



Cambridgeshire
Police & Crime
Commissioner

To: Business Coordination Board

From: Chief Constable and Chief Executive

Date: 26 May 2016

TACKLING RE-OFFENDING THROUGH DEFERRED PROSECUTION

1. Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Business Coordination Board (“the Board”) on the use of the Home Office innovation funding to tackle reoffending through the use of deferred prosecutions and effective support interventions.

2. Recommendation

2.1 The Board is recommended to note the contents of this report.

3. Background

3.1 Cambridgeshire has successfully been awarded £250,000 from the Home Office Police Innovation Fund in 2016-17. A further £250,000 for 2017-18 has also been approved, subject to sufficient progress and meeting monitoring requirements in year one. The bid proposal was to tackle the root causes of early offending behaviour through a conditional deferred prosecution. This will provide a foundation for multi-agency pathways to reduce demand on policing and other services.

3.2 Currently the bulk of investment is further ‘downstream’, spent on managing known offenders, rather than ‘upstream’ in preventative and early intervention work. We need to do more to manage demand on policing and other services, and improve the impact of attending court. Where low level crime takes place, there is an opportunity to respond in a way which ensures that they do not reoffend, while also reducing costs.

3.3 A systematic review of all studies on juvenile court processes over 35 years covering 29 studies and over 7,000 juveniles found that court processes do not reduce reoffending overall. In fact, most studies show a backfiring effect, with offenders entering a ‘revolving door’ of offending. Evidence indicates that holding the

prosecution over provides more of a deterrent than the court processes themselves. Research has also shown that speed as well as certainty is more effective than severity of punishment in reducing offending.

3.4 We have joined up our response to the most vulnerable through the Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub. We recognise that we can learn lessons from the Troubled Families methodology and multi-agency safeguarding work. We can further develop linkages between existing case management initiatives such as the Chronically Excluded Adults Service and the Liaison and Diversion service. We need to look at the whole system, and create truly integrated pathways which:

- Maximise the impact on reducing reoffending
- Provide resolution for victims
- Reduce demand on services.

3.5 The complex layers of local, regional and national Criminal Justice System structures, processes and arrangements is recognised and is currently being considered by the Ministry of Justice with the Home Office. Consideration is being given to how the role of Police and Crime Commissioner might be expanded in the area of criminal justice, recognising the potential for Commissioners to look across the whole system at a local level. These proposals also put us in a strong position to respond to the changes that are widely anticipated on Out of Court Disposals, and more widely on possible changes to drive local leadership across the system building our existing joined up response to the most vulnerable through the Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub.

3.6 This approach to driving the effectiveness of the impact of the criminal justice system, as well as its efficiency, is reflected in the 'BeNCH' area Reducing Offending Strategy which is being implemented across Bedfordshire, Northamptonshire, Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire, under the oversight of the BeNCH Reducing Offending Board.

4. Proposals

4.1 Police will be able to identify suitable individuals and hold over their prosecution, pending compliance with conditions for dealing with the issues underpinning their behaviour. A swift multi-agency assessment process will enable appropriate conditions to be set, and agreed with the offender.

4.2 Bespoke options for support are likely to include support for debt management; housing issues; anger management; drugs or alcohol misuse; mental health or other health needs; employment, education and training. Appropriate interventions will be provided by partner organisations.

4.3 Compliance will be monitored throughout and if the conditions are not met, the prosecution will continue.

4.4 The project will focus on two key outcomes:

- Reducing reoffending
- Reducing demand and costs associated with reoffending.

4.5 Anticipated benefits include:

- Savings from court processes and related police time and longer term savings through reduced demand across agencies
- The root causes of an individual’s offending behaviour will be addressed early, before they escalate and require more costly interventions, while holding over the prospect of prosecution to ensure compliance
- Holding the offender to account for their behaviour, but not adversely affecting the rest of their life with a criminal record
- Ensuring the delivery of the most appropriate interventions by fewer agencies where previously many organisations may have acted independently, often duplicating services and giving conflicting advice and assistance
- Multi-agency working to ensure that every contact offenders have with services reduce their likelihood of reoffending
- Increased victim satisfaction
- Ensuring that the issues causing offending behaviour are tackled by the most appropriate agency
- The potential for prosecution should increase the motivation of the offender to get issues dealt with.

4.6 Detective Chief Inspector Dominic Human has been appointed to take forward this work. The Constabulary will work in partnership with the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, the Commissioner being the recipient of the funding. A “virtual” offender hub will be developed operating along similar lines to the Restorative Justice hub to bring together appropriate and existing agencies to identify and effectively address the underlying causes of an offender’s behaviour. A co-ordinator and business support will be appointed.

4.7 A performance framework will be developed to ensure that performance can be monitored effectively. Further work is required to understand reoffending picture in Cambridgeshire. Governance will be through Force Executive Board and strategically through the Commissioner’s Governance Board.

4.8 This work supports a whole system approach across Cambridgeshire so work with a range of partner organisations will be key. A Steering Group comprised of key partners has been established. An updated Countywide Community Safety Agreement for 2017-20 and a reinvigorated Countywide Community Safety Strategic Board can provide the necessary partnership governance structures, with appropriate links to the Criminal Justice Board.

5. Recommendation

5.1 The Board is recommended to note the contents of this report

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Source Document(s)	Offender hub Project initiation document Innovation fund delivery plan
Contact Officer(s)	DCI Dominic Human – Project lead Cambridgeshire constabulary Cristina Strood – Head of Policy and Performance OPCC