

# **North Somerset Council**

## **REPORT TO THE FULL COUNCIL**

**DATE OF MEETING: 24 September 2019**

**SUBJECT OF REPORT: Youth Justice Partnership Plan 01/04/19 – 31/03/22**

**TOWN OR PARISH: North Somerset Unitary Authority Area**

**OFFICER/MEMBER PRESENTING: Councillor Catherine Gibbons, Executive Member, Children and Young People's Services**

**KEY DECISION: No**

**REASON: As this is not an Executive decision**

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The full Council approve and adopt the Youth Justice Partnership Plan 01/04/19 – 31/03/22 and submit the Plan to the Youth Justice Board.

### **1. SUMMARY OF REPORT**

1.1 The draft Youth Justice Plan has been prepared with a focus on the three national youth crime and justice outcomes of reducing re-offending, reducing first time offending and reducing the use of custody which are measured through the three national indicators: NI 19, NI 43 and NI 111. The Youth Offending and Prevention Service (YOS) focuses upon public protection – the risk of harm to others and preventing of offending; the welfare of children and families within a safeguarding context; and ensuring Court sentences are served.

1.2 The Plan details use of resources, governance, organisational structures, workload statistics and local indicators.

### **2. POLICY**

2.1 The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 established the Youth Justice Board and placed a duty on local authorities with social services and education responsibilities to ensure the availability of appropriate youth justice services in their area; and required Police Service, Probation Service and the Clinical Commissioning Group to cooperate in ensuring service provision. Hence the establishment of multi-agency Youth Offending Teams from April 2000. An additional requirement of the Act was the preparation of an annual Youth Justice Plan.

2.2 The Youth Justice Board's functions include monitoring service provision and identifying and promoting effective practice. The YOS works with young people aged 10 to 18 who are

under a Court community or custodial order, a Youth Caution with programme issued by the Police, or where referred for a programme of intervention because of significant risk of offending or committing anti-social behaviour.

2.3 The YOS contributes to the strategic and operational plans of the agencies represented on the YOS Management Board. This includes the North Somerset Council Corporate Plan 2015-2019. Hence contributing to the 'Health and Wellbeing' vision outcome through supporting families to give their children the best start in life.

### **3. DETAILS**

3.1 In 2018/19 the YOS delivered 528 programmes; 131 assessments, 160 specialist health assessments, 13 pre-sentence reports and 11 breach reports. In relation to Youth Offender Panels 08 reports were provided, and 23 reports for the Out of Court Disposal Panel (re cautions and cautions with programmes). The YOS has delivered numerous restorative justice interventions, for example, direct and indirect reparation sessions and through facilitated meetings between offenders and victims.

3.2 In 2018/19 68 young people residing in North Somerset were dealt with by the way of 96 Court and pre-Court sanctions relating to 286 offences. This indicates a reduction against 2017/18, with 94 young people and 125 sanctions. There were 286 offences recorded which equates to an offending rate of 0.37% a reduction of 0.15% on 2018/19. (These percentages are in relation to the 10 -17 years of age general population of 18,591).

3.3 The number of first-time entrants into the criminal justice system has continued on a significant reducing trend over recent years – 292 (06/07) to 45 (17/18). Reasons for this would seem to be:

- The overall reduction in detected youth crime;
- The development of youth restorative disposals which is where the Police and partners provide a brief intervention without escalating the matter to a formal criminal justice pre-court disposal or Charge to Court; and
- The range of interventions provided by the YOS, and partners within North Somerset Council and other agencies, with young people on the edge of entering the criminal justice system.

In 18/19 106 Youth Inclusion Support programmes were completed with young people at risk of entering and/or being diverted from the criminal justice system None of these young people recorded any convictions in the 6 months after their programme ended. A Drugs Diversion Scheme is also in operation whereby young people involved in drugs offending are offered a programme of intervention from the Substance Advice Service. On successful engagement they are dealt with by way of community resolution rather than a caution.

3.4 In relation to re-offending there exists within North Somerset a significant core of young people who commit a high number of offences. The YOS continues to deliver individualised tailored programmes in relation to these young people within their family context.

