

Report to Cabinet

Title:	Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2017/18
Date:	Monday 26 th June 2017
Date can be implemented:	Tuesday 4 th July 2017
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Local members affected:	(All Electoral Divisions);
Portfolio areas affected:	Children's Services

For press enquiries concerning this report, please contact the media office on 01296 382444

Summary

This report presents the Youth Justice Strategic Plan for 2017/18

Recommendation

Cabinet is asked to endorse the Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2017/18.

A. Narrative setting out the reasons for the decision

The youth offending partnership has a statutory duty to submit an annual youth justice plan. Section 40 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 sets out the youth offending partnership's responsibilities in producing and agreeing this plan. It states that it is the duty of each local authority, after consultation with the partner agencies, to formulate and implement an annual youth justice plan, setting out:

- How youth justice services in their area are to be provided and funded.
- How the youth offending team (YOT) will be composed and funded, how it will operate, and what functions it will carry out.
- The Youth Justice Plan must be submitted to the Youth Justice Board for England and Wales (YJB) and published in accordance with the directions of the Secretary of State.

The YJB provide guidance on the standard requirements for content for the Plan, which are linked to the terms and conditions of the YJB grant.

Performance

The work of Youth Offending Service partnership is assessed against three national Indicators

1) Reducing First Time Entrants

The rate of young people entering the criminal justice system for the first time remains low in Buckinghamshire, with a rate of 240 per 100,000 of the 10-17 year old population between October 2015 and September 2016. This shows strong performance in comparison with Thames Valley (312), the South East (269) and England (334) during this period.

2) Reducing the use of Custody

During 2016, custodial rates were exceptionally low in Buckinghamshire, with only 1 young person receiving a custodial outcome. This gives a rate of 0.02 per 1000 of the 10-17 year old population and is below the average for Thames Valley (0.1), the South East (0.2) and England (0.37) for the same period.

3) Reducing Re-offending

The proportion of young people reoffending in a one year follow up period fell in Buckinghamshire between April 2014 and March 2015. At 32.2%, the rate of reoffending in Buckinghamshire has dropped below the average for Thames Valley (33.6%), the South East (35%) and England (37.7%) for the same period.

Future State

The impact of successfully reducing the number of first time entrants and young people sentenced to custody has meant that those young people that the YOS are actively working with have far more complex needs to address and therefore reducing offending behaviour of this high risk and vulnerable group is more challenging. This is also true of those young people who are worked with at the pre court stage. The most prevalent offence category remains that of violence against the person and of particular concern is serious youth violence connected to local gangs in the Wycombe area.

Inspection

Her Majesty's Inspection of Probation completed a full inspection of the YOS in June 2011, since then they have conducted a short Quality screening in June 2015. The summary is as follows:

'Overall, we found that Buckinghamshire YOS was delivering excellent work to reduce reoffending, protect children and young people, and ensure that sentences were served. Work to protect the public was mostly good. In all of the work we saw, Buckinghamshire had maintained or improved the position we found in our last inspection in 2011, and there had been encouraging progress to improve public protection outcomes.'

The inspection regime is being revised and a new inspection programme which will be risk based will start in April 2018. In the meantime there are a series of thematic reviews being undertaken in 2017

The YOS Management Board has agreed five strategic priorities for 2017/18. These are:

- 1) Continue to focus on reducing reoffending by considering new approaches to engaging young people in light of the changes in the complexity of their needs.
- 2) Work with partners in Health and Education to develop specialist input to meet young people's individual needs at the earliest opportunity.
- 3) Focus on engaging with whole families to secure effective outcomes.
- 4) Provide evidence to the Youth Justice Task Force on reforms in the youth justice system and implement the recommendations identified.
- 5) Review and explore models of service delivery in the context of reducing budgets whilst maintaining an effective and efficient response to offending by young people and delivering value for money.

B. Other options available, and their pros and cons

N/A

C. Resource implications

The YOS is funded from a variety of sources. These include the key partners which are Buckinghamshire County Council, Thames Valley Police, the Clinical Commissioning Group, National Probation Service, Police and Crime Commissioner and the Youth Justice Board. This forms the partnership budget, the details of which are outlined within the Youth Justice Strategic Plan.

High level benchmarking shows that Buckinghamshire County Council spends less on Youth Justice than our statistical neighbours

D. Value for Money (VfM) Self Assessment

The YOS has received funding cuts of £50K this year from Buckinghamshire County Council. In 2016/17 the YOS had funding cuts from the Youth Justice Board of £96K. A two year plan was put into place to realise these reductions which included the closing down of the YOS office base in Wycombe and relocating staff to Aylesbury. The loss of a Co-ordinators post and an Operational Managers post and two business support posts. A consultation and restructuring of the service took place. Front line staff were protected so that statutory duties were able to continue to be provided.

E. Legal implications

Youth justice plans require political scrutiny and approval. Seeking elected member endorsement is an important factor in maintaining informed dialogue on youth offending matters with the community through the political process. The statutory youth justice plan must be submitted and approved by the YJB and published in accordance with the directions of the Secretary of State.

F. Property implications

The YOS has recently streamlined its operational bases and moved all staff into a single site in Aylesbury, ensuring available resources are utilised for direct work with the client group.

G. Other implications/issues

N/A.

H. Feedback from consultation, Local Area Forums and Local Member views

The YOS Management Board is responsible for the governance of the YOS and this forum is currently chaired by the Local Area Commander for Aylesbury (Thames Valley Police). The Board have been fully consulted in the production of this plan and have agreed and signed it. The draft Plan has also been sent to the lead member for Children's Services

I. Communication issues

The Plan is a public document and will be published on the Partnership website.

J. Progress Monitoring

The YOS Management Board, which meets on a quarterly basis, has the responsibility to monitor the progress of the plan and reports are submitted to the Board to enable them to carry out this function.

K. Review

A new Youth Justice Strategic Plan will be produced by May 2018.

Background Papers

Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2017/18

Your questions and views

If you have any questions about the matters contained in this paper please get in touch with the Contact Officer whose telephone number is given at the head of the paper.

If you have any views on this paper that you would like the Cabinet Member to consider, or if you wish to object to the proposed decision, please inform the Member Services Team by 5.00pm on 23rd June 2017. This can be done by telephone (to 01296 382343), or e-mail to democracy@buckscc.gov.uk