

Safeguarding Overview and Scrutiny

Dorset County Council



| | |
|--|---|
| Date of Meeting | 5 July 2018 |
| Officer | Nick Jarman, Director of Children's Services |
| Subject of Report | Approval of Youth Justice Plan for 2018-19 |
| 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 2017-18. 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 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 risk relating to possible funding reductions; 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 been maintained since then but the funding formula is now being reviewed for 2019/20. The YOS Board has approved the YOS budget plan for 2018-19 which enables statutory functions to be delivered.</p> |
| | <p>Other Implications:</p> |
| Recommendation | That Committee recommends approval of the Youth Justice Plan to the Cabinet |
| Reason for Recommendation | The draft Youth Justice Plan meets statutory requirements. 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 2018-19. |
| Appendices | The full Youth Justice Plan is attached at Appendix 1 |
| Background Papers | None |
| Officer Contact | <p>Name: David Webb Tel: 01202 453939 Email: david.webb@bournemouth.gov.uk</p> |

1 Introduction

1.1 Youth justice services in Dorset were previously delivered by the Dorset Youth Offending Team. In July 2015 the Dorset Youth Offending Team merged with the Bournemouth and Poole Youth Offending Service, which covered the Bournemouth and Poole areas, to form the 'Dorset Combined Youth Offending Service'. 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 2017/18 and reports on progress against last year's priorities. The Youth Offending Service (YOS) has continued to perform well against the National

Indicators for Reducing Re-Offending and Reducing the Use of Custodial Sentences. Performance in the Dorset area has remained good for Reducing the Number of First-Time Entrants into the youth justice system, but there has been an increase over the past year after large reductions over the previous ten years.

2.2 Achievements during the past year have included the creation and recruitment of a new YOS Speech and Language Therapist post. Research shows that about 65% of young people in the youth justice system have speech, language and communication needs, so it is important that we can respond to these needs. The YOS took a leading role in the agreement and implementation of a pan-Dorset Protocol to Reduce the Criminalisation of Children in Care. The Protocol led to a 50% reduction in police call-outs to children's homes during 2017, and was commended in the Howard League's national community justice awards. Work was also completed in 2017/18 to develop some of the specialist skills used by members of the team, such as work with young people who show harmful sexual behaviour, and work to help young people who are struggling to cope with earlier traumatic experiences. The Plan sets out these and other achievements in more detail.

2.3 The Youth Justice Plan summarises 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 Poole. 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 members of the Youth Offending Service partnership work together to make our multi-agency work effective. One of the priorities for the coming year is to develop the local strategy to prevent young people entering the justice system. Another priority is to work with police, courts and other services to improve the way our local youth justice system works.

2.7 Within the YOS team, there is a priority to continue to improve the quality of our practice to achieve better outcomes for children, young people and families. The YOS also aims to improve its effectiveness and efficiency to make best use of its resources. The Plan includes more details about how each of these priority areas will be addressed.

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 2018-19 to the Cabinet.

Nick Jarman
Director of Children's Services
July 2018