

MEETING:	Cabinet
MEETING DATE:	11 September 2015
TITLE OF REPORT:	Youth justice plan 2015/16
REPORT BY:	Director for children's wellbeing

Classification

Open

Key Decision

This is a key decision.

This is a key decision because it is likely to be significant in terms of its effect on communities living or working in an area comprising one or more wards in the county.

Notice has been served in accordance with Part 2, Section 5 (Procedures Prior to Private Meetings) of The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (Regulations) 2012.

Wards Affected

County-wide.

Purpose

To recommend the Youth Justice Plan for approval by Council.

Recommendation(s)

THAT:

- (a) **the Youth Justice Plan (at appendix A) is recommended to Council for approval.**

Alternative Options

- 1 There are no alternative options as a Youth Justice Plan is required to be produced on an annual basis.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 2 The Youth Justice Plan forms part of the council's budget and policy framework and is therefore reserved to council to approve.
- 3 The Youth Justice Plan is prepared on an annual basis on behalf of Herefordshire Council, Shropshire Council, Telford and Wrekin Council and Worcestershire County Council. The basic plan preparation is undertaken by the West Mercia Youth Offending Service according to the deadlines and guidance from the Youth Justice Board for England and Wales (YJB).
- 4 The Youth Justice Plan sets out how youth justice services across West Mercia are structured and resourced and identifies key actions to address identified risks to service delivery and improvement.
- 5 Whilst the plan focusses predominantly on reducing offending and reoffending and improving quality of practice, there is also a need to improve health and wellbeing outcomes of young offenders and reduce the inequalities which exist. During the course of the next year, through the closer integration with local services in Herefordshire, there will be a focus on the wellbeing outcomes and the actions which can be taken to address these.
- 6 Under section 40 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 each local authority has a duty to produce a Youth Justice Plan setting out how Youth Justice Services in their area are provided and funded and how the Youth Offending Service for the area is funded and composed; the plan is submitted to the Youth Justice Board for England and Wales.
- 7 The Youth Justice Plan for 2015/16 was prepared in May 2015 in line with the guidance issued by the YJB, and agreed at the West Mercia Youth Offending Management Board on 1 June 2015. It is officially due to be submitted to the YJB by the end of August 2015. A provisional copy was forwarded to the YJB in June.

Key Considerations

- 8 The Youth Offending Service is subject to three national indicators. Performance against the indicators is outlined in the plan and actions identified to address risks to performance improvement. The Herefordshire specific information is set out on pages 28-32 of the plan.
- 9 The first time entrant (FTE) indicator which is expressed as the number of first time entrants to the youth justice per 100,000 youth population was 525 for Herefordshire in the year ending September 2014, representing a reduction of 11% from the year ending September 2013 where the FTE rate was 589.
- 10 At 525 Herefordshire has the highest rate of FTEs across West Mercia and some analysis into the reasons for the higher rate was undertaken in 13/14, and found that in part it is due to a higher detection rate and lower proportional use of informal disposals. Further work commenced at the end of 14/15 and is continuing in 15/16.
- 11 The second indicator is the use of custody indicator, which is measured as the number of custodial sentences per 1,000 youth population. The use of custody performance for the year 2014/15 was 0.24. This is an improvement in performance from 2013/14 where the rate was 0.30.

