

MINUTES OF THE SAFER STRONGER COMMUNITIES SELECT COMMITTEE

Thursday, 14 May 2015 at 7.00 pm

Present: Councillors Pauline Morrison (Chair), Pat Raven (Vice-Chair), Brenda Dacres, Colin Elliott, David Michael, Luke Sorba and James-J Walsh

Apologies: Councillors Andre Bourne, Alicia Kennedy and Paul Upex

Also present: Timothy Andrew (Scrutiny Manager), Becky Canning (Chief Officer) (National Probation Service, London Division, Southwark/Lewisham Cluster), Robert Clarke (Chief Officer) (Lewisham and Southwark Community Rehabilitation Cluster), James Lee (Service Manager, Inclusion and Prevention and Head of Cultural and Community Development), Barrie Neal (Head of Corporate Policy and Governance) and Geeta Subramaniam-Mooney (Head of Crime Reduction and Supporting People)

1. Minutes of the meeting held on 20 April 2015

1.1 Resolved: to agree the minutes of the meeting held on 20 April as an accurate record.

2. Declarations of interest

2.1 There were none

3. Probation service

3.1 Geeta Subramaniam-Mooney (Head of Crime Reduction and Supporting People) introduced Becky Canning (Chief Officer, National Probation Service, Lewisham and Southwark Cluster) and Robert Clarke (Chief Officer, Community Rehabilitation Company, Lewisham and Southwark Cluster).

3.2 Becky Canning (Chief Officer, National Probation Service, Lewisham and Southwark Cluster) addressed the Committee. The following key points were noted:

- It had been about two years since the last update about the probation service to the Committee.
- At the time of the last update, the probation service was in the process of implementing the government's 'transforming rehabilitation' programme.
- The programme replaced the Probation Trust with two new organisations; the National Probation Service (NPS) and Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRCs). All of the programme's milestones for delivery had been reached.
- Staff from the previous probation trust had been allocated between two new services.
- Under the new arrangements, the country was divided into areas of operation. London formed one area.
- The NPS's main functions were to provide advice to the courts and supervise high risk offenders.
- The NPS also decided whether it should manage cases or whether they should be managed by the CRC.

- A range of tools and diagnostic criteria were used to make decisions about which organisation would manage each offender.
- The NPS managed all offenders subject to Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA). The arrangements were in place to oversee high risk offenders, including those responsible for sexual offences and violent crimes.
- The NPS was also responsible for parole reports and arrangements for the release of prisoners. As well as victim liaison when offenders were due for release.
- The NPS set license conditions (the rules by which a person on probation was required to abide)
- The transforming rehabilitation programme had also introduced offender rehabilitation for all offenders who served a custodial sentence of more than two days. This provision came into force on 1 February 2015.

3.3. Robert Clarke (Chief Officer) (Lewisham and Southwark Community Rehabilitation Cluster) addressed the Committee. The following key points were noted:

- Staff from the NPS and the CRC had worked closely together for a number of years before the reorganisation.
- He himself had a long history of working in probation. Including, most recently as Assistant Chief Officer in Bromley.
- Public safety was at the heart of the new arrangements.
- As part of the reforms, the Government had created packages of service delivery, which were tendered to community rehabilitation companies.
- CRC's were partnerships of private, public and third sector organisations.
- In London and the Thames Valley, MTC Novo had been awarded the contract for community rehabilitation.
- MTC was an organisation based in the United States, which ran a number of private prisons and delivered offender management services.
- Novo was collaboration between a number of third sector organisations, including: Rise, A Band of Brothers, The Manchester College, Thames Valley Partnership and Amey.
- London had the largest Community Rehabilitation Company in the country. It had a caseload of 25 thousand cases of medium and low risk offenders.
- The CRC also provided 'through the gate' activities for offenders leaving custody in order to enable their reintegration back into society.
- Prior to the changes in probation, some offenders left custody without supervision.
- Previously, only those sentenced to 12 months or more were supervised on licence.
- For any offender committing an offence on or after 1st February 2015 who was sentenced to custody of more than one day, there would be a period of supervision which would last for at least 12 months, regardless of the length of their sentence.
- The CRC was also supportive of the approach to the integrated management of offenders, which was designed to deal with the most prolific reoffenders.
- The CRC currently managed a caseload of 1175 offenders.
- Since February 2015, the CRC had supervised ten thousand hours of community payback over 1500 attendances.

