

AGENDA MANAGEMENT SHEET

Name of Committee **Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

Date of Committee **8 September 2010**

Report Title **Youth Justice Service Report on Reduction of Re-offending**

Summary This report was requested by the Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee. It outlines the excellent performance of the Warwickshire Youth Justice Service (WYJS) in achieving the stated objectives of preventing youth crime and reducing re-offending of those young people who have committed offences.
The paper describes some of the interventions provided to young people supervised by the Service and demonstrates the effectiveness of those interventions.
The paper also outlines the effect of the current economic climate on both re-offending rates and the ability of the WYJS to be effective in continuing the excellent performance.

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Would the recommended decision be contrary to the Budget and Policy

No

Framework? [please identify relevant plan/budget provision]
Background papers

Background information can be found at www.yjb.gov.uk
www.homeoffice.gov.uk

CONSULTATION ALREADY UNDERTAKEN:

Details to be specified

Other Committees

Local Member(s)

Other Elected Members

CYP&F O&S Chair
Cllr June Tandy

CYP&F O&S Spokesperson
Cllr Peter Balaam
Cllr Carolyn Robbins

Cabinet Member

For information:
Cllr Heather Timms
Cllr Richard Hobbs

Other Cabinet Members consulted

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Chief Executive

.....

Legal

Fay Ford – ‘*Fine*’

Finance

.....

Other Strategic Directors

Graeme Smith, Strategic Director – Fire & Rescue
(for information)

District Councils

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Health Authority

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Police

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Other Bodies/Individuals

Michelle McHugh, Overview and Scrutiny
Manager

FINAL DECISION

YES/NO

SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS:

Details to be specified

Further consideration by this Committee

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To Council

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To Cabinet

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To an O & S Committee

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To an Area Committee

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Further Consultation

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Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

8 September 2010

Youth Justice Service Report on Reduction of Re-offending

Report of the Strategic Director for Children, Young People and Families

Recommendation:

That the Communities Overview & Scrutiny Committee

- i. note the report and the current YJB rated performance of 'excellent' for Warwickshire Youth Justice Service with regard to reducing re-offending and the effectiveness of the interventions delivered by the Service.
- ii. consider the potential risks resulting from the current economic climate and reduction in funding to the Youth Justice Service.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee requested a report on the effectiveness of Warwickshire Youth Justice Service (WYJS) interventions in reducing re-offending within Warwickshire. In particular, the Committee requested information on the impact of the current economic climate on offending rates, and the opportunities and challenges for the Service going forward.
- 1.2 The way in which youth rates of re-offending is reported has recently changed and is currently calculated as the 'rate' of re-offending – numbers of young people re-offending against the number of offences each young person commits. However, for the purpose of this report this rate and the previous calculations – the percentage of young people re-offending and the seriousness of the offences committed following the imposition of an order, have been considered in order to give a true picture of the service delivered.
- 1.3 The ability of the Service to continue to deliver this performance within the current economic climate is considered alongside the recent review and performance report of the Service by the Youth Justice Board (YJB).

2. Offending rates

- 2.1 Offending rates have reduced nationally but to a much lesser extent than that within Warwickshire, where a reduction in first time entrants to the youth justice system (FTEs) has been supported through partnership work between prevention staff within WYJS, the police and the partners in Integrated Youth Support Services.
- 2.2 WYJS practitioners and community police officers trained in restorative justice supervise Youth Restorative Disposals (YRDs) imposed on those young people who commit anti-social behaviour which puts them at risk of entering the criminal justice system.
- 2.3 Interventions to reduce the risk of offending are based upon an assessment of risk identified using the ONSET tool. These interventions nevertheless ensure the young people concerned face the consequences of their behaviour with restorative justice being used to bring the 'offender and their victim face to face and/or make reparation for the 'offence/s' committed.
- 2.4 During 2009/10 WYJS reported a further reduction of crime committed by young people, with a 19% reduction in young people committing offences compared to 2008/9 and a 22% reduction in the number of offences committed. The percentage of young people in Warwickshire committing crime in 2009/10 was 1.7%.
- 2.5 As a result of our prevention work and that of our partners we continue to see very few children below the age of 13 years within the court system. During quarter 1 of 2010 no young people aged less than 13 years were sentenced in court.

