

Report to the Schools, Children and Families Overview & Scrutiny Committee

7 December 2016

Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2016/17

Purpose of the Report

To brief the Committee on the contents of the Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2016/17, taking into account the financial implications and the priority actions identified

Recommendation

That Members note the information contained in this report

The plan was approved by Cabinet on 18th October 2016

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1. Background

- 1.1 The Birmingham Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2016/17 reviews the last 12 months' performance of the Service and its partners, and outlines the priorities for the next 12 months. The Plan also reviews the latest research analysing 'what work's' and sets out the range of evidence based assessments and interventions delivered by the Service and its partners. The Youth Offending Service Management Board has set strategic priorities for the Youth Offending Service partnership for 2016/17 and these are outlined within the Plan. They include maintaining and improving performance against the Youth Justice outcomes especially for those cohorts identified with poorer outcomes, and prioritising the safeguarding of vulnerable children and young people.
- 1.2 Birmingham Youth Offending Service is the largest metropolitan Youth Offending Service in the country and is identified as the most complex by the Youth Justice Board, given its urban context. Overall Birmingham has maintained good performance against the national Youth Justice indicators: reducing first time entrants and reducing re-offending. In relation to reducing the use of custody, Birmingham has a higher than national average custodial sentences, however levels are comparable with other core cities.
- 1.3 As the rate of young people entering the Youth Justice system for the first time continues to fall, the proportion of those with complex needs and presenting more serious risks has risen. Considerable work has been undertaken within the Service to increase awareness of workers as to the risk that a young person can present to themselves. This has enabled staff to put into effect plans to minimise those risk.
- 1.4 Birmingham has continued its good performance in relation to preventing re-offending, sustaining one of the lowest re-offending rates of all core cities for the 12 month cohort July 2012 to June 2013 (latest Ministry of Justice figures) and is below the national average of 1.19.
- 1.5 Priorities within the plan have been informed by feedback from 354 self-assessment surveys completed during 2015/16 by young people, analysing and reviewing performance data and an understanding of 'what works' in achieving outcomes. The Plan also supports key outcomes in relation to improved life chances for vulnerable people and safer communities and identifies those groups performing less well, setting out actions to improve outcomes. The Plan is monitored by the Youth Offending Service Management Board on a quarterly basis.
- 1.6 The Plan outlines the outcome of the most recent multi-agency inspection that took place in January 2016. The inspection was led by HM Inspectorate of Probation and took the form of a 'Short Quality Screening, which focusses on the first three-months of an Order, both Community and Custodial.
- 1.8 47 cases were inspected, including a high percentage of Children in Care cases. Overall, the inspectors found work of good quality with staff well-engaged with the

children and young people under their supervision and their parents/carers and that the Service was working effectively with other agencies involved in their cases. Inspectors also reported that initial assessments were of a good standard; case managers demonstrated good knowledge of, and commitment to, the children and young people under their supervision and good attention was paid to the health and well-being outcomes of children and young people. Areas of improvement identified were in relation to planning and reviewing and management oversight.

2. Key Issues

- 2.1 In the period 01 April 2015 to 31 March 2016, 1995 offences were proven against 892 young people. This resulted in 1394 outcomes. In comparison with the same period in 2014/15, the number of offenders represented a fall of 4.7% (from 936), offences a fall of 0.25% (from 2000) and outcomes a fall of 2.385% (from 1430).
- 2.2 During this period the Service worked with 1369 young people on Court Order and Preventative Programmes, 666 (48.652%) of these were existing clients. This compared with 1515 young people, 677 (44.69%) who were existing clients, in the same period the previous year. This represented a fall of 9.64% over 2014/15. In addition, the Service worked with approximately 1800 parents and siblings under its 'Think Family' responsibilities.
- 2.3 The total number of first time entrants rose between April 2015 and March 2016 to 557 young people, however an increase in the 10 -17 population saw a fall in the rate to 475 per 100,000. This compared with 542 young people (497 per 100,000) in 2014/15. Birmingham performs below the national average but compares favourably with other core cities. Whilst the overall number of young people coming to the attention of the Youth Justice system has fallen, the proportion of those with complex needs and presenting more high risks has risen.
- 2.4 Nationally and locally there has been a rise in the frequency rate for re-offending. However, Birmingham has continued its good performance in relation to preventing re-offending, sustaining one of the lowest re-offending rates of all core cities for the 12 month cohort July 2012 to June 2013 (latest Ministry of Justice figures) and is below the national average of 1.19. Within this cohort were 967 young offenders, the largest across the core cities, with 34.0% re-offending, which was one of the lowest percentages of re-offenders of all core cities and compared with 37.8% nationally.
- 2.5 Birmingham has higher than the national average custodial sentences, although levels are comparable with other core cities. The number of custodial sentences in Birmingham has increased in the 2015/16 period to 110. This compares to 103 custodial sentences in 2014/15. Although the number of custodial sentences slightly increased over 2015/16 this is still a fall from the 157 custodial sentences given in 2012/13 and less than half of the 206 given in 2011/12. The three main offences that resulted in a custodial sentence over the period were Robbery; Breach of Statutory Order; and Violence against the Person.

