



AGENDA NO:

POLICE AND CRIME PANEL: 29 JUNE 2017

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE SERVICE AND REDUCING RE-OFFENDING

REPORT BY THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To update members regarding progress on the Police and Crime plan commitments around the use of Restorative Justice, including the expansion of Neighbourhood Justice Panels across Dorset, post-conviction restorative justice, and other initiatives to reduce reoffending.

1. BACKGROUND/INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Restorative Justice (RJ) is an approach to justice that focuses on the needs of victims, offenders and the involved community, as opposed to simply punishing the offender. RJ is victim focussed and allows victims to fully explain to offenders the real impact of their crime. RJ is shown to improve victim satisfaction and reduce reoffending - this fits directly with the third pillar of the Police and Crime Plan 'supporting victims, witnesses and reducing reoffending'. RJ holds offenders directly accountable to their victims and can bring them together in a facilitated meeting.
- 1.2 The specific commitments made by the PCC in respect of RJ are to:
 - Expand Neighbourhood Justice Panels (NJPs) across Dorset
 - Expand Restorative Justice meetings between victims who request a meeting with convicted offenders in prison
- 1.3 A range of other work is in progress to reduce reoffending.
- 1.4 The specific commitments made by the PCC in respect of reducing reoffending include to:
 - Establish a problem solving forum to identify new ways of dealing with issues
 - Expand tagging of offenders in Dorset Police
 - Work with partners to explore more behaviour changing courses for offenders
 - Explore ways to improve services such as peer mentoring and public mentoring

2. RESTORATIVE DORSET SERVICE

- 2.1 In February 2017 the PCC commissioned the provision of a Dorset wide Restorative Justice (RJ) service for victims and adult offenders of crimes (a

provision for youth offenders already exists). The new service 'Restorative Dorset' is being established to provide RJ for both anti-social behaviour (ASB) and crime at any stage and any type. This service is currently recruiting for two part time RJ co-ordinators, to work across the county.

- 2.2 Any type and/or level of crime is considered if the victim wants it, subject to appropriate risk assessment processes on a case-by-case basis. This includes low level crime through to post-conviction RJ. For pre-sentence RJ to be effective there are still conflicts with the 'Better Case Management' targets for courts and the Government had agreed to look into this nationally. Once resolved there is support from the Dorset Magistrates Bench to move forward on this. The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner is working closely with the Bench to achieve this.
- 2.3 The service is being staffed by RJ co-ordinators who check referrals, carry out risk assessments and allocate the cases to the appropriate RJ facilitators. The facilitators are volunteers and are/will be provided with supervision, training, peer support/shadowing and mentoring through the RJ Co-ordinators. All facilitators have been/will be subject to police vetting. Some volunteers will be trained to deal with serious and more complex cases such as sexual violence, hate crime and domestic abuse.
- 2.4 The launch of the new service will be in September 2017 and all key stakeholders will be invited and will continue to be updated on the performance and progress of the service. Many stakeholders provide support to the service including funding to and/or support 'in kind' by providing meeting venues for case conferences.
- 2.5 The governance and monitoring of the performance of the project will be reported to the quarterly Victim and Witness Strategy sub-group of the Dorset Criminal Justice Board and the OPCC. A range of performance measures have been identified for measuring the success of 'Restorative Dorset' and are based on those recommended by the Justice Committee's report on RJ and the Government's response in November 2016. Performance of the service will also be reported to the Dorset Community Safety and Criminal Justice Board.
- 2.6 In preparation for the launch event in September, work with partner organisations is in progress, to ensure awareness of staff about the RJ service across all agencies in contact with victims and perpetrators/ offenders of ASB and crime. A 'soft launch' to Dorset Police is in progress over the summer.

3. REDUCING RE-OFFENDING

- 3.1 Currently there are 50 Prolific and other Priority Offenders (PPOs) being managed in Dorset. A number of offenders are wearing a GPS tag on a voluntary basis. Dorset Police has had multiple successes from its voluntary tagging scheme where offenders voluntarily wear tags in a bid to stop re-offending.
- 3.3 The tagging scheme provides offenders with the opportunity to be fitted with a GPS tag for an agreed period while they are on probation or following their release from prison. Initially launched as a trial in Dorset three years ago, the scheme is now regularly used as one of several offender management tools. The tagging initiative is generally provided to offenders who have a disproportionately negative impact on communities from committing crimes such as theft and burglary. As well as deterring offending, in a few cases where bail conditions have been breached, evidence from the tags can help in court, saving the criminal justice system time and money.
- 3.4 60 offenders have been fitted with tags since the scheme has been running and only seven have reoffended whilst wearing the tag. In all but one of those cases the tag evidence prompted a guilty plea and in one case that went to trial, the tag evidence secured a conviction.

- 3.5 In tackling youth offending Dorset Police's Safe Schools and Communities Team (SSCT) use diversionary courses that have been successful in reducing reoffending. These courses are run as two types of workshops on shoplifting and on drugs, using a restorative approach. The SSCT works closely with the Combined Dorset Youth Offending Service (YOS) to use Youth Restorative Disposals (YRDs) as some cases are referred by the YOS to the SSCT workshops. Work is under consideration to tackle Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE), by proactively identifying young people who have been affected, then through using early intervention and diversion options, known to impact on reoffending rates.
- 3.6 Work to reduce re-offending includes the establishment of a problem solving forum, expanding tagging of offenders in Dorset, identifying options for behaviour changing courses, and exploring 'through the gate' initiatives such as mentoring.
- 3.7 The OPCC is a member of the DCJB's multi-agency Reducing Reoffending Strategy Group. Membership includes probation services, police and local councils – both from community safety and housing. The work is focussed on:
- Promoting joint working approaches to support and develop the pathways that contribute to reducing reoffending and rehabilitation of offenders in Dorset
 - Assessing the extent and effectiveness of services available to meet the needs of offenders and their families to reduce re-offending and lobby to influence this at a national level. Monitoring of female offenders to be included in this
 - Developing the joint Integrated Offender Management (IOM) approach to prioritise those who present the highest risk of reoffending and causing harm
 - Monitoring the supervision of Dorset offenders and the successful completion of their orders/licences

4. NEXT STEPS

- 4.1 Public launch of the new Restorative Dorset service in September 2017
- 4.2 Working with the Council for Voluntary Service and other partners to hold problem solving events. It is anticipated that the various topics this may cover will have an impact on reducing reoffending, the first one will be in the autumn 2017.
- 4.3 Working with Dorset Police and other Criminal Justice agencies to expand the use of tagging of offenders in Dorset. Research into trials and good practice elsewhere will result in a position paper to agree and develop options to move this forward by the end of the summer 2017.
- 4.4 Working with partners to explore ways to reduce reoffending through mentoring, including developing both peer and public mentoring services. This will be for both lower level offenders and 'through the gate' offenders released from prison.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 Members are invited to note this update in relation to both the establishment of the 'Restorative Dorset' Service and the proposed work on reducing reoffending.

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