

# Report

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Report to:	<b>Performance and Review Scrutiny Forum</b>
Date of Meeting:	<b>13 July 2010</b>
Report by:	<b>Executive Director (Social Work Resources)</b>

Subject:	<b>Social Work Resources Service Review: Community Service</b>
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## 1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- ◆ provide the Performance and Review Scrutiny Forum with a summary of the review findings in respect of Community Services delivered by Social Work Resources

## 2. Recommendation(s)

2.1. The Forum is asked to approve the following recommendation(s):-

- (1) that option 4 recommendation from the review be endorsed, that is revise Community Services to a locality based model with a skills mix of qualified and unqualified workers allowing for flexibility and the targeting of resources
- (2) that the recommendations contained within the service review improvement plan be endorsed.

## 3. Background

3.1. Community Services had been identified for service review as a consequence of previous concerns around performance and also forthcoming legislation which could have resource implications. The main drivers for review were the:

- inspection outcomes of Criminal Justice Services by the Social Work Inspection agency
- performance profile of Community Services being in the lower quartile of the 32 Scottish local authorities in regard to community service
- impact of new legislation in regard to the delivery of justice services
- need to review resource implications including staff duties and roles in addressing additional legislation requirements
- need to review Community Services placement and provision

## 4. Definition of the Service

4.1. Community Services provides Courts with a community-based alternative to custody, requiring offenders to “pay back” to the community by undertaking unpaid work. There are national standards around community service including ensuring their work to be of value to the community and the offender. Also the Service requires to ensure a sufficient variety of placements to meet the needs of particular offenders for

example women and people who are disabled. Within Community Services challenging standards of behaviour and work are set, and any instances of absenteeism or poor behaviour are rapidly followed up, with sanctions applied where there is non-compliance.

## **5. Reporting Requirements**

- 5.1. Revised national standards introduced in June 2009 state that the offenders subject to community service must be seen within 1 working day of the order being issued and for their placement to commence within 7 working days. The new legislation sets out further timescales where the order must be completed within a certain time frame. Level 1 which is for 30 to 100 hours must be completed within 3 months. Level 2 which is for 101 to 300 hours must be completed within 6 months. Also new under the Criminal Justice and Licensing (Scotland) Bill, when enacted later this year, will be the ability to offer a therapeutic component alongside the unpaid work. This can be literacy and numeracy programmes, anger management and other programmes to support offenders into work, etc. The therapeutic component can be up to 30 hours or 30% depending on which is the lesser.

## **6. Review Process**

- 6.1 The Review for Community Services involved both internal and external consultations as well as trade union representation. A steering group was established to oversee the process. The partners represented on the steering group were:
- Community Resources
  - Housing and Technical Resources
  - Enterprise Resources
  - Community Service
  - Justice Services
  - Performance and Support Services
- 6.2 Several sub-groups were also established looking at specific areas such as:
- staffing
  - education and placements
  - performance
  - participation and communication
- 6.3 In the course of the review, the following were taken into account:
- service user views regarding the service
  - the opinions of beneficiaries of community service inputs
  - staff involvement
  - identification of improvement areas
  - benchmarking against other local authority providers
  - consideration of options
- 6.4 Overall the offenders consulted were extremely positive of Community Service Staff. The majority of offenders (57%) reported that they had learnt new skills and that Community Services provided a focus to their day. The areas of improvement suggested were mainly in relation to expanding the range of placements available.
- 6.5 Overall, the agencies were extremely positive of the work carried out. They often reported that the work would not have been done if it was not for community service. The work carried out was reported as being to a high standard. One agency felt that their staff had gained experience in working with this particular client group.

