

**REPORT FOR: OVERVIEW AND  
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

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| <b>Date of Meeting:</b>               | 17 September 2013  |
| <b>Subject:</b>                       | Youth Justice Plan 2013 - 14   |
| <b>Responsible Officer:</b>           | Melissa Caslake, Divisional Director,<br>Targeted Services   |
| <b>Scrutiny Lead<br/>Member area:</b> | Councillor Christine Bednell , Children and<br>Families Policy Lead<br>Councillor Victoria Silver, Children and<br>Families Performance Lead |
| <b>Exempt:</b>                        | No   |
| <b>Enclosures:</b>                    | Draft Youth Justice Plan 2013 - 14   |

**Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations**

This report presents the draft Youth Justice Plan for 2013/14, a statutory plan, which once agreed will be submitted to the Youth Justice Board as part of the conditions attached to the grant received from the Ministry of Justice.

**Recommendations:**

That the Committee's comments in relation to the draft Youth Justice Plan be forwarded to Cabinet for consideration.

## **Section 2 – Report**

### **Introduction**

The Youth Offending Team (YOT) has responsibility for reducing the risk of young people offending and re-offending and to provide counsel and rehabilitation to those who do offend.

A requirement of the Youth Justice Board (YJB) Grant conditions is for the local authority to produce an annual Youth Justice Plan. The plan provides an overview of activity over the past year together with details of future strategic planning for 2013/14 and how the YOT will meet key deliverables.

The YOT Management Board has provided rigorous challenge to ensure difficulties identified were responded to and overcome in an effective and timely way. A new management team has provided the leadership needed to bring about change, address performance concerns and develop a motivated and skilled workforce whose primary aim is to reduce offending and engage children and young people in a meaningful way to address the complexities in their lives that lead to their offending behaviour. Stronger partnerships with the Police, Probation, Health, Early Intervention Service, Children in need and those working with looked after children have all provided the framework for managing offending in a systemic way.

The successful work of the Early Intervention Service through the Triage has seen targeted interventions result in reductions in re-offending. Out of a total of 57 entrants meeting the criteria 56 engaged fully. This has resulted in a 98.2% rate of no re-offending. The analysis of case loads in the YOT has highlighted case managers are increasingly managing the most prolific and entrenched offending behaviour that requires a higher level of intervention and supervision, so manageable caseloads are critical to successful delivery and positive outcomes. This complexity is also reflected in the rise in custody rates.

The plan in place for 2013/14 will involve young people coming into contact with the YOT benefiting from good quality assessments that take into account previous offending behaviour and vulnerabilities, accurate and focussed risk assessments, good planning through the use of well thought out interventions and an emphasis on engagement with children, young people and their parents/carers to achieve sustainable change.

### **Financial Implications**

No changes anticipated. The work identified in this plan will be funded from existing budgets and approved grants.

### **Performance Issues**

There has been a significant cultural change in the management and service delivery in the YOT. This has included the development and implementation of a rigorous quality assurance framework aimed at tracking and raising performance against key YJB indicators:

- Reduction in the number of first time entrants to the youth justice system
- Reduction in re-offending
- Reduction in the use of custody
- Protecting the public
- Protecting the child and young person
- Ensuring that the sentence is served

The development of the performance scorecard evidences a clear journey of improvement including standards being raised in the quality of assessments and interventions in response to entrenched and high risk offending behaviour. In total during 2012 – 13 a total of 198 children and young people were on interventions in the YOT with those displaying high risk behaviour being on multiple interventions and being known to other social care teams due to complex and entrenched social vulnerabilities.

There has been a drive to recruit the right staff that are both experienced and committed. Concerted efforts have been made to improve management oversight and accountability with a focus on timeliness of assessments with greater engagement with children and young people. A comprehensive staff training programme has lead significant improvements in the quality of assessments.

The forthcoming year will focus on embedding high standards of practice, developing creative bail packages and reducing rates of re-offending through greater participation and engagement.

## **Environmental Impact**

None

## **Risk Management Implications**

The risk to the local authority of a reduction in resources will impact significantly on the pace of change and future successes.

## **Equalities implications**

An Equalities impact Assessment will be undertaken on the draft Youth Justice Plan prior to its submission to Cabinet.

## **Corporate Priorities**

- Keeping neighbourhoods clean, green and safe.
- United and involved communities: A Council that listens and leads.
- Supporting and protecting people who are most in need.

## **Section 3 - Contact Details and Background Papers**

**Contact:** Parmjit Chahal, Service Manager, Youth Offending and Children in Need Teams Ext. 6470