

**CABINET**

**19 OCTOBER 2016**

**YOUTH JUSTICE PLAN 2016/17**

**REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

**1. Purpose of the Report**

- 1.1 The Youth Justice Plan is an Article 4 plan which requires full Council approval.
- 1.2 The report informs Cabinet of the background, purpose and intentions of the plan and seeks to consult with and gain approval from Cabinet and to refer to Scrutiny Committee for comment.

**2. Description of Decision (Recommendations)**

- 2.1 Following consultation with the YOS Board partners, Cabinet is recommended to provide comment on the Youth Justice Plan 2016-2017 (attached) and recommend that it is referred to Scrutiny Committee for their advice and consideration.
- 2.2 Cabinet are further requested to give delegated authority to the Portfolio Holder for Children and Director of Children's Services to accept any amendments to the plan being referred to Council for final approval.

**3. Introduction/Background**

- 3.1 The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 required the Chief Executive of each local authority area to set up a multi-agency Youth Offending Team / Service (YOT / YOS) governed by a multi-agency Management Board. The act required that each Team / Service produce an annual Youth Justice Plan.
- 3.2 The Sunderland YOS Management Board comprises the four statutory agencies of the Local Authority, Police, Probation and Health as well as the area courts as a local partner. The attached Youth Justice Plan 2016/17 was considered by the multi-agency YOS Management Board on 20th July 2016.
- 3.3 The Youth Justice Board (YJB) oversees the youth justice system in England and Wales. The YJB is required to monitor performance of the youth justice system and report to the Secretary of State for Justice. The YJB does this through the collection of performance data and annual Youth Justice Plans.
- 3.4 Each year the YJB issues guidance on the required content for the annual Youth Justice Plan and sets out the required submission date. The Youth Offending Service partnership is therefore given a defined period for the development of the Youth Justice Plan and for the relevant consultations to be undertaken. The attached YOS Plan for Sunderland follows the YJB's guidance for the construction of the plan for the purposes of national YJB submission.

#### **4. Current Position – Youth Justice Plan 2016/17**

- 4.1 The Youth Justice Plan 2016/17 sets out the principal aim of the Sunderland Youth offending Service to *'prevent offending and re-offending by children and young people'*. It also sets out the key related outcomes of reducing the numbers of first time entrants to the criminal justice system, reducing the proven rate of re-offending for children and young people and maintaining a low use of custody.
- 4.2 The Youth Justice Plan 2016/17 sets out a number of service development priorities that have been developed on the basis of an analysis of performance and need from a range of sources including:-
- The national and local policy context for youth justice.
  - Performance against key national and local outcome targets.
  - Analysis of prevention and youth offending service assessment data.
  - Outcomes of practice quality assurance audits and good practice guidance.
- 4.3 The plan sets out the excellent performance of Sunderland Youth Offending service and it's achievements during the course of its last strategic plan which spanned 2013/14 to 2015/16. The service's achievements include:
- A very positive Inspection in February 2016 which identified that case managers demonstrated tenacity and persistence to engage children and young people and their parents/carers, that case managers were skilled and confident in making plans to address vulnerability and encourage engagement and compliance and overall that arrangements within Sunderland YOT were well-organised, mature and supported by a culture of learning and improvement.
  - Maintenance of performance in relation to the service's 3 annual key performance indicators. In particular the service achieved the lowest rate of custody in the Region, a position which stands Sunderland far better than the national average rate.
  - A continuing strong performance in relation to the frequency of reoffending when compared to both regional and national averages.
  - Mainstreaming of the YOT's liaison and diversion scheme across the service which is enabling the service to offer early assessment of all young people from the point of arrest.
  - The development of a unique LAC (Looked After Children) Protocol with children's services and Northumbria Police which is supporting improved decision making for LAC children who offend within Children's Homes, employing restorative justice principles and supporting diversion of such children out of the criminal justice system. Early indications on performance across 2015/16 indicate the reported LAC offending rate for Sunderland has significantly reduced.
  - Sunderland's YOT's Strengthening Families thematic assessment tool being accepted into the YJB Effective Practice Library.
  - Implementation of the new national assessment tool "AssetPlus" which takes a more holistic approach to assessing the needs of children, young people and their parents/carers.

- Sunderland's overall performance continues to be recognised positively by the Youth Justice Board with a review following the service's Inspection concluding that Sunderland continue to perform at a high standard in all aspects of YOT work. This is evidenced by their recent SQS [February 2016] and their continued positive performance in reducing youth offending in Sunderland. Custody rates are very low, reoffending rates are excellent given the comparisons that can be drawn with near neighbours.

## **5. Reasons for the Decision**

- 5.1 The Youth Justice Plan is an Article 4 plan under the Constitution of the Council and is the primary document for YOT partnerships to set out how they will deliver against Youth Justice Board (YJB) performance management framework for Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) and is a key source for local youth justice planning.

## **6. Alternative Options**

- 6.1 The alternative option is not to submit the Youth Justice Plan to full Council. This would have a negative impact on local youth justice planning, and the service's ability to deliver against its action plans.

## **7. Relevant Considerations / Consultations**

- 7.1 The relevant statutory partners, including the Sunderland Children's Trust and Safer Sunderland Partnership, as well as local partners have been consulted on the plan through the YOS Management Board.

- 7.2 Consultations and service user feedback have informed the development of the plan through the needs analysis underpinning the plan.

- 7.3 The report and plan will be presented to the Scrutiny Committee, Cabinet and full Council.

### **7.4 Impacts Analysis: Crime and Disorder**

- 7.4.1 The principal aim of the Youth Offending Service is to prevent offending and re-offending by children and young people in Sunderland.

- 7.4.2 The role and responsibilities of the local YOT/YOS are set out in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and the Youth Offending Service continues to work with four statutory agencies of Police, Probation, Health and the Local Authority to ensure that the service continues to be a high performing which delivers outcomes which contribute to the Council's priorities.

## **8. Glossary**

MOJ Ministry of Justice  
YJB Youth Justice Board  
YOS Youth Offending Service

**9. List of Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Sunderland Youth Justice Plan 2016/17.