## **7. Service Profile**

- 7.1. Funding allocation from the Scottish Government for Social Work Justices Services goes to the Criminal Justice Authority for distribution. The Section 27 Grant for Criminal Justice Service is ring fenced money and any underspend is returned to the Scottish Government. The spend for Community Service, including Supervised Attendance Orders, in 2009-10 was £1,031,340. This includes employee costs, property, supplies and services, transport, other administration, finance and leasing. The current staffing structure of Community Services is outlined in Appendix 1. The allocation for 2010-11 is £1,089,072.
- 7.2. Community Service has a central base at High Blantyre which also contains workshop facilities and group work rooms used for programmed work with people given a Supervised Attendance Orders. There is also a Community service staff presence at Lanark local office. The service will soon be moving to a new base at Auchintibber. This will enable more group work to take place, a new laundry service to be introduced as well as having the capacity for all of the staff to have a localised presence.
- 7.3. The service operates over 7 days, providing the flexibility to accommodate offenders who are also in employment. The range of community service placement types available for offenders include being based within squads or in the workshop in Blantyre under Community Service Supervisor supervision. Squad work includes environmental improvements such as litter picking, clearing of walkways, enhancing the natural environment. Other work can include assisting requests such as when a church or vulnerable person/family make assistance requests such as helping with removal, or painting and decorating. Following a risk assessment some offenders who are considered low risk are placed in individual agency placements such as a charity shop or care home etc.
- 7.4. 487 Community Service orders were made in 2008-09, with the number of individuals subject to these orders being 457. This was made up of 344 orders for Community Service and 143 orders of probation with a requirement for unpaid work. The average length of Orders is 150 hours. The profile of the orders completed in 2008-09 is:
- 244 orders (72%) were successfully completed
  - 69 orders (20%) were revoked either due to review or breach
  - 11 orders (3%) were transferred out of the area
  - 3 orders (0.8%) where the person had died
  - 11 orders (3%) were noted under other
- 7.5. The majority of offenders on Community Service are males (89.7%), with the age profile of community service participants being predominately young men and women from 18 to 35. The age peaks at 21-25, with 26.5% of males offenders being in this category. In recent years the high level of employment has had an impact on the service to provide more weekend placements. However, it is not known what the more recent economic position has had, although it is anticipated that the employment figure will decrease when the position for 2009-10 is formally reported.

## **8. Benchmarking**

- 8.1. The community service provision of three local authorities were explored to compare service models. Each of the local authorities visited had very different service models and staffing structures. Two out of the three local authorities have the service model where the management of offenders on CS is provided by the Criminal Justice Team and the placements managed by a Project Manager or

Project Officer and Assistant. Both were overseen seen by a team leader, with a project officer/manager overseeing the placements. In one of the areas there was also a senior social worker and social workers involved in the management of offenders. One of the areas relied heavily on seasonal workforce for community service supervisors. Not all of the local authorities had work shop facilities.

- 8.2. The third area did have a very similar set up to SLC, in that there were Community Service Officers who managed the stand alone Community Service Orders but they did not hold a Social Work qualification. Social Work Assistants undertake the suitability assessments as well as holding Supervised Attendance Orders. In addition there are placement officers and co-ordinators who manage the placements.
- 8.3. The positive aspects from the different service models were considered in the revised structure.
- 8.4. Comparative analysis with three other authorities and the national average position was also undertaken in relation to Statutory Performance Indicators:
  - The number of CSO commencing
  - Average number of hours per week to complete a CSO.

In South Lanarkshire, there had been a decrease from 2004-05 to 2006-07 in the number of new Community Service Orders (CSO) being issued. As a result SLC became disadvantaged at this point as it this was when the 3 year funding formula was based on. Since then the numbers of orders have increased, thus the service has been provided to more service users on the back of limited resources. In relation to the average number of hours to complete CSO, South Lanarkshire Council has had the most marked improvement in recent years from 2.7 in 2004-05 to 3.9 in 2009-10 (**appendix 2**). The Scottish average has been decreasing over this period.

