

# **Safer and Stronger Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

**21 February 2017**

## **County Durham and Darlington Reducing Reoffending Group Update**



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### **Report of Alan Reiss - Chief of Staff, Office of the Durham Police Crime and Victims' Commissioner, and Chair of the County Durham and Darlington Reducing Reoffending Group**

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#### **Purpose of the Report**

- 1 To provide Members of the Safer and Stronger Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee with an update on the work of the County Durham and Darlington Reducing Reoffending Group (RRG).

#### **Background**

- 2 In May 2016 the Chief of Staff from the Office of the Durham Police, Crime and Victims' Commissioner (ODPCVC) became Chair of the RRG. It was agreed that the Group should be re-established as a group which explicitly reported into the Local Criminal Justice Board for Durham and Cleveland police force areas as well as the two Community Safety Partnerships within the Durham Police area (Durham and Darlington).
- 3 The Group also agreed that a refresh was required of the Reducing Reoffending Performance Framework and of the Group's Delivery Plan. It therefore agreed that a workshop would be held to develop a new plan and agree the priority areas for action for the Group.
- 4 The workshop was held in June 2016 and resulted in a Strategy on a Page (attached at Appendix 2), which describes how the agencies involved would like the system to operate. The Group agreed that the priority areas for work would be determined by identifying the areas on which are not currently operating as they should or could be. The Strategy on a Page was agreed at the Reducing Reoffending Group meeting in September 2016 and subsequently at the Safe Durham Partnership.
- 5 It also agreed that the Delivery Plan should focus on a small number of key partnership projects, and avoid as far as possible including issues which were a matter for individual agencies. It was felt that this is how the Group could have most impact.

## Current Position

- 6 At the last Reducing Reoffending Group meeting in December 2016, the Group received an update and agreed further work on the four initial areas:
- (a) **A review of the pathways to desistance throughout the criminal justice system** – this project will be externally commissioned by the ODPCVC and will look at the availability, quality and referral mechanisms of the pathways at every stage of the system from early intervention through to post-sentence. PCCs were offered the opportunity to bid for some time limited consultancy support from 'Revolving doors', ODPCVC applied and were successful. 'Revolving Doors' have carried out semi structured interviews with relevant RRG members; feedback and conclusions from the interviews were presented to the Group by 'Revolving Doors'. This has assisted in developing a detailed scope for a more comprehensive mapping and planning exercise around pathways provision, which will be commissioned shortly;
  - (b) **Growing the use of Restorative Justice** – this project has already seen a large increase in the volume of trained volunteers able to carry out restorative conferences. The next stage is to increase demand for their services by growing the number of cases through increased referrals;
  - (c) **Developing the Performance Framework** – this project will ensure that the data available enables the Group to manage reoffending performance across the system and identify critical issues in a timely fashion. It will build on the existing performance framework by developing new measures where necessary, including developing a local measure for reoffending (in place of the national binary measure which is two years out of date). A sub-group of the Reducing Reoffending group is being set up, with the Head of Performance and Analysis- Durham Constabulary as the chair for this sub-group.
  - (d) **Improved understanding of partner roles** - The Reducing Reoffending Group has agreed to develop a programme of interagency seminars which increase the understanding that staff within individual organisations have of the work of other partners and to discover and exploit opportunities to generate additional positive outcomes through partnership working. Durham County Council's Community Safety Team will coordinate this project and all partners are expected to contribute in-kind with resources and information.

- 7 The Group's delivery plan initially focuses on these four projects. It is a "living" document and will be used to track progress and updated regularly. Alongside this, the Group provides an opportunity for partners to bring issues to the table and consult on key decisions which affect other partners, and the Group will maintain an Action Log alongside the delivery plan to track progress. The Group will also receive reports on the Checkpoint project as the Checkpoint Governance Board has been subsumed into the RRG.
- 8 Membership of the Group has also been reviewed, and extended to ensure it includes representatives from across the Criminal Justice System and from those services which provide pathways to desistance. Membership will be kept under review.

### **Recommendations**

- 9 The Safer and Stronger Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee is recommended to:
  - (i) Note the contents of the report;
  - (ii) Note the Strategy on a Page; and
  - (iii) Agree to receive a further update from the group in six months' time.

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## **Appendix 1 – Implications**

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### **Finance**

A review of the pathways to desistance throughout the criminal justice system is being externally commissioned by the ODPCVC.

### **Staffing**

No implications.

### **Risk**

No implications.

### **Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty**

No implications.

### **Accommodation**

No implications.

### **Crime and Disorder**

Preventing crime and disorder is the main focus of the Reducing Re-Offending Delivery Plan.

### **Human Rights**

No implications.

### **Consultation**

No implications.

### **Procurement**

No implications.

### **Disability Issues**

No implications.

### **Legal Implications**

No implications.

## Appendix 2

### County Durham and Darlington Reducing Re-offending Strategy on a Page 2016-(2020)

**Vision:** “Across County Durham and Darlington, partners implement the most effective and efficient measures to ensure that adults and young people who offend are challenged and supported to desist from crime in order to improve life chances and keep communities safe.”

