

REPORT TO Executive Board

DATE: 14th June 2012

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director Children and Enterprise

SUBJECT: A Three Local Authority Youth Offending Service

PORTFOLIO: Children, Young People and Families

WARDS: Borough Wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 This report identifies the issues relating to the potential establishment of a three way Youth Offending Service (YOS) for Warrington, Halton, Cheshire West and Chester:

- Outlines the origins of the proposals and the work undertaken to date on developing the YOS proposal.
- Seeks Executive Board approval to move towards a single entity across the 3 local authorities and statutory partner organisation's within Cheshire (Police, Probation).

2.0 RECOMMENDED: That Executive Board

- 1) To approve Halton's engagement with and delivery of the 3 LA YOS.**
- 2) To delegate authority to the Strategic Director, Children and Enterprise, Services, to manage the development and delivery of the 3 LA YOS in consultation with Lead Member, Children and Young People's Service, the Section 151 Officer and the Solicitor to the Council.**

3.0 BACKGROUND

3.1 There are currently two Youth Justice Teams across the Cheshire footprint:

- Halton & Warrington Youth Offending Team (YOT) – serving the both Halton Council and Warrington Council.
- Cheshire Youth Offending Service (YOS) – serving the both Cheshire East Council and Cheshire West & Chester Council.

Warrington and Cheshire East councils currently host these two services. Each service is considered to be high performing by the Youth Justice Board.

- 3.2 Halton and Warrington YOT is a consistently high performing service that has resulted in a significant reduction in the number of first time offenders in the service over the past 3 years:
- 09/10- 460
 - 10/11- 354
 - 11/12- 286
- 3.3 The Chief Executives of Cheshire East, Cheshire West & Chester, Halton and Warrington Councils commissioned a feasibility study on the options for greater collaboration and efficiencies and a possible merger of each of their Youth Justice Services. The driver for this work was:
- A concern about the continued reductions in funding for the service from all partners that could threaten the sustainability of each YOT.
 - Changes in the management and role of Youth Justice Services nationally, which would lead to changes in the profile and activity of Youth Justice Services locally.
- 3.4 An initial phase of exploration took place from July 2010 then further developments nationally and locally prompted a 2nd Phase of the single YOS project. These included:
- Changes in the role and remit of the Youth Justice Board resulting in more local autonomy for each YOS.
 - Legislation to support the creation of Police and Crime Commissioners for each local area, this included one Commissioner across the Cheshire footprint.
 - The establishment of a single Youth Panel for the courts in the Cheshire footprint and further rationalisation of the local courts.
- 3.5 A Project Board was established, on behalf of the four councils, to develop proposals for a single YOS scenario that would provide all statutory partners with an analysis of how this single entity would:
- Improve performance;
 - Increase efficiencies; and
 - Sustain localism.
- 3.6 The four authorities/two YOTs identified and resourced a project manager who has brought valuable capacity to the project to date. Five workstreams were established; each led by one of the local authorities and one by the Youth Justice Board. A Project Board was also established including both YOT Managers and representatives from both Police and Probation. The workstreams presented recommendations to the Project Board, which has enabled the YOS to be modelled.

- 3.7 In January 2012 Cheshire East withdrew from the proposal to develop a single YOS across the Cheshire footprint. Cheshire West and Chester wanted to continue their involvement and explore a 3 way YOS with Halton and Warrington.
- 3.8 The model presented in this report is a result of a reassessment of the viability and opportunities presented by bringing together Youth Justice Services across the 3 Local Authorities.

4.0 NATIONAL POLICY AND EXPECTATIONS

- 4.1 The basis for the establishment of the Youth Offending Service is set out in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. In summary the Act requires that:
- A Local Authority in co-operation with others must ensure that all youth justice services are available in its area.
 - The Police, Probation and Health Services are to co-operate with the Local Authority in discharging its duty to provide services.
 - A Youth Offending Service will include specified people and fulfill key tasks and functions as detailed in the act. An annual plan is required by the Youth Justice Board.
- 4.2 National consultation on the future of the Youth Justice Board has recently concluded. A decision has been made to retain this national body with reduced functions and activity. The Youth Justice Board will retain a role in monitoring the work of local services against 3 National Indicators: the number of young people re-offending; the use of custody; and the numbers of first time entrants into the youth justice system.

5.0 A THREE LOCAL AUTHORITY YOS PROPOSALS

- 5.1 The model for a 3 LA YOS includes:
- A single set of Performance Measures (3 National Indicators and 4 Local Indicators) reflecting the performance issues across the area.
 - A single management team with operational staff retaining the work with young people in each local area.
 - A single Partnership Board to govern the service through a Partnership Agreement with all statutory partners.
- 5.2 The Project Board explored a number of models for a 3 LA YOS. These included a purely collaborative approach across the footprint building on existing practice and maintaining two separate entities. This did not deliver

any savings to partners and was not felt to be sustainable in the longer term when all other YOS partners are moving to single services across the

footprint. e.g. The courts, the Crime and Police Commissioner. A further model was explored where all staff would be managed as part of one organisation, a fully integrated model. This option, whilst delivering savings and bringing opportunities for further joint working across the footprint was not felt to be viable for any one of the LA's involved because of the increased liabilities this would place on one body.

