Service (2); Third Sector Interface (2); Victim Support (1).

Thereafter, the Head of Adult Services reported that it was proposed the six elected members would be identified by the Appointment Panel External Bodies/Arms Length External Organisations using a skills set scoring matrix. It was also proposed that the Partnership would meet quarterly, subject to review, and would be supported by an Officer Group, details of which she provided. Transitional funding had been confirmed for three years ending March 2018, and a project manager had been appointed by the

Third Sector Interface to lead on the coordination and delivery of Community Justice, with particular emphasis on ensuring widespread collaboration on the development of the local plan.

In discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- it was suggested that the recommendation to the Council by the ECAS Committee that the six Members be identified by the Appointment Panel External Bodies/ALEOs using a skills set scoring matrix represented a fair and equitable method for confirming these appointments;
- concern was expressed that the use of the skills matrix set may disadvantage new members on the Council;
- in confirming the appointments to the Community Justice Partnership it was important to ensure the members had the appropriate skills set and also that the political balance of the Council was reflected; and
- a point in regard to the potential role of the District Partnerships in the new arrangements for community justice given Council's specific remit to work with local partners to respond to matters raised locally.

During further discussion, it was suggested there was a need for closer links to be established in some areas between Community Payback Officers and community councils. The Principal Officer advised that Community Payback Officers should be inviting contact from community councils on an annual basis in regard to projects that could be undertaken through the unpaid work scheme, and that he would reinforce this point to the officers involved. He also confirmed that he would circulate the contact details of the Community Payback Officers and information on the geographical area they covered to the Sub-Committee.

Thereafter, the Sub-Committee **NOTED** the proposed model for the future model of community justice described in the report and the transition arrangements.

#### **4. Services Provided by Action for Children to Criminal Justice Services**

There had been circulated Report No CJ/03/16 dated 24 February 2016 by the Director of Care and Learning which detailed the services provided by Action for Children to Criminal Justice Services under the terms of the Service Level Agreement.

Mr Grahame Cooper, Children Services Manager, Action for Children Scotland proceeded to give a detailed presentation during which he provided an overview of the services provided and programmes delivered by the organisation in partnership in Highland, specifically with the aim of providing support to young people between 16-24 years to help them understand their behaviours and to reduce or stop their offending. He advised that the close partnership working and communications with the Council and other organisations in Highland was key to the successful delivery of its services in the context of ongoing changes with criminal justice services. He also provided details of the locations in Highland in respect of which the organisation was funded to operate, and which were based on the level of need.

In response to questions, the Children's Services Manager explained that individual packages tailored to the individual needs of a young person were developed and delivered through a multi-agency approach. This involved an assessment of a young person's level of risk and need at the outset of the process which was critical in terms of informing the support package then delivered.

During further discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- information was sought and received on the range of partners the organisation worked with across the area;
- a point in regard to type of support services provided to young people who may have the potential to offend;
- concern at the use of the term 'legal highs' on the basis they were not legal or safe; in this regard reference was made to the importance of using language which young people recognised to educate them on the dangers of these substances;
- information was requested and received on the package of support that was put in place for young people with a dependency on alcohol/drugs and on the range of agencies involved and their respective remits;
- related to the above confirmation was sought and provided that the organisation worked with the Highland Alcohol and Drugs Partnership in regard to awareness raising around drugs and alcohol;
- it was suggested that the use of statistics in regard to the drop-out rates in terms of the programmes provided for young people and at what point these occurred, could act as an important tool in reinforcing and improving these programmes if required;
- concern that a main issue faced by young people on being released from prison was finding suitable accommodation;
- a point in regard to the need to consider and address any gaps in the support available for young people in those areas of the Highlands not covered by Action for Children Scotland or the 'Constructs' programme, particularly on the west coast;
- concern at the challenges associated with the Constructs programme as outlined in the report and the importance of support being provided through alternative programmes for those less able offenders who were unable to complete the programme or those who did not meet the eligibility criteria; and
- a request that a copy of the presentation and Mr Cooper's contact details be circulated to the Sub-Committee.

Thereafter, the Sub-Committee **NOTED** the report.

In conclusion and on it being the final meeting of the Sub-Committee, the Chair thanked the Members, both current and previous, for their contribution. He also advised that the first meeting of the new Community Justice Partnership was scheduled for 2 June 2016.

The meeting ended at 11.40pm.