- 2.6 Young people from Birmingham occupied 2965 remand bed nights between 01 April 2015 and 31 March 2016. This was lower than the 3817 used in 2014/15, and a significant drop from the 6399 used in 2012/13. The Local Authority is responsible for the costs of all remands into secure or custodial institutions. The total cost of the 2015/16 bed nights was just over 70% of the previous year's cost. A total of 56 young people were remanded to the secure estate between April 2015 and March 2016 which was a fall from 59 in 2014/15.
- 2.7 The latest Local Authority returns identified that 40(4.6%) of the 870 children aged 10 or older who had been looked after for more than 12 months had a conviction or were made subject to a Final Warning or Reprimand during the period 1st April 2015 - 31st March 2016, a reduction from 60 (6.8%) in 2014/15. This compares favourably with the national average of 5.19%.
- 2.8 Young People with a history of being looked after were more likely to be sentenced to custody, with custodial sentences comprising 16.12% (39 young people) of all LAC sentencing, compared to 8.51% of those who had never been looked after. Despite the high proportion being sentenced to custody, young people with a history of being looked after only constituted 8.8% of First Time Entrants during the period.
- 2.9 The Youth Offending Service offered Restorative Justice to 425 victims and 216 took up the offer of an intervention. 64 (of those who disclosed their age) were 17 or under. There were high levels of feedback from victims and 99.0% identified that they were satisfied with the service that they received.
- 2.10 The engagement of young offenders into positive Education, Training and Employment (ETE) is an integral protective factor to reduce re-offending and is a priority objective for the Service. The Service continues to use the support of dedicated ETE engagement mentors who are focused on raising young people's aspirations, building confidence and supporting them to engage in ETE. Work with Schools and Education Providers continues to reap rewards with 84.0% of school age young people worked with during 2015/16, being in a suitable education by the end of their court order. It continues to remain a challenge to support our post-16 NEET cohort to secure education, training or employment with only 62.9% of young people about school age being engaged in ETE by the end of their Court Order. The Service has supported the successful bid for increased resources through the Youth Employment Initiative and this will enable more intensive support for our cohort and an enhanced capacity to develop greater links with employers and enhance employment opportunities.
- 2.11 The Plan supports key outcomes in relation to improved life chances for vulnerable people and safer communities and identifies those groups performing less well, setting out actions to improve outcomes.
- 2.12 Black young men continue to be over-represented in both the Criminal Justice system and in the custodial population and young people from a mixed heritage background are also over represented in the Criminal Justice System. Children in Care (CiC) are an especially vulnerable group and their prevalence in the Youth

Justice system is regularly monitored and reported on. The latest Local Authority returns identified that 40 (4.6%) of the 870 children aged 10 or older who had been looked after for more than 12 months had a conviction or were made subject to a Final Warning or Reprimand during the period 1st April 2015 - 31st March 2016, a reduction from 60 (6.8%) in 2014/15. This compares favourably with the national average of 5.19%.

- 2.13 Young people with a history of being looked after were more likely to be sentenced to custody, with custodial sentences comprising 16.12% (39 young people) of all CIC sentencing, compared to 8.51% of those who had never been looked after. Despite the high proportion being sentenced to custody, young people with a history of being in Care of the Local Authority only constituted 8.8% of First Time Entrants during the period. Young people with a history of being looked after were less likely to be in full time ETE at the end of their order (62.3%) than those who had never been looked after (72.0%). Of the young people remanded to the secure estate during the period, 9 (16.0%) were looked after at the time of remand. These young people accounted for 9.0% (269) of the 2,965 remand bed nights during the period.
- 2.14 To ensure that looked after young people are not disadvantaged by being allocated to a new worker when a new placement moves them from one catchment area to another, the Service allocates a worker to them from their 'home' team and this worker is responsible for ensuring they receive the necessary support and intervention irrespective of where they are placed, either within the city or an out-of-city placement. In addition, work has been ongoing to streamline the case review process across agencies into a single meeting to improve integrated working and avoid unnecessary duplication.
- 2.15 It should also be noted that young white male and female offenders, those in Care, and young people with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties are less likely than other young offenders to be in full time education, training and employment at the end of their Order. The Youth Justice Plan identifies the barriers for these cohorts and highlights progress made, and identifies on-going actions to address performance across partner agencies including education and training providers.

