



CABINET – 24 APRIL 2023

LEICESTERSHIRE YOUTH JUSTICE STRATEGIC PLAN 2023-2026

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

PART A

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to present to the Cabinet the updated Leicestershire Youth Justice Strategic Plan covering the period 2023 to 2026, which is appended to this report.

Recommendations

2. It is recommended that:
 - a) The comments of the Scrutiny Commission on the Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2023-2026 be noted;
 - b) The County Council at its meeting in May be recommended to approve the Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2023-2026.

Reasons for Recommendation

3. The County Council has a statutory duty under Section 40 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to produce a Youth Justice Plan. In 2015 the Youth Justice Board (YJB) enabled Youth Justice Services to submit three-year plans; these are updated annually prior to re-submission to the YJB and are primarily focused on reflecting changes in priorities and budget position.

Timetable for Decisions (including Scrutiny)

4. The updated three-year Plan has been considered by the Youth and Justice Management Board. Whilst there are no significant changes to the Plan, the Scrutiny Commission (as the Council's designated Crime and Disorder Committee) will consider a report on the updated Plan at its meeting on 12 April 2023. A summary of its comments is set out in Part B of this report.
5. Subject to approval by the Cabinet, the Plan will be submitted to the County Council for approval at its meeting in May 2023.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

6. There is a statutory requirement in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 for the County Council to produce a Youth Justice Plan which is linked to releasing the Youth Justice Grant from the Youth Justice Board (YJB).
7. The Youth Justice Plan 2020-2023 was approved by the County Council in July 2020.
8. In relation to the Leicestershire County Council Strategic Plan 2022-26, the Youth Justice Plan and the work of the Youth and Justice Service contributes to the following strategic objectives:
 - Clean and Green – through informal education with children and through direct reparation activities linked to the environment and green spaces.
 - 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.
 - Improved Opportunities – Youth Justice is committed to ensuring that children have access to good quality education, achieve their potential and that their families are supported to be resilient.
 - Safe and Well – the Service is dedicated to identifying, supporting and protecting children with safeguarding and harm outside the home.

Resource Implications

9. Section 5 of the Plan sets out the resourcing and funding arrangements for the Youth Justice Team. The financial position of the core Youth Justice funding has been stable with the Service managing this within budget. The Strategic Partnership also provides staffing in-kind as part of its contribution and this equates 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.
10. In terms of the 2023-24 budget the YJB is yet to confirm the annual grant allocation but has 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 in section 5 of the Youth Justice Plan). In addition to the below finances, the Police, Probation, and Health second staff into the Service as part of their contribution.

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

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

11. None.

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PART B

Background

12. The Youth Justice Plan highlights the continuing positive performance of the Youth and Justice Service and sets out the Service's priorities and objectives across the three years. The Plan is supplemented by one-year delivery plans which will be updated with progress made against the current year's plan and the objectives looking forward.
13. The focus of the 2023-2026 Plan is developing Child First practice (seeing children as children rather than offenders), responding to the Serious Violence Duty and embedding the ten new Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that have been introduced by the Ministry of Justice. The KPIs focus on identifying the needs of children and understanding how these are responded to across the Youth Justice partnerships individually and collectively across England and Wales. The KPIs concern factors such as suitability of accommodation, education, accessing support for substance misuse, and emotional wellbeing, along with ensuring that statutory partners are held accountable for their attendance at the Youth and Justice Management Board and that consultation takes place with victims.
14. The challenges faced by Youth Justice Partnerships across the country concern the national picture around child exploitation and serious youth violence. There are strong operational and strategic partnerships across all agencies working with children across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland to deal with child exploitation. Work is supported by the Violence Reduction Network (an alliance of partner organisations and groups in the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland area), which takes a public health approach around prevention to addressing serious violence, through building trusted and meaningful relationships and taking a whole family approach to support. The County Council's continued commitment to preventative services for children and families supports this approach.

Consultation

15. There is a requirement that the Plan is agreed by the statutory partners of the Youth and Justice Partnership. The Chair of the Youth and Justice Management Board is the only signatory required on the Plan. Consultation with Youth and Justice Management Board members commenced on 2 December 2022 to identify the key priorities and concluded when the Plan was ratified by the Board on 10 March 2023.
16. There is no formal requirement for children to be consulted on the Youth Justice Plan due to its strategic nature. However, children are involved in co-production at an operational level and this will continue throughout the Plan. For example, there is a group of girls who are engaging with practitioners to develop a more targeted response to girls who are an over-represented group in Youth Justice.

Comments of the Scrutiny Commission

17. The Commission considered the updated Youth Justice Plan for 2023 – 2026 at its meeting on 12 April 2023. It welcomed and supported the revised Plan and the good, proactive work undertaken by the Youth Justice Service to support not only young offenders and those at risk of offending, but also their families and families across neighbourhoods. This was despite continued pressures around staff recruitment and retention.
18. In discussing the activities of the Service, the Commission welcomed the resources invested by partners which were not entirely financial, but involved the sharing of personnel which supported a more joined up approach, but commented on the need:
 - To continue to focus on preventative actions, in particular in the face of increased serious violent crime which, although still relatively low in Leicestershire, was increasing nationally;
 - For an improved focus on victims to ensure their voice was still heard as the impact of youth crime upon them could still be severe;
 - To continue to develop relationships with City Council youth justice colleagues to ensure cross boundary arrangements were robust, and with schools which it was noted continued to make the largest number of referrals to the Service;
 - For better communication within communities regarding the work the Service was undertaking, it being noted that in respect of incidents of anti-social behaviour, often the police response was all that was visible;
 - To manage public expectations in matters such as anti-social behaviour as an immediate resolution was not always possible given the complexity of some individuals circumstances;
 - To take account of the impact of supporting children who require a statutory service from Youth Justice in private children's homes located in the area and the limits on the Council's ability to plan for and manage this at a strategic level, there being no requirement for the County Council to be notified when a new children's home was being established in the area.

Equality Implications

19. A comprehensive equality impact assessment has been completed and approved by the Departmental Equalities Group and there are no discernible equality implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

Human Rights Implications

20. A comprehensive human rights impact assessment has been completed and approved by the Departmental Equalities Group and there are no discernible human rights implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

Background Papers

Report to the Cabinet on 22 May 2020 - "Leicestershire Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2020 – 2023"

<https://politics.leics.gov.uk/documents/s152650/Youth%20Justice%20Strategic%20Plan.pdf>

Appendix

Leicestershire Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2023 – 2026