

Committee: **Scrutiny Committee for Children's Services**

Date: **28 November 2007**

Title of Report: **Scrutiny Review of Youth Offending Team - 6 month update on action plan**

By: **Director of Children's Services**

Purpose of Report: **To update the Committee on the Action Plan**

Recommendations:

The Scrutiny Committee is recommended to:

- i) consider and comment on the progress made against the recommendations in the Scrutiny Review of the Youth Offending Team; and**
 - ii) approve the proposal to incorporate Action Points R1-5 into the development of a multi-agency Youth Crime Prevention Strategy**
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1. Financial Appraisal

1.1 There will be a reduction in services delivered by the Youth Offending Team from April 2008 onwards if the Youth Crime Prevention Grant is reduced or not renewed. The level of grant in 2007/08 is £243,961.

2. Supporting Information

2.1 The Action Plan drawn up in response to the Scrutiny Review in March 2007 was approved by the Cabinet on 1 May 2007. It is appended to this report to indicate the progress made to date on each action point.

2.2 The report of the Joint Inspection of the Youth Offending Team (YOT) was published on 31 October 2007. The inspectorate made a total of eight judgements across the five areas of work that were inspected. It found that the YOT was good in its work with parents and in the outcomes achieved with children and young people. In its other six judgements, the inspectorate found that the YOT was performing adequately.

2.3 The report makes ten recommendations which are being addressed within the improvement plan that is to be submitted to the inspectorate on 28 November 2007. One of its recommendations is for a multi-agency Youth Crime Prevention Strategy to be developed to provide co-ordination and direction to the Prevent and Deter groups. Accordingly, a small Strategy Group is being established to oversee this work, with a view to a final draft strategy being taken to the YOT Chief Officers' Group in June 2008. In order to avoid duplication, it is proposed that the action points R1-5 agreed following the Scrutiny Review be incorporated into the development of the Youth Crime Prevention Strategy.

2.4 At the time of writing the Government has not announced whether the Youth Crime Prevention Grant is to be renewed from April 2008 onwards and, if so, at what level of funding. The uncertainty surrounding this grant is causing considerable concern, with the risk that staff currently employed in posts funded by the grant will seek more secure employment elsewhere.

3. Community Safety Issues

3.1 The establishment of a Youth Crime Prevention Strategy Group to co-ordinate all youth crime prevention work in the county, including the Prevent and Deter Groups, has been approved by the Safer Communities Steering Group.

4. Conclusion and Reason for Recommendations

4.1 The progress report indicates that most of the actions agreed following the Scrutiny Review are being implemented. The Committee is, therefore, invited to consider and comment on the progress made against the recommendations in the Scrutiny Review of the Youth Offending Team, and to approve the proposal to incorporate Action Points R1-5 into the development of a multi-agency Youth Crime Prevention Strategy.

MATT DUNKLEY

Director of Children's Services

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Local Members: All

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

- Joint Inspection Report on East Sussex Youth Offending Team, October 2007
- Scrutiny Review of Youth Offending Team, 14 March 2007

Scrutiny Review of the Youth Offending Team

ACTION PLAN

	Recommendation	Director's response and action	Timescale	Progress
R1	All Prevent and Deter Groups to ensure that when a young person is being discussed at a meeting all key partners currently dealing with that person are identified and attend the meeting. The responsibility for identifying those key partners should lie with the agency referring the young person.	Agreed. This recommendation will be incorporated into the review of the current protocol between the Youth Offending Team and Integrated Children's Services due in November 2007, and will be added to relevant protocols with other key partners as these are reviewed over the next twelve months.	November 2007	This action is being incorporated into the work required to produce a multi-agency Youth Crime Prevention Strategy following the YOT Inspection in May 2007.
R2	The Children's Services Department to clarify the effectiveness of using the Children's Index as a tool for the Prevent and Deter Groups to identify those key partners working with a young person.	The Children's Index is the most effective tool for agencies to ascertain which key partners are involved in working with a young person. Each agency referring a young person to a Prevent and Deter Group is, therefore, expected to carry out a check of the Index as part of the referral process.	November 2007	A check is made against the Children's Index for each young person referred to a Prevent and Deter Group. Refresher training has been provided to all YOT staff involved in Prevent and Deter groups to ensure they are able to use the Index.
R3	All Prevent and Deter Groups to have in place the same defined criteria to identify which young people should receive intervention, and to risk assess when this intervention should end.	Common criteria will be agreed, although there will need to be some scope for flexibility within such criteria to take account of specific local circumstances.	November 2007	This action has been incorporated into the development of a Youth Crime Prevention Strategy (see R1).
R4	All Prevent and Deter Groups to use standard forms to record the young person's data, identify the lead agency, and	Agreed. This is already work in progress.	November 2007	See R1.