- A sizable proportion of this payback was in charity shops – but the CRC also supported longstanding projects in the borough.

3.4 Becky Canning (Chief Officer) (National Probation Service, London Division, Southwark/Lewisham Cluster) and Robert Clarke (Chief Officer) (Lewisham and Southwark Community Rehabilitation Cluster) responded to questions from the Committee. The following key points were noted:

- There had not been any substantial reduction in resources as a result of the programme.
- There had been some initial staffing issues related to the division of officers between the two new organisations.
- In general, there were not enough qualified probation officers in London. This had led to the recent loss of service to Lewisham’s youth offending team.
- The probation service had not trained enough officers in the past.
- The National Offender Management Service (NOMS) had recruited 700 trainee probation officers. 300 of these were due to be trained in London.
- 40 new officers would be entering service in London in September.
- The NPS in Lewisham was responsible for a caseload of 762 cases. Two thirds of these offenders were in custody. This included MAPPA offenders under supervision.
- The NPS had a range of approaches (focused on control and rehabilitation) to the use of the licence conditions.
- This included working with victims, to ensure specific licence conditions were in place, where necessary.
- Up to date data about reoffending rates was not available from the Ministry of Justice.
- The Ministry was working to get accurate information to the probation service within three or four months.
- There was a two year time lag on this information becoming available.
- The CRC was supervising 874 offenders in the community; 688 were subject to community orders; 186 were on licence.
- A breach of licence conditions could result in an offender being sent back to prison.
- Safeguarding the public was of primary importance to both services.
- A range of information sharing agreements between the two organisations – and with other enforcement agencies.
- All partners worked on the basis of gaining consent for data sharing.
- However, the overriding principle was to ensure protection of the public – in instances where there was uncertainty, protection of the public was the primary concern.
- Interactions between the two organisations were good. Former colleagues were co-located and they worked together to ensure that information could be passed in both directions.
- In emergencies, licences for prisoner could be revoked within two hours.
- The longest time for recall to prison (from the order being made to the police securing custody) was twenty four hours.
- There were no breaches of licence conditions by MAPPA offenders to report.
- Computer systems at the NPS were still being improved.

- Officers did not have details of comparative data with neighbouring boroughs nor offender profiles or outcomes.
- The 90% target for recall of offenders was regularly met or exceeded.
- The NPS in Lewisham and Southwark always met its targets ensuring cases were ready for court.
- There was no difference in the level of service between Lewisham and Southwark.
- When burglary was identified as a specific problem in Lewisham – this was targeted by partners in Lewisham working together.
- The process of integrated offender management was focused on reducing offending by the most prolific offenders.
- The ten thousand hours of community payback did not correlate directly with the number of offenders involved in community projects.
- A day of community payback was about 6.6 hours.
- Different offenders were required to carry out different levels of payback, depending on their circumstances.
- Work was currently well funded. In the next three years, the CRC would receive 40 per cent of its funding through payment by results.
- The aim of this model would be to focus efforts on reducing reoffending.
- The system of payment by results was set up so that the risk was borne by providers.
- Providers that were underperforming would lose their contracts.
- It was anticipated that any organisation that was seriously underperforming would be dealt with before a major risk to the public could occur.
- Contracts were designed so that the risk was to the provider and not to the public.
- The CRC was investing in finding data and intelligence to drive the right behaviours.
- The new approach was about ensuring that the offender's journey was appropriate and targeted.
- The CRC was working on developing options for the delivery of community payback.
- About 45% of current payback activity was in charity shops.
- Options were being considered which might enable each Council to have a budget of hours to use on payback.
- In some scenarios it was not safe or appropriate for offenders to carry out their community payback in high visibility jackets.
- Further work would take place between partners to develop the approach to community payback in the borough.

Resolved: to note the update from the officers and to give further consideration to any future proposals for the use of community payback.