3. Re-offending rates

- 3.1 WYJS performance for reduction of re-offending rates is comparable with the West Midlands region but significantly better than that of our YOT family and the national performance.
- 3.2 Rates of youth re-offending within Warwickshire have continued to reduce year on year since 2007/8. This is the result of the work of practitioners within WYJS, using a risk led approach to delivery of interventions which is linked to the assessment of the young person. These assessments are carried out using the Asset tool which has a predictive validity rate of over 69%.
- 3.3 Interventions are designed to address factors contributing to the young person's offending and are therefore dependant on the presenting needs of the each young person.
- 3.4 Increasingly young people subject to court orders present with complex issues requiring intensive supervision by practitioners. The statutory partnership of YOTs is therefore extremely beneficial in ensuring that these young people

receive prompt and appropriate support by professionals qualified to both assess and address their needs.

- 3.5 Each of the agencies within WYJS contributes to interventions based on their own professional discipline as well as contributing to the overall multi-agency approach to casework within the Service.

3.6 Effectiveness of Interventions

- 3.6.1 The Service uses many different interventions to address the causes of offending. Due to the complexity of each young person's issues it is usual for a variety of methods to be adopted in any one case. However, as interventions are linked to assessed risks it is possible to demonstrate effectiveness in many areas:-

- Interventions to address sexually harmful behaviour are carried out by social workers within the Service. This programme has proved extremely effective with a re-offending rate for those committing sexual offences of 25%, none of which were for sexual offences. As a result of this the Service has introduced the use of a further assessment tool to support these cases.
- In 2001 and again more recently an analysis of health needs of young people known to WYJS was undertaken which showed a significant number (54%) of young people presenting with some sort of mental health issue and 50% had experienced a head injury which research by the Child Brain Injury Trust shows can result in cognitive behavioural difficulties. Mental health practitioners within WYJS are able to deliver prompt and appropriate services to those young people identified with mental health needs. 42% of young people supervised by the Service during 2009/10 with identified mental needs showed improvement in the state of their mental health.
- An anger management programme devised by one of the health practitioners in the early days of Warwickshire YOT continues to be used for those young people where anger forms part of the reason for offending. This programme has proved to improve the thinking and behaviour of the young people concerned in almost 49% of cases.
- An analysis of re-offending rates where WYJS parenting provision has been provided alongside other WYS interventions demonstrates an 80% success rate, with none of the young people offending during the following 12 months.
- During 2010 work with schools and the Out of Schools Group has continued and as such we have seen a significant increase in performance for young people known to the Service in full time education, with 76.6% compared to the baseline performance of 57.3%; of which 83% of young people were aged under 16 years and 70.2% were aged 16 years and over.
- Probation officers within the Service supervise many of the older age group of 16 and 17 year olds. This group is consistently the most prolific of offenders and as such often require substantial support to reduce their likelihood of re-

offending. Of the cohort of young offenders from 2009 56% of these young people did not re-offend within 12 months, compared to 44% in 2008.

- Over 40% of the young people who were supervised by WYJS for a knife related offence during 2009-10 showed improvements in 'Family and Personal Relationships', 'Lifestyle' and 'Thinking and Behaviour' at the end of WYJS intervention. Only 29% of those young people supervised by WYJS who committed knife related offences re-offended during that period.
- The work of police practitioners within WYJS was reviewed in 2008/9 and now focuses increasingly on the management of risky young people and Persistent Young Offenders (now described as Deter Young Offenders or DYOs). This work includes sharing intelligence with officers within the community ensuring all are aware of conditions made against individual young people in order to bring them back to justice for non-compliance; home visits to ensure the young people are complying with requirements of orders or bail; and supervision of orders where the skills of the police are required to reduce offending. WYJS work with those young people identified as DYOs is demonstrated to reduce their offending by 50%.

