

# BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

## INFORMATION REPORT TO CABINET

6 SEPTEMBER 2016

### REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR – EDUCATION AND FAMILY SUPPORT

#### YOUTH JUSTICE PLAN

#### 1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The report presents the background and summary of the content of the Western Bay Youth Justice and Early Intervention draft annual Youth Justice Plan 2016/17(**Appendix 1**).

#### 2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Objectives/Other Corporate Priorities

- 2.1 This report relates to all three Corporate Improvement Plan priorities:-

- Supporting a successful economy
- Helping people to become more self-reliant
- Smarter use of resources

#### 3. Background

- 3.1 Youth Offending Services/Teams (YOS/Ts) are statutory multi-agency partnerships who have a legal duty to co-operate in order to secure youth justice services appropriate to their area funded from a variety of sources including UK Government, Welsh Government and the statutory partners. (i.e. the Local Authority, Police, the National Probation Service and Health).
- 3.2 The production of a Youth Justice Plan is a statutory duty of the Local Authority under Section 40 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. The plan sets out:
- a) how youth justice services are to be provided and funded, and
  - b) how the Youth Offending Service established by the Local Authority is to be composed and funded, how it will operate and what function it is to carry out.
- 3.3 The Crime and Disorder Act 1998, Section 39(1) placed a duty on each Local Authority, acting with its statutory partners (Police, Probation and Health) to establish Youth Offending Teams in their local area to deliver youth justice services. Section 38(3) of the Act placed a duty on the Local Authority and its statutory partners to make payment towards the expenditure incurred in providing youth justice services. The purpose of the Western Bay Youth Justice and Early Intervention Service is to ensure that youth justice services are available across the Western Bay area of Bridgend, Swansea and Neath Port Talbot.
- 3.4 Bridgend, Neath Port Talbot and Swansea Youth Offending Teams have been merged service since 29<sup>th</sup> May 2014 when the first Western Bay Youth Justice and

Early Intervention Service (WBYJ&EIS) Management Board was held and all local management boards ceased. The Management Board is chaired by Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council's Director of Social Services, Health and Housing and has a membership in line with the requirements of the Crime and Disorder Act including Cabinet Members from all three local authorities.

- 3.5 The youth justice plan contains information relating to: a summary of achievements; structure and governance; resources and value for money; partnership arrangements and; risks to future delivery against the youth justice outcome measures.

#### **4. Current situation / proposal**

##### **Summary of the content of the plan**

The summary of achievements includes:

- 4.1 The sharing of good practice across the Western Bay region from early intervention and prevention work through to resettlement and reintegration panels for high risk young people.
- 4.2 Sustaining performance through a period of uncertainty and change. During 2015/16 the service saw 108 children and young people enter the Youth Justice System for the first time (recorded as First Time Entrants by the Youth Justice Board). The service diverted 520 children and young people away from the youth justice system altogether through the use of prevention programmes and non-criminal disposals. Despite an increase of five children and young people compared to the 103 recorded First Time Entrants in 20-14/15 the performance of the WB service remains strong. As it is working with such low figures, the Youth Justice Board considers this as sustaining existing good performance. If compared against other authorities using a per head of 10-17 population measure, the number of FTE's recorded across Western Bay has a lower rate of children and young people entering the system than South Wales and Wales. Western Bay has a 10-17 population of 46,307 (YJB 2014 mid-year estimates).
- 4.3 Reducing the use of custody from 15 young people receiving custodial sentences in 2014/15 to 13 custodial sentences in 2015/16.
- 4.4 The performance measures relating to accessing services i.e education, training and employment, suitable accommodation, substance misuse and mental health services showed improvement. The mental health measure remains under review, so cannot be accurately reported. The number of hours accessed for education, training and employment by the children and young people at the end of their order were considered high by the Youth Justice Board for both statutory and post school aged children and young people. 132 young people had closed community based penalties, 123 (93.2%) were in suitable accommodation at the start and 124 (93.9%) at the end of their orders. 13 young people ended a custodial disposal during this period, 11 were in suitable accommodation at the start and 13 were in suitable accommodation at the end. Substance misuse services have been accessed in a timely fashion for all young people assessed as in need.