- 5.3 The model and staffing structure outlined in this report has been developed to protect and enhance the delivery of Youth Offending services to young people by maintaining all operational activity at the local level in Halton, Warrington and Cheshire West and Chester. This local work will be managed dedicated senior managers who will have a lead role in each Local Authority in order to provide a consistent approach and knowledge of the crime and youth justice issues in each local area.
- 5.4 Within the proposals, collaborative working and joint initiatives will enable the 3 LA YOS to be more effective in delivering some specialised areas of Youth Justice work. A number of small specialist areas of work will be brought together e.g. substance misuse, work with sex offenders, work with violent offenders, volunteering and mentoring in order to deliver effective work across the footprint. This will protect and secure the long-term viability of these specialist areas of work.
- 5.5 A single court team will also be created to work alongside the single Youth Panel operating across Cheshire Courts. This will bring increased efficiencies and ensure consistencies across the footprint .
- 5.6 A Performance and Business Unit will support the work in the 3 LA YOS and ensure good performance data and information is available to all partners and ensure that the Partnership Board is be able to respond efficiently and effectively to changing demands on the service.
- 5.7 A revised structure will be established to create the new 3 LA YOS involving shared management and shared support services. The Head of Service will then be responsible for reviewing back office arrangements and to further develop collaborative approaches in order to deliver overall savings of 15%.
- 5.8 Developing the new service with CW&C will double the size of the YOS and bring together a range of services including specialist provision. Delivering services over a wider footprint will inevitably mean that specialist provision can be maintained and the new service will future proof provision in Halton and Warrington for some of the most vulnerable young people in the borough's.
- 5.9 A new Partnership Board will be created for the 3 LA YOS replacing the two existing structures: Halton and Warrington Youth Offending Board and Cheshire Youth Justice Board. The new Board will be chaired by one of the Directors' of Children and Young Peoples Services or Senior Officer of the Statutory Partners (Police, Probation). A partnership agreement will ensure the smooth running of YOS.

6.0 **IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

6.1 **Children & Young People in Halton**

Ensure the YOT is strengthened and protected through the increased collaboration and remains sustainable. In addition is able to deliver more specialist support to young people.

6.2 **Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton**

N/A

6.3 **A Healthy Halton**

N/A

6.4 **A Safer Halton**

Continues to contribute to the reduction in the number of first time offenders in the service over the past 3 years:

7.0 **FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

7.1 The Project brief outlined an expectation that a 3 LA YOS should achieve 15% savings for each partner funding the service. However work undertaken as part of the project using the Youth Justice Board cost tool analysis showed that the direct work being undertaken with young people in both services is extremely cost effective whilst management costs were slightly higher than the national average.

7.2 The Project Board asked that models for a 3 LA YOS be developed making savings from management and back office costs in order to protect front line delivery of these services to Young People. During 2011/12 Cheshire YOS and Halton & Warrington YOT have achieved savings and the new service will be expected to deliver further savings during 2012/13 to secure an overall 15% saving for each statutory partner.

7.3 In the last year both Halton and Warrington Local Authorities have taken savings from the YOT as a result of budget reductions across Children's Services. The sustainability of high quality provision will inevitably be a risk if this trend continues and particularly for the provision of specialist services for small numbers of high risk offenders.

7.4 No savings will be available to the LA's or partner organisations until all liabilities have been funded. This will include any redundancy and pension costs.

7.5 Staff will be retained on their existing contracts with the two employing Local Authorities and statutory partners and will be seconded to the YOS. This means there will be no increased liability for any partner.

8.0 RISK ANALYSIS

8.1 Risks associated with moving to a 3 LA YOS have been fully explored throughout the project through the workstreams and considered by the Project Board. The financial risks are highlighted in this report. The Project Board has agreed to create a Joint Officer group to support the transition to the single YOS and address any shared service issues that may arise. The Youth Justice Board is in full support of the move to a 3 LA YOS.

9.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

9.1 The maintenance of services for young people at risk of the poorest outcomes is the primary focus of this proposal. An Equality Impact assessment has been undertaken in relation to these proposals.

10.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 The move to 3 LA YOS will secure and safeguard high quality services for young people, embrace sub regional collaboration and deliver financial efficiencies.

11.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

11.1 Consideration was given to 4 LA YOS including Cheshire East. Cheshire East have now agreed separate arrangements.

12.0 IMPLEMENTATION DATE

12.1 The implementation date of the 3 LA YOS is September 2012.

13.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
Minutes of the One YOS meetings 2011 to 2012	Rutland House	Ann McIntyre