

DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE - 18 February 2002

REPORT ON: INTER AGENCY WORKING: - CRIMINAL JUSTICE SOCIAL WORK AND TAYSIDE POLICE

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK

REPORT NO: 137-2002

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 This report informs committee members of an agreement between the Criminal Justice Service and Tayside Police to form an integrated risk assessment and risk management team for sex offenders and other potentially dangerous offenders. The team would be based in the Criminal Justice Social Work office in Friarfield House, Barrack Street, Dundee.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Social Work Committee approve: -

- 2.1 The creation of a joint Criminal Justice Service/Tayside Police risk assessment and risk management team for sex offenders and other potentially dangerous offenders.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 There are no financial implications for Dundee City Council arising from this proposal.

4.0 AGENDA 21

- 4.1 This proposal supports and promotes key theme 9, which acknowledges the right "of people to live without fear of personal malice or crime of persecution."

5.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 None.

6.0 MAIN TEXT

- 6.1 In 1998 Dundee City, Perth and Kinross and Angus councils were signatories to a formal protocol with Tayside Police which described information sharing arrangements between the agencies in relation to both registered and non-registered sex offenders living in the community. The protocol emphasised the commitment of all of the signatories to work in partnership to protect the public from potentially dangerous offenders. More recently, in October 2001, Dundee City Council and Tayside Police were, again, joint signatories to the "Public Protection Forum Corporate Framework" document, which had, as one of four key principles, a commitment to share information with relevant agencies and departments to reduce the risk posed to the community by sex offenders and other potentially dangerous offenders. The proposal also satisfies a number of the recommendations contained in the Mclean report on serious violent and sexual offenders (published in June 2001), and the expert panel on the supervision and management of sex offenders, chaired by Lady Cosrove which published its findings in June 2001 in a report entitled, "Reducing the risk: Improving the response to sex offending".

- 6.2 In support of the principle of partnership working, and in recognition of the need to share information effectively, Dundee City Council and Tayside Police have developed joint risk assessment and risk management procedures. These ensure that all decisions taken on sex offenders and potentially dangerous offenders are informed by the pooling of expertise, knowledge and skills of both agencies. At the present time the registered and non-registered sex offender profiling officers of Tayside Police are based in Police Headquarters in Dundee while the Criminal Justice Service Social workers are normally based in Friarfield House, Barrack Street, Dundee.
- 6.3 As a consequence of the close co-operative working between the two agencies a great deal of time is spent together in joint risk assessment meetings and in joint visits to offenders. It became apparent to Tayside Police and the Criminal Justice Service that the need to collaborate was likely, over time, to increase and it appeared reasonable, in the interests of effectiveness and efficiency, to consider arrangements to promote and enhance the ability of staff to work together.
- 6.4 Agreement has now been reached between Tayside Police and the Dundee City Council Criminal Justice social work service to combine the resources of both agencies in one location to form an integrated risk assessment and risk management team. The team would be based in Friarfield House, Dundee. Tayside Police would locate the registered and non-registered sex offender profiling officers in Friarfield House alongside the Tay project, which works with convicted sex offenders. The office also accommodates social workers who have responsibility for the supervision of sex offenders and other potentially dangerous offenders in the community.
- 6.5 The benefits of the arrangement are significant; improved communication, joint working, information sharing and enhanced team working will all contribute to the key objective of increased public protection. While it is impossible to completely eliminate risk we can greatly reduce the risks through the improved risk assessment and risk management which will be come from the work of the joint team. The team will provide a reference point for other Council services for advice and support. Particular benefits will be derived by, departments which regularly have to address issues relating to dangerousness and community safety, such as the Housing department. The initiative is believed to be the first of its kind in Scotland where both the police and criminal social work share the same accommodation as a means of furthering and enhancing partnership working.
- 6.6 If committee approves the proposal it is expected that the arrangement will begin in early spring 2002.

7.0 CONSULTATION

- 7.1 Consultation has taken place with the Chief Constable of Tayside Police, The Director of Housing and the Director of Finance.

8.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information), were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above report.

9.0 SIGNATURE

Director of Social Work

Date

5 February 2002