

PERTH & KINROSS COUNCIL

Community Safety Committee 22 August 2012

PERFORMANCE IN RELATION TO HIGH RISK VIOLENT/SEX OFFENDERS

Report by Executive Director (Housing and Community Care)

Abstract

This report provides an update to that submitted to the Community Safety Committee on 7 September 2011. The report highlights the performance of Perth & Kinross Council's Community Safety Service in respect of high risk offenders.

1 RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Community Safety Committee notes the content of this report.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 In June 2009 the then Social Work Inspection Agency (SWIA) published a report following an inspection conducted across a sample of Scottish Local Authorities regarding work with 'high risk offenders'. Arising from this, in 2010, the Scottish Government required all Local Authority Criminal Justice Services to conduct a self-evaluation of their work with high risk violent/sex offenders. The self-evaluation in Perth & Kinross was carried out under the auspices of the Association of Directors of Social Work (ADSW) in partnership with SWIA and organised by the Tayside Criminal Justice Partnership in the Autumn of 2010.

2.2 Each local authority criminal justice service completed a self-evaluation template provided by SWIA. The self-evaluation was considered by SWIA and through peer evaluation of the three member local authorities in Tayside. Each self-evaluation led to the development of a self-improvement plan, which again was approved by SWIA. The first progress report was submitted to SWIA in the Spring of 2011.

2.3 This was followed by a Report to the Community Safety Committee on 7 September 2011. In effect that Report outlined the specific actions detailed in the SWIA initiated self-evaluation improvement plan, including a timeframe. The Report explained that the self-evaluation had evidenced **good** performance in the majority of practice areas, ie

- Delivery of key processes and securing outcomes
- Risk assessment and risk management
- Support and guidance for staff
- Standard of case recording
- Middle and senior management oversight

The resultant Improvement Plan focussed on improving the areas of performance delivery which were regarded as less and is reported in this report.

3 PROGRESS REPORT

- 3.1** The Improvement Plan has been regularly monitored by the Community Safety Management Group, the Sexual and Violent Offenders Action Group (Tayside Community Justice Authority/SAVOAG), the Tayside Criminal Justice Partnership, and for some elements the Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements Strategic Oversight Group (MAPPA SOG).

The Plan has been reviewed at regular intervals over the past 12 months.

3.2 Improving feedback from service users and key partners about performance

Work in relation to Criminal Justice Services' (CJS) performance with high risk offenders takes place through Tayside-wide MAPPA Chair training events and MAPPA (Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements) developmental sessions. In addition, SAVOAG and other key partners have considered their performance in relation to the Thomas Bennie Smith Inquiry Report. This Report concerned an individual who was a Registered Sex Offender living in East Ayrshire in 2009, who committed a double murder while subject to MAPPA.

The Criminal Justice Service in Perth & Kinross subsequently liaised closely with partners across Tayside, as well as the Child Protection Committee. The purpose was to ensure that local practice, in terms of the monitoring of Registered Sex Offenders, was robust and incorporated the recommendations made by the Independent Inquiry. A Report was submitted and accepted by the Child Protection Committee on 29 June 2012.

The feedback from these exercises is being used to inform practice so as to ensure that the services which are delivered are not formulated in a vacuum and responsive to the needs of public protection. An annual review across Tayside, focussed on operational effectiveness is to be undertaken under the auspices of SAVOAG later this year. The review is to include a section on feedback from service users and partners.

3.3 Work/Liaison with child protection and adult protection services

Regular formal contact is maintained with colleagues in these services both at an operational level and by involvement at strategic/senior management forums. Both Child Care and Adult Protection staff are invited to attend fortnightly MAPPA sessions. The purpose of this is to ensure that issues which may be directly or indirectly connected to child and/or adult protection are fully considered and communicated to all parties.

A member of the Criminal Justice Team has attended all Children Services Social Work team meetings during the past few months to explain the role/task of Criminal Justice Services and to underline the systems and processes for joint working and communication. The purpose was to improve understanding and to enable colleagues from Education and Children's Services to highlight any areas of routine operational practice that needed to be improved or changed in any way. This exercise helped to ensure that there was a consistency of practice and understanding of processes (such as MAPPA) and that existing channels of communication were known to practitioners and being used across both staff groups.

3.4 Corporate and Elected Member ownership of high risk offender work

Briefing events for elected members are to be arranged with the new administration following the local elections in May 2012. A news release will be formulated and issued in due course.

3.5 Ensuring the wider community understands the role we play in managing the risk posed by high risk offenders

Work with the Police and other partners is ongoing to improve public information regarding MAPPA. In addition, an 'Open Day' for partner agencies, elected members, and community groups, was held on 24 June 2011 to publicise the specific work of Community Safety – including the task of managing high risk offenders. It is planned to repeat this event before the end of 2012 so that the systems and processes for managing 'high risk' dangerous offenders within Perth & Kinross can be explained and fully considered. In conjunction with the Tayside Community Justice Authority, and partner Criminal Justice Services, a joint communications strategy is also being developed that will help to address this very issue.

3.6 Introducing a procedure to identify 'near misses' and gaps in resources

A forum has been introduced for key partners to discuss lessons learned and to disseminate learning across the services should a 'near miss' occur. To date there have been no such near misses. A 'near miss' is an event or situation that could have resulted in injury, or loss, but did not do so due to chance, corrective action and/or timely intervention. The use of the term originated within a health & safety context but has become commonplace in a number of professional disciplines, including social work.

4 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

5 COUNCIL CORPORATE PLAN OBJECTIVES 2009-2012

The Council's Corporate Plan 2009/12 outlines five Objectives which provide clear strategic direction, inform decisions at a corporate and service level, and shape resource allocation. This report relates to the following:-

- A Safe, Secure and Welcoming Environment
- Healthy Caring Communities
- Confident, Active and Inclusive Communities

6 EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EqIA)

6.1 An equality impact assessment needs to be carried out for functions, policies, procedures or strategies in relation to race, gender and disability and other relevant protected characteristics. This supports the Council's legal requirement to comply with the duty to assess and consult on relevant new and existing policies.

The function, policy, procedure or strategy presented in this report was considered under the Corporate Equalities Impact Assessment process (EqIA) with the following outcome:

- i) Assessed as **not relevant** for the purposes of EqIA.

7 STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT ASSESSMENT

7.1 Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is a legal requirement under the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 that applies to all qualifying plans, programmes and strategies, including policies (PPS).

7.2 However, no action is required as the Act does not apply to the matters presented in this report. This is because the Committee are requested to note the contents of the report only and the Committee are not being requested to approve, adopt or agree to an action or to set the framework for future decisions.

8 CONSULTATION

Staff from the Performance and Quality Section of Housing & Community Care have been involved in the formulation and monitoring of the Improvement Plan.

9 CONCLUSION

The Report informs Elected Members of the progress, and current position, against the key objectives contained in the High Risk Offenders Self Evaluation Improvement Plan. It is intended to provide regular updates to Elected Members in respect of the work with High Risk Offenders.

David Burke

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Note: The following background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (and not containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to a material extent in preparing the above report.

Community Safety Committee report dated 7 September 2011 (11/449)

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