

**Report To:** Scrutiny Committee

**Date of Meeting:** November 2012

**Lead Member / Officer:** Councillor David Smith / Councillor Bobby Feeley

**Report Author:** Emma Rathbone

**Title:** Three Year Strategic Youth Justice Plan

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### **1. What is the report about?**

The report informs Scrutiny Committee of the background, purpose and intentions of the Strategic Youth Justice Plan and provides the final draft intended for submission to the Youth Justice Board and its subsequent publication and distribution.

### **2. What is the reason for making this report?**

The Youth Justice Board (YJB) oversees the youth justice system in England and Wales and works to prevent offending and re-offending by children and young people under the age of 18.

The YJB is required to monitor and report on the performance of the youth justice system to the Home Secretary. It does this through the Strategic Youth Justice Plans submitted annually by each Youth Justice Service (YJS) and through the collection of performance data. Regional Teams of the YJB receive submission of the Youth Justice Plan.

### **3. What are the Recommendations?**

That members consider and comment on the Conwy/Denbighshire Strategic Youth Justice Plan review for 2012 / 2013.

### **4. Report details.**

The Strategic Youth Justice Plan describes how local youth justice services operate, the challenges that they face and their plans to overcome potential risks to future delivery. In order to deliver youth justice outcomes youth offending teams must function effectively in two key sectors: criminal justice and services for children and young people. They should be closely aligned and engaged with Children and Young People's Partnerships and Community Safety Partnerships. In Wales, this means that YJSs operate in an environment that is governed by both devolved and reserved lines of accountability to both the UK and the Welsh Assembly Government. For this reason, the YJB works with the devolved administration to ensure that its monitoring and practice improvement activity is appropriate to the delivery of children's services in Wales.

## **Local Priorities**

### **Our customers**

Our primary customers are children and young people in the youth justice system, their families and the victims of their crimes. We also work with children and young people and their families to prevent them entering the youth justice system. Secondary customers would include all communities in Conwy and Denbighshire who are affected by the criminal and anti-social behaviour of children and young people that we are trying to reduce and prevent.

### **What we deliver for Denbighshire/Conwy**

Conwy/Denbighshire Youth Justice Service is a statutory multi-agency partnership hosted within Conwy County Borough Council. Our purpose is to prevent children and young people from offending whilst safeguarding their welfare, protecting the public and helping restore the damage caused to the victims of their crimes. Our aim is to make Conwy/Denbighshire an even safer place to live and help young people achieve their full potential in life. We strive hard to work proactively with the two counties diverse population.

## **Our service strategic priorities for the next 3 years**

### **How our priorities help to deliver the Council's Strategic Ambitions**

The Conwy/Denbighshire YJS will contribute to both local authorities strategic aims by making it a safer place to live and work and to enable young people to make a positive contribution to their communities and prevent negative impacts on others.

### **How our priorities help to deliver the Council's core roles**

Actions in the Conwy/Denbighshire YJS plan will contribute to the Council's core role 'to act as a safety net for the most vulnerable people in our county and protect the public' with particular reference to working with partners to deliver a coordinated approach to prolific criminal offenders and making sure vulnerable people are safe in their homes, schools and communities.

Successful delivery of priorities would mean that:

- Children and young people would be law abiding, engaged in positive behaviour and show respect for others
- Parents take responsibility for their children's behaviour.
- Communities believe they get on well together and have confidence in the way that crime and anti-social behaviour is dealt with by local authorities and the police.

- Victims of crime would feel some of the damage caused had been restored and the public would have confidence and feel protected
- Reducing the number of children and young people coming into the youth justice system (first time entrants)
- Reducing re-offending by children and young people
- Reducing the numbers of young people going into custody (prison) either sentenced or on remand

**The agreed operational objectives for 2012-15 are: (further specific themed priorities in section 3 of the operational plan)**

1. Increase use of partnerships and community agencies to identify problem areas and potential solutions, in order to focus youth crime prevention activities where they are most likely to have a direct impact
2. Ensure the Quality Assurance management Process Policy is followed to evidence regular management oversight of all cases from start to end.
3. A timely and good quality assessment of the individual's vulnerability and *Risk of Harm to others* is completed at the start, as Appropriate to the specific sentence.
4. The Asset assessment and plan of work with the case is regularly reviewed with a frequency consistent with national standards for youth offending services and following any significant change.
5. Further develop young people's participation across the borough, so that they are actively involved in both identifying the issues and areas of concern to them and creating the solutions.
6. Integrate assessments of young people to better identify who is at greatest risk of reoffending, so that interventions can be targeted. With the development of the scaled approach and YRO the effective assessment and identification of Risk in a consistent manner will be central to delivering effective interventions.
7. Embed partnership initiatives to tackle recidivism among young people, in collaboration with the Children and Young People's Partnership, Local Safeguarding Board and schools.

**5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Priorities?**

The plan contributes to the vision for children and young people in Denbighshire where children and young people are empowered and supported to develop to their full potential and have the life skills and opportunities to play an active part in society. The plan also supports a vision for community safety where local people live in a safe, fear-free and tolerant community.

The plan also supports the Big Plan for Denbighshire and is linked with the joint Local Children Safeguarding Board for Conwy Denbighshire.

**6. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?**

Conwy/Denbighshire Youth Justice Service has a complex budget structure made up of partner agency cash and in-kind financial contributions, core government funding from the YJB for England and Wales and a range of time limited funding. The Strategic Youth Justice Plan is funded from the YJS core budget. Conwy hold the financial control for the partnership.

## **7. What consultations have been carried out?**

The YJS Board, YJS Strategic Managers, YJS Operational Managers and Community Safety Team have been consulted on the plan and have provided input accordingly. Once committee has agreed its content it can go out in the public domain.

## **8. Chief Finance Officer Statement**

The costs associated with the implementation of the Plan must be contained within agreed limits. The council's financial contribution to the partnership is approximately £220k.

## **9. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?**

The work of the Youth Justice Service as set out in the Youth Justice Plan makes a significant contribution to reducing crime and disorder by young people in Conwy.

The sustainability of this plan is subject to resource allocations received by the service from a number of sources. For this reason the plan is reviewed on an annual basis.

Human Rights Implications – are in accordance with the crime and disorder act 1998.

If the plan is not agreed it would result in a breach of the Council's Constitution of having a statutory Strategic Youth Justice plan in place thus the YJB would not release the funding for the service having a negative impact on local youth justice planning.

## **10. Power to make the Decision**

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998, s 38

## **11. Appendix**

Conwy and Denbighshire Youth Justice Plan 2012-15