

**NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
SOCIAL CARE HEALTH & WELL-BEING CABINET BOARD**

13th September 2018

**Report of the Director of Social Services, Health & Housing –
Andrew Jarrett**

SECTION A – FOR DECISION

WARD(S) AFFECTED: ALL

**Western Bay Youth Justice and Early Intervention Annual Plan
2018-2019**

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The report presents the background and summary of the content of the Western Bay Youth Justice and Early Intervention Service (WBYJ and EIS) draft Annual Youth Justice Plan 2018-2019 (Appendix 1).
- 1.2 The report is seeking Member approval for the Western Bay Youth Justice and Early Intervention draft annual Youth Justice Plan 2018-2019 to be commended to Council. After approval the Western Bay Youth Justice & Early Intervention Service Management Board will submit the final version to the Youth Justice Board.

2. Executive Summary

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

2.4 Bridgend, Neath Port Talbot and Swansea youth offending teams have been merged service since 29 May 2014 when the first WBYJ and EIS Management Board was held and all local management boards ceased to exist. 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.

2.5 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.

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, prevention work and diversion through bureau 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 Focusing on the three England and Wales key performance indicators (KPI) during 2016-2017, the service saw 72 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 45,817 children aged 10-17 years. Of those, only 67 children and young people entered the youth justice system during the financial year 2017-2018 (this number does not include those already within the 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 and 9 in 2017-2018.
- 3.4 The re-offending cohort being reported for 2017-2018 is taken from 2015-2016 to allow the potential offending behaviour to be tracked. Western Bay has 245 children and young people in the cohort compared to 295 the year before. 119 children and young people (48.6%) re-offended during the tracked period compared to 153 (51.9%) 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 27%.
- 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 working across the region. There are 19 shared posts in 2018-2019 compared to 11 in 2017-2018. 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. This approach is fortunate as it allows for any

disaggregation of the service to be more manageable than had the service been taken through a whole region wide restructure.

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 regional working came at a time of significant financial challenge for all partners. As the service joined in 2014-2015 each local authority realised a 20% saving against core funding as a result of the amalgamated approach to the delivery of services. The Western Bay service is continuously undergoing redesign across the three local authority areas responding to opportunities and changes in demand. The following years have shown year on year reduction in staffing levels from 107 full time equivalent in 2015-2016 to 84.5 in 2017-2018. The service income has reduced from £4,230,124.00 in 2015-2016 to £3,686,411.00 in 2017-2018. There has been no negative impact on performance and no compulsory redundancies 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 Improving the key performance indicator (KPI) regarding increasing access to education, training and employment for children and young people known to the service continues to be a challenge. The service has an intervention centre where the staff are able to deliver, e.g. trade tasters and additional tutoring for those young people who have missed significant periods of school. The future development of the intervention centre is central to improving this KPI. The hours offered by education providers increased last year but attendance did not improve at the same rate, this will be a focus for staff along with evidencing outcomes more effectively.

3.12 The approach is informed by the WBYJ and EIS service young people's group who felt strongly that more vocational training should be available through schools. There was a range of experiences within the group but one-to-one learning support in particular was viewed positively. This can be provided through the intervention centre working in partnership with schools and training providers.

- 3.13 While the plan contains realistic and achievable actions and targets for service delivery over the next twelve months, the risks that come with grant-funded posts are always present. The pre-court work relies heavily on WG grant funding which in Bridgend has been included in the flexible funding pathway pilot. It is unclear how this may impact on youth justice services in the years to come.
- 3.14 The decision for Bridgend to leave the Abertawe Bro Morgannwg (ABMU) health region to join the Cwm Taf health region brings with it challenges for WBYJ and EIS as there are joint funded posts and one Western Bay database. Any disaggregation of the service brings risks to delivery as there will be gaps in service for Bridgend as a result of the efficiencies made over the last 4 years from the sharing of posts when managing vacancies and the single database.

4. Financial Impact

- 4.1 There is no financial impact on the local authority resulting from this year's plan. However, there may be some efficiencies that can be realised through the year. It was recognised that the remand costs to NPT were high last financial year and as a result of this peak the remand strategy is being reviewed to guard against any possibility of unnecessary remands to the secure estate from the courts.
- 4.2 The levels of grant funding available to YOT's, like many other grant funded services are uncertain for the coming years.

5. Equality Impact Assessment

- 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. Whilst the plan contains areas of service development it can be viewed as business as usual. The equality impact screening has been completed with the conclusion that a full assessment is not required.
- 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.

6. Workforce Impacts

6.1 There are no workforce impacts associated with this report.

7. Legal Impacts

7.1 There are no legal impacts associated with this report.

7.2 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.

8. Risk Management

8.1 There are no risk management issues associated with this report.

8.2 The risk to delivery repeatedly referenced through the plan is that of the uncertainty regarding Bridgend leaving ABMU Health Board and reducing resources.

8.3 The Council has a legal duty under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to carry out all its various functions with “due regard to the need to prevent Crime and Disorder in its area”. The planned actions contained in the Youth Justice Plan aim to have a positive impact on preventing and reducing crime.

8.4 Section 26 of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 places a duty on specified authorities in the exercise of their functions to have “due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism”. The multi-agency youth justice team through the intensive work undertaken with highly vulnerable young people within the youth justice system and at risk of offending aims to have a positive impact to prevent them being drawn into terrorism.

9. Consultation

- 9.1 There is no requirement for public consultation on the youth justice plan, however the plan has been circulated to partners through the management board and the community safety partnerships in all three local authorities for comment. In January 2018 a young person's sub group of the management board was formed. It is only made up of four young people at present but between them they represent the whole area of delivery i.e. each local authority, pre-court, post court and exit planning. They meet two weeks before each management board and go through the intended agenda and raise any issues or observations they may have. They receive the minutes and actions taken following on from any suggestions they make for change are fed back. The group is new and still developing but they were actively involved in the development of the plan.
- 9.2 Feedback is routinely sought from victims and parents and this feedback has also been used to influence planned service delivery.

10. Recommendations

- 10.1 Members are asked to support the Western Bay Youth Justice and Early Intervention Youth Justice Plan 2018-2019 for commending to Council for approval.

11. Reasons for Proposed Decision

- 11.1 To enable the Western Bay Youth Justice and Early Intervention Service on behalf of Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council to undertake its duties to deliver youth justice services in line with the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. Services include preventing children and young people from entering the youth justice system, supervising young people in the community, the secure estate, supporting families and victims in partnership with other agencies.

Implementation of Decision

It is proposed for implementation after the three day call in period.

Appendices

Draft Youth Justice and Early Intervention Plan 2018-2019

List of Background Papers

None.

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