3.5 In 2017/18, there were no custodial sentences were imposed which compares against 3 in 17/18, 9 in 15/16 and 15 in 14/15 when the Youth Justice Board viewed North Somerset as statistical high outlier for the use of custody. This is a very significant trend reduction and may be the cumulative impact of various initiatives over a number of years. The cost of custody in social, financial and re-offending terms means that this is a significant outturn. To this end the YOS, significantly assisted by the Youth Justice Grants, has focused efforts

on effective alternatives to custody and resettlement from custody. This has included the provision of Attendance Centre Order provision on Saturdays for 3 hours a session.

3.6 Analyses of the young people receiving custodial sentences and activities to address this, have been considered by the YOS Management Board. The YOS has developed a range of arrangements, and activities, to focus and deliver alternatives to custody and to enhance the prospects for successful resettlement from custody. One process outcome was the establishment of a Custody Panel to consider cases where young people receive custody or where young people were effectively managed without receiving a custodial sentence in order to promote effective interventions. Thematic issues have been escalated to the YOS Management Board for strategic multi-agency consideration and response, for example, in relation to substance misuse across young people and adults.

3.7 Since July 2010, the YOS Manager has undertaken the project management role for the South West Resettlement Consortium (SWRC) focusing on the ex- Avon Local Authority areas to ensure effective service provision for resettlement. One development was the establishment, in April 2012, of the Future4Me Project - lottery funded - through the 16-25 Independent People organisation. This provides intensive interventions to young people leaving Care or Custody. The Lottery Fund granted follow-on funding for a reframed project for 3 years from January 2017.

3.8 The Youth Justice Board has pioneered in South Wales an Enhanced Case Management model which is based on a trauma informed approach, to work with repeat offenders. Based on the success of the South Wales trial the SWRC was approached to pilot this approach in England. North Somerset YOS has taken a lead YOS role through whom one full time equivalent Senior Practitioner and a psychologist have been recruited to work across four youth offending teams. These posts are funded by Youth Justice Board and NHS England. It is planned that these appointments will be effective from September 2019.

3.9 The YOS has sustained victim engagement and support with all identifiable victims of crime contacted. The two seconded Police staff are critical to the liaison function with the Police and interface with the victims.

#### **4. CONSULTATION**

4.1 The draft Youth Justice Partnership Plan was considered and agreed by the Youth Offending Service Management Board on 18<sup>th</sup> June 2019.

4.2 This draft Youth Justice Partnership Plan is submitted to the full Council for adoption as a constitutional plan of the Council.

4.3 The draft Youth Justice Partnership Plan has been submitted to the Youth Justice Board in accordance with the requirements of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. It has been accepted subject to adoption by the North Somerset Council.

#### **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 For 2019/20 the total budget for the YOS amounts to £824,186 when all partner agencies financial contributions, and budgets held within the seconding agencies for staff secondments, are added together. It should be borne in mind that this YOS funding incorporates Junction 21 mentoring service, the Youth Inclusion Support Project and the

Substance Advice Service which is broader than most Youth Offending Teams. The Local Authority's budget contribution for 18/19 is £374,430.

5.2 The Police contribution to the YOS partnership budget for 19/20 is £10,000 as against previous contribution of £35,890 per annum in 17/18. Alongside this the Police seconded two staff. The National Probation Service contribute £5,000 per annum to the future budget and second one Probation Officer.

5.3 In late 16/17 following upon a successful bid submission to NHS-England Health and Justice Collaborative Commissioning Work Stream, via the Clinical Commissioning Group, North Somerset YOS was granted £40k per annum to March 2020 to deliver mental health assessment and interventions to vulnerable young people across children's services. This funding enabled the appointment of an additional worker who is based in the Youth Inclusion Support Project.

## **6. LEGAL POWERS AND IMPLICATIONS**

Crime and Disorder Act 1998

## **7. CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

No direct impact flowing from this report

## **8. RISK MANAGEMENT**

8.1 North Somerset Council and contributing national and local partners remain under financial pressure thus there remains a continuing challenge to sustain the range of qualified staff with the appropriate skills set.

