

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Cabinet

Date of Meeting: 12 April 2016

Report of: Kath O'Dwyer, Executive Director of Children's Services and Deputy Chief Executive

Subject/Title: Review of Arrangements for the Delivery of Youth Justice Services in Cheshire East

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Liz Durham – Portfolio Holder for Children and Families

1.0 Background

- 1.1 The Local Authority has a statutory duty to deliver Youth Offending Services (YOS).
- 1.2 In 2012, a proposal was made that a single YOS for the Cheshire footprint (across Halton, Warrington, Cheshire West and Chester and Cheshire East) should be established and work progressed on this basis.
- 1.3 However; prior to implementation Cheshire East Council, at this time, took the decision not to join the sub regional arrangements and developed instead an integrated Youth Engagement Service which incorporates the YOS.
- 1.4 The remaining three Local Authorities (CWaC, Warrington and Halton) developed and implemented a shared YOS arrangement from 2012.

2.0 Current position

- 2.1 The Cheshire East YOS component of the Youth Engagement Service (YES) was inspected by HMIP in June 2013 and was found to be delivering 'a high standard of service'. There has been no recent inspection of the service.
- 2.2 The Cheshire West, Halton and Warrington YOS (CWHWYOS) was inspected in November 2015 and inspectors found that the service was delivering 'high quality work and good quality reports'.
- 2.3 In relation to key performance indicators both the Cheshire East YES and the CWHWYOS perform equally well although they have different delivery models.
- 2.4 The Cheshire East Business Improvement Team were asked to undertake a review of both services to help inform decision making around the future method of service delivery for Cheshire East's Youth Offending Services. This

was prompted by a renewed request from Cheshire Police and the PCC for us to consider joining the 'Cheshire YOT'. This also coincided with a time of budget savings being identified within the Council and increasing budget pressures for the service. This review found that 'it is impossible to carry out a like for like evaluation but there are clear pros and cons for each option'.

- 2.5 In order to better 'future proof' both the statutory YOS elements of the service, and retain an appropriate focus on prevention via youth and family support provision, it is proposed that we join Cheshire West, Halton and Warrington (CWHWYOS) to create a 'One Cheshire' YOT whilst retaining the preventative services as part of a wider Cheshire East Youth and Family Support offer.
- 2.6 This proposal will reduce spend on overhead costs of management and back office and will allow the development of a revised integrated support offer locally and a more resilient specialist YOT offer led on a Cheshire wide footprint but with localised management and delivery.

3.0 Recommendations

- 3.1 To agree to:-
- i. Transfer the Youth Offending Specialist Services into a One Cheshire YOT. Cheshire East staff will remain employees of Cheshire East and retain their terms and conditions of employment but will work through the terms of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the partner authorities.
 - ii. Combine the Preventative Youth Support aspects of the service with our remaining/existing Youth and Family Support Services into a single service within the Children and Families Directorate.
 - iii. Delegate the implementation of the proposals to the Executive Director of Children's Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Children and Families.
 - iv. Proposals on the partnership arrangement including ways of working and any reduction in the number of CE staff under new arrangements will form part of a formal Consultation with affected staff.

4.0 Reasons for recommendations

- 4.1 To enable the Council to continue to deliver high quality specialist Youth Offending Services and to deliver a preventative youth service across the Borough, with diminishing resources, it is proposed that our current Cheshire East YES service is redesigned to:-
- a) Transfer the specialist Youth Justice Services to the high performing CWHW YOS to create a 'One Cheshire YOS' and;
 - b) Transfer the remaining Youth Engagement Services to combine with existing youth and family support services to deliver a comprehensive preventative offer to young people in Cheshire East.

5.0 Opportunities and Threats

5.1 There are a range of both opportunities and threats in relation to the future expectations, funding and positioning of Youth Offending Services within Local Authorities.

5.2 Funding

The Youth Justice Board has implemented an in year cut of 10.6% to the budget passported to Local Authorities for YOS provision and we are awaiting notification of an expected 15% further reduction over the next four years.

5.3 The Police and Crime Commissioner has communicated a preference for a single YOT and makes a contribution of £40k.

5.4 Within the £2.5million savings to be identified for 2016/17 and beyond from within the Children's Services Directorate, savings will need to come from the YOS.

5.5 It is likely that further funding cuts from the existing YOS contributing partners, YJB and PCC will continue in the future and a method of delivery that withstands such cuts is sought.

5.6 Specialist v Preventative

The Cheshire East YES combines specialist YOT services in an integrated model with preventative youth support services. We also have other youth support services located elsewhere within the Directorate.

5.7 It is proposed that to obtain greatest benefit from the proposed change in arrangements we retain both aspects but join the specialist YOS provision into the current Cheshire West, Halton and Warrington YOS and retain the preventative services and join them into our existing youth and family support arrangements. This would therefore result in better value for money and no reduction in service delivery.

