

Finance Committee

Community Justice (Scotland) Bill

Submission from Midlothian Community Safety Partnership

Response

Consultation

1. Did you take part in any consultation exercise preceding the Bill and, if so, did you comment on the financial assumptions made?

We responded to the consultation undertaken in February 2014. At the time the partnership highlighted that:

- We believe that it would be counter-productive to end ring-fenced funding during or shortly after this important transition period. Local authorities are under a great deal of financial pressure to maintain services to vulnerable adults and children and it would not be helpful for Community Justice to have to compete with other priorities in the current economic climate.

The following comment was made about funding for women offenders:

- The needs of women offenders have been poorly met for many years and there has been significant improvement in this area over the past two years with the development of Community Justice Centres and other projects tailored for women. It is important that this progress is maintained under the new structure and that funding for these services is not short-term and characterised by uncertainty.

2. If applicable, do you believe your comments on the financial assumptions have been accurately reflected in the FM?

The FM does not refer to ring fenced funding.

3. Did you have sufficient time to contribute to the consultation exercise?

Yes.

Costs

4. If the Bill has any financial implications for your organisation, do you believe that they have been accurately reflected in the FM? If not, please provide details.

No. The Bill will have financial implications for local authorities and the new reducing reoffending partnership in terms of them taking on part of the role currently undertaken by the CJA. Although 3 years of transitional funding has been provided

the FM does not set out how local authorities are expected to fund this in the long run.

5. Do you consider that the estimated costs and savings set out in the FM are reasonable and accurate?

No. One off staff cost relating to community justice performance framework – The framework will need to be refreshed in accordance with changes to the national strategy. No allowance has been made for this.

Other than this the Community Safety Partnership is not best placed to comment on the costs associated with the running of a national body.

6. If applicable, are you content that your organisation can meet any financial costs that it might incur as a result of the Bill? If not, how do you think these costs should be met?

No. It is not clear how the Partnership will meet the on-going costs of developing and delivering the reducing reoffending plan. It is suggested the Government should either provide funding for this using savings from the CJA, or that the Bill should provide a requirement for core partners to contribute to funding.

7. Does the FM accurately reflect the margins of uncertainty associated with the Bill's estimated costs and with the timescales over which they would be expected to arise?

Wider Issues

8. Do you believe that the FM reasonably captures any costs associated with the Bill? If not, which other costs might be incurred and by whom?

Does not capture local authority costs in the long run or provide for changes in the Criminal Justice funding formula.

9. Do you believe that there may be future costs associated with the Bill, for example through subordinate legislation? If so, is it possible to quantify these costs?

No comment.