

REPORT OF THE CABINET

E. LEICESTERSHIRE YOUTH JUSTICE STRATEGIC PLAN 2020 –2023

Introduction

1. This report seeks approval to the draft Leicestershire Youth Justice Strategic Plan covering the period 2020 – 2023, attached as Appendix A.
2. The County Council has a statutory duty under Section 40 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to produce an annual Youth Justice Plan. The Plan is included in the Council's Policy Framework.

Background

3. At the time of inception of Youth Offending Teams nationally in 2002 the Youth Justice Board provided the framework for the Youth Justice Plan, along with considerable scrutiny and oversight. Several years ago, Youth Offending Teams were given the freedom and flexibility to produce a Youth Justice Strategic Plan overseen by their Youth Offending Service Management Board (YOSMB) in line with their own timetable and format. The current requirement is that the Plan or annual update should be submitted to the YJB by the end of July 2020. The YOSMB have chosen the option to introduce a 3-year plan.
4. The review of Early Help Services in 2018/19 led to the integration of a number of services into an integrated locality-based Children and Family Wellbeing Service (CFWS). The YOS and Youth Teams now form part of locality-based teams within this Service.
5. The transformation of the Early Help Services has led to YOS prevention staff working more closely with youth and family workers enabling a whole family approach to explore a young person's problems. During the last year there has been a small increase in resources with the addition of three workers to the two existing posts, which focus on providing consistent and intensive support to the most complex children through project responsive (outlined in Section D of the plan). There has also been a joint project with the three Clinical Commissioning Groups and Leicester City Council's YOS which has led to the introduction of a Clinical Psychologist and a Forensic Psychologist to offer direct work with children with ACEs (adverse childhood experiences) and to provide advice to YOS practitioners. (outlined in section D).

Draft Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2020-2023

6. The Youth Justice Plan provides an overview of how the Leicestershire Youth Offending Service will link into partnership arrangements and

deliver services in line with national requirements set out by the National YJB. The Plan outlines the YOS's governance arrangements and structure, the proposed YOS reporting schedule to the YOSMB, resources, local Draft performance, practice developments, priorities and future risks.

7. The 2020-23 Plan has been introduced in a slightly different format by incorporating some brief case studies in response to the request of the Scrutiny Commission at its meeting in April 2019 when it considered the previous plan, as well as feedback received from partner agencies through the YOSMB. Short case studies that showcase the work of the Youth Offending Service have been embedded within the draft Plan and can be found on pages under sections B and D.
8. The draft Plan highlights the continuing positive performance achieved by the YOS. The commitment to intervention with young people at the earliest opportunity is reflected in the performance of the YOS in relation to first time entrants into the criminal justice system compared to regional and national partners. The rate of young people receiving custodial sentences in Leicestershire is also low compared to regional and national partners.
9. In terms of outcomes, the most significant area of challenge concerns the percentage of young people in employment, education, or training at the end of their period of work with the YOS, and the Plan focuses on the YOS working together with the school inclusion team and partner agencies to make improvements. The Plan also highlights the need for the YOS to focus on further developing how the voice of the child influences support, particularly in relation to those young people with the most complex issues.
10. Section E of the Plan focuses on future risks. The most significant current risk is linked to the increased understanding and influence of child criminal exploitation. The Plan highlights a number of priority areas of work linked to the response to this risk (Section D (iii) strategic and practice priorities)

Comments of the Scrutiny Commission

11. The Scrutiny Commission considered the draft Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2020-2023 at its meeting on 8 April 2020. Members welcomed the excellent work continuing to take place with families and the whole family approach, supported the work to provide support to those subject to youth referral orders which was a statutory requirement, and also first-time entrants, and welcomed the Council's introduction of additional resources, including a psychologist and forensic psychologist, that would support the engagement with young people who did not participate in education, employment or training. It was recognised that partnership working with other agencies was key to addressing this.

12. A key area of concern related to the exploitation of children, particularly vulnerable children, although it was noted that all partners would focus on addressing this. As it was a key risk area, it would be heavily monitored under the revised Plan, although under current circumstances it was difficult to operate in the usual way as schools which were currently closed, played a key role in identifying and reporting such issues.
13. Members were concerned that the Service looked at the impact of isolation on some families during the current crisis and how this had affected children and young people who might not be being supported in the usual way. It was recognised that the potential release of young offenders from young offender's institutes because of the coronavirus outbreak would be unlikely to have a significant impact in Leicestershire.
14. Members requested that the plan contained in Section A of the draft Youth Justice Plan be amended as the district structure on the map did not include Oadby and Wigston.
15. Finally, there was some concern that the Plan was difficult to follow for someone who had little knowledge of the Youth Offending Services and members suggested that a glossary of terms and an overall summary be included for the future.

Officer Response and Amendments to Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2020 – 2023

16. Draft Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2020-23 has been amended in light of consultation responses. Firstly, a slightly different format has been introduced by incorporating some brief case studies in light of the request of the Scrutiny Commission at its meeting in April 2019 when it considered the previous plan, as well as feedback received from partner agencies through the YOSMB. Short case studies that showcase the work of the Youth Offending Service have been embedded within the draft Plan and can be found in Section B and D of the plan.
17. As a result of feedback from the Scrutiny Commission in April 2020 There have been amendments to the map contained in section A of the plan, reference to the Leicestershire Children's Partnership Board included in section B, and a glossary of terms has been added within the Plan appendices.
18. There has been no updated formal guidance received from the YJB in relation the change of structure and format of plans in 2020.

Resource Implications

19. Section C of the draft Plan sets out the resourcing and funding arrangements for the Youth Offending Service. The County Council

remains the major funding partner via the Children and Families Service.

20. In terms of the 2020-21 budget the YJB are yet to confirm the annual grant and no communications have been received to date. Confirmation is also yet to be received regarding all partner contributions. Overall the budget is likely to have a slight decrease on the 2019-20 budget.

Equality and Human Rights Implications

21. An equality impact and human rights impact assessment screening has been completed and there are no discernible equality and human rights implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

Risk Assessment

22. A risk management plan has been incorporated into the Plan which can be found under Section E.

Consideration by the Cabinet

23. The Cabinet at its meeting on 22nd May considered a revised draft of the Youth Justice Plan together with comments submitted by Mr Hunt CC (copy attached as Appendix B). The decision of the Cabinet is reflected in the motion below.

Motion to be moved

That the Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2020 – 2023 be approved.

Appendices

Appendix A - Leicestershire Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2020 – 2023
Appendix B – Mr Hunt CC Comment to Cabinet 22 May 2020