

Safeguarding Overview and Scrutiny

BACKGROUND
REPORT

Dorset County Council



Date of Meeting	6 July 2017
Officer	Sara Tough, Corporate Director for Children’s, Adults and Communities
Subject of Report	Approval of Youth Justice Plan for 2017-18
Executive Summary	Youth Offending Teams are required to publish an annual Youth Justice Plan which should be approved by the local authority for that Youth Offending Team and by the Youth Justice Board. Dorset Combined Youth Offending Service works across Bournemouth, Poole and Dorset. Approval is therefore sought from Dorset County Council, as well as from the Borough of Poole and from Bournemouth Borough Council.
Impact Assessment: <i>Please refer to the protocol for writing reports.</i>	<p>Equalities Impact Assessment:</p> <p>The Youth Justice Plan sets out how the Youth Offending Service (YOS) will develop its work with vulnerable groups. The Plan also includes information about some protected characteristics relating to the YOS’s staff and volunteers. No adverse impacts are identified for groups identified by protected characteristics.</p>
	<p>Use of Evidence:</p> <p>The Plan includes performance information relating to the YOS during 2016-17. This information is derived from the Youth Justice Board’s national data collection arrangements.</p>
	<p>Budget:</p> <p>The Youth Justice Plan includes a section setting out the resources available to the YOS. The pan-Dorset Youth Offending Service is</p>

	<p>overseen by a Partnership Board which agrees the contributions from all statutory partners for the provision of the service.</p>
	<p>Risk Assessment:</p> <p>Current Risk: LOW Residual Risk MEDIUM</p> <p>The Youth Justice Plan sets out an achievable strategy for the pan-Dorset YOS to deliver continued high levels of service. There is a potential risk relating to budget cuts; the Youth Justice Board announced extra in-year budget cuts during 2015-16, and further cuts for 2016-17. Youth Justice Board grant levels have not been reduced for 2017/18. The YOS Board has approved the YOS budget plan for 2017-18 which enables statutory functions to be delivered.</p>
	<p>Other Implications:</p>
Recommendation	<p>That Committee recommends approval of the Youth Justice Plan to the Cabinet</p>
Reason for Recommendation	<p>The draft Youth Justice Plan has been approved by the YOS Management Board. The plan reviews achievements in the previous year, details the structure, governance and resources of the Youth Offending Service, and sets out the priorities for 2017-18.</p>
Appendices	<p>The full Youth Justice Plan is attached at Appendix 1</p>
Background Papers	<p>None</p>
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1 Introduction

- 1.1. Youth justice services in Dorset were previously delivered by the Dorset Youth Offending Team. This service merged with the Bournemouth and Poole Youth Offending Service, which covered the Bournemouth and Poole areas, to form the 'Dorset Combined Youth Offending Service' in July 2015. Bournemouth Borough Council acts as the lead local authority.
- 1.2. Youth Offending Teams are required to publish an annual youth justice plan. The Youth Justice Board has issued guidance which stipulates what must be included in

the plan, and recommends a structure for the plan. The draft Youth Justice Plan for the Dorset Combined Youth Offending Service is attached at Appendix 1.

2. Contents of the Youth Justice Plan

- 2.1. The Plan reviews performance during 2016/17 and reports on progress against last year's priorities. The YOS has continued to perform well against the 3 National Indicators (Reducing First-Time Entrants to the Youth Justice System; Reducing Re-Offending; Reducing the use of Custodial Sentences). Performance in the Dorset area has been particularly strong in reducing the number of first-time entrants into the youth justice system.
- 2.2. The priorities identified in last year's Youth Justice Plan have been achieved. Following the successful merger of the two previously separate youth offending teams in 2015, the new service implemented a new electronic case management system and a new assessment tool for young people during 2016. The YOS was inspected in September 2016, shortly after the introduction of these new systems. The inspection report was largely positive, with some recommendations about increasing the evidence and effectiveness of manager oversight on assessments, plans and reviews. During 2016/17 the YOS also took a leading role in the agreement and implementation of a pan-Dorset Protocol to Reduce the Criminalisation of Children in Care.
- 2.3. The Youth Justice Plan sets out the structure, governance and resourcing of the Youth Offending Service. The Dorset Combined Youth Offending Service is overseen by a Partnership Board comprised of senior representatives of the key partners, chaired by the Director of Children's Services for Dorset. The involvement of senior managers from the 3 local authorities and from the statutory partners (police, health and probation) enables the YOS to integrate its work with other strategic plans and priorities, including strong links to local safeguarding and public protection arrangements. Details about some of the specific operational links between the YOS and other local initiatives are summarised in the 'Partnership Arrangements' section of the Plan.
- 2.4. The Youth Justice Plan outlines the resourcing of the YOS. Local authority and other partner contributions have remained broadly the same since 2014/15, but the Youth Justice Board grant has reduced in that time from £790,000 to £594,000, while staffing costs have increased. The management of vacancies, and the deletion of some posts, has enabled a balanced budget.
- 2.5. The creation of the pan-Dorset YOS and subsequent Youth Justice Board grant reductions led to some posts being removed, though no redundancies were required. The statutory basis of youth offending teams is the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 which mandates minimum staffing contributions from the YOS partners. The combined service continues to comply with these minimum staffing requirements.
- 2.6. The priorities for the coming year include the role of the YOS in local multi-agency arrangements to prevent young people entering the justice system. A national review of youth justice was undertaken in 2016, which has provided some useful ideas for local partners to consider in the way the youth justice system operates in Dorset, Bournemouth and Poole, with particular reference to best practice in police custody and the youth courts. The YOS also aims to improve its collection and use of information, following last year's implementation of a new case management system and a new assessment tool.

- 2.7. The YOS also has plans to continue to review and improve the quality of its work with young people, including the recruitment of a Speech and Language Therapist to join the team. The multi-disciplinary nature of the team allows us to continue to improve our workforce and to share learning and professional expertise.

3. Conclusion

- 3.1. The Youth Justice Plan provides a summary of the performance, structure, governance, resources and future priorities for the Dorset Combined Youth Offending Service. The full plan is attached at Appendix 1. Committee is asked to recommend approval of the Youth Justice Plan for 2017-18 to the Cabinet.

Sara Tough
Corporate Director for Children's, Adults and Communities
June 2017