

MEETING:	CABINET – CHILDREN’S SERVICES
MEETING DATE:	25 JULY 2013
TITLE OF REPORT:	YOUTH JUSTICE PLAN
REPORT BY:	DIRECTOR FOR PEOPLE’S SERVICES

1. Classification

Open

2. Key Decision

This is not a key decision

3. Wards Affected

County-wide

4. Purpose

To endorse the Youth Justice Plan as attached at Appendix A, for approval by Council at its September meeting.

5. Recommendation(s)

THAT:

- (a) **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 27 September 2013.**

6. Alternative Options

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

7. Reasons for Recommendations

- 7.1 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).

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

- 7.3 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.
- 7.4 The Youth Justice Plan for 2013/14 was prepared in April 2013 in line with the guidance issued by the YJB, agreed at the West Mercia Youth Offending Management Board on 1st May 2013 and submitted to the YJB at the end of June 2013.

8. Key Considerations

- 8.1 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 21-26 of the plan.
- 8.2 Whilst it is pleasing to note that over time there has been a successful reduction of first-time youth offenders it is of concern that Herefordshire has the highest offending rate of the West Mercia authorities. This is being further analysed to ensure the reasons for this are understood, and appropriate interventions can be targeted.
- 8.3 In common with Shropshire, Herefordshire has a large number of children's residential units used by other Local Authorities. This creates pressures for the Youth Offending Service, as no additional funding is made available to meet the increased offending issues caused by some of these placements.
- 8.4 Gaps in commissioned services have also been identified. These include appropriate intervention for older adolescents with challenging histories and treatment needs for complex mental health, drug and alcohol misuse and sexual offending. The new arrangement for the West Mercia YOS enables the four authorities with other partners, to pool expertise and resource to meet need on a sub-regional basis.

9. Community Impact

- 9.1 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 the significant risks identified to future service delivery and improvement.

10. Equality and Human Rights

The Youth Justice Plan does pay due regard to equality and human rights.

11. Financial Implications

- 11.1 The current financial contribution to the YOS is £256,675, comprising £160,085 in cash and £91,366 in staff related resources for 2 FTE, a further £19,475 funding will be contributed from reserves to make the overall contribution £276,150. This represents a 11% reduction since 2011/12 (on the council element), as part of a planned reduction created by the successful reduction in the number of offenders and efficiencies created by a West Mercia YOS.

The contributions for 2013/14 have been calculated based upon activity information across all four partners and it was agreed that Herefordshire's contribution would be

“topped up” from reserves so that the contribution by the authority would remain constant from 2012/13 to 2013/14.

12. Legal Implications

- 12.1 Section 40 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 imposes a statutory duty on the Council, after consulting with the Police, Probation and Health, 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, 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

13. Risk Management

- 13.1 The risks are identified in the Plan, together with the actions to mitigate them.
- 13.2 During 2013/14, the four local authorities will be reviewing the management arrangement for the YOS, in light of the changes to the local Probation Trusts set out by the Government.

14. Consultees

- 14.1 As detailed in the Youth Justice Plan

15. Appendices

- 15.1 Appendix A - Youth Justice Plan
- 15.2 Appendix B - Governance Structure

16. Background Papers

- 16.1 None identified.