

19 October 2015

Agenda Item: 06

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, YOUTH, FAMILIES AND CULTURE

UPDATE ON THE YOUTH JUSTICE PLAN 2015-16

Purpose of the Report

1. To update the Committee on the progress being made to agree a Youth Justice Plan for 2015-16. This report will be accompanied by a presentation at the meeting.

Information and Advice

Background

2. Full Council is responsible each year for agreeing a Youth Justice Plan for Nottinghamshire including how the finance and resources available will be used to meet the key national and local priorities. The Plan is usually received by Children and Young People's Committee before being presented for agreement at Full Council.
3. A draft plan has been prepared but at present the Youth Justice Board for England and Wales are consulting on an in-year budget reduction to the Youth Justice Good Practice Grant, the amount of which Nottinghamshire was to receive being originally agreed in March 2015. The level of reduction being considered is 14%, which for Nottinghamshire would be in the region of £170,000. Given the current uncertainties about the budget therefore, it is not possible at this time to present the plan for agreement.

Progress on Key Areas from the 2014-15 Youth Justice Plan

4. During 2014/15 the service set out to increase crime prevention referrals to the service through the design of a simpler referral form and co locating staff with key partners within police stations and community safety hubs. Referrals for crime preventative interventions have increased and relationships with key partners have been strengthened as a result of these actions but there is scope for increasing referrals further if sufficient resource remains available to work with them.
5. The service also set out to better monitor the quality of the services offered through quality assurance activities. Monthly quality assurance events have run and themes from these have helped the service to identify areas that require further focus or a change to its practice. Managers have reviewed every remand at monthly meetings and have been satisfied that in the majority of cases nothing further could have been done to prevent the remand into custody. Where it was felt more could have been done, learning from this has been taken back to the individuals concerned and has been disseminated across the

service. In May of this year the service underwent a Short Quality Screening Inspection led by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation, which confirmed the service's self-assessment that quality of work undertaken was high and good outcomes were being secured for children and young people.

Governance

6. The Nottinghamshire Youth Justice Service sits within the Local Authority's Children, Families and Cultural Services department. Line management of the service flows up through the department to the Corporate Director. The activities of the Youth Justice Service are monitored and directed by the Nottinghamshire Youth Justice Board, which is chaired by the Corporate Director for Children, Families and Cultural Services. The statutory partners from the police, National Probation Service and local health authorities are represented at a senior level at the Board and there is additional membership from the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and District Councils. The Board reports to the Safer Nottinghamshire Board and also links to the Health and Wellbeing Board when appropriate.

Performance

7. During 2014/15 there were 193 actual young people committing their first crime (known as First Time Entrants) a decrease of 11.9% on the preceding year. Numbers of young people entering the youth justice system for the first time have decreased by 81% since 2009/10.
8. As with first time entrants, reoffending rates of young people within the youth justice system had steadily fallen since 2009/10. During 2014/15 the rates of re-offending has increased but remains significantly below regional and national comparators. At the end of quarter 3, the period for which the most recent data is available, the figure for the binary reoffending rate was 31% of young people reoffending within a year of their last conviction. There are several factors underlying this increase, some related to the much more complex issues that the reduced number of young people in the youth justice system have. Analysis of the data also shows that approximately a third of the young people who have re-offended had not had intervention by the Youth Justice Service due to the outcome they had received. Different approaches will be required to address these separate issues – from trying to identify effective ways of addressing the needs and complexities of those in contact with the Youth Justice Service, to working with partners to provide support where a sanction is given that does not have a rehabilitative component.
9. There have been significant reductions in the number of young people experiencing a custodial remand or a custodial sentence within Nottinghamshire since 2009/10. Rates of remand have dropped 58% during that period and custodial sentences have reduced by 79%. The Local Authority is responsible for the cost of remand placements and central government currently pays the costs for young people sentenced by the Courts.

Areas for development over the coming year

10. A number of areas for development have been identified for the 2015-16 financial year. The progress against these will be overseen by the Nottinghamshire Youth Justice Board. These areas include:
- implementing the Asset Plus assessment system which is being rolled out nationally to bring new evidence about how to assess young offender needs into local practice
 - deciding how to use the scarce youth crime prevention resources to have the maximum impact on preventing harm in communities
 - working closely with Children's Social Care to reduce secure remands and their cost by providing robust alternatives whenever possible
 - improving responses to children with speech, language and communication needs through better assessment and new programme approaches
 - reviewing health provision to young people who offend
 - establishing the local Junior Attendance Centre model
 - reviewing approaches to looked after young people and criminalization to ensure they are treated equally to those not in care
 - to further develop services to victims so that they can be more involved in sentences and have an increased sense that justice has been done.

Other Options Considered

11. As this report is for noting only no other options have been considered.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

12. The Committee are asked to note the report as an update pending the finalisation of the Youth Justice Plan.

Statutory and Policy Implications

13. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (Public Health only), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults, service users, sustainability and the environment and ways of working and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1) That the Committee notes the update on the Youth Justice Plan for 2015-16.

Derek Higton
Service Director, Youth, Families and Culture

For any enquiries about this report please contact:

Samantha Morris
Youth Justice Operations Manager
T: 07826 951555
E: Samantha.Morris@nottsccl.gov.uk

Constitutional Comments

14. As this report is for noting only, no Constitutional Comments are required.

Financial Comments (SS 05/10/15)

15. There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

Youth Justice Plan 2014/15 – report to Full Council on 18 September 2014 (previously published)

Outcome of the Youth Justice Service Short Quality Screening Inspection – report to Children & Young People's Committee on 13 July 2015 (previously published)

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

C0710