



To: Business Coordination Board

From: Acting Chief Executive

Date: 02 July 2020

POLICE AND CRIME PLAN – OFFENDERS THEME – OPCC AND BROADER PARTNERSHIP SUPPORT

1. Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this report is to:

- update the Business Coordination Board (the “Board”) on Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (“OPCC”) and partnership activity underway to deliver the priorities set out in the Offenders section of the Police and Crime Plan (the “Plan”);

2. Recommendation

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

3. Summary

3.1 The broad focus of the ‘Offenders’ section of the Police and Crime Plan, on ensuring offenders are brought to justice and are less likely to reoffend, means the Commissioner and the OPCC continue to work within this framework to support partnership approaches to these issues.

3.2 During the Covid-19 pandemic, the OPCC has continued to provide leadership and support for partnership working arrangements for the safe resettlement of people leaving prison. Strong links have been established with public health colleagues to ensure current guidance can be adhered to.

3.3 The current situation has presented many challenges to local services. The scale and pace of change to service delivery has been significant. However, as well as enabling services to respond appropriately to the pandemic, flexibilities which have been put in place have also had a broader positive impact on support for vulnerable people. The

recovery arrangements put in place in Cambridgeshire should enable the system to consider how these positive aspects might be maintained in the future.

- 3.4 The OPCC will continue to support partnership working to address the long-term causes of offending, such as housing, health issues, drug and alcohol misuse and education, employment and training. Across the partnership landscape there is a strong consensus on the need to build on existing services and to work in a more holistic way, breaking down traditional boundaries between frontline services. The Government is also set to introduce significant changes to probation services in June 2021. This provides an opportunity to make a real step change in how people are supported to settle back into communities so they are less likely to reoffend.

4. Background

- 4.1 Under the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011, the Police and Crime Commissioner (the “Commissioner”) is required to produce a Police and Crime Plan. The Commissioner’s Plan became effective from April 2017.
- 4.2 The Offenders section of the plan seeks to ensure offenders are brought to justice and are less likely to reoffend. Tackling and investigating crime so that offenders are brought to justice, while ensuring the best outcomes for victims, is clearly a core policing role. A partnership approach is needed which helps to prevent crime in the first place, and makes people less likely to re-offend when they go through the criminal justice system.
- 4.3 The Constabulary have a key role in delivering the Plan and in April 2019 brought a set of refreshed comprehensive Constabulary priorities to this Board. These were welcomed and were seen to address key areas of work, such as improving the quality of police investigations and police files for prosecution. The progress around these Constabulary priorities is reported in a separate paper. These Constabulary priorities are currently being refreshed. The OPCC has a wider role in supporting broader partnership work to deliver against the Offenders theme.
- 4.4 A comprehensive update covering all elements of the offender section of the plan was considered by the Board in December 2019. This paper therefore focusses on key recent developments. The current Police and Crime Plan has ensured a local partnership focus on reducing reoffending through addressing the long term drivers of crime. The next Police and Crime Plan following the Police and Crime Commissioner elections in May 2021 will provide an opportunity to build on this.

5. Responding to the Covid-19 Pandemic

- 5.1 The OPCC has liaised with key partners on a regular basis to ensure emerging partnership issues or risks are addressed, and that opportunities for collaborative working are identified.
- 5.2 The Government announced the need, following appropriate risk assessment, for the early release of some prisoners in order to help manage the current health crisis. This is in the context of challenges for services providing support to these individuals, given the need for social distancing and pressures on services such as temporary accommodation. Supporting the prison and probation leads on these releases, the OPCC has facilitated a broad-based partnership group to undertake joint planning. In

the event, early prison releases have not been required on a significant scale. However, those released during this period as 'business as usual' continue.

- 5.3 The OPCC has also provided a link with wider work to map the response for those groups that can experience exclusion. More recently this has included supporting the development of an Outbreak Management Plan for excluded groups.
- 5.4 The OPCC continues to support sharing of information and practical problem solving between a very broad range of partners. This will continue through the recovery phase, including facilitating work to ensure that new, more flexible ways of inter-agency working during Covid, can continue where this adds value.

