

CITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON COUNCIL	Cabinet 10 July 2019
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Report title	Wolverhampton Youth Justice Plan 2019-2020	
Decision designation	RED	
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor John Reynolds Children and Young People	
Key decision	Yes	
In forward plan	Yes	
Wards affected	All Wards	
Accountable Director	Emma Bennett, Director of Children's Services	
Originating service	Youth Offending Team	
Accountable employee	Rachel King Tel Email	Head of Service 01902 555955 Rachel.King@wolverhampton.gov.uk
Report to be/has been considered by	Strategic Executive Board YOT Management Board Children Young People and Families Scrutiny Panel	18 June 2019 18 June 2019 19 June 2019

Recommendation for decision:

The Cabinet is recommended to recommend that Council:

Approve the adoption of the Youth Justice Plan 2019-2020.

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to request that Cabinet recommend to Council the approval of the Youth Justice Plan for 2019-2020. This is the plan relating to the work of the Youth Offending Team (YOT) partnership under the oversight of the YOT Management Board and the Safer Wolverhampton Partnership. The work of this plan is regularly reviewed by the YOT Management Board, which comprises membership from City of Wolverhampton Council, West Midlands Police, The Royal Wolverhampton Hospital Trust, Recovery Near You (substance misuse service), National Probation Service and the Chair of the Black Country Youth Court Bench.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 Under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, each Local Authority is required to have in place arrangements for the delivery of Youth Justice services usually via a YOT. Central government provides a grant to support local Youth Justice work via the Youth Justice Board (YJB) which sits within The Ministry of Justice. A condition of the grant is the provision of satisfactory services that are outlined in the required production of an annual Youth Justice Plan. The Youth Justice Plan requires Full Council approval, as detailed in the constitution under the budget and policy framework.
- 2.2 The format for Youth Justice planning is prescribed by the Youth Justice Board and has varied over the years. The attached plan is compliant with current guidance and an action plan based on future risks to delivery is prepared to drive the work.
- 2.3 This plan has routinely involved significant partnership consultation and planning, and the plan was agreed at the strategic YOT Management Board on 19 June 2019. The plan is required to be officially submitted to the Youth Justice Board by 5 August 2019.
- 2.4 The plan for 2019-2020 seeks to identify priorities that respond to the national YJB key performance indicators whilst also taking the local context of Wolverhampton into consideration. There is a clear focus on continuing to reduce the number of first-time entrants, reducing reoffending and reducing the number of young people who received a custodial sentence
- 2.5 The recent increase in gang and youth violence within the city is specifically identified as a priority area to ensure we are identifying young people at risk and tailoring interventions to take into account the impact of adverse childhood experiences on young people. This work will also link to developing a better understanding across the region of the emerging issue surrounding County Lines. To ensure this work is progressed across the City the YOT has contributed to the development of the City's Tackling Violence and Exploitation Strategy.

3.0 Progress

- 3.1 The primary focus of a YOT is to prevent and reduce the offending behaviour of young people aged up to 18. There are three overarching national indicators on which performance is measured; the number of first-time entrants into the youth justice system, the number of young people who reoffend after their first offence and the number of young people who receive a custodial sentence as opposed to a community sentence.
- 3.2 During 2018-2019 the YOT has continued to focus its energy on preventing young people entering the Criminal Justice System by extending its offer with Community Resolutions and Out of Court disposals. In addition, practice has continued to develop in engaging and working with young people at high risk of reoffending with an extension in the interventions on offer and the implementation of trauma informed practice. The first-time entrant rate for Wolverhampton has shown a 32% reduction in young people and a 14% reduction in the number of offences committed for 2018-2019 when compared against last year.
- 3.3 The implementation of the Wolverhampton Reoffending Live Tracker toolkit in April 2018 has provided encouraging data on the levels of reoffending within the first 12 months of monitoring. Tracking in quarter four 2018-2019 for this cohort has provided extremely encouraging results with an overall binary rate of 17% compared to national performance 37.9% and overall reoffences per offender rate of 0.38 compared to national performance of 1.25.
- 3.4 It is recognised that some children and young people need to be detained in custody for the protection of themselves and the wider community. The YOT Management Board receives regular reports on custody rates and also seeks assurance that those who are detained in the secure estate are those for whom all other options have been exhausted or their sentence is proportionate to the crime committed.
- 3.5 The most recently released YJB data reported a custody rate per 1,000 of the population of 0.29. This is better than our region (0.52) and in actual terms represents a 40% reduction in the number of custody disposals for 2018-2019 when compared against 2017-2018.
- 3.6 The new YOT inspection framework was published in March 2018 and inspection preparation is underway. The last inspection of the YOT was in December 2015. The outcome of the last inspection was that Wolverhampton YOT and its partners were found to have children and young people at the heart of their work. Planning for work to reduce reoffending was impressive and interventions were judged as being delivered to a high standard. However, education, training and employment outcomes for children and young people known to the YOT required improvement. Positively in 2018-2019 there was a 3% improvement in the educational engagement of school aged YOT young people.

3.7 A draft of the report and the plan was presented to the Children, Young People and Families Scrutiny Panel on 19 June 2019 for pre-decision scrutiny. A summary of the panel comments is attached as Appendix 2 to this report.

4.0 Evaluation of alternative options

4.1 The local authority has a statutory duty to submit an annual youth justice plan relating to their provision of youth offending services. The Youth Justice Plan 2019-2020 has been developed following consultation with partner agencies.