5.8 Opportunity to reduce overhead costs

The Cheshire East YES has within it 56 staff. This includes 8.5 managers and 5 administration support staff. By combining the YOT specialist elements within the Cheshire West, Halton and Warrington YOS and the preventative elements within the existing youth and family support service, we would seek to reduce managerial and back office staff costs. There is no proposal to reduce practitioner roles or reduce services to children and young people.

5.9 Pressure on partner agency budgets is having an impact upon both YOT services with the Cheshire East YOT having its Police Officer contribution reduced by 50% (to 1x FTE) in recent months. This leaves limited cover when the one remaining officer is absent.

5.10 Local Influence and Delivery

One of the concerns back in 2012 when the issue of Cheshire East joining the Cheshire wide YOT was previously considered was concern regarding a loss of local influence and local delivery.

5.11 Having sought feedback from the existing Local Authorities within the Cheshire West, Halton and Warrington YOS, all report that through the Management Board, rotating Chair arrangements and the MOU agreement there has been no reduction in local influence or the ability to respond effectively and appropriately to local need and local delivery demands.

5.12 Opportunity to build on existing shared arrangements

There are currently a range of joint working and joint delivery arrangements in place between the Cheshire East YES and the Cheshire West, Halton and Warrington YOS. These include:-

- Divert – a disposal process to divert young people from court.
- Transition to Mental Health for young offenders.
- MAPAA – current shared arrangements across Cheshire.
- Restorative Justice – current shared arrangements across Cheshire.
- Courts – shared arrangements to cover Saturday courts.
- Custody suite – shared arrangement for covering the Appropriate Adult arrangement at Middlewich.

5.13 Partner Views

The Police and Crime Commissioner and Cheshire Constabulary are very clear in their view that they would prefer a single YOT for the Cheshire Sub Region as this would be, in their view, the most effective and efficient model.

5.14 Colleagues in Probation do not hold a strong view and would be content with either arrangement.

5.15 For Health colleagues, this is again not a huge issue as there would not be any difference in coterminosity.

5.16 Highly specialist services

One advantage of a One Cheshire YOT would be the opportunity through a larger footprint to delivery high quality, highly specialist services and to small groups of young offenders such as girls and young people who sexually offend.

6.0 Proposals

6.1 It is proposed that:

a) the current CE YES is redesigned into two services – specialist and preventative. The specialist Youth Justice elements of the service will be delivered through a partnership arrangement whereby Cheshire West, Halton and Warrington YOS current partnership will be extended to include the Cheshire East YOS. This partnership will create a single Cheshire YOT (One

Cheshire YOT) in line with partners' footprints (Police, Fire, Probation, PCC) and sub regional developments.

b) the preventative youth engagement elements of the service transfer into the existing youth and family support service within the Children and Families Directorate.

c) there is no reduction in practitioner posts or service delivery capacity.

d) appropriate reductions in managerial and back office support are identified and implemented.

e) the existing MOU is modified and developed to reflect the participation of Cheshire East in the Cheshire West, Halton and Warrington YOS and to ensure appropriate and effective delivery as part of a one Cheshire YOT.

f) decision making as to the detail of these proposals is delegated to the Executive Director of Children's Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Children and Families.

7.0 Wards effected

7.1 All

8.0 Local Ward Members

8.1 All

9.0 Policy Implications

9.1 The decision to join the current Cheshire West, Halton and Warrington YOS to create a One Cheshire YOS would represent a change in Council policy and any such arrangement would be the subject of a clear and detailed MOU to reflect the partnership arrangement between the four local authorities.

10.0 Financial Implications

10.1 The proposal would seek to deliver financial efficiencies in managerial and back office shared arrangements that can be used to:-

a) deliver required savings

b) future proof against further cuts in available funding

c) improve and/or redesign service delivery in other areas within the Directorate

d) address pressures in other areas within the Directorate

10.2 The proposal to join a single Cheshire YOS would deliver value for money, provide the opportunity for current and also potential future efficiencies and present the opportunity to develop a specialist YOS service whilst also

enhancing existing youth and family support services to allow future redesign to support appropriate service levels for less cost.

11.0 Legal Implications

- 11.1 The ways of working of the new One Cheshire YOT partnership would be outlined in a detailed MOU between the four Local Authorities.
- 11.2 Any workforce change would be delivered via the required consultation process.

12.0 Summary and Conclusions

- 12.1 The Council is committed to delivering the best possible services to vulnerable children and young people. To do so in the context of reducing resources, increasing demand and the devolution agenda, we need to think differently about how we deliver and develop our services.
- 12.2 It is therefore proposed to align our specialist Youth Offending Services to join the Cheshire West, Halton and Warrington YOS to create a 'One Cheshire' YOT, with partners including Police, PCC, Fire and Probation Services in the region. This will ensure efficiencies in management and back office costs support the delivery of robust specialist services whilst retaining local delivery to respond to local need.
- 12.3 It is further proposed to align our Youth Engagement aspect of the current service to join the existing family and youth support services within the Children and Families Directorate to ensure a comprehensive and robust preventative offer to vulnerable children, young people and their families.

13.0 Access to information

- 13.1 The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report author.

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