

CABINET ITEM COVERING SHEET PROFORMA

AGENDA ITEM

REPORT TO CABINET

15 MARCH 2007

**REPORT OF CHILDREN AND
YOUNG PEOPLE SELECT
COMMITTEE**

CABINET DECISION

**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE – LEAD CABINET MEMBER – COUNCILLOR
CUNNINGHAM**

REVIEW OF TEENAGE PREGNANCY IN STOCKTON BOROUGH

1. Summary

This report informs Cabinet of the outcomes of the review of teenage pregnancy in Stockton Borough undertaken by the Children and Young People Select Committee between April 2006 and February 2007.

2. Recommendations

It is recommended to Cabinet that:

- The creation of the new permanent role of Teenage Pregnancy Co-ordinator (a decision which the Committee would have strongly recommended as part of its review) is supported and urges the Council and the PCT board to support the continued funding of this post in order to provide essential staff continuity to help tackle the issue of teenage pregnancy.
- All schools are encouraged to ensure that all young people have equality of access to the wide range of SRE information and services available.
- Head Teachers, Governing Bodies and the Teenage Pregnancy Partnership be encouraged to consider ways of integrating SRE into the curriculum of all primary schools in the borough.
- The role of the youth service be examined as part of the monitoring of the review.
- The revised Teenage Pregnancy Strategy be presented to the Committee for consideration together with details of the funding arrangements and that the Committee receive reports and updates presented to the Teenage Pregnancy Strategy Board and Teenage Pregnancy Regional Co-ordinator as part of the monitoring of the review

3. Reasons for the Recommendations/Decision(s)

This topic was identified as an area meriting a scrutiny review at a meeting of the Scrutiny Liaison Forum held on 8 March 2006. The issue was subsequently referred to the Children and Young People Select Committee for approval, and passed to a meeting of the Executive Scrutiny Committee as part of the work programming procedure.

The objectives/aims developed by the Committee for the review were as follows: -

- To address a rise in the teenage conception rate in Stockton by:
 - Exploration of mainstreaming funding arrangements.
 - Improving the co-ordinated approach.
 - Provision of more timely performance information.

The review addresses the following strategic corporate objective:

- Children and Young People – Objective 2: Be Healthy: Improve the health of children in the Borough – with the main aim being to reduce the under 18 conception rate by 50% by 2010 (1998 baseline year, 52 per 1,000 population)

4. Members Interests

Members (including co-opted members with voting rights) should consider whether they have a personal interest in the item as defined in the Council's code of conduct (paragraph 8) and, if so, declare the existence and nature of that interest in accordance with paragraph 9 of the code.

Where a Member regards him/herself as having a personal interest in the item, he/she must then consider whether that interest is one which a member of the public, with knowledge of the relevant facts, would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to prejudice the Member's judgement of the public interest (paragraph 10 of the code of conduct).

A Member with a prejudicial interest in any matter must withdraw from the room where the meeting is being held, whilst the matter is being considered; not exercise executive functions in relation to the matter and not seek improperly to influence the decision about the matter (paragraph 12 of the Code).

Further to the above, it should be noted that any Member attending a meeting of Cabinet, Select Committee etc.; whether or not they are a member of the Cabinet or Select Committee concerned, must declare any personal interest which they have in the business being considered at the meeting, and if their interest is prejudicial, they must also leave the meeting room during consideration of the relevant item.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

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1. The creation of the new permanent role of Teenage Pregnancy Co-ordinator (a decision which the Committee would have strongly recommended as part of its review) is supported and urges the Council and the PCT board to support the continued funding of this post in order to provide essential staff continuity to help tackle the issue of teenage pregnancy.
2. All schools are encouraged to ensure that all young people have equality of access to the wide range of SRE information and services available.
3. Head Teachers, Governing Bodies and the Teenage Pregnancy Partnership be encouraged to consider ways of integrating SRE into the curriculum of all primary schools in the borough.
4. The role of the youth service be examined as part of the monitoring of the review.
5. The revised Teenage Pregnancy Strategy be presented to the Committee for consideration together with details of the funding arrangements and that the Committee receive reports and updates presented to the Teenage Pregnancy Strategy Board and Teenage Pregnancy Regional Co-ordinator as part of the monitoring of the review.

DETAIL

1. The Children and Young People Select Committee was tasked with reviewing the approach taken by the Teenage Pregnancy Partnership that exists in Stockton Borough to tackle the increased number in conceptions and pregnancies occurring in the borough. This is set against a national target that expects a 50 per cent reduction in the under 18 conception rate by 2010.
2. The Committee established that close working relationships were required between the four mainstream agencies – the Primary Care Trust, Education Department, Social Services and Children and Youth Services/Connexions.
3. The Teenage Pregnancy Co-ordinator plays key role in the delivery of the partnership's strategy. The Committee was therefore concerned when it learnt that the position at the time of the review was funded as a temporary contract which threatened the continuity of the service. The Committee supports the changes made to mainstream the co-ordinator's post having raised this issue as part of this review.
4. A major element of future reductions in teenage conceptions and pregnancies is the implementation of adequate sex education in schools. The Committee was keen to engage with the borough's schools to determine how schools met the requirements. Sex education has tended to focus on the biology of reproduction and disease and not the broader issues of sex and relationships.
5. The Committee was pleased to learn about the 'Lucinda and Godfrey' resource available for primary schools and specially packaged resources in secondary schools, designed and delivered in partnership with the North Tees Primary Care Trust, and is therefore hopeful that the improvements and the links that have been developed across the two school types will begin to show a reduction in the pregnancy rates of teenage girls in the borough.
6. Focused contraception/sexual health services, trusted by teenagers and well known by professionals working with them was the factor stated by the Department for Education and Skills as having the biggest impact on conception rate reductions in the high performing areas. The Committee explored this issue with officers from the North Tees Primary Care Trust and heard that an increased number of 12 and 13 year-old girls present themselves to clinics in the borough but was reassured by the approach health professionals adopt.
7. The review was in part instigated by the percentage increase in teenage conception and pregnancy in the borough. What this belies is the low number of girls directly affected but which has a large impact on percentage figures. Comparison with other Tees Valley authorities shows how they are all susceptible to small numerical change.
8. The Committee recognises the effort and importance that is given to this issue by all parties on the Teenage Pregnancy Board and welcomes the reduction in the teenage pregnancy statistics in 2005 that were published after the Committee completed this review.

CONSULTATION, INCLUDING WARD COUNCILLORS

Consultation information taken from departmental Ezee questionnaire.

FINANCIAL AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial

Continued mainstream funding of Teenage Pregnancy Co-ordinator.

Legal

No direct legal implications.

RISK ASSESSMENT

The reduction in teenage conception and pregnancy rates is categorised as low to medium risk. Existing management systems and daily routine activities are sufficient to control and reduce risk.

COMMUNITY STRATEGY IMPLICATIONS

Children and Young People – Being Healthy Theme

Reduce the teenage conception rate – Key performance target “reduce the teenage conception rate by 50% by 2010 (1998 baseline) and reduce the gap between the worst fifth of wards and the average by 20% by 2010.”

No specific implications for community safety

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Background Papers:

N/a

Ward(s) and Ward Councillors:

N/a