

## CABINET ITEM COVERING SHEET PROFORMA

**AGENDA ITEM**

**REPORT TO CABINET**

**11<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2010**

**REPORT OF CORPORATE  
MANAGEMENT TEAM**

### **CABINET DECISION**

**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE – LEAD CABINET MEMBER – COUNCILLOR ALEX CUNNINGHAM**  
**HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY – LEAD CABINET MEMBER – COUNCILLOR STEVE NELSON**

#### **HMI PROBATION INSPECTION OF STOCKTON-ON-TEES YOUTH OFFENDING SERVICE**

1. Summary

- 1.1. In 2009, HMI Probation (HMIP) introduced a new 3 year independent inspection programme of Youth Offending Services (YOS). In response to national developments relating to public protection, youth crime and the safeguarding agenda, the new inspection regime focuses exclusively upon the delivery of case work and how this contributes to: managing risk of harm presented to others from children and young people; reducing the likelihood of offending; and the safeguarding of children and young people.
- 1.2 Stockton-on-Tees YOS received very positive feedback from inspectors during and following inspection. The inspection report was published 6<sup>th</sup> January 2010, with *minimum recommendations for improvement* in relation to all three areas of managing risk of harm; reducing likelihood of offending; and safeguarding. **The full inspection report is attached as Appendix A.**
- 1.3 Stockton's results compare very favourably in the North East region and places the YOS as the best performing YOS overall in the region. An improvement action plan has been prepared in response to the inspection's key recommendations to further strengthen service performance.

2. Recommendations

Cabinet is requested to:

- 2.1 Note the positive outcome of the YOS inspection.

3. Reasons for the Recommendations/Decision(s)

- 3.1 The YOS has been independently inspected by HMI Probation and has received positive feedback about its contribution to public protection, reducing likelihood of offending and safeguarding children and young people.

#### 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 (**paragraphs 10 and 11 of the code of conduct**).

A Member with a prejudicial interest in any matter must withdraw from the room where the meeting considering the business is being held -

- in a case where the Member is attending a meeting (including a meeting of a select committee) but only for the purpose of making representations, answering questions or giving evidence, provided the public are also allowed to attend the meeting for the same purpose whether under statutory right or otherwise, immediately after making representations, answering questions or giving evidence as the case may be;
- in any other case, whenever it becomes apparent that the business is being considered at the meeting;

and must 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 (unless the interest arises solely from the Member's membership of, or position of control or management on any other body to which the Member was appointed or nominated by the Council, or on any other body exercising functions of a public nature, when the interest only needs to be declared if and when the Member speaks on the matter), and if their interest is prejudicial, they must also leave the meeting room, subject to and in accordance with the provisions referred to above.**

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2. Recommendations

Cabinet is requested to:

- 2.1 Note the positive outcome of the YOS inspection.

**DETAIL**

- 1.1 The HMIP inspection is conducted region by region and took place in the North East from September to October 2009. New findings terminology has been introduced, replacing terms such as 'good' and 'satisfactory' with a percentage scoring framework of how well aspects of case work met the quality inspectors are looking for, which then informs a recommended level of improvements: either *minimum*; *moderate*; *substantial*; or *drastic*. The greatest change however has been the exclusive focus upon service delivery on the ground by practitioners, and the impact this has upon service user experiences and behaviours.

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1.3 Stockton's results compares very favourably in the North East region and places the YOS as the best performance overall in the region. The following summarises the strengths and areas for improvement:

## 2. Strengths

- Lots of progress since the last inspection in 2007. Recent practice development work was paying dividends and practitioner capacity and capability enhanced.
- Commitment by staff in supporting and developing children and young people.
- A good range of in house and external resources for YOS practitioners to draw upon, creative intervention programmes and joint working with other agencies.
- Capable leadership of the YOS Management Team.
- Strong performance in managing risk of harm, addressing likelihood of reoffending and in safeguarding children and young people.
- Children and young people's diversity issues were well addressed.
- Involvement of children and young people in their assessment and sentence planning.
- Active liaison with secure / custodial settings and good attention to community reintegration issues.
- Good progress made against actions linked to offending and activity to sustain positive outcomes.
- Appropriate responses to children and young people's non-compliance with their sentences.

## 3. Areas for Improvement:

- Greater consistency needed in the quality of risk and vulnerability management plans and better integration with overall intervention plans.
- Greater attention needed to victim's issues, in particularly victim safety considerations need to be more explicit in some risk management documentation.
- Whilst enforcement of court orders was a strength, enforcement was used in too many cases as only half of the children and young people complied with their requirements.
- Greater consistency in management oversight of risk of harm and safeguarding issues.
- More attention needed to *evidencing* impact of service upon young people's behaviour; practitioners often not recognising and recording when progress had been made in assessment, planning and review documentation.

- Systems to monitor and report on offending outcomes to assist in strategic planning were under-developed, in particular the ability of the YOS to access offending information from the police for children and young people.

4. Key Recommendations of Inspection (Primary responsibility is indicated in brackets):

- Good quality risk management plans are produced in all relevant cases, in order to minimise the *Risk of Harm to others*. These should specifically address victims issues and should be integrated into the intervention plan for the case (YOS Manager).
- Good quality vulnerability management plans are produced in all relevant cases, in order to minimise Safeguarding risks. These should be integrated into the intervention plan for the case (YOS Manager).
- A higher proportion of children and young people comply with the requirements of their sentences (YOS Manager).
- There is evidence in the file of regular and effective management oversight of *Risk of Harm* and Safeguarding issues (YOS Manager).
- Analysis of outcome data is used to inform the interventions offered by the YOS and its partners (Chair of the YOS Management Board).

5. Next Steps:

- 5.1 In response to these findings, the service has developed an Improvement Action Plan for submission to HMI Probation and work has already begun to secure further improvements in practice. This will be presented to the YOS Management Board for approval on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2010. The YOS Management Board will be responsible for overseeing the effective implementation of the Action Plan.
- 5.2 The service's approach to risk of harm and vulnerability management planning has been reviewed and staff have received updated training. The service had already amended its use of related documentation; new templates were introduced prior to the inspection taking place and positive feedback was received from the inspection team on their introduction and emerging impact upon practice.
- 5.3 Work is ongoing to monitor the impact of these developments and to revise management oversight processes. A review is about to start of how the service inducts and engages children and young people into the service. The monthly YOS performance clinic will lead on securing improvements in the analysis of outcome data with linkages with data from partners to improve understanding of offending patterns and reduce levels of youth crime.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

6. There are no specific financial implications which have been identified.

**LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

7. There are no specific legal implications which have been identified.

## **RISK ASSESSMENT**

8. This report is categorised as low to medium risk. Existing management systems and daily routine activities are sufficient to control and reduce risk.

## **COMMUNITY STRATEGY IMPLICATIONS**

9. Public protection, reducing youth crime and safeguarding children and young people are key components of the safer communities' strategy and the YOS performance contributes favourably to the Community Safety and Children and Young People's agendas.

## **CORPORATE PARENTING**

10. For those children and young people who are looked after, the Council has a responsibility as Corporate Parent to ensure that their needs are appropriately met. Strong performance from the YOS contributes favourably to this agenda.

## **CONSULTATION INCLUDING WARD/COUNCILLORS**

11. No consultation has taken place in relation to this issue.

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### Background Papers

HMI Probation Core Case Inspection of Youth Offending Work in Stockton on Tees, 01.2010