

Kenny MacAskill MSP  
Cabinet Secretary for Justice  
St. Andrews House  
Regent Road  
Edinburgh  
EH1 3DG

17 December 2013

Dear Mr McAskill,

Thank you for your letter dated 16th December regarding reform of community justice.

We note your decision to consult on a 'fourth' model and warmly welcome your acknowledgement of the role that CJAs can play in the reform process in the interim.

While we would acknowledge that the consultation period has been unsettling, the CJA has not allowed the focus on the reoffending challenge in Lothian and Borders to be diminished.

Indeed, the intervening period has witnessed further improvements in performance as well as further development of partnership based solutions to the re-offending challenge across the Sheriffdom.

I know that the Chief Officer and his team will continue to innovate and work hard with board members and partners to ensure that the CJA meets the highest possible standards as a public body.

At its meeting in November 2013, the Lothian and Borders CJA Board signed up to a 'reform handling strategy' proposed by the CJA Chief Officer, in anticipation of the next stage of reform.

This 'reform handling strategy' aims to ensure resilience within the CJA team and across the wider community justice system in Lothian and Borders throughout the period of reform. The strategy is based on the following broad commitments:

1. Lothian and Borders CJA is fully committed to playing its part in the transition to the new community justice system;
2. Lothian and Borders CJA will continue to discharge its statutory, regulatory and partnership functions and obligations in an effective manner;

3. Lothian and Borders CJA will continue to promote reducing reoffending, partnership and continuous performance improvement; and

4. Lothian and Borders CJA will keep lines of communication open and ensure that Board Members, staff, partners and stakeholders are kept up to date with the community justice service reform process.

I am very much looking forward to our ongoing work with criminal justice and community planning partners over the next 3 years or so to continue to reduce re-offending and in support of a new and exciting era for the community justice system.

Please do not hesitate to come back to me if you would like further information.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Catherine Johnston". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping tail at the end.

Cllr C Johnstone  
Convener  
Lothian and Borders CJA