

## CABINET

16 DECEMBER 2014

### YOUTH JUSTICE PLAN (POLICY FRAMEWORK) – ADDENDUM REPORT

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Mike O'Brien, Children's Services (Lead Member)

Report from: Barbara Peacock, Director of Children and Adults Services

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#### Summary

To report on the outcome of the consideration of the Youth Justice Plan at the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 9 December 2014.

#### 1. Background

- 1.1 The Youth Offending Team (YOT) Manager introduced the report to the committee, which set out the Youth Justice Plan re-draft for 2014-16. It had been developed following discussions with partner agencies via the YOT Management Board and a provisional version had been submitted to the Youth Justice Board who had responded favourably.
- 1.2 Members then asked officers questions, which included:
- **Transition from youth offending to adult services** and how this was working. The YOT Manager explained that Medway had been leading on some work around transition via a working party of the Kent and Medway Reducing Reoffending Board, which had recently been re-established to look at how transition can best be managed. The working party was currently looking at a 6 month tapering of support so that Adult Services could work with children services three months before and three months after the young person becomes 18 years old.
  - **An update on the mindfulness training.** The YOT Manager explained that staff were continuing their mindfulness training and that the Medway YOT was the first YOT to adopt this approach and were working with

schools, such as Silverbank Pupil Referral Unit to deliver mindfulness workshops to pupils there.

- **Has the work with Medway Action for Families (MAfF) helped with transition.** The YOT Manager explained that the YOT had been working closely with officers from the MafF Team, with two YOT staff Members being dedicated to working on this project. Furthermore, he added that YOT had invested half a full time equivalent post to provide functional family therapy (FFT). Early evidence had demonstrated that reoffending of young people from families who received support under MafF had reduced by 50% and where FFT had also been provided, reoffending had reduced by 60%.
- **Review of the move to Strood.** The YOT Manager explained that the move itself had been very efficient, being completed two days before deadline and service downtime had been less than two working days. The move had enabled a much more integrated approach with the Youth Service and owing to the premises being smaller the YOT were now holding appointments in hubs within neighbourhoods making the service more local to the user, which had proved successful.
- **Representation on the YOT Management Board.** In response to a question as to whether a representative from private sector housing should be included, the YOT Manager explained that because private sector housing was so large and diverse it would be difficult to be representational and as the majority of youth offenders were placed via the Council's Housing Services, who were represented on the Board, it was not considered necessary to include a private sector housing representative at this point.
- **Preventing looked after children from becoming criminalised.** Following a request for an update on this issue, the YOT Manager confirmed that this was an area of concern with around one third of young people involved with the Youth Offending Team being looked after. The YOT was about to launch a protocol so that when a report was made about a Looked After Child, unless the incident was of a serious nature, the Police would instead refer to the YOT who would then carry out restorative justice methods to attempt to resolve issues
- **Managing further possible cuts.** In response to a question about how the service would accommodate any possible further cuts, the YOT Manager explained that a number of efficiency measures had already been made, for example the move to Strood, however, further cuts would require a need to safeguard statutory functions by reducing levels of preventative work. He explained that this would have potential implications in terms of increased statutory work levels.
- **Monitoring extremism.** When asked whether the YOT monitored any signs of extremism, the YOT Manager explained that Medway YOT had run a programme for two years which did work on this issue and although this programme had now ended due to the funding ending, the service was benefitting from the expertise gained from this project. Plus, the YOT

worked closely with Police in sharing information and intelligence and also worked with local mosques.

- 1.3 The committee recommended the Cabinet and Full Council to approve the Youth Justice Plan re-draft 2014-16.

**Lead officer contact**

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