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Michael Lane
Police and Crime Commissioner for
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(by email)

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Dear Mr Lane,

Hampshire Police and Crime Panel's Proactive Scrutiny of Restorative Justice

At the 27 January 2017 meeting Members of the Hampshire Police and Crime Panel reviewed the evidence received from yourself and other organisations in relation to the use of restorative justice and restorative approaches across the Hampshire policing area.

This review aimed to scrutinise and support you in your role as Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) in your intention to keep communities across Hampshire and the Isle of Wight safe and secure, through reviewing the progress made towards achieving the vision of the Restorative Justice and Restorative Approaches Strategy. This scrutiny also considered how well you are engaging partners across the two counties in delivering this agenda, as well as increasing awareness and engagement from the wider community.

The review looked at the following key questions:

- How well have the OPCC worked with voluntary and statutory sector partners to date, to support the development and delivery of the Restorative Justice and Restorative Approaches Strategy?
- How are the Commissioner and his office engaging with local communities and victims and perpetrators of crime and anti-social behaviour, to raise the profile of restorative justice and restorative approaches within Hampshire and the Isle of Wight?
- What are the key priorities which need to be considered by the PCC to support delivery of the Restorative Justice and Restorative Approaches Strategy?
- What best practice exists which could also be considered by the PCC in his approach to enhancing the restorative justice provision across Hampshire and the IOW?

Following a review of the evidence received, the Panel have outlined their findings below for your consideration.

Findings

Members of the Panel noted that evidence received had demonstrated the progress made by the Commissioner and his office in delivering this agenda. In particular the evidence had suggested:

- The Commissioner and his office have engaged well with a wide range of statutory and voluntary sector partners, consulting with them in the development of the new Restorative Justice and Restorative Approaches Strategy and seeking their commitment to the delivery of it. Examples provided include the Strategy consultation and launch events, and implementation of the Restorative Justice Project Board and the Restorative Approaches Forum. Partners commented that they felt 'valued' within the process and that the OPCC had been enthusiastic and receptive to feedback.
- That, in launching his new Restorative Justice and Restorative Approaches Strategy the Commissioner had acknowledged the need for, and made commitment to, making restorative justice available to all victims and perpetrators, regardless of the nature of the crime. This expanded upon the provision of the previous strategy and was commended by a number of those responding to the review.
- That, through appointing a Restorative Justice Coordinator at the OPCC, the Commissioner has developed capacity within his office to maintain an overview of the delivery of the new strategy across both counties, and enhance engagement with partners across the criminal justice system and those working within statutory and voluntary sectors.
- The Commissioner and his office, at the time of this review, were reviewing public awareness of the availability and use of restorative justice. The evidence noted that the Commissioner intended to hold a public engagement planning session in January 2017 and was developing a communication and engagement plan with the intention of promoting wider public awareness.
- The Commissioner is seeking to learn of best practice from others, including engaging with restorative justice leads in other policing areas and with Youth Offending Teams, who are experienced practitioners in the use of Restorative Justice across Hampshire and the Isle of Wight.

Further, in reviewing the evidence received, Members brought forth a number of recommendations, which they wish to raise for your consideration:

- a. That the Commissioner, in addition to those measures outlined above, should encourage and seek opportunities for greater public awareness raising and understanding, with a view to increasing the level of self-referrals to restorative services. Whilst the review noted that Restorative Justice featured prominently on the Commissioner's website, the Commissioner should ensure that the strategy and information on Restorative Justice is accessible to those without, or with limited access to online mediums, to encourage wider awareness and understanding of the Commissioner's restorative justice agenda.

- b. That the Commissioner should, where possible, ensure within his Commissioning Strategy that funds are made available to encourage innovation in the field of restorative practice and the upskilling of local partners.
- c. Through liaison with partners including HMP, CRC and National Probation Service, opportunities should be sought to increase the access to, and awareness perpetrators have of restorative justice, including identification of when and how it would be appropriate for offenders to initiate a restorative approach.
- d. In partnership with Youth Offending Teams and other appropriate partners, that the Commissioner considers how restorative approaches could be used within schools, as a tool for reducing offending and supporting young people to remain engaged in education. In assessing the benefits of such a scheme, consideration should be given to the evaluation and outcomes of a pilot project undertaken by Southampton Youth Offending Team.
- e. That, the Commissioner should seek to increase engagement with partners specialising in domestic and sexual abuse to ensure that they understand the availability and process involved for accessing restorative justice for victims of these crime types, including through the planned introduction of the OPCC's consultation group. In considering the use of restorative justice for victims of sensitive crime types, the Commissioner should ensure that the process is robustly risk assessed to ensure that appropriate safeguards are in place to prevent further harm or re-victimisation, and that an adequate evidence base is built to measure the success in the use of restorative justice for these victims.
- f. The Panel would encourage the Commissioner to outline measurable outcomes, under the Restorative Justice and Restorative approaches strategy, ensuring good quality quantitative and qualitative measures are used, and requests that the Commissioner provides updates to the Panel on the positive outcomes these restorative approaches have delivered.
- g. In due course, that the Commissioner provides a public update on the benefits delivered through the use of restorative justice and on progress made against the Restorative Justice and Restorative Approaches strategy.

Evidence to the Panel has also highlighted a number of examples of best practice which the Commissioner may wish to consider as part of the future development of his strategy. The Panel would also draw the Commissioner's attention to the research undertaken by the Survivor's Trust, in the preparation for their response, which provides comment on the use of Restorative Justice with victims of sexual crime.

In summary, the Panel observed that the overwhelming majority of responses that were received to this scrutiny reflected positively on the progress the Commissioner and his office have made in developing the new Restorative Justice and Restorative Approaches strategy and the work undertaken to support its delivery.

We look forward to receiving, in due course, your response to the recommendations outlined above, including consideration as to how the recommendations made will be incorporated into related activities within your Delivery Plan.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Stewart', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Councillor David Stewart
Chair, Hampshire Police and Crime Panel