

CABINET

7 FEBRUARY 2017

YOUTH OFFENDING TEAM STRATEGIC PLAN 2016-17

Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Andrew Mackness, Children's Services (Lead Member)
Report from:	Ian Sutherland, Interim Director of Children and Adults Services
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Summary

This report outlines the Medway Youth Justice Plan for 2016-17, which has been developed following discussions and consultations with partner agencies. It also reflects the requirements of the Youth Offending Team (YOT) to submit a costed plan in respect of their Youth Justice Board grant 2016-17

1. Budget and Policy Framework

- 1.1 The Youth Justice Plan (Appendix A) is revised on an annual basis and forms part of the Council's policy framework. Approval is therefore a matter for Council.

2. Background

- 2.1 A Youth Justice Plan is required under the provisions of the Crime & Disorder Act 1998. The Youth Justice Plan is a strategic plan, which is required to be signed off by Medway Council's established procedures prior to formal submission to the Ministry Of Justice. The submitted Plan is then placed in the House of Lords Library.
- 2.2 There is no requirement for any part of the Youth Justice Plan to be regarded as confidential or "exempt".
- 2.3 This Youth Justice plan is a one year plan that spans the transitional period between transferring from Medway Council's School Effectiveness and Inclusion Division to Medway Children's Services Division.
- 2.4 A restructure of IYSS will take place in early 2017 to identify the most effective model for incorporating these young people's services with Medway's Early Help provision.

3. Options

- 3.1 There have been significant reductions in funding for 2016-2017 from all YOT financial contributors and partners totalling £152k. This is linked to new formula funding and reducing YOT client caseloads.
- 3.2 A previous decision to outsource IYSS made by Cabinet in January 2016 has been reversed following a review which indicates that greater efficiencies and improved outcomes for young people would be achieved by keeping these services in house.
- 3.3 The Medway YOT has been able to mitigate the effect of partner reductions by focusing resources on statutory duties and developing closer partnership working with the Youth Service and other Children's Services..
- 3.4 The move to Early Help and Children's Services will enable the Medway Youth Justice Service to develop closer partnerships with Children's Services and help mitigate some of our other partner reductions in support to the YOT.

4. Advice and analysis

- 4.1 The Youth Justice Plan is a delivery vehicle to sustain the ongoing improvements made by the YOT partnership over recent years. The plan supports key objectives within the following plans:
 - Medway Council Strategic Plan
 - Medway Safeguarding Children's Board Business Plan
 - Integrated Youth Support Services Plan
 - Medway Community Safety Partnership Plan
 - Kent Criminal Justice Board Business Plan
 - Kent and Medway Reducing Reoffending Board Plan.
- 4.2 The Diversity Impact Assessment (DIA) is attached at Appendix B. This DIA relates to the Integrated Youth Support Service and therefore is relevant for Youth Offending Services.

5. Risk management

- 5.1 A number of important areas of risks have been identified which could impact upon the ability of the YOT to carry out its full range of statutory and other responsibilities. These are outlined on page 25 of the YOT plan.

6. Consultation

- 6.1 The updated Youth Justice Plan 2016-17 has been circulated to partner organisations. It was discussed at the last meeting of the YOT Management Board on 12 December 2016 and subsequently reviewed and approved by partner agencies.
- 6.2 The Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered this report on 19 January 2017.
- 6.3 The Interim Deputy Director, Children and Adult Services and the Head of Integrated Family Support Services introduced the report which provided the

Committee with the proposed Medway Youth Justice Plan for 2016-17. It was explained that the plan was at its final phase and a new plan would be created for 2017/18 which would reflect the Youth Offending Team (YOT) becoming more integrated with other children's services in the future.

6.4 Members then raised comments and questions, which included: -

- **Looked after children (LAC) and reduction in offending** – A Member referred to a reference on page 17 of the plan and asked whether this could be looked at in more depth either via a task group or via the Corporate Parenting Board. The Deputy Director confirmed that there was an intention for the Corporate Parenting Board to start working in a themed meeting approach and welcomed this topic to be used for one of those meetings to look at the issue in-depth.
- **Gang culture** – A Member asked whether this was an imminent issue for Medway and one that should be planned for. Officers explained that the Home Office had reviewed the risk for Medway and had reported its findings to the Community Safety Partnership. It was found that Medway was not at high risk of gang culture but it had recommended approximately 12 actions which would be built into the Community Safety Plan and the Youth Justice Plan. Officers undertook to provide the details of these recommendations.

6.5 The Committee recommended the Youth Offending Team Strategic Plan 2016-17 to the Cabinet, as attached at Appendix A.

6.6 The Committee recommended that Looked After Children and reduction in offending should be the topic of one of the future themed meetings of the Corporate Parenting Board.

7. Implications for Looked After Children

7.1 A protocol has been developed with Kent and Medway Police to reduce looked after children's involvement with the criminal justice system. Currently there is a disproportionate number of looked after children within the Youth Justice System.

8. Financial implications

8.1 These are contained within the body of this report.

8.2 There are on going financial implications arising from the adoption of this plan, in respect of the identified risks to YOT partnership funding and work is underway to identify these and to decide where youth justice work can be reduced with minimal impact to high risk clients.

9. Legal implications

9.1 Section 40 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 requires the Council, after consultation with the relevant persons and bodies, to formulate and implement for each year, a plan (a "Youth Justice Plan") setting out:

(a) How Youth Justice Services in their area are to be provided and funded; and

(b) How the Youth Offending Team or Teams established by them (whether alone or jointly with one or more other local authorities) are to be composed and funded, how they are to operate, and what functions they are to carry out.

10. Recommendations

10.1 The Cabinet is asked to consider the comments of the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee as set out in paragraph 6 of the report.

10.2 The Cabinet is asked to recommend approval of the Youth Offending Team Strategic Plan to Full Council on 23 February 2017.

11. Suggested reasons for decision

11.1 To ensure that Medway Council and other agencies have effective strategies for addressing youth offending behaviour and delivers outcomes that have positive benefits for our communities.

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Appendices (please see Supplementary Agenda No.1)

Appendix A – Youth Justice Plan 2016/2017

Appendix B – Diversity Impact Assessment

Background papers

None