8.2 The YOS contributes to the prevention of young people being remanded/sentenced to custody and/or accommodated by the Local Authority. Thus, the Service may be seen in terms of an 'invest to save' model. The need remains to ensure sufficient service capacity to minimise numbers in custody and/or accommodated with the associated additional financial and social costs

8.3 The Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offender Act 2012 introduced a single youth remand custody order and the transfer of funding to local authorities to meet the costs. This change was to incentivise local authorities to manage young people in the community. This reinforces the continuing efforts of the YOS, Support and Safeguarding (People and Communities) and partner agencies to promote the management of young people in the community in a way that is safe and secure for the wider community as well as the young people concerned. The delegated budget for 19/20 is £104 due to no young people being remanded in 18/19 as against the previous allocation of £14,198.

## **9. EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 Nationally, young people from black and ethnic minority groups are more likely to receive intrusive penalties including custodial sentences, than their white peers, when being sentenced for similar offences.

9.2 Disposals for young people from minority ethnic groups are monitored by the YOS. Local information about sentencing for black and minority ethnic people in North Somerset

does not at the current time replicate this national picture, i.e. there are no statistical causes for concern. Currently 2.9% of the offending population is made up of young people from black and minority ethnic communities as against 4.3% in the general population. It is kept under review. In terms of interventions with young people and families an individualised approach is adopted thus ensuring ethnic and cultural aspects are recognised and inform activity.

9.3 Young people and their families from lower income households and areas tend to be over represented as victims of crime. Thus, the robust range of interventions to prevent crime and reduce re-offending helps to reduce levels of victimisation.

## **10. CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 The YOS provides multi-agency packages of interventions to young people who have offended or at risk of offending and their families, addresses the needs of the victims of young people, and has significant community volunteer involvement through Youth Offender Panel members and mentors. The YOS is financed by North Somerset Council People and Communities directorate (including Public Health funding which was previously the Primary Care Trust and National Treatment Agency), Avon and Somerset Police, National Probation Service, North Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group, Ministry of Justice/Youth Justice Board and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner. Staffing is appointed through People and Communities (NSC), Probation and Police and the Home Office. The YOS works with numerous partners both within North Somerset Local Authority area, and beyond, to address risk factors and promote resilience within the lives of young people and their families.

10.2 The YOS makes extensive use of accredited volunteers, with 44 involved in a variety of tasks – mentoring, Youth Offender Panel work, groupwork activities, and as adult supporters (known as appropriate adults) where a young person is being interviewed by the Police on suspicion of offending. Volunteers bring an invaluable contribution from the community in perspective and the nature of interventions delivered; and also affirms that the YOS is owned by the wider community.

10.3 The YOS is an integral part of the Integrated Offender Management scheme with Police, Probation and other agencies to ensure effective management and surveillance of high-risk offenders which includes the significant transitions phase from childhood into adulthood.

10.4. The Junction 21 Mentoring Scheme, which has kitemark accreditation from the National Mentoring and Befriending Foundation, continues to deliver interventions to young people at risk of offending. The Service's mentoring element was featured in the Children and Young People Now magazine's 2-15/08/16 edition within the Prevention Youth Offending special report section.

10.5 The North Somerset Corporate Plan 2015-19 contains three key outcome areas: prosperity and opportunity; health and wellbeing, and quality places with ten ambitions across these. The work of the YOS contributes towards a number of these ambitions through direct work with referred young people and families, and victims, and indirectly to the wellbeing of the broader community. Particular areas of contribution include: enabling young people to fulfil their potential; reducing ill health and increasing independence; and empowering people to contribute to their community. The latter also incorporates the work of YOS accredited volunteers.

10.6 The critical areas of YOS focus in the three-year Youth Justice Partnership Plan are:

- Delivery of mental health assessments and interventions to vulnerable young people.
- Accessing through working with partner agencies, education, training and employment provision for young people who have offended.
- Ensuring overall practice is focused and assessed in relation to the HM Probation Inspectorate standards for the normal schedule of inspections.
- Undertaking a national self-assessment to baseline practice against Youth Justice Board requirements.
- Delivery of Enhanced Case Management model.
- Preparation for the HMI Probation Inspectorate inspection.

## **11. OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

None

### **AUTHOR**

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2<sup>nd</sup> August 2019

### **APPENDICES**

Draft Youth Justice Plan 01/04/19 – 31/03/22

### **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None