

SCRUTINY COMMISSION 20 APRIL 2011

DRAFT YOUTH JUSTICE STRATEGIC PLAN 2011/12

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Purpose of report

1. The purpose of this report is to seek the views of Scrutiny Commission on the Draft Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2011/12, attached as Appendix 1. The draft Plan will be presented to Cabinet on 3 May 2011 along with any comments from the Commission.

Policy Framework and Previous Decision(s)

2. There is a statutory requirement in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 that the Youth Offending Service should produce an annual Youth Justice Plan.

Background

3. In previous years, the Youth Justice Board (YJB) has provided the framework for the Plan, along with considerable scrutiny and oversight. This year, in line with the Government's agenda to reduce the burden and in line with the abolition of the YJB, Youth Offending Services have the freedom and flexibility to produce a Youth Justice Strategic Plan to their own timetable and format. The plan still has to be submitted to the YJB, but there is no deadline or additional YJB scrutiny.
4. The Youth Offending Service Management Board (YOSMB) agreed that, for 2011/12, the annual Youth Justice Strategic Plan should be completed using a slightly modified version of last year's plan format.

Consultations

5. There is a requirement for the Plan to be approved by the statutory partners that make up the Youth Offending Service partnership. The draft Plan has therefore been submitted to the YOSMB which considered the matter on 8th April 2011. It has also been submitted to the Children and Young People's Executive on 15th April and will be reconsidered by the YOSMB on 13th May 2011.

Resource implications

6. Section 5 of the plan (pages 11 – 13) sets out the resourcing and funding arrangements for the Youth Offending Service, which has a total budget of £3.434m. The County Council remains the major funding partner via the Chief Executive's and the Children and Young People's Service. The YJB's grant allocation was previously provided with a number of ring-fences, which have this year been removed to create a single Youth Justice Grant of £770,067.
7. The Youth Justice Grant now includes a contribution for Intensive Supervision and Surveillance (ISS), previously provided directly by the YJB to the City YOS which managed ISS as a consortium arrangement on behalf of both authorities. It has now been decided that the county will develop its own ISS services. The unexpectedly large reduction in the Youth Justice Grant, taking into account the ISS funding, amounts to 21%. The Youth Justice Grant formula will be revised for 2012/13 and is also likely to include a 25% element of payment by results.
8. Fortunately, the partners have largely maintained current levels of YOS funding. In addition, in February 2011, the County Council agreed £500k of transitional funding over two years (2011/12 and 2012/13) for Youth Justice and Safer Communities in view of the significant losses in external grant funding of 21%.
9. This transitional funding will be used to make up for the loss of grant to ensure that compulsory redundancies will not be required and that front-line services will continue to be delivered at the current level during 2011/12. It will in particular enable the public health worker post, the participation worker post and all the prevention services to continue during 2011/12. The funding will allow a more phased reduction in some of the lower priority services in 2012/13 in order to meet the full savings requirement by 2013/14. This reduction will be undertaken through a full Service Review, to ensure that the required savings are made whilst maintaining service delivery to a high standard.
10. Corporate HR Services are fully involved in the Service Review and the relevant Trade Unions will be consulted.
11. The Director of Corporate Resources has been consulted and supports the approach set out in section 5 of the Plan.

Timetable for decisions

12. The draft Plan will be considered by the Cabinet on the 3rd May 2011, prior to submission to the YJB on 16 May 2011. The final Plan will be considered by the County Council on the 6 July 2011.

Conclusions

13. The draft Plan highlights the continuing high performance of the YOS in 2010/11 and sets out the key priorities, objectives and outcomes for the work of the Youth Offending Service during 2011/12, against a background of significant reductions in external grant. However, two year transitional funding will help to mitigate the impact and one of the key objectives of the Service Review will be to minimise the impact on front line services.

Background papers

Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2010/11
Children and Young People's Plan 2010/11

Circulation under Local Issues Alert Procedure

None.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Draft Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2011/12

Relevant Impact Assessments

16. Inequality is inherent within the criminal justice system and the Plan includes analyses of disproportionality, for example, in the numbers of young people from Black and Minority Ethnic backgrounds entering the youth justice system (p10). The gender and ethnic composition of the workforce is included on page 18. An Equalities Impact Assessment has been completed on the Plan. This identifies the need to continue to monitor YOS performance in relation to diversity and the need to improve the numbers of young people and their parents/carers who complete the participation survey. The YOS will also undertake a qualitative analysis of the experiences of Black and Minority Ethnic young people who enter custody in order to evaluate YOS practice with these young people.

Environmental Implications

18. There are no particular environmental implications arising out of the Plan. However, the YOS has in 2010/11 achieved reductions in mileage through the use of the County Council's Work Well project, and expects to achieve further reductions in 2011/12 as a result of the Service's move to County Hall.