

AGENDA ITEM

**REPORT TO CLEVELAND
POLICE AND CRIME PANEL**

22 OCTOBER 2013

**REPORT OF HEAD OF
DEMOCRATIC SERVICES &
HEAD OF COMMUNITY
PROTECTION**

REVIEW OF PROBATION SERVICES

SUMMARY

At the meeting of 18 July, the Panel agreed to undertake a range of scrutiny work, including a piece of work examining the probation service. The Panel agreed to receive a further report setting out how this could take place.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That Members agree the task and finish group approach to reviewing probation services, the timescale and make appointments accordingly.

DETAIL

1. At the meeting of 18 July, the Panel agreed to undertake a range of scrutiny work. Alongside a range of other topics, the Panel agreed to undertake a review into the probation service. It was agreed to consider a further report setting out the possible format of such a review.
2. The Government is undertaking major reform of the probation service. This will see the abolition of the current Probation Trusts and their replacement by a new National Probation Service (NPS). The NPS would carry out initial assessments and pre-sentence work with offenders, and would manage those offenders assessed as representing high risk, and a series of new companies would manage medium and low risk offenders.
3. The local company managing the lower risk offenders would be co-terminous with the area covered by the present Durham Tees Valley Probation Trust. Discussion has taken place in relation to making a bid for the local contract, through a consortium made up of public and third sector organisations. This may take the form of a Community Interest Company.

4. The tendering process will continue during 2014 and it is currently planned for contracts to start in April 2015.
5. It is proposed that a task and finish group is set up to consider the matter. The review could consider the transition from the current arrangements, and the progress of the local 'public and third sector' bid, subject to that bid's continued development.
6. Separately, the Panel has agreed to undertake other scrutiny work including two Task and Finish Reviews of the Overall Budget Strategy, and Work in Schools, and these are now underway. These reviews will require commitments from both Members and officer support. As the budget review will be completed by January, it is therefore proposed that the task group reviewing probation starts work from February onwards.
7. The two Task and Finish Reviews currently underway have a membership based on 1 member from each authority, plus 1 of the Non Political Independent Members. The Panel may wish to adopt the same approach for this review and appoint accordingly.

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