

report



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE CHILDREN’S TRUST BOARD MEETING

23rd November 2009

Agenda Item 4

REPORT FROM SERVICE DIRECTOR FOR ENGAGEMENT AND ENRICHMENT, CHILDREN’S AND YOUNG PEOPLES SERVICES, SERVICE DIRECTOR FOR COMMUNITY SAFETY, RESILIENCE AND PROTECTION, COMMUNITIES DEPARTMENT, AND NOTTINGHAMSHIRE POLICE

The Development of a Youth Crime Prevention and Reduction Strategy for Nottinghamshire

Purpose of item

1. This report seeks the agreement of the Children’s Trust Board and Safer Nottinghamshire Board for the development of a single three-year Youth Crime Prevention and Reduction Strategy, with supporting action plan, for Nottinghamshire.

Information and advice

Background

2. Section 40 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 makes it a duty of each top tier local authority, after consultation with the Chief Officer of Police or Police Authority, District Councils, Probation Board and Primary Care Trusts to formulate and implement for each year a Youth Justice Plan setting out how youth justice services in their area are to be provided and funded. The current National Standards for Youth Justice (2009) also make it a responsibility for each local authority area to have a Youth Crime Prevention Strategy outlining how local partners will prevent children and young people from becoming involved in crime and anti-social behaviour, and support their parents, carers and families, in respect of the duties set out within the Children Act (1989) for local authorities to “encourage juveniles not to offend, take reasonable steps to reduce the need to bring criminal proceedings against juveniles and to avoid the need for children to be placed in secure accommodation”.

Local context

3. Since 2006 there has been a downward trend in the first time entrants (FTEs) entering the formal youth justice system in Nottinghamshire; from a peak of 1,622 in 2006 it has fallen by 41 per cent to 951 in 2008. Proportionately FTEs have been falling since 2005 when they represented 35.7% of the offending population, compared to 27.3 per cent in 2008. However, whilst the number of

Nottinghamshire young people entering the criminal justice system is reducing year on year, community concern regarding crime and anti social behaviour remains high, and the involvement of young people in these activities forms a significant point of focus for public anxiety, with a 2008-09 Ipsos Mori poll showing 46% of residents very concerned about teenagers hanging around on the streets and 40% thinking levels of crime are one of the things which needs improving most in their neighbourhood. In addition, results from the Nottinghamshire Listens Panel (August 2008) found 24% of respondents felt that 'youth crime' should be one of the top four or five crime and disorder priorities in their local area.

4. Youth issues are current identified priority areas for South Nottinghamshire, and Bassetlaw and Newark and Sherwood Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs). Youth issues have been highlighted by these Partnerships because 'youth' tends to be associated with a number of forms of criminality, whether because young people are offenders or victims of certain types of crime. 'Youth' is also associated with other factors associated with crime and disorder, such as alcohol use and drug taking. It is also recognised that involvement with crime or disorder at a young age, can, if not tackled lead to more serious involvement in later life. Whilst only limited data are available generally on the characteristics of victims and offenders of crime (due to the levels of reporting and detecting of crime), data available shows that for some crime types both victims and offenders tend to be young. For example, data drawn from current local strategic assessments shows that victims of robbery and violence offences tend to be similar in age to the offenders of such offences. In relation to robbery in South Nottinghamshire, for example, 57% of robbery offenders are aged under 18 compared to 53% of victims. In the case of ASB and criminal damage, a similar pattern is seen. In South Nottinghamshire, 35% of criminal damage offenders are aged under 18, with 16 being the peak age for offending, whereas victims tend to be aged between 37 and 42 years.¹
5. Although the current Children and Young People's Plan for 2009/10 includes reducing youth crime and young people's fear of crime as one of its 10 priorities, individual agencies include actions around young people and offending behaviour in their own plans, and a range of effective local initiatives and partnerships that support joint work to reduce youth crime and anti social behaviour are in existence, there is not currently a single Youth Crime Prevention and Reduction Strategy for Nottinghamshire that is supported by all of the key agencies. As such, there is not currently, amongst agencies, a shared vision of success for youth crime reduction, or a shared view of the key priority actions that need to be taken forward at both county, district and locality levels, to address public and agency concerns.

Proposed Course of Action

6. With these factors in mind, it is proposed that for Nottinghamshire a single three year strategic youth crime prevention and reduction plan, with an annual review and action planning cycle, should be formulated. The key aims of the document would be:-
 - Preventing and reducing youth offending and anti-social behaviour;

¹ Data drawn from Nottinghamshire County Strategic assessment, OPM for the safer Nottinghamshire Board, 2009

- Safeguarding children (both as victims and those in contact with youth justice services) and;
- Protecting the public and empowering victims.

The strategy and supporting plan would be jointly governed by the Safer Nottinghamshire Board and the Children and Young People's Trust, with development and delivery coordinated through the newly developed multi agency Joint Youth Crime Group, which forms part of the governance structure for both the Children's Trust and the Safer Nottinghamshire Board through the Integrated Youth Support Board. Those parts directly relating to the operation of the Youth Offending Service (YOS) would be overseen by the YOS Management Board.

Next Steps

7. In order to ensure multi agency involvement and sign up to the strategy, it is proposed to host a strategy development workshop in January 2010, to which all partners will be invited.
8. The draft strategy and action plan will be subject to the approval of the Children's Trust Board and the Safer Nottinghamshire Board.

Recommendations

9. **That a single, three-year, multi agency Youth Crime Prevention and Reduction Strategy (to include the Youth Justice Plan) is developed by April 2010.**
10. **That the development, delivery and monitoring of the strategy is co-ordinated through the Joint Youth Crime Group, with those elements directly relating to the YOS overseen by the YOS Management Board.**

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