

Bath & North East Somerset Council

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| MEETING: | Early Years, Children and Youth Policy Development and Scrutiny |
| MEETING DATE: | 18 July 2011 |
| TITLE: | Youth Justice Plan 2010-11 |
| WARD: | ALL |

AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM

List of attachments to this report:

National Indicator Performance Report 2010-11

Final Review of Youth Justice Work Plan 2010-11

1 THE ISSUE

- 1.1 A local Youth Justice Plan is produced each year in accordance with the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and the specifications of the Youth Justice Board for England and Wales. The Plan sets out how the Local Authority's statutory responsibility to prevent youth offending is to be resourced, delivered and monitored, in partnership with Police, Probation and Health Services. It includes local and national priorities and initiatives. The Plan for 2010-11, informed by the HMI Joint Inspection and the Care Quality Council Inspection in spring 2010, was completed and submitted to the Youth Justice Board as required, in June 2010. Since 2005, the relevant Council Overview and Scrutiny Panels have received reports on delivery of the Youth Justice Plan.

2 RECOMMENDATION

The Early Years, Children and Youth Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel is asked to agree that:

- 2.1 The Youth Justice Plan 2010-11 has been delivered, including the improvements agreed following the Joint Inspection and the Care Quality Commission Inspection.
- 2.2 Performance has improved against key National Indicators in 2010-11.

3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The Council made a significant contribution of £375,277 into the overall budget for the Youth Offending Team. Partner agencies contributed £199,353 and the team received £534,571 of direct national funding, resulting in a total budget of £1,109,201.
- 3.2 The Youth Offending Team budget is set and regularly reviewed by the Youth Offending Team Management Board, chaired by the local Police District Commander, with exception reporting to the Responsible Authorities Group. Financial reports presented during the year confirm that the Youth Offending Team delivered services in accordance with its budget in 2010-11.

4 THE REPORT

- 4.1 The Youth Offending Team has a statutory responsibility to prevent youth offending and re-offending. Performance is measured by a comprehensive national framework published by the Youth Justice Board, including five National Indicators.
- 4.2 A summary of performance for 2010-11 is attached as an appendix to this report. The Youth Offending Team and its partners are able to report the lowest number of youth custodial sentences passed since the Youth Offending Team was established in 2000, together with a reduction in the percentage of all sentences resulting in custody. At the same time, re-offending after nine months reduced and engagement in education, training and employment increased. All three represent significant improvements on our own previous performance and the re-offending and education, training and employment performance was better than family, regional and national averages, as well as being best in Avon and Somerset.
- 4.3 Engagement in education, training and employment is known to be the single most important factor in reducing the risk of a young person offending and there is some correlation between this and the reduction in re-offending. Improvements are also associated with the Deter Young Offender scheme, a partnership initiative to provide a “premium service” to the relatively small number of young people agreed with the Police to be at highest risk of re-offending. We anticipate that consolidation of the Family Intervention Project, working intensively and persistently with whole families where there are young people at high risk of re-offending, and our membership of the now well established south-west resettlement consortium to support young people returning to the community from custody, will support us to maintain reductions in re-offending rates.
- 4.4 However, after four consecutive years of improvement, the local target for further reducing the rate of young people entering the youth justice system for the first time was not met; instead, the number increased, against a context of continuing reductions by all comparators (although the number increased in Bristol too). The numbers are small – just an additional 18 young people compared with last year, and it is too early to say whether this is the beginning of a rising trend. There has been no overall increase in youth crime in the period. The reasons for the increase are not fully understood and the Youth Crime Prevention Board is continuing to examine the data and promote prevention services to partner agencies, particularly Police.

- 4.5 Most ethnic minority groups were slightly over-represented in the youth justice system again, compared with the proportions in the general population, with dual heritage young people being most over-represented. Crime prevention projects have worked to promote their services for all young people from ethnic minority backgrounds who have been assessed as at risk of offending, and data shows that no young people from dual heritage backgrounds became first time entrants to the youth justice system in 2010-11.
- 4.6 The Youth Justice Plan was influenced by the Joint Inspection and the Care Quality Commission Inspection and incorporated areas for development identified through those processes, together with other locally identified priorities. The YOT Management Board has overseen implementation of the action plans and the Youth Justice Board has undertaken a monitoring role. Most actions have now been completed, as summarised in the Final Review of the Work Plan attached as an appendix. Outstanding actions have been carried forward into the new Youth Justice Plan for 2011-12, which is due to go to Council in September 2011, prior to submission to the Youth Justice Board on 30 September 2011.

5 RISK MANAGEMENT

- 5.1 A risk assessment related to the issue and recommendations has been undertaken, in compliance with the Council's decision making risk management guidance.

6 EQUALITIES

- 6.1 Equalities issues were explicitly and implicitly addressed throughout the Youth Justice Plan.

7 CONSULTATION

- 7.1 The compilation and subsequent review of the Youth Justice Plan is a multi-agency task, with input from the Youth Offending Team itself, its Management Board and its constituent agencies. The Youth Offending Team actively seeks feedback from young people, victims and parents and carers and seeks to use this to develop practice. It also receives feedback from volunteer Referral Order Panel Members and Appropriate Adults, who work with the service on behalf of the community. Youth justice planning is also informed by the work of the Responsible Authorities Group.
- 7.3 The Youth Offending Team is managed within the Children's Service and the Youth Justice Plan is informed by and aligned with the Children and Young People's Plan and the Local Safeguarding Children Business Plan. In this, it also draws on feedback from children and young people, including concern about their own safety from crime.
- 7.4 This report has been sent to the Trade Unions.

8. ISSUES TO CONSIDER IN REACHING THE DECISION

- 8.1 The Youth Offending Team works with some of the most socially excluded young people in this Authority – a complex exclusion arising from the factors in their own lives that place them at risk of offending, and also as a direct result of their own behaviour. Work to prevent offending and re-offending includes supporting these young people to make changes in their own lives and helping them to achieve positive outcomes.
- 8.2 The reported level of offending in Bath and North East Somerset is relatively low, but fear of crime and anti-social behaviour remains an issue, including amongst young people. The Youth Offending Team offers services to victims and involves trained volunteer community members in agreeing contracts with first-time offenders, setting out how they will address the harm they have caused. This contributes to the criminal justice objective to raise public confidence.

9 ADVICE SOUGHT

- 9.1 The Council's Monitoring Officer (Divisional Director – Legal and Democratic Services) and Section 151 Officer (Divisional Director – Finance) have received copies of this report.

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| Background papers | Youth Justice Plan 2010-11 |
| Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format | |