- 12 The third indicator is re-offending. There are two measures both measuring re-offending in the same cohort of offenders over a 12 month period following the youth justice sanction that placed the young person in the cohort. The first, the frequency rate, is the average number of re-offences per young person in the cohort. The second is the percentage of the young people in the cohort who have re-offended.
- 13 The frequency measure for Herefordshire for the year 2012/13 is 1.00 and this shows improved performance from 2011/12 when the rate was 1.35.
- 14 The percentage of young people who have re-offended in Herefordshire for 2012/13 is 28.1% and has significantly improved from 2011/12 where it was 40.8%. The Herefordshire rate is better than for West Mercia, 31.3% and for England, 36.0%
- 15 During 2015/16 the YOS will be implementing the YJB re-offending tracking tool in order to understand the characteristics of the re-offending group and inform the services approach to reducing re-offending.
- 16 The Youth Justice Plan outlines key actions to improve service provision in 2015/16 under four main priorities:
- (i) Improving Performance and Developing Practice
- In response to the findings of internal and external audits work to improve identified areas of practice and quality
 - Implementation of the Short Quality Screening (SQS) Inspection action plan
 - Re-establishing the Worcester Junior Attendance Centre (JAC) and developing the programme for the Telford JAC
 - Developing service guidance and screening tools for child sexual exploitation (CSE)
 - Implementation of a single ICT system and new case management system
 - Review the management of risk processes and implementation of a single integrated intervention plan for young people
- (ii) Understanding our Young People
- Implementation of tracker tools for re-offending, first time entrants, education, training and employment and victim work
 - Further analysis of first time entrants to gain a greater understanding of journey of the child into the youth justice system
 - Work to understand the nature and extent of harmful sexual behaviour by young people
 - Reviewing and revising methods of collecting and the use of feedback from service users
 - Building and developing the needs assessment and evidence base
- (iii) Improved Joint Working and Integration
- Continued focus on joint issues between YOS and social care for looked after children and care leavers through the LAC and Care Leavers sub group of the Management Board

- Developing better joint work, information and integration with relevant children services
- Ensuring linkages with the Troubled Families and early help developments in each local authority
- Strengthening transition work with National Probation Service (NPS), particularly through the implementation of the Y2A (youth to adults) case transfer arrangements

(iv) Governance and Communication

- Complete the service review and agree future delivery arrangements for youth offending services across West Mercia
- Developing a more integrated approach to leadership and management of the YOS between the management team and management board
- Further development of the communications strategy
- Review of health participation in the YOS governance structure

Community Impact

- 15 The principal aim of the Youth Justice System is the prevention of offending and re-offending by children and young people. The Youth Justice Plan sets out an action plan to address the significant risks identified to future service delivery and improvement.
- 16 The Youth Justice Plan supports the Children and Young People's Plan 2015 - 2018, by planning actions to improve the outcomes for children and young people who are in the youth justice system and working to minimise the risks associated with any harm they may pose to others and any harm posed to them.
- 17 The Youth Justice Plan directly contributes to the reducing re-offending priority in the Herefordshire Community Safety Strategic Plan 2014/17. During 2015/16 the Youth Offending Service will strengthen links with the Families First programme contributing directly to the parents and children involved in crime and anti-social behaviour priority in the Herefordshire Outcomes Plan.
- 18 The Youth Justice Plan supports priority 2 of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy, in working to reduce offending, anti-social behaviour and re-offending by young people.

Equality and Human Rights

- 19 The Youth Justice Plan will support the Council in its overall duty to promote equality. In particular the plan makes proposals to improve the outcomes of children and young people who are conflict with the law, by ensuring that their diversity factors are assessed and assisting them in accessing services that meet their needs.

Financial Implications

- 20 The 2015/16 financial contribution to the YOS by the Council is £232k which includes a cash contribution and two FTE staff. This contribution represents a 25% saving from the 11/12 contribution as part of a planned reduction created by the successful reduction in the number of offenders and efficiencies created by the establishment of the West Mercia YOS.

Legal Implications

- 21 Section 40 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 imposes a statutory duty on the Council, after consulting with the Police, Probation and Health (as set out in Section 38(2)), to formulate and implement for each year a Youth Justice Plan. The plan must set out: how youth justice services in Herefordshire are to be provided and funded; how the youth offending service is to be composed and funded, how it is to operate; and what functions it will carry out. The Council must submit its Youth Justice Plan to the Youth Justice Board for England and Wales in a form and by a date set by the Secretary of State.

Risk Management

- 22 The risks are identified in the Plan, together with the actions to mitigate them.
- 23 West Mercia YOS is currently hosted on an interim basis by Worcestershire County Council. During 2015/16 work will be undertaken by the four Local Authorities and the other statutory partners to evaluate and agree the longer term hosting and delivery arrangements for West Mercia YOS.

Consultees

- 24 Through their Management Board, representatives of Herefordshire Council, Shropshire Council, Telford and Wrekin Council, Worcestershire and Herefordshire Council, West Mercia Police, the National Probation Service, the Office of the West Mercia PCC and the staff of West Mercia Youth Offending Service have been consulted.

Appendices

- West Mercia Youth Justice Plan 2015/16

Background Papers

- None identified.