



To: Business Coordination Board

From: Chief Executive

Date: 16 March 2021

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 Plan, on ensuring offenders are brought to justice and are less likely to reoffend, means the Acting Police and Crime Commissioner (the “Acting Commissioner”) and the OPCC continue to work within this framework to facilitate and 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, recognising the need to ensure current guidance can be adhered to.

3.3 The current situation has presented many challenges to local services. Services have been adapting their services in line with national guidance and policy. The scale and pace of change to service delivery has been significant.

3.4 As well as enabling services to respond appropriately to the pandemic, flexibilities have been put in place which could also be incorporated into positive practice in future service delivery.

- 3.5 The OPCC continues 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, in the context of the current pandemic.
- 3.6 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. Partnership working during the pandemic provides a good foundation for future work.
- 3.7 A very detailed summary of partnership activity and outcomes was provided in December 2020 so this report focuses on a broad update on key issues.

4. Background

- 4.1 Under the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011, a Police and Crime Commissioner is required to produce a Plan. The 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. Cambridgeshire Constabulary's (the "Constabulary") progress on this agenda is reported in a separate paper.
- 4.3 A partnership approach 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 is also needed. The OPCC has a wider role in supporting broader partnership work to deliver against the Offenders theme.
- 4.4 The current Plan has ensured a local partnership focus on reducing reoffending through addressing the long term drivers of crime. The new 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 – Prison Release Planning and Through the Gate Support

- 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. The Cambridgeshire Criminal Justice Board – Offender Subgroup has been the partnership forum overseeing this area of work, supported by the OPCC. The group usually meets quarterly but has undertaken additional meetings, as regularly as weekly or fortnightly when necessary, in order to understand and respond to the constantly changing landscape. The membership of the group has been broadened to ensure that effective links can be maintained between key services such as housing and substance misuse treatment. In line with the additional Covid-related activities required across the OPCC, as well as secondments from the OPCC at the start of the pandemic, this has required reprioritisation of work within the OPCC.
- 5.2 There have been significant challenges for services providing support to those individuals leaving prison. The prison's Covid regime has meant that for a significant period external service providers have not been able to work with individuals face to

face as part of their pre-release planning. Even on release the need for social distancing and pressures on services such as temporary accommodation have been challenging.

- 5.3 Access to wider support services has remained in place, although virtually/via telephone in some cases, and sometimes in a limited capacity. There has been positive progress in other areas. For example, enhanced prescribing on release from prison is a new pathway that has been implemented during this period. Housing colleagues now also now able to undertake housing assessments remotely via video link before release. Additional local authority and probation accommodation funding has had some successes, enabling temporary accommodation to be accessed while housing assessments take place and longer-term solutions sought. Work is ongoing between probation and housing service partners to access suitable, longer term accommodation.
- 5.4 While there is good evidence to demonstrate that processes are working well in the majority of cases, there are still some instances where people are released with no settled accommodation and with little time for agencies to respond. An in-depth review of some recent cases where the system hasn't worked effectively is underway so that any critical gaps can be addressed. Work to respond to release issues relating to prison Covid outbreaks is ongoing, as is work to respond to issues relating to those released after a period on remand rather than at the end of a sentence.
- 5.5 Monitoring the impact of additional accommodation options during this period on compliance and desistance will be important to monitor in the medium term.

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 Constabulary sets out how it will tackle offending in its Corporate Plan. The progress around these Constabulary priorities is reported in a separate paper.
- 6.2 As Chair of the Cambridgeshire Criminal Justice Board (the "CJ Board"), the Acting Commissioner continues to support this work. The CJ Board, and supporting governance arrangements, bring together a wide range of criminal justice partners to find ways to better 'join up' the criminal justice system. This has been particularly important in order to respond to the challenges posed by the pandemic.
- 6.3 At the end of 2019, the Constabulary refreshed their approach to the use of Out of Court Disposals introducing a new team, the Out of Court Diversion Suite. In line with national guidance, the team work alongside frontline colleagues to ethically divert low level offending out of the court system by offering referrals to partner agencies for suspects to address their offending. Working with Peterborough's Outside Links service and other partners such as the Liaison and Diversion Service and the substance misuse treatment service, this is enabling people to access support to tackle the root causes of their criminal behaviour at an early stage. To support this work, the OPCC has continued to provide a grant to Peterborough's Outside Links service. A wide range of issues are addressed including housing, drug or alcohol misuse and financial

management. In order to meet the higher demand following successful implementation of the new Constabulary team and as a result of the pandemic, the Constabulary are working with a wide range of partners to ensure demand pressures can be managed effectively. This includes exploring options for the use of electronic interventions, in suitable cases.

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

National landscape

7.1 The Government has reinforced its commitment to bringing offenders to justice and breaking the cycle of reoffending through a range of new national strategies and additional investment recently. These include:

- ‘A Smarter Approach to Sentencing’ white paper¹
- ‘Neighbourhood Crime Integrated Offender Management Strategy’²
- ‘Changing Futures’ programme to support adults experiencing multiple disadvantage³
- Government additional investment in accommodation and wider support for prison leavers⁴
- Prison leavers ‘Local Leadership and Integration Fund’⁵
- Government additional investment in drug treatment services⁶.