6. Objective: Police enforcement disrupts offenders and deters would-be offenders

Objective: Offenders are brought to justice while ensuring the best outcomes for victims

- 6.1 Tackling and investigating crime so that offenders are brought to justice, while ensuring the best outcomes for victims, is a core policing role. The progress around these Constabulary priorities is reported in a separate paper.
- 6.2 The Commissioner continues to support this work through the Cambridgeshire Criminal Justice Board, which the Commissioner Chairs. This brings together a wide range of criminal justice partners to find ways to better 'join up' the criminal justice system. Over the last year the Board's work has included looking at ways to improve case file quality.
- 6.3 At the end of 2019, the Constabulary refreshed their approach to the use of Out of Court Disposals. This approach, working with Peterborough's Outside Links service, is enabling people to access support to tackle the roots causes of their criminal behaviour at an early stage. To support this work, the OPCC has provided a grant of £45,000 this year to Peterborough's Outside Links service. This is an increase from £30,000 last year to reflect the increased capacity required. A wide range of issues are addressed including housing, drug or alcohol misuse and financial management.
- 6.4 The Victim and Witness Hub continues to support victims of crime with information about Restorative Justice and whether it can help them recover from the crime they have experienced.

7. Objective: All agencies coming into contact with offenders ensure they address the causes of criminality

Needs Assessment

- 7.1 The needs assessment on offending prevention and management was commissioned by the OPCC and published in June 2017. This highlighted the scale of complex needs, especially in relation to housing, employment and skills, drug and alcohol misuse, and mental health. The priority issues identified by the needs assessment are being addressed through the appropriate partnership governance mechanisms.
- 7.2 These issues remain pertinent during the pandemic and appropriate mechanisms have been put in place countywide to ensure the health needs of excluded and vulnerable groups are addressed.

- 7.3 The needs assessment also highlighted the scale of overlapping, often interdependent, needs. 94% of those assessed had two or more needs. Services are also reporting the need to support individuals to access appropriate services.
- 7.4 An update to the needs assessment is currently being finalised but it is anticipated that these issues and pathways will remain key areas of partnership attention. A specific focus on key cohorts will also continue to be important (e.g. high risk/harm individuals, females, IOM, dual diagnosis, short sentences, youth), as will specific place-based approaches.

Partnership Working - Addressing Vulnerability to Reduce Reoffending

- 7.5 The Countywide Community Safety Strategic Board, chaired by the PCC, ensures a countywide strategic overview and co-ordinated multi-agency response. High risk delivery groups, key countywide prevention workstreams and Community Safety Partnerships (“CSPs”) all contribute to work to keep Cambridgeshire safe.
- 7.6 During the pandemic, the OPCC has supported the Cambridgeshire Criminal Justice Board – Offender Group to meet more regularly and broaden its membership in order to support the safe resettlement of people leaving prison during this period. While the number of early releases locally has been very small, this has enabled good partnership communication and working arrangements. This has included plans to ensure those released without a suitable address are placed in emergency accommodation and to ensure wrap-around support is provided to meet their resettlement needs. Strong links have been established with public health colleagues to ensure current guidance can be adhered to.
- 7.7 It is recognised that the key areas of need identified above, in relation to the needs assessment, are broader social inclusion pathways. The National Policing Crime Prevention Strategy recognises the need to address the drivers of crime by collaborating with partners on the broad themes and issues which impact on police demand.
- 7.8 Like policing, other services have for some time been reporting increasingly complex demand. Across the partnership landscape there is a strong consensus on the need to build on existing services and to work in a more holistic way, breaking down traditional boundaries between health, housing, work and benefits, social care and policing. Earlier this year, a review of existing Joint Strategic Needs Assessments across sectors linked to vulnerability highlighted the fragmentation of governance, accountability and service provision, along with frequent structural and process changes. It raised concern about whether the holistic needs of an individual with complex needs is being adequately met in this context. This has been reinforced through some of the flexible ways of working which have been established during the pandemic. The recovery infrastructure and planning put in place in Cambridgeshire should enable the system to consider how these positive aspects might be maintained in the future. Pressures on resources are recognised, however, with upper tier authorities having to make significant savings even before the pandemic.
- 7.9 Last year the Government announced its plan for the future of probation, bringing probation practitioners together under the National Probation Service. Shadow arrangements are being put into place through 2020, with full implementation

scheduled for June 2021. A positive dialogue continues with the National Probation Service on the potential for building on existing local services. In future, Government expects probation to be co-commissioning with PCCs and other strategic partners. This makes sense in order to ensure efficient and effective pathways to desistance. It also provides a potential link with the police vision for early intervention through custody and diversion.

