

# CABINET



Report subject	<b>Youth Justice Service Youth Justice Plan for 2021/22</b>
Meeting date	23 June 2021
Status	Public Report
Executive summary	To present the Youth Justice Plan for 2021/22. There is a statutory requirement to publish an annual Youth Justice Plan which must provide specified information about the local provision of youth justice services. This report summarises the Youth Justice Plan for 2021/22, with a copy of the Plan appended. The Youth Justice Plan needs to be approved by the full Council.
Recommendations	<b>It is RECOMMENDED that:</b>  <b>Cabinet endorse the Youth Justice Plan so that Cabinet can recommend its approval to the Full Council</b>
Reason for recommendations	Youth Offending Teams are required to publish an annual Youth Justice Plan which should be approved by the Local Authority for that Youth Offending Team. Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service works across both Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council and Dorset Council. Approval is therefore sought from Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council, as well as from Dorset Council.
Portfolio Holder(s):	Councillor Mike White, Portfolio Holder Children's Services
Corporate Director	Elaine Redding, Corporate Director, Children's Services
Report Authors	David Webb, Manager, Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service
Wards	Council-wide
Classification	For Recommendation

## **Background**

1. Under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 Youth Offending Teams are required to publish an annual youth justice plan. The Youth Justice Board provides guidance about what must be included in the plan and recommends a structure for the plan. The draft Youth Justice Plan for the Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service is attached at Appendix One. A brief summary of the Youth Justice Plan is provided in this report

## **Summary of Contents of the Youth Justice Plan 2021/22/**

2. The Youth Justice Plan provides information on the resourcing, structure, governance, partnership arrangements and performance of the Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service. The Plan also describes the national and local youth justice context for 2021/22 and sets out our priorities for this year.
3. The Youth Justice Board continue to monitor three 'key performance indicators' for youth justice. The first indicator relates to the rate of young people entering the justice system for the first time. Local performance in this area had declined in the period 2016-2018 but has been improving since then. The latest national data, relating to the 12 months to December 2019, shows a combined pan-Dorset rate of 251 per 100,000 10-17 year olds entering the justice system for the first time. This compares with a figure of 344 per 100,000 10-17 year olds in the year to December 2018. Local data is more up to date and shows a further reduction in first-time entrants in the BCP Council area in the year to March 2021. The improvement is welcome and further steps are planned for 2021/22.
4. The other two national indicators relate to reducing reoffending and minimising the use of custodial sentences. The reoffending rate fluctuates, partly because of the current counting rules for this measure. Our local reoffending rate has for the most part remained below the national rate. Local analysis shows that young people who are more likely to reoffend are also more likely to have more complex speech, language and communication needs and to find it hard to access education or training. The Youth Justice Plan sets out some of the actions that have been taken and future plans to address these issues.
5. Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service has low rates of custodial sentences, below the regional and national averages. Young people who are sentenced to custody have often experienced significant trauma in their earlier life, affecting their current behaviour. In 2020 the Youth Justice Service implemented a plan to become a trauma informed service, using the Youth Justice Board's 'Enhanced Case Management' model. More work is planned for the coming year to embed this approach.
6. The work of the Youth Justice Service in 2020/21 was significantly affected by the pandemic. Team members have mostly been working from home since March 2020, using the IT equipment and infrastructure that was already in place. Contacts with children have taken place both in person and remotely, by video or phone, with good examples of creative and innovative work in difficult circumstances. Team members, including the team's Education Officer, worked closely with colleagues in the local authority and in schools to support children's engagement in education. Over the course of the year we saw a reduction in children entering the justice system. This continued a trend since 2018, making it hard to differentiate the effects of the

pandemic from longer-term trends. Full data on entrants to the justice system and re-offending patterns is not yet available; it is likely to be some time before the impact of the pandemic is understood, including the possible longer-term consequences for child well-being and behaviour.

### **Options Appraisal**

7. Councillors are asked to endorse the Youth Justice Plan for 2021/22 before it is considered by Cabinet. Cabinet will then decide whether to recommend approval of the Youth Justice Plan to the full Council.

### **Summary of financial implications**

8. The Youth Justice Plan reports on the resourcing of the Youth Justice Service (YJS). Local authority and other partner contributions remained static from 2014/15 to 2018/19 when a cost of living increase to local authority contributions was agreed, along with a redistribution of the funding proportions to reflect Local Government Reorganisation. There have been no further cost of living increase in the local authority contributions. The annual Youth Justice Grant reduced from £790,000 in 2014/15 to £607,968 in 2020/21. An increase has been announced for 2021/22, to £653,417.
9. The creation of the pan-Dorset youth offending service in 2015 increased the service's resilience and ability to adapt to reduced funding and increased costs. The management of vacancies, and the deletion of some posts, has enabled a balanced budget to be achieved in the years to 2021.

### **Summary of legal implications**

10. Local authorities are legally required to form a youth offending team with the statutory partners named in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. The Act also stipulates that youth offending partnerships must submit an annual youth justice plan setting out how youth justice services in their area will be provided and funded; and how the youth offending team will be composed and funded, how it will operate and what functions it will carry out. The Youth Justice Plan for 2021/22 meets these legal obligations.

### **Summary of human resources implications**

11. Local Authority YJS staff members who were previously employed by Poole and Dorset transferred to become employees of Bournemouth Borough Council in 2015. Local Government Reorganisation in April 2019 led to a further TUPE transfer of local authority employees to the new Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole council. The YJS also includes employees of the partner agencies who have been seconded to work in the team and who remain employed by the partner agency.
12. The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 also contains statutory requirements for the staffing composition of youth offending services. The Youth Justice Plan shows how Dorset Combined Youth Offending Service meets these requirements.

### **Summary of sustainability impact**

13. No adverse environmental impact has been identified. The Youth Justice Plan notes that the Covid-19 pandemic has led to changes in the working arrangements of the Youth Justice Service. These changes include significant reductions in staff travel, both to and from work and to visit service users, with more activities being carried

out remotely. Team members are committed to maintaining some of these changes in our future working arrangements.

### **Summary of public health implications**

14. Young people in contact with youth justice services are known to be more likely than other young people to have unmet or unidentified health needs. The Youth Justice Service includes seconded health workers who work directly with young people and who facilitate their engagement with community health services.

### **Summary of equality implications**

15. It is recognised nationally that young people from minority ethnic groups, and young people in the care of the local authority, are over-represented in the youth justice system and particularly in the youth custodial population. It is also recognised that young people known to the YJS may experience learning difficulties or disabilities, including in respect of speech, language and communication needs. Information from Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service records, summarised in the Youth Justice Plan, shows that these issues of over-representation also apply locally. Actions have been identified in the Youth Justice Plan to address these issues. An Equality Impact Assessment screening process has been completed. No adverse equality impacts were identified.

### **Summary of risk assessment**

16. The Youth Justice Plan sets out local priorities and actions to prevent and reduce offending by young people. These priorities and actions have been developed in response to identified risks and concerns. The recommendation for councillors to endorse the Youth Justice Plan is intended to support the Youth Justice Service to reduce the risks associated with youth offending. No specific risks have been identified as arising from this recommendation

### **Background papers**

None

### **Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service Youth Justice Plan 2021/22.