

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

Date: **14 March 2008**

Title of Report: **Scrutiny Review of Youth Offending Team**

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

Purpose of Report: **To update the Committee on recommendations 7 and 8 of the Action Plan from the Scrutiny Review of the Youth Offending Team.**

---

**Recommendation:**

**The Scrutiny Committee is recommended to consider and comment on the report.**

---

**1. Financial Appraisal**

1.1 The Youth Crime Prevention Grant allocated to East Sussex Youth Offending Team (YOT) in 2008/9 is £243,961, the same amount as for 2007/08. The majority of this grant will be used to maintain key elements of the existing youth crime prevention work provided by the YOT, such as the co-ordination of the Prevent and Deter strategy and co-ordination of work with parents and carers. The balance will be used to strengthen the operational management of all youth crime prevention services provided by the YOT, including services funded by the Children's Fund and East Sussex Safer Communities Partnership.

**2. Supporting Information**

2.1 This report updates the Scrutiny Committee on recommendations 7 and 8 in the Action Plan approved by the Cabinet on 1 May 2007, following the Scrutiny Review of the Youth Offending Team.

**Recommendation 7:**

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 funding ending in 2008

2.2 The Government announced shortly before Christmas 2007 that the Youth Crime Prevention Grant would be renewed for three years from April 2008, but the level of grant was only confirmed by the Youth Justice Board on 26 February 2008. Whilst it remains the case that this grant cannot be used to substitute for core funding from statutory partners, the other conditions relating to the allocation of spend locally have been relaxed in line with the new local authority performance framework. This gives the Head of Youth Offending Services greater flexibility to allocate resources to address local needs, in consultation with partner agencies and the newly formed Youth Crime Prevention Strategy Group.

2.3 The key performance indicator measuring the effectiveness of youth crime prevention work is the number of first-time entrants to the youth justice system. YOT partnerships were set the target to reduce first-time entrants by 5% by March 2008. Against the benchmark year of 2005/06, performance in 2006/07 saw the number of first-time entrants fall by 19.3%. The position in 2007/08 is that, by the end of December 2007, the number of first-time entrants had fallen by 10.5%, compared to the same period in 2005/06. This indicates that, whilst the target of a 5% reduction by March 2008 is very likely

to be met, the number of first-time entrants year-on-year is expected to increase slightly by the end of 2007/08, compared to 2006/07.

**Recommendation 8:**

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

2.4 The new performance framework that takes effect from April 2008 provides for local partnerships to set their own targets for the six youth justice related indicators within the National Indicator Set (NIS). A report will be taken to the next YOT Chief Officers' Group on 31 March 2008 proposing specific local targets against these six indicators, including first-time entrants.

2.5 The six youth justice related indicators in the NIS are as follows:

- (i) Rate of proven reoffending by young offenders
- (ii) First-time entrants to the youth justice system aged 10-17
- (iii) Ethnic composition of children and young people in the youth justice system
- (iv) Proportion of young offenders convicted by the courts who receive a custodial sentence
- (v) Percentage of young offenders in suitable education, training or employment
- (vi) Percentage of young offenders in suitable accommodation

2.6 All the other national key performance indicators have been discontinued. These include data on parenting work, restorative justice, final warnings and access to mental health and substance misuse services. It will be for local partnerships to decide if they wish to continue to collect such data in future.

### **3. Community Safety Issues**

3.1 It is expected that the Youth Crime Prevention Strategy will be finalised by September 2008. The deployment of resources allocated to East Sussex YOT by the Youth Justice Board for youth crime prevention work will be decided by the Head of Youth Offending Services, following discussions with key partners, and monitored by the Youth Crime Prevention Strategy Group and the YOT Chief Officers' Group.

### **4. Conclusion and Reason for Recommendation**

4.1 The Scrutiny Committee is invited to consider and comment on this report.

**MATT DUNKLEY**

**Director of Children's Services**

Contact Officer: John Hawkins, Head of Youth Offending Services, Tel: 01323 466647

Local Members: All