

Extract from 'Proposals for the Establishment of Area Support Teams' by the National Convener of Children's Hearings Scotland, published July 2011

17. East Dunbartonshire and West Dunbartonshire

- 17.1 Geography and Boundaries: East Dunbartonshire lies to the north of Glasgow and shares boundaries with Stirling Council to the north, West Dunbartonshire to the west, North Lanarkshire to the south and east and Glasgow to the south and west. It is a mixture of urban and rural areas. East Dunbartonshire recently re-located to a new hearings room provided by the local authority and based in the Kirkintilloch Registration Offices.
- 17.2 West Dunbartonshire is located between Loch Lomond and the Glasgow conurbation on the north bank of the River Clyde. It shares boundaries with Glasgow City, Argyll and Bute, Stirling, East Dunbartonshire and Renfrewshire and is separated from Renfrewshire by the River Clyde.
- 17.3 Size of panel to be supported by the proposed AST: The proposed AST would support approximately 114 members: East Dunbartonshire currently has 33 children's panel members and two joint children's panel chairs and West Dunbartonshire has 81 panel members, including one panel chair and three depute chairs.
- 17.4 Existing joint / cross-boundary CPAC or panel working that should be preserved: There are no joint working arrangements between the CPAC or panel in each local authority area at present. East Dunbartonshire panel has previously assisted South Lanarkshire colleagues by providing male panel members to assist with hearings in South Lanarkshire over a 6 month period.
- 17.5 The two local authorities work together, however, in terms of the following broader structures and partnerships: the Clyde Valley Community Planning Partnership (along with Glasgow City, Inverclyde and East Renfrewshire); the Criminal Justice Partnership (also including Argyll and Bute); North Strathclyde Community Justice Authority (also comprising Inverclyde, East Renfrewshire, Renfrewshire and Argyll and Bute) and; the Valuation Joint Board (also including Argyll and Bute).

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- 17.6 How the proposed arrangement would deliver better support for panel members locally: The same considerations apply as I have set out in the previous section: I considered and discounted, the creation of an AST grouping similar to the SCRA North Strathclyde Locality Model that includes East Dunbartonshire and West Dunbartonshire. I concluded that there would be no benefits in this model in terms of more effective support for panel members or greater efficiencies.
- 17.7 I do believe, however, that there are benefits to be gained from a more outward-facing approach that would facilitate the sharing of good practice and learning, whilst avoiding the creation of an AST so large and geographically spread that it could not offer meaningful support to panel members and may adversely affect their retention.
- 17.8 Membership of the proposed AST as a minimum: I propose a core membership of 9 National Convener appointees, 1 local authority and 1 Panel nominee for each local authority area and 1 Clerk.