3. Risk and Vulnerability:

- 3.1 The management of young offenders subject to Court Orders is a key responsibility of the Youth Offending Service. The Plan provides updated information on multi-agency arrangements including Integrated Offender Management. The Youth Offending Service chairs a monthly pan-Birmingham Youth Shared Priority Forum (now referred to as ODOC "One Day, One Conversation"). This multi-agency panel ensures that there are robust risk management arrangements in place for those young people assessed as 'Persistent or Priority Offenders' and that concerns are addressed early for those young people in the 'Deter' cohort. Police Offender Managers and Youth Crime Officers play a critical role with the Youth Offending Team officer in ensuring that robust arrangements are in place.

- 3.2 The Service is also responsible for completing 'Risk of Serious Harm to Others' (ROSH) assessments and co-ordinates robust multi-agency plans for these young people. This led to 1466 ROSH assessments being completed on 428 young people and 1111 Risk Management Plans being completed on 497 young people between 01 April 2015 and 31 March 2016 to manage that risk, This compared with 1426 ROSH assessments being completed on 632 young people and 1008 Risk Management Plans being completed on 469 young people in 2014/15.
- 3.3 All young people are screened for issues of Vulnerability and Vulnerability Management Plans. Areas of vulnerability included concerns around Mental Health, Substance Misuse, self-harm or young people assessed as at risk from the behaviour of others. Between 01 April 2015 and 31 March 2016, 1111 Vulnerability Management Plans were completed on 472 young people known to the Service, compared with 984 plans on 436 young people in the previous year. Responses include referrals to Children's Safeguarding Services, Child and Adolescent Mental Health and Substance Misuse (CAMHS) and Alcohol Treatment Services.
- 3.4 The Youth Offending Service provides two part time Senior Social Workers to the Children Advice and Support Service (CASS) environment, which has seen an improvement in the timeliness and quality of Youth Offending Service safeguarding referrals; a greater understanding around Remands to Local Authority Accommodation and Youth Detention Accommodation; an increase in early referrals to the Sexually Harmful Behaviour Team and Youth Offending Service contribution at peer on peer abuse strategy discussions.
- 3.4 All young people continue to be screened on entry to the Service using a 'Strengths and Difficulties' (SDQ) questionnaire. This has enabled greater identification of vulnerable young people and subsequent consultation and referrals to CAMHS workers within the Service. This continues to result in a reduction in the number of serious incidents relating to self-harm.
- 3.5 There is a statutory requirement through the Youth Justice Board for Youth Offending Service to report on incidents and review cases relating to Safeguarding and Public Protection/ serious further offences i.e. when a young person dies whilst under our supervision, including suicide or when there is an attempt suicide or when they are a victim of a serious offence such as murder or rape. The Youth Offending Service also report if a young person supervised by the Service is charged with murder or rape. On these occasions either a Critical Learning Review or a more In-depth Learning Review is carried out in order to identify shortfalls in strategy, policy, resources and practice. Recommendations and an Action Plan are formed in order to address the issues from a multi-agency perspective. Such reviews often feed in to other reviews such as Serious Case Reviews and Management and Thematic Reviews commissioned by the BSCB Child Death Overview Panel and Serious Cases Sub-Committee.

4. Financial Implications:

- 4.1 There continues to be a number of risks associated with the funding streams of the Youth Offending Service from its statutory partners and its other funding sources including the Youth Justice Grant from the Youth Justice Board. The Service's pooled budget for 2016/17 was cut by £543,322, which required a service redesign, resulting in the loss of commissioned resources targeted at vulnerable groups, and a reduction in staffing. Interventions funded by interim transitional funding from the Police and Crime Commissioner of £274,628 will be reviewed in January 2017 to re-align to Community Safety Priorities where possible, to maintain funding. At this point it is not clear any other savings the Service may be required to deliver in the future, however it is working towards achieving further efficiencies, specifically in relation to its buildings.

5. Conclusions

- 5.1 Overall Birmingham is maintaining good performance against the National Youth Justice priorities: reducing first time entrants and reducing re-offending. The reduction in the use of the secure estate remains a volatile indicator. Birmingham has a higher than national average custodial sentences, however levels are comparable with other core cities.
- 5.2 The Youth Offending Service Management Board has set strategic priorities for the Youth Offending Service partnership for 2016/17 and these are outlined within the Plan. They include maintaining and improving performance against the Youth Justice outcomes especially for those cohorts identified with poorer outcomes, and prioritising the safeguarding of vulnerable children and young people.
- 5.3 These priorities have been informed by feedback from 354 recent self-assessment surveys completed by young people, analysing and reviewing performance data and an understanding of 'what works' in achieving outcomes. The Plan is monitored by the Youth Offending Service Management Board on a quarterly basis.

List of Appendices

1. Birmingham Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2016/17.