

Report of the Cabinet Member for Well Being

Cabinet – 21 September 2017

Western Bay Youth Justice and Early Intervention Service Annual Youth Justice Plan 2017-2018

Purpose: The report presents the background and summary of the content of the Western Bay Youth Justice and Early Intervention draft annual Youth Justice Plan 2017-2018

Report Author: Caroline Dyer

Finance Officer: Chris Davies

Legal Officer: Lucy Moore

Access to Services Officer: Catherine Window

FOR INFORMATION

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 service (WBYSJEIS) draft annual youth justice plan 2017-2018 (Appendix 1).

2. Background

- 2.1 Youth offending services/teams (YOS/Ts) are statutory multi-agency partnerships that 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 (WG) and the statutory partners. (ie the local authority, police, the national probation service and health).

- 2.2 The production of a youth justice plan is a statutory duty of the Local Authority under Part 3, 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.

- 2.3 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 WBYJEIS is to ensure that youth justice services are available across the Western Bay area (Bridgend, Swansea and Neath Port Talbot).

- 2.4 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.
- 2.5 The desired outcomes contribute directly to meeting local authority priorities held within corporate plans across the three local authorities. The priorities and outcomes mirror those of the YJB Business Plan 2016-2017 and the YJB and WG Joint Strategy Children and Young People First (July 2014).

The service is represented on all three Community Safety Partnership Boards, the Western Bay Safeguarding Children Board and the Western Bay Area Planning Board. Locally the service is represented in all relevant planning

3. Summary of the content of the plan

The summary of achievements includes:

- 3.1 Efforts have been concentrated on bringing consistent good practice across the region from early intervention and prevention work through to resettlement and reintegration. This has not been without difficulty; it has taken staff time to move from one established way of working to another especially during a time of local and national uncertainty. However, youth justice board (YJB) key performance indicators continue to show a reduction in first time entrants and a reduction in the use of custody. Re-offending rates remain high but the actual number of young people re-offending continues to fall.
- 3.2 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 YJB). In the Western Bay region there are 46,307 children aged 10-17 of those only 68 children and young people entered the youth justice system during 2016-2017 (this number does not include those already within system from previous years). In addition to this over 400 children and young people were diverted away from having any criminal record through early intervention by the service and diversion through the bureau.

- 3.3 The use of custody has reduced from 15 young people receiving custodial sentences in 2014-2015 to 13 custodial sentences in 2015-2016 and 12 custodial sentences being given in 2016-2017.
- 3.4 The re-offending cohort being reported for 2016-2017 is taken from 2014-2015 to allow the potential offending behavior to be tracked. Western Bay has 217 children and young people in the cohort compared to 269 the year before. 99 children and young people (45.6%) re-offended during the tracked period compared to 110 the year before.
- 3.5 If the bureau (pre-court diversion scheme) young people are included in the calculation of reoffending the figure is reduced to a rate of approximately 26%.
- 3.6 There have been a variety of developments over the past year which evidences the benefits of regional working such as an increasing number of staff work across the region. This is allowing effective vacancy management as well as the sharing of skills. There has been no 'big bang' effect of the regional working; progress continues to be a pragmatic approach to adapting to change.

Structure and governance

- 3.7 The primary 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 YOS is the main vehicle through which youth justice services are coordinated and delivered working to reduce anti-social behavior, offending and reoffending amongst children and young people.
- 3.8 The activity of the YOS across the Western Bay region is overseen and monitored by a management board. As indicated this is chaired by the Director from Neath and Port Talbot and is made up of senior representatives from each of the statutory partners who closely monitor and challenge the operation of the service including the functions it undertakes and the funding arrangements. There is a cabinet member from each local authority on this governance board.

Resources and value for money

- 3.9 The development of the regional working came at a time of significant financial challenge for all partners. The service has managed to continue to deliver services and sustain performance whilst making savings (circa £1million when comparing the budget for all 3 services at the start of the regional working with that of the budget now). The service has been flexible and able to work differently with less staff to achieve these savings. No compulsory redundancies have been made to date.

Risks to future delivery against the youth justice outcome measures

- 3.10 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 YJB and WG joint strategy “Children and Young People First” July 2014. These are:
- 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.
- 3.11 Access to education, training and employment continues to be a challenged as does reducing reoffending rates however the plan contains actions to improve performance. An example of how the service aims to improve performance is the detailed examination of re-offending completed in partnership with the YJB using the most recent re-offending data which is providing the service with a comprehensive understanding of those children who re-offend and allowing us to plan appropriate steps to address this more effectively. In partnership with YJB and the police and crime commissioner the service is piloting adverse childhood experience informed practice through trauma recovery based interventions including using an “enhanced case management” approach which involves child psychologist oversight.
- 3.12 The management board is currently focused on outcomes for children and young people subject to reduced educational timetables to help address the problems being experienced by them. Research informs us that accessing education and having the opportunity to reach their potential have a direct impact on addressing re-offending.

- 3.13 Whilst the plan contains realistic and achievable actions and targets for service delivery over the next twelve month the risks that come with grant funded posts are always present. The pre-court work relies heavily on WG grant funding. The impact of Bridgend moving out of the Abertawe Bro Morgannwg University Health Board (ABMU) are unknown.

4. Conclusion

- 4.1 The draft plan is currently going through the appropriate Cabinet and Scrutiny processes in all three Local Authorities. It has also been agreed by partners represented on the Management Board . The final version of the plan has to be signed off by the Management Board Chair and submitted to the Youth Justice Board by 31st September 2017.

5. Equality and Engagement Implications

- 5.1 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 behaviors escalating.
- 5.2 Acknowledging children and young people as a priority group in their own right, the service focuses on diverting children and young people away from the youth justice system as much as possible. In line with the YJB and WG youth offending strategy the children and young people we engage with are seen 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.
- 5.3 Consultation on the plan with children and young people has taken place, each of the three locality offices (Bridgend, Neath Port Talbot and Swansea) have asked children, young people, parents and carers and victims one very important question “What do we do badly ie what does not work?”. The answers have been and continue to be gathered to inform service delivery and service improvement. The regional manager has met with focus groups of young people in order to involve them in the planning process. The plan itself is shared with key partners for feedback prior to completion and the management board sign’s off the plan (as per the statutory guidance).

6. Legal Implications

- 6.1 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

- 6.2 As stated in paragraph 2.3 the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, Section 39(1) placed a duty on each Local Authority to establish Youth Offending Teams in their local area to deliver youth justice services. It also requires there to be a Strategic Management Board which is ultimately responsible for the sign off of the Youth Justice Plan which is also within the conditions of the Youth Justice grant.

7. Financial Implications

- 7.1 The regional service has realised financial savings across the region. There are no financial implications associated with the 2017-2018 plan. The service has managed to adjust practice and work creatively to meet reductions in resources. Possible grant reductions also remain a risk to the service.

8. Recommendations

- 8.1 Cabinet notes the progress of the collaboration, the contents of the Youth Justice Plan 2017-2018 and the challenges the service faces.

Background papers: None.

Appendices: Appendix A – Draft Western Bay Youth Justice and Early Intervention Service Annual Youth Justice Plan 2017-2018.