



Policy Overview & Scrutiny Committee Review Scoping Report 2011/12

OBJECTIVE

Short title of review

REVIEW OF RE-OFFENDING IN THE BOROUGH
--

Aim of review

To review and recommend improvements to local arrangements to address re-offending in the Borough.

Terms of Reference

1. To consider existing local services and procedures which address re-offending and any improvements that could be made;
2. To review whether the local processes in tackling this are timely, effective and cost efficient;
3. To review the guidance and support that is currently available to these re-offenders and their families;
4. To seek out the views on this subject from Residents and partner organisations using a variety of existing and contemporary consultation mechanisms;
5. To examine best practice elsewhere through case studies, policy ideas, witness sessions and visits;
6. To improve awareness and understanding of re-offending for professionals;
7. To explore ways that people who have re-offended can get more involved in their communities;
8. To explore ideas for developing early intervention; and

9. After due consideration of the above, to bring forward cost conscious, innovative and practical recommendations to the Cabinet in relation to the Council's procedure in dealing with cases of re-offending.

Reasons for the review

More than half of offenders serving less than 12 months in prison or on community sentences re-offend within the first year following their release. This puts huge strain on both local and national resources.

Re-offenders returning to prison contribute significantly to the steady increase in the prison population and rising costs; handling an individual reconviction could cost the public as much as £65,000 followed by up to £37,500 per year in prison. The overall cost of re-offending to the economy is between £7 billion and £10 billion per year.

The Council is involved in: the employment of ex-offenders through Blue Sky / Groundwork UK; housing offenders on release from prison; and drug and alcohol rehabilitation by funding the NHS work of the Drug / Alcohol Action Team.

There is a London wide Reducing Re-offending Strategy that can be explored to see how this works in Hillingdon. The problem of how to reform adult offenders remains as a major contributor to the crime rate.

Work is currently being undertaken by various departments within the Council to address the issue of re-offending. Current procedures need to be reviewed to ensure that issues are not overlooked.

To ensure that Borough Residents receive the best possible service, people that re-offend should be made aware of procedures and advice that is available to help them.

Background Information

The Hillingdon Sustainable Community Strategy has five theme groups in 2011, and is prioritising reducing re-offending:

Priorities for the Theme Group	Priority for Sustainable Community Strategy / Local Strategic Partnership
Safer Hillingdon Partnership <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reducing harm caused by alcohol and drugs• Reducing anti-social behaviour• Reducing youth crime• Reducing re-offending	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop prevention strategy for young people undertaking risky behaviours• Reduce repeat offending

The SHP Annual Plan is the Community Safety Strategy for the Borough. An annual strategic assessment determines the priorities requiring attention and if existing ones are still relevant and important.

The priorities identified by the strategic assessment were considered and discussed at the SHP Board meeting on 25 January 2011. As a result of these discussions the Board agreed that the following focussed list of issues should become the key priority areas for action over the coming 3-years:

- **Reducing harm caused by alcohol and drugs**
 - Misuse of alcohol and drugs generates a significant amount of acquisitive crime (burglary, robbery, motor vehicle crime) and violent crime.
- **Reducing anti social behaviour**
 - The Stakeholder Survey suggests vandalism, misuse of alcohol and drugs, nuisance behaviour, fly-tipping, noise and graffiti should be the priority areas for action.
- **Reducing youth crime**
 - Addressing crime and disorder issues that affect young people as both victims and perpetrators. Many young people have identified public transport around school travel times as particular areas of concern (through both Stakeholder Survey and past Your Shout surveys).
- **Reducing re-offending**
 - Addressing reasons why some individuals or families have long histories of causing crime and/or anti social behaviour.

Key objectives for Reducing re-offending:

- Maintain the crime reductions achieved prior to 2011/12
- Increase the number of offenders brought to justice
- Reduce the re-offending rate of offenders
- Ensure the Domestic Violence Action Plan is up dated and reported to the DV Executive each quarter
- Operate a Specialist DV Court
- Operate a Multi Agency Referral and Assessment Conference system for DV

The Ministry of Justice has released information relating to the re-offending rates of all adult offenders in Hillingdon. Over the course of a 12 month period

(2009/10), Hillingdon's Probation Service dealt with 3,061 offenders. The predicted re-offending rate was 7.92%; Hillingdon Probation Service reduced the actual re-offending rate to 7.45%. This is a reduction of just over 6% from the baseline. This data shows Hillingdon out-performing neighbouring borough's of Harrow (reducing 1.25% from baseline), Hammersmith and Fulham (reducing 0.27% from baseline), Brent (increasing 2.14% from baseline), Ealing (increasing 2.52% from baseline) and Hounslow (increasing 4.82% from baseline).

The Probation Service and LBH Housing Department have been making sure that all priority offenders who are released from prison have suitable accommodation to go to. Priority offenders are those assessed as causing most harm the community. For example, burglary, robbery and vehicle crime.

The Youth Offending Team work with young people who have committed crime to reduce any future re-offending. This year the Council's maximum target was a re-offending rate of 1.05%, the final performance for the year was 0.96%, so the target was met.

The Blue Sky Project, through Groundwork Thames Valley, Hillingdon Council and the Probation Service work together to provide paid work for people coming out of prison. The aim is to break the cycle of re-offending, achieving benefits for the individual and society.

Employment is probably the key intervention in breaking this cycle. The Blue Sky Project offers this for ex-offenders, with a focus on Priority and Prolific Offenders. Between 2007 and 2010, Blue Sky found employment for over 30 Hillingdon ex-offenders. An estimated £1 million saving to the taxpayer and a major contribution to the Borough's 64% reduction in offending for the Priority and Prolific group have been achieved.

Blue Sky statistics

All the national statistics are taken from the report, "Reducing Re-Offending by Ex-Prisoners" produced by the Social Exclusion Unit in 2002.

