

To: Kent County Council – 13 May 2010

By: Mike Hill, Cabinet Member

Subject: Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2010-11

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: This report provides a context for and an introduction to the core objectives of the Kent Youth Justice Strategic Plan for 2010/11. It identifies the resources which the County Council is providing for the multi agency Youth Offending Service.

FOR APPROVAL

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Kent Youth Justice Plan sets out how the Youth Offending Service (YOS) will work, in the county, during 2010/11 towards the principal aim for the youth justice system, “the prevention of offending by children and young people”. The Plan, which is a statutory requirement (Crime & Disorder Act 1998, S40), must be submitted to the Youth Justice Board in line with the KCC planning cycle.
- 1.2 The contents are similar to those included in the 2010/11 Annual Operating Plan for the Service. The key themes include:
 - (i) the partnership arrangements for the management of YOS
 - (ii) the targets for the performance of the Service, including that for reducing the number of first time entrants, National Indicator 111, which is one of the 35 priorities for the current Kent Area Agreement
 - (iii) planned new developments and the activity forecasts for the core youth justice services
 - (iv) the resources the Service has available to deliver the objectives of the Plan
- 1.3 Annexes A – F provide youth justice data that provides an insight into the demands on the Service at each stage of the youth justice process and enables comparisons to be made between the levels of demand experienced in 2008 & 2009.
- 1.4 The attached Plan has been subject to consultation with the County Youth Justice Board, Kent Children’s Trust Executive, Communities Policy and Scrutiny Overview Committee and Cabinet Members

2. Context

- 2.1 The immediate context for the Plan is the change in legislation, the Criminal Justice & Immigration Act 2008, and policy, the Scaled Approach, which were both implemented in November of last year. The changes introduced require the Service to prioritise the management of those children and young people who

have been assessed as being the most likely to re-offend or to present a risk of serious harm to others or both of these factors. The existing priorities, to reduce the numbers of children and young people resident in the county entering the youth justice system, to promote the welfare of those known to the Service and to engage victims of youth crime in restorative justice processes, do however remain.

2.2 The Service has recorded a downward shift in demand in the past twelve months. The findings indicate that during 2009 there was:

- (i) when compared with 2008 a:
 - a. 9.0% decrease in the number of offences recorded by the Service (Annexes A & B)
 - b. 3.4% reduction in the number of first time entrants (Annex F)
 - c. 12.7% fall in the number of sentences imposed by the Courts on children and young people (Annex D)
- (ii) a 48.0% reduction in the number of young people receiving a custodial sentence when comparing the number for Quarter 3 of 2009/10 (15) compared to the number (29) for Quarter 4 of 2008/09
- (iii) a 10.9% fall in the statutory caseload based on snapshots taken in January 2009 (708) and January 2010 (631)

2.3 This reduction in demand is felt to be a contributory factor to the improving performance of the Service that is reflected in the reduction of the re-offending rate (Annex E). There has been an incremental reduction in the rates achieved for the cohorts for 2005, 2006 and 2008 (NB there was no cohort in 2007) with the outcomes being respectively 40.2%, 36.3% and 34.6%. The rate for the 2009 cohort is forecast to show a further improvement.

2.4 The demand, though, for remand services (Annex C) increased during 2009. The upward trend was recorded for Bail Support & Supervision as well as for the use of the Secure Estate and this is being considered as part of our review of the Remand Management Services.

3. YOS Business Priorities for 2010/11

3.1 The key priorities for the Service continue to revolve around a number of themes. These include:

- (i) integrating the YOS prevention strategy with that of the Children's Trust as set out in the Children and Young People's Plan for 2011/14
- (ii) joint work with Kent Police (the Offender Management Units) in line with the Deter Young Offender strategy which targets the persistent offender. This collaboration has been facilitated by aligning the boundaries of the five Teams within YOS with those of the five Police Areas
- (iii) improving the percentage of those of statutory school age known to YOS who are engaged in education
- (iv) maintaining the significant progress being made with the engagement of 16 / 17 year olds in training and employment – the New Skills New Live initiative led by the Service should be influential in this respect

- (v) matching the needs of children and young people with speech & language, mental health and substance misuse needs to appropriate interventions and services
- (vi) enhancing the services offered at the remand stage to ensure they are credible with Courts and so enable greater use of community based services at this stage of the youth justice process
- (vii) strengthening the post custody resettlement arrangements through the effective use of the Integrated Resettlement Support co-ordinators to further reduce the risk of re-offending
- (viii) joint working with Local Housing Authorities, Children's Social Services and supporting People to improve access for homeless 16 / 17 year olds to suitable accommodation
- (ix) exploring different approaches to the delivery of youth justice services, including closer co-operation with partners such as the Youth Service, with the objective of maximising the benefits of available resources

4. Resource Implications

- 4.1 The YOS Budget for 2010/11 is projected to be £6.7m, a reduction of £181k when compared to the total for 2009/10, of which the County Council contributes £3.7m (55.2%). The remainder is provided by statutory partners (Health, Education, Children's Social Services, Police and Probation) and by grants from the Youth Justice Board,
- 4.2 To date not all funding streams have been confirmed for 2010/11 although a reduction in funding had been planned for by the Service. Partnership funding has been reduced to achieve efficiency savings, these include 2.1% from the KCC contribution and 8.3% from that of Probation. Others, including the Youth Justice Board Grants, are expected to maintain their contributions at the funding levels provided for 2009/10.
- 4.3 Whilst there has been additional investment from the Youth Justice Board (YJB) for Integrated Resettlement Support and from KCC for Training these are not long term commitments with the IRS grant funding only to 31 March 2011. YOS Partnership funding settlements are anticipated to continue to be challenging for the foreseeable future given the political and economic climate.

RECOMMENDATION

- 5.1 Council are asked to APPROVE the objectives of the Kent Youth Justice Strategic Plan and the contribution the County Council is making with respect to improving both public safety and the life chances of those at risk of entering the youth justice system and those who have offended.

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