## **9. Options Appraisal**

- 9.1. The review has considered five future options for the provision of Community Service which included:
  - Option 1- Retain the current service in its existing form
  - Option 2 - Revise elements of the service with the locality based model moving to a fully qualified staff group at Officer level
  - Option 3 - Revise elements of the service moving to a locality based model with assessor/provider split
  - Option 4 - Revise service to a locality based model with skills mix of unqualified and qualified workers managing workers and case loads
  - Option 5 - Outsourcing service to an independent provider
- 9.2. Community Service is particularly staff intensive as the profiles of offenders within the service can mean that the staff role can be challenging at times, but also particularly isolating. Given the nature and characteristics of some individuals subject to community service it is important that staff have the appropriate attributes, skills and knowledge to undertake the role and that they are supported appropriately to do so.

## **10. Recommendation**

- 10.1. The difficulties associated with the options looked at were:
  - Option 1: According to national diagnostics framework the current structure is not compliant. There is scope to streamline the structure.
  - Option 2: A fully qualified staff team would not be cost affective as qualified staff would be involved in undertaken low level duties.

- Option 3: The assessor /provider split would provide a disjointed service with little cross over that would compromise the ownership of the service, risk and potentially the performance
- Option 4: see below
- Option 5: The provision of community service is a legislative requirement of local authorities. Tight controls around risk management and compliance are required

10.2 Therefore in consideration of all options, Option 4 with a revised staffing structure (**Appendix 1**) was identified as the preferred option as this supports the professionalisation of the service. This option which would bring significant improvements for staff and service users as option retention of a central base facilitates flexibility and communication across all staff groups whilst also providing facilities to allow the extension of placement opportunities for example laundry, groupwork, developmental and educational work. This model also offers a clearer focus on tasks and responsibilities ensuring that skills are deployed effectively and appropriately, ensuring an appropriate balance across qualified social workers and unqualified staff which is an important feature given the risk assessment and potential management challenges in working with offenders subject to community service. Other benefits of this model would be staff dedicated to seeking out placement work, building strong links with their designated locality. The Supervisors are managed effectively and have a clear career pathway. The review of staff roles and responsibilities allows capacity for increased flexibility and range of placement opportunities across evenings and weekends. To support evening placements new shift working arrangements would need to be implemented.

10.3 The challenge identified in moving to this model would be that of change in roles for current staff group including additional responsibilities.

10.4 An improvement plan (appendix 3) to the support implementation of option 4 and the service improvements has been developed.

## **11. Employee Implications**

11.1. The employee implications are detailed on the attached appendix 1. The total cost of the proposed increase in the staffing establishment is £43,000. Costings for the proposed structure are at this point estimated pending grading for new posts through the Council's Competence Initiative

11.2 The total costs detailed on the attached appendix 1 include the effects of superannuation and national insurance.

## **12. Financial Implications**

12.1. Criminal Justice Services are funded directly by National Government via a section 27 Grant which is administered by Lanarkshire Community Justice Authority. Justice Services provides the LCJA with an end of year position and any under spend is returned to the Scottish Government.

12.2 The increased staffing costs can be fully funded through the Section 27 grant monies.

## **13. Other Implications**

13.1. The trade unions have been involved at every stage of the process and discussions regarding staffing and service delivery implications are ongoing.

## **14. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements**

- 14.1. An equality impact assessment has been carried out on the recommendations contained in this report and, where issues were identified, remedial action has been taken. The assessment is that the proposals do not have any adverse impact on any part of the community covered by equalities legislation, or on community relations, and the results of the assessment will be published on the Council website.

**Harry Stevenson**  
**Executive Director (Social Work Resources)**

16 June 2010

### **Link(s) to Council Values/Objectives**

- Corporate improvement theme: Vision and Strategic Direction – Sustainable Development
- Increase involvement in life-long learning
- Improve the quality of the physical environment
- Improve community safety
- Support local economy by providing the right conditions of growth, improving skills and employability

### **Previous References**

None

### **List of Background Papers**

None

### **Contact for Further Information**

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact:-

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**Table 1: Current Staffing**