- More than 350 ex-offenders have been employed on 6-month contracts since Blue Sky began in October 2005
- Only 15% of Blue Sky ex-employees have re-offended – a quarter of the national average.
- 46% of Blue Sky employees move into sustained employment once they leave Blue Sky
- In 2009/10, 70% of Blue Sky employees left with an accredited vocational qualification
- Year on year employment in Blue Sky has risen by 87%

National statistics

- Re-offending costs the UK £12 billion each year.

PART 1 – MEMBERS, PUBLIC AND PRESS

- England and Wales release 90,000 prisoners per annum - 60% re-offend within two years.
- Employment reduces the probability of re-offending by 33-50%.
- 75% of ex-offenders have no job on release.
- The estimated cost for every single re-offender is approximately £200,000.
- 25% of all prisoners leave prison to homelessness.
- Employment and accommodation are the two most effective interventions in reducing re-offending.

Supporting the Cabinet & Council's policies and objectives

To be determined

INFORMATION AND ANALYSIS

Key Issues

This should provide a summary of the issues which the review will cover and will provide general points on aspects of the review which Members could start to look at

Remit - who / what is this review covering?

It is proposed this review will look at:

1. understanding the needs and requirements of agencies and people that re-offend, and the services offered to them;
2. improving awareness and understanding of re-offending for professionals;
3. developing early intervention;
4. ways to reduce re-offending rates in the borough and in-turn reducing the cost to the Local Authority.

The Committee's recommendations will go to the Cabinet and the Council's partners for approval.

Connected work (recently completed, planned or ongoing)

Through various programmes, some London boroughs are working closely with their statutory partners to reduce re-offending in innovative ways. The Integrated Offender Management (IOM) model has enabled local authorities to develop a joined up approach to working closely with local partners to tackle crime and reduce re-offending. Six boroughs also piloted the 'Diamond Initiative' to break cycles of re-offending using a multi-agency approach in 2008-10. Results were found to be mixed despite very large financial investment due to inconsistencies in the partnership arrangements. A report on the Diamond Districts project was published in 2011.

In December 2010, the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) published its Green Paper consultation, *Breaking the Cycle: Effective Punishment, Rehabilitation and Sentencing of Offenders*. In the Green Paper, the MOJ committed to carrying out a minimum of six rehabilitation pilots across the country, based on a payment-by-results (PBR) approach, and to explore innovative ways for reducing re-offending.

Five London boroughs have agreed to be pilots for a financial incentives approach and will incorporate this into their programmes for tackling re-offending. Lewisham, Lambeth, Hackney, Croydon and Southwark have all committed to build on their work with offenders and to explore innovative ways of working with their local statutory partners so as to reduce the demand on the justice system caused by re-offending. The pilots began on 1 July 2011 and will run for two years until 30 June 2013.

In addition, scrutiny reviews on offending have been undertaken by various Local Authorities including Derbyshire, Bradford, East Sussex and Haringey. No in-depth work has yet been taken by the London Borough of Hillingdon with regard to re-offending.

Key information required

To be determined.

EVIDENCE & ENQUIRY

Methodology

1. A Working Group would be set up to examine background documents and receive evidence at its public and private meetings from officers and external witnesses.
2. The Committee may also make visits to sites and/or to other Councils with best practice examples.
3. Relevant literature and websites for background reading for Members be researched.
4. A consultation exercise could also be undertaken.

Witnesses

Possible witnesses include:

1. Individuals who have been through the probation system and re-offenders.

2. External agencies: Blue Sky / Groundwork Thames Valley, Probation Services, Hayes Town Partnership, HM Prison Service, Metropolitan Police Authority, Metropolitan Police Service and Schools.
3. Officers from Youth Offending Service and Community Safety Team.
4. Cabinet Members for Improvement, Partnerships and Community Safety.

There may need to be some further prioritisation within this list in order to make the review manageable and ensure that it is completed within the prescribed timescale.

Intelligence

To be determined.

Consultation and Communications

Consultation could be undertaken with individuals who have re-offended, service departments, outside organisations and the voluntary sector.

Lines of enquiry

1. Are Residents' expectations and concerns about re-offending reflected in local service standards?
2. How are instances currently identified and dealt with across the Borough and how can this be improved and standardised?
3. How well developed are local strategies and partnerships with regard to re-offending?
4. How have other areas/councils successfully dealt with the issue of re-offending?
5. What joint-up or cross-borough work is the Council doing to ensure the re-offending rates are minimised?
6. Can you identify the barriers for working?
7. What training is available to staff to properly deal with cases?
8. How can education and training in relation to re-offending for probation and prison professionals be improved?
9. What information, support and advice is available to those that may need it? How can this be improved?

PART 1 – MEMBERS, PUBLIC AND PRESS

10. How can people who have re-offended get more involved in their communities and play a positive role in society?
11. Balance of the 'nanny state' versus an individual's freedom.

PROPOSALS

To be determined.

LOGISTICS

Proposed timeframe & milestones

Meeting	Action	Purpose / Outcome
ESSC – 20 July 2011	Agree Scoping Report	
Date TBA	Introductory Report / Witness Session	Background and Evidence gathering.
Date TBA	Witness session	Evidence gathering.
Date TBA	Witness session	Evidence gathering.

** Specific meetings can be shortened or extended to suit the review topic and needs of the Committee*

Equalities

The Council needs to ensure that procedures for dealing with individuals who re-offend and people affected by re-offenders are applied equitably to all community groups, races and ethnicities, enhance community cohesion and adequately meet the needs of a diverse borough.

Risk assessment

The review needs to be resourced and to stay focused on its terms of reference in order to meet this deadline. The impact of the review may be reduced if the scope of the review is too broad.