4. Impact of the Economic Climate

- 4.1 As a result of reductions in youth crime the number of young people supervised by WYJS has reduced during 2010. However, with the implementation of the Youth Justice Reforms introduced as a result of the Criminal Justice and Immigration Act 2008 and changes to statutory practice for YOTs (the scaled approach and new national standards) the workload of practitioners has begun to rise, as predicted using the YJB forecasting tool.
- 4.2 In addition to the rise in workloads we have seen an increase in the number of cases being managed by practitioners in WYJS, the first rise of it's' kind for more than 2 years. Further analysis shows that the increase in caseloads is due to increased complexity of issues presented by the young people supervised by the service. This complexity is further demonstrated by the reduction in early discharges of court orders supervised by WYJS for completion and good progress during 2009/10 (14%) compared to 29% for the previous year.
- 4.3 It is difficult to assess the impact of the economic climate in relation to future offending within Warwickshire but the British Crime Survey report states that "During 1990 -1992 the UK was suffering a recession. This led to economic hardship which can be linked to increases in levels of crime in the early 90s. From 1996/97 onwards the economy was growing, which is thought to have contributed to the decrease in property crime since the peak in 1995".
- 4.4 The impact of increases in offending, together with the increased complexity of presenting issues for young people supervised by WYJS will no doubt have a impact on the resources required to deliver the level of support young people need to address the causes of their criminal behaviour. If the Service experiences reduction in resources the impact could be considered significant.

5. Sustainability of the Service

- 5.1 In February of this year the Strategic Director of Children's Services and the Youth Justice Service Manager were interviewed by the YJB to establish the sustainability of the success of the WYJS as part of the national review of YOT management. This formed part of the Capacity and Capability Self Assessment undertaken on each Youth Offending Team as part of the Youth Justice Planning Improvement Framework (YJPIF).
- 5.2 Following this interview the YJPIF was validated by the YJB both regionally and nationally and WYJS was found to be 'excellent' in terms of performance and 'good' with regards to capacity and capability. The inability to recruit to the post of Performance Manager due to funding concerns corporately was noted as the weak element leaving the WYJS with a reduced capacity to carry out detailed analysis on intervention effectiveness:-
- 5.3 The validator's notes state:
- 5.3.1 "The validation of the Warwickshire Youth Justice Service (WYJS) demonstrates that the Service is performing excellently against the national indicators with good capacity and capability to sustain and improve performance. The WYJS is improving significantly in reducing re-offending, increasing education, training and employment (ETE) and reducing First Time Entrants (FTE). Although the Custody performance appears static, the number of custodial sentences has actually reduced from 31 in 2008/09 to 17 in 2009/10
- 5.3.2 Although there is evidence of detailed reporting on Performance, there is insufficient detailed analysis. This is linked to the departure of the Performance Manager. The post is currently being reviewed.
- 5.3.3 There are a number of notable areas of emerging practice.
- 5.3.4 The WYJS Management Board is small but well represented at a senior level. It has recently re-structured the management levels of the WYJS with efficiency savings in mind. Covering 5 districts in the county has been challenging but reporting to and consulting with districts is well incorporated into the management responsibilities.
- 5.3.5 There are a number of notable and innovative practices"
- 5.4 The current constraint on budgets following the coalition government's emergency budget is already starting to impact on the work of the WYJS with partners requesting a review of funding to the Service and grants being reduced or removed. Health has recently undertaken a review of provision within the WYJS; and the County Council and Police have also requested a review.

- 5.5 The 'Area Based Grant' (ABG) was used to support parenting provision within the Service, an area cited as one of good practice by the YJB. This grant has been removed mid year with salaries already paid which will impact on the rest of the Service, and will result in the reduction of services to parents (30 families at any one time).
- 5.6 In addition to this the YJB currently support WYJS in the provision of grants, one of which is to support prevention which has proved effective in reducing FTEs (as noted above). This grant is under review and it is anticipated that the grant may be removed either during 2010/11 or 2011/15, following the Comprehensive Service Review. This will have a major impact on the ability of the Service to provide anything other than supervision of statutory orders.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 Warwickshire can feel confident in the effectiveness of WYJS in delivering interventions that result in both prevention and reduction of offending by young people. All of which results in a safer environment to Warwickshire residents.
- 6.2 The YJB have reported confidence in the Services' ability to sustain this success in terms of our commitment to continuous improvement and excellent partnership work. However, financial constraints that lead to reductions in funds will no doubt impact on performance and the range of services that can be provided.
- 6.3 Current and anticipated reviews of contributions to the Service by the statutory partners will be discussed by the Chief Officers of the partnership who will consider closely the impact of such reductions on outcomes to young people, parents, victims and the wider community. However, removal of grants such as the ABG and in particular those provided by the YJB, the Services' major contributor, will also need to be considered in order to ensure the Service can fulfil its' statutory duties.

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16th August, 2010