Relevant local partnership groups are working through these significant opportunities. At a system level, there is an opportunity to support whole system approaches and evidence the need for long-term government investment to enhance the local impact and outcomes.

7.2 Last year the Government announced its plan for the future of probation⁷. Bringing probation practitioners together under the National Probation Service. Implementation is scheduled for June 2021 and Ministry of Justice commissioning processes for services such as accommodation, education, training and employment, and females are underway. In future, the Government expects probation to be co-commissioning with Police and Crime Commissioner’s and other strategic partners.

Needs Assessment

7.3 The needs assessment on offending prevention and management highlighted the scale of complex needs, especially in relation to housing, employment and skills, drug and

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https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/918187/a-smarter-approach-to-sentencing.pdf

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/integrated-offender-management-strategy>

³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/changing-futures-changing-systems-for-adults-experiencing-multiple-disadvantage>

⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/70-million-to-keep-prison-leavers-off-the-streets-and-cut-crime>

⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prison-leavers-project-improving-outcomes-for-prison-leavers>

⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/148-million-to-cut-drugs-crime>

⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/strengthening-probation-building-confidence>

alcohol misuse, and mental health. These issues remain pertinent during the pandemic and mechanisms have been put in place countywide to ensure the health needs of excluded and vulnerable groups are addressed. An update to the needs assessment was completed at the end of last year. The main issues from the previous needs assessment are echoed in this update. This reinforces the need for these issues to remain key areas of partnership attention. Key findings will inform countywide thematic delivery groups and commissioning processes.

- 7.4 It remains true that most individuals within the criminal justice system have complex and multiple rehabilitation needs, requiring a more integrated approach to supporting those needs across the system. OPCC funding remains in place in 2021/22 to embed the Making Every Adult Matter (MEAM) approach to supporting people facing multiple disadvantage across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. There is strong local ambition to broaden this approach further through the system. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government has recently launched a significant 'Changing Futures' fund to support people with complex needs, through whole system change. A full Cambridgeshire and Peterborough bid is under development.
- 7.5 Improved data quality and system-wide analysis is pivotal to gaining a comprehensive understanding of need and to identify gaps and potential areas for improvement. Accommodation remains a key need. The impact of no or inappropriate accommodation is an important driver of reoffending. Education, training & employment, mental health and substance misuse remain substantial concerns. Programmes to work with domestic abuse perpetrators to reduce victimisation continue to be an area of focus through the victims workstream, in partnership with relevant agencies.

Accommodation

- 7.6 The OPCC continued to provide a funding contribution into the Homelessness Prevention Trailblazer through 2020-21. This work was mainstreamed at the end of 2020, as planned. The focus of this work more recently has related to the Covid response, as outlined above in section 5. The OPCC has continued to support system-wide approaches, and has continued to chair the criminal justice housing pathways task and finish group.

Health

- 7.7 New arrangements to expand the use of Mental Health Treatment Requirements (MHTRs) for females in Peterborough went live in September 2019. This approach requires and supports women to access treatment for their mental health issues to reduce their reoffending. Plans are currently being finalised to roll out the approach more widely from 2021/22.

Education, Training and Employment (ETE)

- 7.8 Jobcentre Plus continue to work with colleagues in prison and probation to support people as they leave prison. There are good recent examples of employers offering training opportunities and employment to those with an offending history, even in the current employment market. A proposal to pilot a construction work academy for ex-offenders remains under development.

8. Recommendation

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

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Source Documents	<p>‘Police and Crime Plan – Offenders Theme – OPCC and broader partnership support’, Business Coordination Board, 16th December 2020</p> <p>https://s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/media.cambridgeshire-pcc.gov.uk/uploads/2020/12/20-12-16-BCB-Agenda-Item-6.1-Police-and-Crime-Plan-Offender-Theme-OPCC-Report.docx.pdf</p> <p>‘Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Needs Assessment: Victims, Suspect and Offenders: 2019/20’, October 2020</p> <p>http://www.cambridgeshireinsight.org.uk/community-safety/victim-offender-needs-assessment</p> <p>‘Victim and Offender Needs Assessment’, Business Coordination Board, 26th November 2020</p> <p>https://s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/media.cambridgeshire-pcc.gov.uk/uploads/2020/11/20-11-26-BCB-Agenda-Item-7.0-Victim-and-Offender-Needs-Assessment.pdf</p> <p>‘OPCC approach to grants within the current pandemic’, Business Coordination Board, 30th April 2020</p> <p>https://s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/media.cambridgeshire-pcc.gov.uk/uploads/2020/04/20-04-30-BCB-Agenda-Item-11.0-OPCC-Approach-to-Grants.pdf</p> <p>Strategic Needs Assessment: Managing Offenders; Preventing Offending – 2016, June 2017</p> <p>http://cambridgeshire.wpengine.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/OffenderNA-2017_final_FullReport.pdf</p> <p>Police and Crime Plan 2017-20</p> <p>http://www.cambridgeshire-pcc.gov.uk/police-crime-plan</p>
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