4. Main grants programme update

- 4.1 James Lee (Head of Cultural and Community Development) introduced the additional information requested by the Committee. The following key points were noted:

- Following the publication of recommendations for the allocation of main grant programme funding, officers had written to all applicants, setting out the recommendations to Mayor and Cabinet.
- 30 organisations had expressed their intent to make an appeal against officer recommendations – five of these appeals were on points of process, or were dealt with by officers directly.
- 25 appeals had been heard by a special meeting of Mayor and Cabinet (contracts).
- Some organisations had been allocated transitional funding.
- Decisions had been taken at Mayor and Cabinet (contracts) on Wednesday 13 May and were subject to call in by the Overview and Scrutiny Business Panel on 26 May before they could be implemented.

4.2 James Lee (Head of Cultural and Community Development) responded to questions from the Committee, the following key points were noted:

- Any funding to organisations based outside of the borough was accompanied by an undertaking for that organisation to carry out service delivery in the borough.
- Mayor and Cabinet had accepted officers' recommendation that the Council should work with EqualiTeam Lewisham to use existing grant funding.
- EqualiTeam Lewisham was in possession of their outstanding funding.
- Officers would be carrying out further work with all organisations to plan the delivery of their agreed objectives.
- All organisations would be subject to performance monitoring and action would be taken where organisations failed to deliver on their objectives.
- The information about the wards organisations were based in was taken directly from each organisation's funding application.
- Organisations that had been funded to provide ward level development work would be required to demonstrate how they were implementing their work.

4.3 The Committee also discussed the decision to approve officers to work with EqualiTeam Lewisham to use its outstanding funding from the current grants programme. The following key points were noted:

- Some Members felt that the grant assessment process had highlighted EqualiTeam Lewisham's lack of demonstrable outcomes.
- Members questioned the possibility of setting a timescale on which the outstanding funds could be used.
- Members highlighted the perceived lack of fairness that the decision might give in the grants allocation process.
- The Chair indicated that, should the decision to fund EqualiTeam be implemented, then the Committee should seek to assure itself that there were time-bound outcomes being delivered.

4.4 Barrie Neal (Head of Corporate Policy and Governance) advised the Committee that it may want to wait for officers to work with organisations to decide how to implement the decision of the Mayor before deciding on any future course of action.

4.5 The Chair proposed that the Committee ask the Business Panel to review the decision of Mayor and Cabinet.

- The Committee had a range of alternate views about the wording of the referral. One suggestion was for the Committee to recommend that funding be taken back from EqualiTeam Lewisham and allocated annually, based on an agreed set of outcomes.
- Councillor Michael asked that it be noted that he supported equality and fairness as well as value for money and responsible use of resources. However, he felt that he would like to be better informed about the performance of EqualiTeam Lewisham, before he would agree to any proposal other than referring the issue to the Overview and Scrutiny Business Panel.

4.7 The Committee agreed to share its views with the Business Panel, as follows:

- The Committee endorses the decision not to provide additional funds from the main grants programme to EqualiTeam Lewisham.
- The Committee recommends that the Business Panel give consideration to the proposal for additional conditions to be placed on organisations that have not spent their existing grant allocations in order to ensure remaining funds are used to meet the aims of the grants programme 2015-18.

Resolved: to share the Committee's views with the Business Panel.

5. Select Committee work programme

5.1 Timothy Andrew (Scrutiny Manager) introduced the work programme report. The Committee discussed the report and agreed that:

- The voluntary sector accommodation plan would be added to the Committee's work programme in July 2015.
- The agenda item on provision for Lewisham's LGBT community would be moved to the Committee's meeting in September.
- The final VAWG report and recommendations would be agreed and referred to Mayor and Cabinet.
- The Committee would receive a scoping paper on the outline of a review into poverty – based on the publication of the new Indices of Multiple Deprivation.
- The Chair had asked the Business Panel to consider an item about using DNA testing to combat dog fouling.

Resolved: to agree the work programme with the amendments discussed; the Committee also asked the Chair to give consideration to the timetable for the September meeting of the Committee when the scope of the savings proposals for the Lewisham Future Programme were known.

6. Referrals to Mayor and Cabinet

Resolved: to share the Committee's views under item four with the Business Panel.

The meeting ended at 8.45 pm

Chair:

Date:
