

Report to Cabinet

Title:	Buckinghamshire Youth Justice Strategic Plan
Date:	11 November 2019
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Local members affected:	(All Electoral Divisions)
Portfolio areas affected:	All Portfolio Areas

For press enquiries concerning this report, please contact the media office on 01296 382444

Summary

The purpose of this report is to present the Buckinghamshire Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2019-2020. The Youth Justice Strategic Plan provides details of progress made against the agreed outcomes for children and young people. It outlines priorities, alongside potential future challenges for the partnership over the coming year. In addition, the Youth Justice Strategic Plan highlights the partnership arrangements and budget position for the Youth Offending Service Partnership.

Recommendation

That Cabinet agrees the 2019-20 Youth Justice Strategic Plan and refers to Full Council for approval.

A. Narrative setting out the reasons for the decision

Background

1. Buckinghamshire Youth Offending Service is a multi-agency partnership between the Police, Children's Services, Health Services, Probation, Community Safety and both voluntary and private sector providers. The Youth Offending Service (YOS) plays a key role in keeping our communities, families, children and young people safe through the prevention of offending and reoffending, reduction in the use of custody and through contribution to multi-agency protection and safeguarding.

2. The Youth Justice Strategic Plan is produced in compliance with Section 40 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, which stipulates the following:

‘It shall be the duty of each local authority, after consultation with the relevant persons and bodies, to formulate and implement for each year a plan (a “youth justice strategic plan”) setting out:

- a) How youth justice services in their area are to be provided and funded; and
 - b) How the Youth Offending Team (YOT) or teams established by them (whether alone or jointly with one or more other local authorities) are to be composed and funded, how they are to operate, and what functions they are to carry out.’
3. The plan also incorporates guidance from the Youth Justice Board (YJB) and must be submitted to the YJB for England and Wales and published in accordance with the directions of the Secretary of State.
 4. Multi-agency YOT/YOS were established in 2000 following the 1998 Crime and Disorder Act with the intention of reducing the risk of young people offending and re-offending, and to provide counsel and rehabilitation to those who do offend. The act stipulates the composition of the YOT and identifies statutory partners to work alongside the Local Authority.
 5. The YJB has set three national outcome indicators for all YOTs which form the baseline for performance information included within this year’s plan. These are as follows:
 - i. Reduce the number of First Time Entrants (FTE) to the Youth Justice System
 - ii. Reduce Re-offending
 - iii. Reduce the Use of Custody

Local Context

6. In 2018-19, 100 young people aged 10 to 17 entered the Youth Justice System in Buckinghamshire for the first time. This figure has reduced by 26.7% compared with 2017-18.
7. The custody rate in 2018-19 was 0.15 per 1000 of the 10 to 17 year old population in Buckinghamshire. This is lower than both the National average (0.30) and the South East (0.16), and is in line with the Thames Valley figure (0.15).
8. The number of young people remanded in custody increased in 2018-19. The number of bed nights accrued during this period increased by 70.1% compared to the previous year. This is reflective of the seriousness and nature of offending.
9. The proportion of young people reoffending within a 12 month follow up period has continued to fluctuate. The latest reported figures from June 2017, showed Buckinghamshire’s rate of reoffending was 29.2%. This is lower than the National average (38.4%), the South East (36.7%) and Thames Valley (33.9%). There were 14 reoffenders in Buckinghamshire within this most recent cohort in comparison with 23 reoffenders in June 2014, representing a 39.1% decrease in the number of young people reoffending. Whilst the number of young people reoffending continues to fall, the numbers of offences per offender has increased, leading to an increase in average reoffending rate.

10. The YOS offers a prevention programme which monitors the young person for 12 months to see whether they commit any offences and subsequently become a first time entrant. Of the 87 young people offered a voluntary programme in 2017-18, 11 (12.6%) went on to commit offences and become a first time entrant within 12 months. All of these 11 young people refused the prevention programme they were offered.
11. The YOS relaunched its board to ensure partners were fully engaged in delivering a multi-agency response to local youth justice issues. During 2018-19, partners were consistent in attendance and engagement was positive.

Priorities for the coming year

12. Partners from voluntary and statutory services have engaged in the consultation of the Youth Justice Strategic Plan. In particular, colleagues attended a workshop delivered by the YOS which identified opportunities to learn from recent inspections and also supported in identifying the priorities for 2019-20.
13. There are a number of systemic issues which lead young people into the Criminal Justice System. The YOS are keen to influence change across the organisation to not only prevent young people entering the Criminal Justice System but also to secure more positive outcomes for those that have already entered.
14. The YOS will underpin all the work they do on the following three areas to contribute to systematic change across the wider organisation.
 - i. Continuing to address disproportionality;
 - ii. Addressing exploitation of young people; and
 - iii. Embedding an evidence based model of practice

More specifically, priorities for 2019-20 will include:

- Raise awareness of and aim to reduce the exploitation of children and young people within organised criminal groups and in the supply of drugs (county lines).
- Aim to reduce repeat offending and serious youth violence by way of delivering trauma informed models of intervention.
- Strengthen engagement and intervention delivery with partners to reduce children becoming involved in violence through early intervention.

B. Other options available, and their pros and cons

N/A

C. Resource implications

Overall, the YOS budget for 2019-20 demonstrates a reduction in funding of approx. £82,000 compared to 2018-19. The YOS has utilised funding from the Police and Crime Commissioner to support prevention work.

D. Value for Money (VfM) Self-Assessment

It is important to allocate resources to the Council's strategic priorities including Safeguarding our Vulnerable. It is vital we secure improvements across Children's Services to achieve positive outcomes for our children and young people.

E. Legal implications

The local authority must carry out its statutory obligations in compliance with the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, Section 40. In addition, the local authority must also carry out its statutory obligations in respect of safeguarding children and young people, as set out in the Children Act 2004 and in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018.

F. Property implications

N/A

G. Other implications/issues

N/A

H. Feedback from consultation, Local Area Forums and Local Member views

N/A

I. Communication issues

Communication of the Youth Justice Strategic Plan will be managed through the YOS Partnership Management Board, ensuring a multi-agency approach across partners.

J. Progress Monitoring

Progress of the plan will be monitored through the YOS Partnership Management Board which reports into the Safer, Stronger Buckinghamshire Partnership Board.

K. Review

The Youth Justice Strategic Plan should be reviewed and agreed annually.

Background Papers

Appendix 1: Buckinghamshire Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2019-20

Your questions and views

If you have any questions about the matters contained in this paper please get in touch with the Contact Officer whose telephone number is given at the head of the paper.

If you have any views on this paper that you would like the Cabinet Member to consider, or if you wish to object to the proposed decision, please inform the Democratic Services Team by 5.00pm on Friday 8 November 2019. This can be done by telephone (to 01296 382343), or e-mail to democracy@buckscc.gov.uk