



Date of Meeting: 10 September 2019

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Andrew Parry, Lead Member for Children, Education and Early Help

Executive Director: Sarah Parker, Executive Director of People - Children

**Executive Summary:**

There is a statutory requirement to publish an annual Youth Justice Plan which must provide specified information about the local provision of youth justice services. This report summarises the Youth Justice Plan for 2019/20, with a copy of the Plan appended. The Youth Justice Plan needs to be approved by the full Council.

**Equalities Impact Assessment:**

The Youth Justice Plan does not relate to a new strategy, policy or function so an Equalities Impact Assessment has not been undertaken. Some information about equalities issues is included in the report. No adverse equalities impacts have been identified.

**Budget:**

Dorset Council's contribution to the YOS Partnership Budget had been frozen at the same level since 2014/15. A cost of living increase was agreed for the Dorset Council contribution in 2018/19, along with a redistribution of funding contributions between the new local authorities to reflect Local Government Reorganisation.

**Climate implications:**

No climate implications

**Other Implications:**

Evidence shows that children in care are over-represented in the youth justice system. The Youth Justice Plan reports on actions taken to address this issue.

**Recommendation:**

For Cabinet to endorse Youth Justice Plan and recommend its approval to Full Council, That an update be provided in 6 months-time on progress with the plan.

**Reason for Recommendation:**

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 both Dorset Council and Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council. Approval

has been obtained from Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council, as well as being sought from Dorset Council. The Youth Justice Board has also indicated its approval for this Youth Justice Plan.

The draft Youth Justice Plan has been approved by the Dorset Combined Youth Offending Service Partnership Board.

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Youth Justice Plan 2019/20

Appendix 2 – Extract from draft minutes of the People Scrutiny Committee 10 September 2019

Background Papers:

None

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## 1. Background

- 1.1 Under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 Youth Offending Teams are required to publish an annual youth justice plan. The Youth Justice Board provides guidance about 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. A brief summary of the Youth Justice Plan is provided in this report.
- 1.2 The draft Youth Justice Plan was considered by the People Scrutiny Committee at their meeting on 10 September 2019. The committee recommended to Cabinet, that the Youth Justice Plan be recommended to Full Council for approval. An extract of the minutes of the People Scrutiny Committee is included at Appendix 2.

## 2. Summary of Youth Justice Plan Contents

- 2.1 The Youth Justice Plan provides information on the resourcing, structure, governance, partnership arrangements and performance of the Dorset Combined Youth Offending Service. The Plan also describes the national and local youth justice context for 2019/20, identifies risks to the delivery of youth justice outcomes and sets out priorities for this year.
- 2.2 There are three national 'key performance indicators' for youth justice. The first indicator relates to the rate of young people entering the justice system for the first time. Local performance in this area has declined, with young people in Dorset now more likely to enter the justice system than young people in other areas. Plans to develop alternative 'diversion'

options are being taken forward with Dorset Police and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner.

- 2.3 Dorset Combined Youth Offending Service is performing well against the other two national indicators, for reducing reoffending and for minimising the use of custodial sentences.

### **3. Summary of legal implications**

- 3.1 Local authorities are legally required to form a youth offending team with the statutory partners named in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. The Act also stipulates that youth offending partnerships must submit an annual youth justice plan setting out how youth justice services in their area will be provided and funded; and how the youth offending team will be composed and funded, how it will operate and what functions it will carry out. The Youth Justice Plan for 2019-20 meets these legal obligations.

### **4. Summary of financial implications**

- 4.1. The Youth Justice Plan reports on the resourcing of the Youth Offending Service (YOS). Local authority and other partner contributions had remained static since 2014/15. A cost of living increase to local authority contributions was agreed for 2018/19, along with a redistribution of the funding proportions to reflect Local Government Reorganisation. The annual Youth Justice Grant has reduced from £790,000 in 2014/15 to £588,708 in 2019/20.
- 4.2. The creation of the pan-Dorset Youth Offending Service in 2015 increased the service's resilience and ability to adapt to reduced funding and increased costs. The management of vacancies, and the deletion of some posts, has enabled a balanced budget to be achieved.

### **5. Summary of Human Resources implications**

- 5.1 Local Authority YOS staff members who were previously employed by Dorset County Council transferred to become employees of Bournemouth Borough Council in 2015. Local Government Reorganisation in April 2019 led to a further TUPE transfer of local authority employees to the new Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole council. The YOS also includes employees of the partner agencies who have been seconded to work in the team and who remain employed by the partner agency.

## 6. Summary of Health and Well-Being implications

- 6.1 Young people in contact with youth justice services are known to be more likely than other young people to have unmet or unidentified health needs. The Youth Offending Service includes seconded health workers who work directly with young people and who facilitate their engagement with community health services.
- 6.2 In 2018 funding was obtained for a YOS Speech and Language Therapist. Evidence shows that the majority of young people in contact with youth justice services have speech, language or communication needs. The YOS Speech and Language Therapist is able to assess these needs and provide advice to YOS colleagues, other professionals and family members about how to understand the young person's behaviour and how to communicate more effectively with them.

## 7. Summary of Equalities implications

- 7.1 The Youth Justice Plan contains information about the gender and ethnic composition of the YOS staff and volunteer groups. The Plan does not identify any adverse impact on staff or volunteers with protected characteristics. The Plan does show that the YOS staff and volunteer group does not fully reflect the diversity of its service user group. A YOS Staffing Plan has now been completed with actions identified to address this issue.
- 7.2 It is recognised nationally that young people from minority ethnic groups, and young people in the care of the local authority, are over-represented in the youth justice system and in the youth custodial population. It is also recognised that young people known to the YOS may experience learning difficulties or disabilities, including in respect of speech, language and communication needs. Actions have been identified in the Youth Justice Plan to address these issues.

## 8. Risk implications

- 8.1 Risks that have been identified to the achievement of youth justice outcomes include limited access to suitable education provision for young people known to the YOS; lack of suitable local care placements for children with complex risks and needs; increased incidence of child exploitation and associated increased risks of violent behaviour; pressure on resources and uncertainty and delay on Youth Justice Board.
- 8.2 The Youth Justice Plan includes actions to mitigate these risks.