

MEETING:	CABINET
DATE:	20 OCTOBER 2011
TITLE OF REPORT:	YOUTH JUSTICE PLAN
PORTFOLIO AREA:	CORPORATE STRATEGY AND FINANCE

CLASSIFICATION: Open

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

The Youth Justice Plan is prepared on an annual basis on behalf of Herefordshire Council and Worcestershire County Council. The basic plan preparation is undertaken by the Youth Offending Service according to the deadlines and guidance from the Youth Justice Board for England and Wales (YJB).

Key Decision

This is not a Key Decision.

Recommendation

THAT the Youth Justice Plan as prepared be endorsed and that it be recommended within the Policy Framework that the Plan be approved by Council at its meeting on 18 November 2011.

Key Points Summary

The Youth Justice Plan sets out how youth justice services across Herefordshire and Worcestershire are structured and identifies key actions to address identified risks to service delivery and improvement.

Alternative Options

There are no alternative options.

Reasons for Recommendations

The Youth Justice Plan is endorsed by Herefordshire Council annually.

Introduction and Background

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

The Youth Justice Plan for 2010/11 was prepared in March 2011 in line with the guidance issued by the YJB, the draft plan was agreed at the Youth Offending Management Board on 4 April 2011 and signed off by Management Board members in July 2011.

A comparative analysis of resources with other Youth Offending Services within the family group (statistical neighbour group) undertaken in 2008, demonstrated that in terms of delivering performance, meeting National Standards and cost per youth justice disposal Worcestershire and Herefordshire YOS represented good value for money. Within the family group of 10 youth offending services Worcestershire and Herefordshire had the lowest overall cost per disposal at £2350 (range £2350 to £4394), had a higher than average case load per worker but was the fourth highest performing YOS in the family group, in terms of the overall performance, and the highest performing in terms of meeting the key performance indicators.

A Core Case Inspection was undertaken by Her Majesty's Inspectors in January 2011 and recorded that "... we consider this a very encouraging set of findings and that the prospects for the future are good".

During 2010/11 the Management Board reviewed their role in relation to providing strategic direction to the service and has commissioned a sub-group to appraise future service delivery options for 2012 onwards. The review is considering developing the strategic leadership into a West Mercia model, incorporating Worcestershire and Herefordshire, Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin authorities. This model would mirror the strategic leadership of the Police and Probation Services across West Mercia and is seen as being able to achieve more value for money through shared services such as IT and improved performance through increased opportunities for sharing best practice. The operation of the YOS would remain Local Authority based, enabling specific operational processes to continue to reflect local needs and preferences.

Key Considerations

The Youth Offending Service had five indicators in the set of national indicators for local areas. Performance against the indicators for Worcestershire and Herefordshire is outlined in the plan and actions identified to address risks to performance improvement.

Key data relating to YOS Performance and Youth Offending for Herefordshire is provided at Appendix 2 to this report.

Community Impact

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 set out an action plan to address future service delivery and improvement.

Financial Implications

The costs attributed to Herefordshire for YOS provision are covered by the existing budgetary contribution. However the Youth Justice Board is reviewing the national funding formula.

The grant streams previously made available for YOS have been ring fenced to specific activities, and each has had its own allocation formula. Some grants have only been available to a restricted number of YOS, for example the grant for Integrated Resettlement Support was only available to areas where there was a Drug Intervention Programme. From 2012/13 the Youth Justice Grant will be a single pot and allocated across all YOS, and the Youth Justice Board (YJB) have been engaged in work on developing an allocation formula.

The YJB have recently completed a consultation process on four formulae, and based on current year funding, the Worcestershire and Herefordshire grant would increase for two of the formulae, and decrease for other two. The YJB have committed to doing further work on revised versions of two of the formulae as the nation consultation has not identified any one of the four formulae as being most popular. Once a formula has been decided, there are a number of implementation options being considered to ensure that no YOS sustains too greater loss, the options being considered are phased implementation, capping and floor damping.

In addition to any effect of the single pot allocation formula, the YJB currently do not know whether and to what level contributions from departments other than the Ministry of Justice will be for 2012/13.

The position for 2012/13 is, therefore, currently unclear but the YJB have committed to letting local areas know the level of their grant by the end of the calendar year.

Legal Implications

There are no legal implications.

Risk Management

There are no risks associated with the endorsement of the Youth Justice Plan.

Consultees

As detailed in the Youth Justice Plan

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Youth Justice Plan

Appendix 2 – Youth Offending Service Key Data for Herefordshire

Background Papers

None identified.