	record all intervention action taken.			
R5	To reduce confusion and improve uniformity across the county, all Prevent and Deter Groups should be known by the same name.	Agreed. This will be linked to actions under R3 and R4.	November 2007	All areas except Hastings have agreed to use the name 'Prevent and Deter'. Negotiations are continuing with the Hastings area.
R6	Chairs of all Prevent and Deter Groups to meet on a quarterly basis to share information and good practice.	This is already in hand.	September 2007	Recommendation discharged.
R7	The Children's Services Scrutiny Committee to receive an update on the overall effectiveness of the Youth Offending Team's current youth crime prevention work prior to the Youth Justice Board prevention grant ending in 2008.	Agreed.	March 2008	Report to be drafted for March 2008 once the level of grant from April 2008 is known.
R8	The Review Board supports the drive by the Chief Officers' Group to clarify the data required by the Youth Justice Board. It recommends that this continues and an update report on progress be presented to the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee in due course.	Agreed.	March 2008	Report to be drafted for March 2008 in light of there being 6 youth justice indicators within the new National Indicator Set.
R9	The Youth Offending Team to ensure that the same system is used by all staff to record and collate responses from young people, and their parents/carers, on the service that they have received from the Youth Offending Team.	This is now work in progress.	November 2007	Planned to be achieved by January 2008.

R10	<p>The Terms of Reference for the Chief Officers' Group of the Youth Offending Team to be updated to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - guidance to ensure that statutory members place a representative on the Group who has accountability for their service - a process to ensure all members feed back from meetings to their respective services 	A report will be taken to the next meeting of the Chief Officers' Group on 7 June 2008 with a proposed update of the Terms of Reference.	September 2007	Revised TOR approved by COG in September 2007.
R11	The Youth Offending Team and Sussex Police to hold discussions prior to court in relation to any case where a custodial sentence is being considered. The aim being to enable a consensus to be reached which can then be presented to magistrates.	It would be unrealistic to expect that the Youth Offending Team and the Police would always have the same view on the appropriate sentence in such cases. However, it is proposed to hold regular liaison meetings between the Head of Youth Offending Services and Chief Superintendent Nick Wilkinson, to include all five District Commanders in East Sussex and the three YOT Practice Managers, to discuss issues of common concern.	September 2007	Recommendation discharged. Meetings held in July 2007 and October 2007 and twice a year in future.
R12	The Children's Services Scrutiny Committee to receive a report from the Children's Services Department regarding the effectiveness of the new guidance on limiting the use of part-time timetables by schools, particularly with regard to young people known to the Youth Offending Team. This report will be used by the Committee to decide if a further Scrutiny review is required.	Agreed.	September 2008	Report to be produced jointly by John Hawkins and Penny Lavan (Principal Educational Welfare Officer).
R13	The Children's Services Department to investigate whether providing a retainer to recruit a pool of remand foster parents would be more cost effective than using agency placements or a secure unit.	After careful consideration, it is felt to be more cost effective to spot purchase remand foster placements, when required, from a preferred provider independent fostering agency. However, when the re-tendering process for preferred	November 2007	Re-tendering process has been re-scheduled to commence in 2008/09. Discussions are being held with neighbouring

		providers commences later in the current financial year, there is an opportunity to build into the specification a provision to make available a remand foster placement at a preferential rate when this is required.		YOTs to agree access to their remand foster placements where there is no local availability.
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