##### **Structure and governance**

- 4.5 The purpose of the Western Bay Youth Justice and Early Intervention Service is to ensure that youth justice services are available across the Western Bay area. A Youth Offending Service is the main vehicle through which youth justice services are coordinated and delivered working to reduce anti-social behaviour, offending and reoffending amongst children and young people.
- 4.6 The Youth Offending Service Management Board is made up of senior representatives from each of the statutory partners who oversee the operation of the service including the functions it undertakes and the funding arrangements. Regular reports are provided to the individual local authorities including Cabinet Members as requested.
- 4.7 The Management Board is relatively new, having been formed in 2014 but is keen to be pro-active. The service is represented on all three Community Safety Partnership Boards, the Western Bay Safeguarding Children Board and the Western Bay Area Planning Board. The service manager represents South Wales Youth Offending Team Managers on the South Wales Criminal Justice and Integrated Offender Management Board, MAPPA Senior Management Board and represents Youth Offending Team Managers Cymru on the Youth Justice Advisory Panel.
- 4.8 The quality of the work delivered by the service has been subject to a Short Quality Screening Inspection during October 2015. This was a favourable report providing reassurance to service users, the staff, Local Authorities and the Management Board that the service is delivering a good service but most importantly with the skills and capacity in place to grow stronger. The report and recommendations were reported to the Management Board but this report has not been seen in isolation. The thematic inspections relating to resettlement, transition, and most recently desistance have been of particular interest to Board members as have the Laming Report "In Care Out of Trouble" and naturally the review of youth justice services commissioned by the Ministry of Justice.

#### **Resources and value for money**

- 4.9 The amalgamation has come at a time of financial challenge. The service has managed to continue to deliver services sustaining performance whilst making savings of almost one million pounds across the three Local Authorities, when comparing the budget at the beginning of 2015/16 with that of the budget at the beginning of this financial year. The service has had to be flexible and create opportunities to work differently with less staff to achieve these savings. Commissioning, the use of grants, sharing of resources and creatively managing vacancies have contributed to the savings.

#### **Risks to future delivery against the youth justice outcome measures.**

- 4.10 The desired outcomes contained in the plan contribute directly to meeting local authority priorities held within corporate plans across the three local authorities. The priorities and outcomes mirror those of the Youth Justice Board business plan 2016/17 and the Youth Justice Board and Welsh Government joint strategy 'Children and Young People First July 2014'. These are:

4.11 A well-designed partnership approach giving value for money achieving the following:

- Reduction in first time entrants through early intervention, prevention and diversion;
- Reduction in youth reoffending through appropriate interventions of the right level at the right time;
- Reduction in the use of youth custody confident that custody is a last resort and for crimes so serious no community sentence is an appropriate response;
- Access to devolved services for children and young people at risk of entering or having entered the youth justice system;
- Effective safeguarding through recognising vulnerability and improving the safety and wellbeing needs of children and young people;
- Effective public protection through risk recognition, assessment and management;
- Ensuring the voice of the victim is heard;
- Successful reintegration and resettlement at the end of an intervention;
- A well supported professional workforce;
- True participation by all involved.

4.12 The plan contains the realistic and achievable actions and targets for service delivery over the next twelve months. The main risk to delivery repeatedly referenced through the plan is that of the uncertain political environment, reducing resources and the awaited commissioned Ministry of Justice review of youth justice services. The review was due to be published in June 2016 but this has been delayed following the recent EU referendum result.

## **5. Effect upon Policy Framework& Procedure Rules**

5.1 There is no effect upon the Policy Framework and Procedure Rules.

## **6. Equality Impact Assessment**

6.1 Each of the three locality offices of Bridgend, Neath Port Talbot and Swansea have asked children, young people, parents and carers and victims three very important questions:-

What should we stop doing?

What should we do more of?

What should we start doing/do differently?

6.2 The answers have been gathered to inform the annual delivery plan. The plan itself is shared with key partners for feedback prior to completion and agreement by the service's multi-agency management board for sign off.

6.3 The youth justice plan should have a positive impact on wider services provided by the Council by bringing down the number of children and young people in trouble with the police. This will in turn reduce the need for other services involvement as a result of their behaviours escalating.

6.4 The service focuses on diverting children and young people away from the youth justice system as much as possible and in line with the Youth Justice Board and

Welsh Government youth offending strategy sees them as children and young people first and offenders second. Service delivery prioritises helping children and young people avoid criminal records that can hinder them reaching their potential in future years.

- 6.5 An initial screening equality impact assessment has been completed concluding that there are no equality implications.

## **7. Financial Implications**

- 7.1 The amalgamated service has realised financial savings across the region without any compulsory redundancy of staff. The budget for 2016/17 is almost one million pounds less than that for 2015/16 for the amalgamated service.
- 7.2 The reduced budget is the result of Local Authority reductions in contributions from Bridgend and Swansea combined with partner contribution reduction, Welsh Government and Youth Justice Board grant reduction. The service has managed to adjust practice and work creatively to meet these reductions but any further reductions will have a negative impact on the quality of service delivery and staffing.

## **8. Recommendation**

- 8.1 Cabinet is recommended to note the contents of the Youth Justice Plan 2016.

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## **Background documents**

Draft Western Bay Youth Justice & Early Intervention Service Plan 2016/17