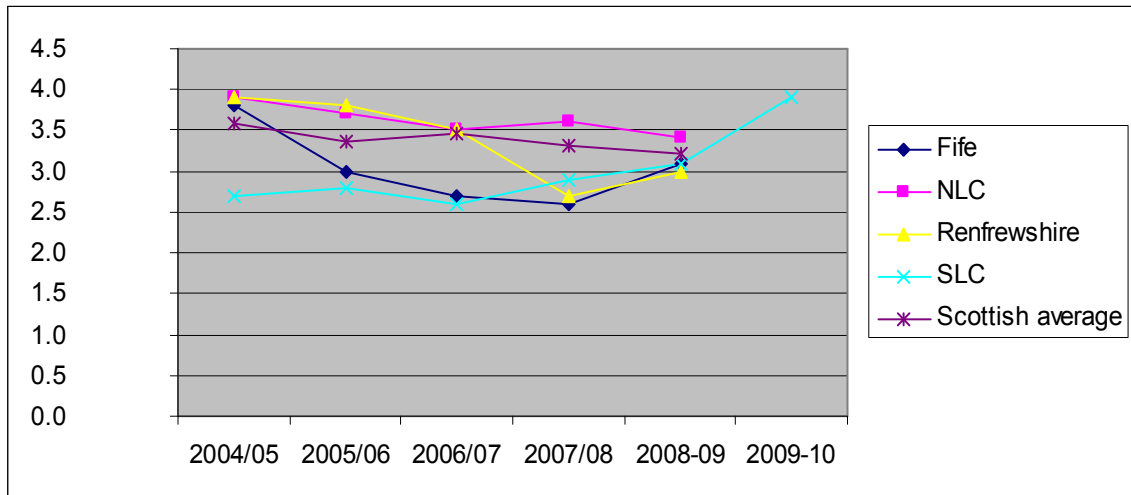
<b>Post Title</b>	<b>WTE</b>
Team Leader	2
Community Service Officer (Posts to be deleted)	5
Supervised Attendance Officers (Posts to be deleted)	2
Resource Assistants (Posts to be deleted)	5
CS Supervisors	13.57
Clerical Assistant	4
Total WTE	31.57
Total Cost	£937,466

**Table 2: Proposed Staffing**

<b>Post Title</b>	<b>WTE</b>
Team Leader	2
Social Worker (New post)	4
Social Work Assistant (New post)	6
Placement Co-ordinators (New post)	3
Unpaid Work Supervisors (Supervisors – change to post title)	13.57
Clerical Assistant	4
Total WTE	32.57
Total Cost	£980,064*

\* Costings for the proposed structure are at this point estimated pending grading for new posts through the Council's Competence Initiative

**Appendix 2:** Comparative analysis on the average number of hours to complete CSO



South Lanarkshire Council has had the most marked improvement of the last three years from 2.7 in 2004-05 to 3.9 in 2009-10 (graph 2). The Scottish average has been decreasing over this period. However, the introduction of the revised National Standards for Community Service may help local authorities to improve their performance in this area. The indicator will need to be revised further once the new legislation comes into force on the number of level 1 orders completed in 3 months and the number of level 2 orders completed in 6 months.



### Appendix 3: Improvement Plan

Area for improvement	Action	Lead	Timescale	Progress
Staffing	Embark on a programme of consultation with staff and Trade Unions	Personnel Advisor / Justice Services Manager	End of July 2010	Note: It is anticipated that the new Community Payback Orders will come into force in December 2010
	Confirm individual arrangements in relation to new proposals	Personnel Advisor / Justice Service Manager	October 2010	
	Implement new shift working arrangements as per new rota	Team Leader	November 2010	
	Make arrangements for staff supervision and team meetings in line with the new rota arrangements	Team Leader	November	
Type of placements	Explore with a range partners the possibility of further developing the range of placements available both in terms of squads and agency placements	Team Leaders	October 2010	
First appointment	Review the first appointment in order to maximise the involvement of the offenders in their order	Team Leaders	October 2010	
Involvement of offenders and the community	Develop systems and processes to ensure ongoing involvement of offenders on the service in general	Team Leaders	August 2010	
	Develop systems and processes to ensure community is involved in determining what environment improvements are the priority	Team Leaders	August 2010	