5.0 Reasons for decision

5.1 The local priorities that have been identified for Wolverhampton not only respond to the local areas of need but also represent an alignment with the strategic priorities identified by the YJB.

5.2 The core vision of the YJB as set out in the YJB Strategic Plan 2019-2022 is:

“A youth justice system that sees children as children, treats them fairly and helps them to build on their strengths so they can make a constructive contribution to society. This will prevent offending and create safer communities with fewer victims.”

5.3 The YJB 2019-2020 seeks to achieve this vision and some of the key areas that will be given significant priority include:

- The implementation of trauma informed practice to develop attachment and trauma informed assessments, case formulation and integrated packages of support and interventions.
- Development of a minimum offer for families and carers whose children are involved in the criminal justice system in order to develop therapeutic approaches with parents
- A clear emphasis on outcomes and the ‘Child First offender Second’ agenda.
- Increased victim contact and engagement with the Restorative Justice process
- Strengthened links with the Early Intervention service to promote a focus on crime prevention to reduce the number of first-time entrants and embed the prevention offer
- Reduction in the criminalisation of young people in care and/or care leavers by increasing the out of court offer and diversionary options at the point of arrest
- Close working with Education in order to contribute to a reduction in permanent exclusions from school through the development of a diversion offer
- Increased engagement of YOT young people in education training and employment with specific focus on the post 16 and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
- Development of strong operational links with St Giles Trust (A&E Intervention Service for young victims of violence) to ensure early intervention work is undertaken with young people at risk of gangs/ youth violence
- Continued multi-agency response to the identification and work with young people at risk of gang association, youth violence and weapon related offending
- Increased participation of YOT young people by ensuring their views are heard and used to shape future service provision

- Development of practice and intervention to reduce levels of Black Asian Minority Ethnic (BAME) disproportionality identified within the youth justice system
- Improved resettlement outcomes for young people being released from the secure estate

6.0 Financial implications

- 6.1 The gross partnership pooled budget for 2019-2020 for the Youth Offending Service is £2.2 million. Following the deduction of partnership income contributions and other in-kind contributions of £800,000 from partners the approved net budget for the Council for the Youth Offending Service is £1.4 million.
- 6.2 A breakdown of the partnership pooled budget for the Youth Offending Service is shown in the attached Youth Justice Plan 2019-2020.
- 6.3 The Youth Offending budget has remained stable over the last three years with a minimal increase in partnership income during 2017-2018 from the Youth Justice Board. The partnership income from the Youth Justice Board has slightly reduced by £4,000 for 2019-2020. This evidences the partnership commitment to delivering a high quality Youth Offending Team. The impact the Youth Offending budget is evidenced within the key achievements section of the YJB Plan.

[NM/10062019/A]

7.0 Legal implications

- 7.1 Under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, each Local Authority is required to have in place arrangements for the delivery of Youth Justice services usually via a YOT.
- 7.2 YOT services are mandated in legislation and oversee Statutory Court Orders. It is a requirement for every area in England and Wales to provide YOT services.
- 7.3 A condition of the grant provided by central government is the provision of satisfactory services outlined in the production of an annual Youth Justice Plan.

[TC/05062019/O]

8.0 Equalities implications

- 8.1 The YOT provides services for some of the most vulnerable young people both as offenders, but also as victims of youth crime. There is on-going work to address the potential for disproportionality in the Youth Justice System.
- 8.2 YOT performance data indicates a disproportionate representation of males from Black Asian Minority Ethnic groups (BAME). The YOT cannot solely influence and address this disproportionality as the police and the courts are also key in the decisions made when a BAME young person commits an offence. However, the YOT is committed to developing practice and interventions that positively engage young people from BAME communities.

For example, the successful delivery of a music and boxing/ fitness project in 2018-2019 engaged 92% BAME young people.

- 8.3 The YOT equality analysis has given due regard to the priorities outlined in the 2019-2020 plan. Work will continue to identify ways in which the YOT can have influence and impact upon the disproportionality.

9.0 Environmental implications

- 9.1 There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

10.0 Human Resources implications

- 10.1 YOT employees work to City of Wolverhampton terms and conditions and policies or those of their seconding agency.

11.0 Corporate landlord implications

- 11.1 There are no Corporate Landlord implications arising from this report.

12.0 Health and Wellbeing implications

- 12.1 Tackling serious violence is a top priority for the Government and the Serious Violence Strategy sets out the Government's approach. This is not solely focused on law enforcement, but depends also on a multi-agency, approach across several sectors and stresses the importance of early intervention to tackle the root causes.
- 12.2 In April 2019 the Government launched a consultation on whether to introduce a new legal duty to support the multi-agency/ 'public health' approach needed to prevent and tackle serious violence. The outcome of this consultation will be published in October 2019 and the implications for the City will need further consideration.
- 12.3 Wolverhampton's YOT Management Board is in support of developing a 'public health' approach and recognises the value of cross-sector partnerships including education, health, social services, housing, youth services and victim services in tackling serious violence and other criminal behaviours.
- 12.4 The YJB plan for 2019-2020 includes a focus on developing a more preventative offer for young people and recognises the importance of early intervention.

13.0 Appendices

Appendix 1 – Youth Justice Plan

Appendix 2 – Scrutiny Panel comments on the Youth Justice Plan