Accommodation

- 7.10 Homeless offenders entering prison have a much higher reconviction rate in a year (79% vs. 47%). Key issues identified in the needs assessment included the need to improve co-ordination between housing and criminal justice services; the fact that current policies can limit access to housing – which impacts on offending; and demand for appropriate housing outstripping supply. The housing market in Cambridgeshire also impacts owing to relatively high accommodation costs. Partnership work between criminal justice agencies and housing services, supported by the OPCC, has therefore focussed on the need to improve pathways to housing from the criminal justice system and links between these different services. The OPCC has continued to provide a funding contribution towards the Homelessness Prevention Trailblazer.
- 7.11 Despite improvements in housing referral pathways where individuals engage, ‘no fixed abode’ prison releases remain stubbornly high. The demand for suitable housing and support remains a challenge. The OPCC continues to lead a task and finish group which is problem-solving key housing pathway issues between agencies. A deep-dive exercise which has been carried out has identified a lack of engagement with support services by individuals as an issue. Further work is underway with service users to explore how this could be addressed. Other issues identified are being followed up with partners. Close links with partners will enable lessons from the housing and support provided to rough sleepers during the pandemic to be captured for future ways of working.

Health

- 7.12 Key issues identified in the needs assessment included a high percentage and volume of individuals in contact with the criminal justice system have a mental health issue, this is also likely to overlap with other issues such as drug and alcohol misuse and homelessness, adding further complexity. The current system has limited capacity across the whole population, including offenders.
- 7.13 Recognising the challenges for vulnerable offenders in accessing the mental health support they may need, a project was launched to divert vulnerable female offenders in Peterborough at risk of short prison sentences towards community sentences. New arrangements to expand the use of Mental Health Treatment Requirements (“MHTRs”) in Cambridgeshire in 2019/20 co-commissioned by the OPCC, BeNCH Community Rehabilitation Company, National Probation Service and Cambridgeshire and Peterborough NHS Foundation Trust went live in September. This approach requires and supports them to access treatment for their mental health issues to reduce their reoffending. Early indications locally are that this has enabled an increase in the uptake of MHTRs, with good levels of compliance. Work in other pilot sites has shown that positive mental health outcomes have been maintained, with low

reoffending. Local outcomes will be closely monitored. A wider evaluation will report later this year and will inform future funding decisions.

- 7.14 Offenders' mental health needs will often fall short of secondary care thresholds, but are too high for primary care services. This means it can be difficult for them to access services. The PRISM service to provide support for those who need more support than general medical primary care services can provide, but for whom secondary care would not be appropriate is being rolled out but requires access to GP services. Additional mental health investment has recently been secured to further enhance the local offer in Peterborough. Links with this work are being explored.

Education, Training and Employment

- 7.15 The needs assessment identified that those offenders receiving short sentences who are most likely to re-offend are most excluded from ETE provision and that a criminal conviction can act as a barrier to future employment opportunities. It highlighted that further work is required to establish the ETE requirement across the system and how this links with local economic drivers as well as further work with employers around open recruitment.
- 7.16 The Commissioner recognises employment as a key route out of reoffending. In light of the new Cambridgeshire-wide skills strategy and arrangements, the OPCC has facilitated new links to be established between skills partners, the combined authority and criminal justice agencies. A successful workshop was held at the end of January. A potential proposal to pilot a construction work academy for ex-offenders is under development. Clearly the employment picture is more challenging in current circumstances.

Crime and Disorder Reduction Grants

- 7.17 The OPCC awards around £1.3m of grants to organisations it believes will secure or contribute to securing crime and disorder reduction. As reported to the Board in April, the award recipients are in the main unchanged from 19/20. However, the allocated amounts to some services have changed in line with developing work. This funding includes a number of statutory contributions made on behalf of the Constabulary for partnerships arrangements for the Youth Offending Service, Safeguarding Boards and the Management of Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA). It also funds work to deliver against the shared outcomes in the Plan such as funding towards the Homelessness Prevention Trailblazer and the support for those receiving Out of Court Disposals through the Outside Links Service.
- 7.18 CSPs across the county work hard to encourage partners to work with people at risk of becoming involved in crime, or those becoming a victim of crime. The OPCC has again made funding available to CSPs in 2020/21. Funding is linked to agreed delivery activities.

8. Recommendation

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

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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