



<u>Committee and Date</u>
Council
22 September 2022

<u>Item</u>
<u>Public</u>

## **WEST MERCIA YOUTH JUSTICE PLAN 2022-23**

### **Responsible Officer**

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### **1. Synopsis**

The annual Youth Justice Plan sets out how the service is structured and resourced and outlines the 2022/23 improvement action plan for the service addressing the priorities agreed by the management board.

### **2. Executive Summary**

- 2.1. The Youth Justice Plan is prepared on an annual basis on behalf of Herefordshire, Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin and Worcestershire councils. The basic plan preparation is undertaken by the West Mercia Youth Justice Service Management Board according to the deadlines and content requirements set by the Youth Justice Board for England and Wales (YJB). For 2022/23, marking a departure from previous years, the YJB guidance was prescriptive in terms of the contents and format of the plan, and the plan had to be submitted on a given template. The Youth Justice Plan is attached at Appendix A.
- 2.2. The annual Youth Justice Plan sets out how the service is structured and resourced and outlines the 2022/23 improvement action plan for the service addressing the priorities agreed by the management board. A short review of 2021/22 and commentary on the service's performance against the national youth justice indicators is also provided along with key information on children in the youth justice system in West Mercia. The key priorities for the period 2022/23 are grouped under:
  - A. People Themes
  - B. Practice Themes

- C. Partnership Themes
  - D. Governance, Leadership and Management Themes
- 2.3. More detail on these is provided in Section 7 of this report. Actions addressing each of the actions are also included in Section 13 of the Annual Youth Justice Plan.

### **3. Recommendations**

- 3.1. **That the Youth Justice Plan as attached at Appendix A be approved**

## **REPORT**

### **4. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal**

- 4.1. The principal aim of the Youth Justice System is the prevention of offending and re-offending by children and young people. The Youth Justice Plan includes an action plan to address the significant risks identified to future service delivery and improvement.
- 4.2. The plan will support the Council in its overall duty to promote equality. In particular, the plan makes proposals to improve the outcomes of children and young people who are in conflict with the law, by ensuring their individual needs are assessed whilst assisting them in accessing services that meet their needs.
- 4.3. A proposal for a process and timeline for a public consultation on the plan was considered by the management board but given the prescriptive nature of the plan this year and that consultation is not a requirement, the board resolved to only consult with key elected members from each local authority and the staff of the service. As consultation on the plan is not a requirement, there are no risks associated with this. Any risks associated with service delivery are identified within the plan.
- 4.4. The content of the plan has been informed by joint workshop of the management board and service leadership team and the staff and elected members consultation.

## 5. Financial Implications

- 5.1. These are covered by the existing budgetary contribution, which is sufficient to deliver the Youth Justice Plan.

## 6. Climate Change Appraisal

- 6.1 We will work with our partners in the West Mercia Youth Justice Service through the Youth Justice Service Management Board to minimise waste, reduce energy and carbon emissions and to consider opportunities to enhance biodiversity. This will be managed and reported through the governance arrangements set out in the plan.

## 7. Background

- 7.1. The key priorities set out within the Youth Justice Plan are:
- A. People Themes
    - Supporting Staff Development, Wellbeing and Morale
  - B. Practice Themes
    - Embedding Child First in Practice
    - Improving the Resettlement Offer
    - Improving the intervention and risk plans for our service users
    - Strengthening our restorative approaches
  - C. Partnership Themes
    - Strengthening opportunities for emotional and mental health for service users
    - Improving our work with partner agencies and ensuring the service is embedded across the four areas
  - D. Governance, Leadership and Management Themes
    - Responding to the recommendations and findings of service inspection
    - Improving quality and consistency of practice across the service
    - Supporting, valuing and addressing diversity
    - Hearing the voice of the child

- 7.2. Actions addressing each of the priorities are also included in the delivery plan, in section 13 of the plan.
- 7.3. For comparison purposes, the indicator is expressed as the number of first-time entrants to the youth justice system per 100,000 youth population. This rate for the period October 20 to September 21 was 73 for Shropshire. The Shropshire rate is lower than both the rates for West Mercia, 98 and for England 156.
- 7.4. The Police and Youth Justice Service implemented a revised joint decision-making process for out of court disposals during 2020, which brought more young people into scope to benefit from receiving informal interventions to address their risks and needs.
- 7.5. The second indicator is about the use of custody, which is measured as the number of custodial sentences per 1,000 youth population. The use of custody performance for 2021 for Shropshire was 0.10, which is similar to both the West Mercia rate of 0.09, and the national rate of 0.11.
- 7.6. The third indicator is re-offending. There are two measures which both measure re-offending in the same cohort of offenders over a 12 month period following the youth justice sanction that placed that young person in the cohort. The first, the frequency rate, is the average number of re-offences per offender who re-offends. The second measure is the proportion (%) of the cohort who re-offended. Due to the way the Ministry of Justice measure this indicator there is a delay in the results being published. The most recent data available for the preparation of the plan was for the cohort identified in 2019/20, whose re-offending was tracked for 12-month period until March 2021. The frequency measure for Shropshire for this period was 3.53 offences per re-offender which is less than the England rate of 3.65. The proportion of the cohort re-offending was 22.4%, which is significantly better than the England performance of 34.2%

**List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)**

None

**Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder)**

**Cllr Kirstie Hurst-Knight**

**Local Member**

**All Members**

**Appendices**

**Appendix A – WMYJS Youth Justice Plan 2022-23**