



SCRUTINY COMMISSION – 12TH OF APRIL 2023

DRAFT YOUTH JUSTICE STRATEGIC PLAN 2023 – 2026

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SERVICES

Purpose of report

1. The purpose of this report is to seek the views of the Scrutiny Commission (as the County Council's designated Crime and Disorder Committee) on the Draft Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2023 - 2026, attached as Appendix 1. The draft Plan will be presented to the Cabinet on 25 April 2023 alongside any comments of the Commission and thereafter presented to full Council for approval in May.

Policy Framework and Previous Decision(s)

2. There is a statutory requirement in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 that requires the County Council to produce a Youth Justice Plan which is linked to releasing the Youth Justice Grant from the Youth Justice Board (YJB).
3. In relation to Leicestershire County Council's Strategic Plan 2022-26 the Youth Justice Plan and the work of the Youth and Justice Service contribute to the following strategic objectives:
 - a. Clean and Green – through informal education with children and through direct reparation activities linked to the environment and green spaces.
 - b. Great Communities – through having adult volunteers in the Service who enable the re-engagement of children within their communities through restorative justice and the introduction of youth volunteers. All participate in the design of services and delivery.
 - c. Improved Opportunities – Youth Justice are committed to ensuring that children have access to good quality education, achieve their potential and that their families are supported to be resilient.
 - d. Safe and Well – The Service is dedicated to identifying, supporting and protecting children with safeguarding and harm outside the home.

Background

4. Since the inception of Youth Justice Services (formally Youth Offending Teams) nationally in 2002, the Youth Justice Board (YJB) has provided the framework for the Youth Justice Plan. The YJB enables Youth Justice Services to produce a plan that covers a maximum of three years, providing annual updates are made regarding performance, finance, staffing composition, a review of what

has been achieved and the plan for the forthcoming year are provided. This is overseen by the Youth and Justice Management Board (Y&JMB) and then submitted to the YJB.

5. All performance data is reported to the Y&JMB which is a statutory body as defined by the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. The statutory members of this Board are Officers from the County Council for Children's Social Care and Education, Probation Service, Leicestershire Police, Integrated Care Board, Police and Crime Commissioner and Rutland County Council. The Y&JMB have accountability for the performance of Youth Justice provision across Leicestershire and Rutland.
6. The Service is commissioned by Rutland County Council to deliver both statutory youth justice services and an agreed number of prevention interventions.

Consultations

7. There is a requirement for the Plan to be approved by the statutory partners that make up the Y&JMB. A workshop was held with Board members on 2 December 2022 which focused on the partnership identifying the main priorities for the next Youth Justice Plan. Contributions were made around disproportionality, serious youth violence and health interventions. The draft Plan was submitted to the Y&JMB's quarterly meeting on 10 March 2023.

The Draft New Plan

8. The draft Plan highlights the continuing positive performance achieved against the YJB's current KPI (Key Performance Indicators) framework for the Youth and Justice Service. The commitment to intervention with children at the earliest opportunity is reflected in the performance of the Service in relation to first time entrants (FTE's) into the criminal justice system compared to regional and national partners. The rate of children receiving custodial sentences in Leicestershire is also low compared to regional and national partners.
9. In summary, FTE data shows that Leicestershire had 108 FTE's per 1,000 of the 10-17 population, which is lower than the East Midlands (168), the average for YJ teams (152) and England (144). The use of custody rate remains low in Leicestershire per 1,000 of the 10-17 population with the most recent data showing as 0.04 for the County, compared with 0.13 for the East Midlands, 0.16 for the average YJ team and 0.11 in England. Managing the re-offending cohort is more challenging, as this depends on the complexity of the children captured within the group that is then tracked quarterly by the Ministry of Justice. Leicestershire stands at 29.7% for the tracked cohort over the year, slightly higher than the East Midlands at 29.1% and the average for YJ Teams at 26.3%, but lower than England at 31.9%.
10. Further commentary around performance data, including the measures taken to retain high performance and the challenges posed with this is provided on page 17-19 of the Plan appended. The KPI data provided by the Ministry of Justice,

whilst current, relates to previous years due to the nature of tracking offences. Youth Justice has designed and implemented a new case management system called Core+. This has the facility to live track children who are currently re-offending to enable enhanced support to those children across the partnership to reduce re-offending rates.

11. Ten new KPIs are being introduced by the YJB as of 1 April 2023, in addition to the four current KPIs which are detailed above. These concern accommodation, education, training and employment, children with learning needs, mental health and emotional wellbeing, substance misuse, out of court disposals, links to sider services, management board attendance, serious violence rates and victims. The new KPI's are welcomed by the Youth Justice Service and Management Boards as these will influence both the operational and strategic delivery of services. The new KPI's will assist local Y&JMB's to further understand the needs of this cohort of children and enable the partnership to respond better and improve performance in the delivery of outcomes.
12. In terms of outcomes the most significant area of challenge concerns the national picture around child exploitation and serious youth violence, including the introduction of the Serious Violence Duty. Due to escalation in these factors, concerns have been raised by the National Audit Office which is predicting an increase in the use of remand and custodial sentences. The challenge is to minimise the risk of this within Leicestershire working across partnerships with children's social care and the Police. Page 26 of the Plan details further some of the risks, challenges and issues, followed by work that the Service will undertake to address these.
13. Following requests made previously by the Scruitny Commission, examples of work undertaken by the YJ team can be found embedded in section 3 of the Pan (commencing on page 6). The focus this year has been on engagement with children and hearing their voice.

Resource implications

14. Section 5 of the Plan (page 12) sets out the resourcing and funding arrangements for the YJ team. The financial position of core Youth Justice funding has been stable with the Service managing within this budget. The strategic partnership also provides staffing in-kind as part of their contribution and this equate to a full-time seconded Probation Officer, two warranted Police Constables, a Community Psychiatric Nurse and an Adverse Childhood Experiences Team from the Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services. All of these specialist workers are fully embedded within the Service and support the direct delivery of interventions with children whilst retaining positive relationships with their parent organisation.
15. In terms of the 2023-24 budget the YJB are yet to confirm the annual grant allocation but have confirmed that this would not be less than the amount received in 2022-23. Confirmation of partner contributions have been received and remain the same. Therefore, the budget should remain the same as the

current financial year as detailed below and on page 12 of the Youth Justice Plan

B5: YOT budget
Costs and Contributions

Agency	Staffing Costs	Payments in kind	Other delegated funds	Total
Youth Justice Board			511,281	511,281
Local Authority			1,430,358	1,430,358
Police				0
Police and Crime Commissioner	91,847		77,934	169,781
Probation	73,764		10,000	83,764
Health	70,945		47,588	118,533
* Welsh Government				0
Other			73,572	73,572
Total	236,556	0	2,150,733	2,387,289

* Welsh YOTs only

Timetable for Decisions

16. The draft Plan will be considered by the Cabinet at its meeting on 25 April 2023, prior to submission to the YJB.
17. The final Plan will be considered by the County Council on the 5 July 2023.

Relevant Impact Assessments

Equality and Human Right Implications

18. Inequality is inherent within the criminal justice system. An Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) screening has been completed and attached at Appendix 2.

Environmental Implications

19. There are no environmental implications arising out of the Plan.

Recommendation

20. The Commission is asked to note and comment on the youth Justice Plan for 2023-26 attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

Background Papers

Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2020-2023

Circulation under Local Issues Alert Procedure

None.

Officers to Contact

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List of Appendices

Appendix 1: Draft Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2023-26

Appendix 2: EIA screening

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