



Report to Council

Date:

Title: Buckinghamshire Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2020/21

Relevant councillor(s): Cllr Mark Shaw, Cabinet Member for Children's Services

Author and/or contact officer: Tolis Vouyioukas, Corporate Director Children's Services

Ward(s) affected: All

Recommendations:

That Council agrees the 2020/21 Youth Justice Strategic Plan.

1. Background

- 1.1 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.
- 1.2 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.'
- 1.3 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

1.4 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 reoffending, 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.

2. Local Context

2.1 In 2019/20, the YOS set overarching strategic priorities to assist in influencing systematic change across the wider organisation and within different sectors within the Criminal Justice sector locally. It recognised the journey of a child to the criminal justice system starts in their formative years, meaning to create meaningful and sustainable change there is a need to influence systemic change. The YOS were keen, and continue to be 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. Covid-19 has significantly impacted the ability to set priorities for the service and as a result, for 2020/21, due to the need to prioritise recovery planning, the YOS will continue to focus on the previous priorities set. These overarching priorities are:

- Continuing to address disproportionality
- Addressing exploitation of young people
- Embedding an evidence based model of practice

2.2 For 2020/21, the YOS will continue to make progress towards the above strategic priorities, but unlike 2019/20 will be unable to set specific targets against these for the forthcoming year. Instead the focus will be on covid-19 recovery planning, continuing to identify, develop and progress work streams against our overarching priorities and working towards securing positive outcomes against our three national indicators:

- Reducing First Time Entrants
- Reducing Repeat Offending
- Reducing the Use of Custody

2.3 Between October 2018 and September 2019, 94 young people entered the Youth Justice System for the first time in Buckinghamshire. This is a 16.8% decrease on the 113 first time entrants between October 2017 and September 2018.

2.4 The proportion of young people reoffending within a 12 month follow up period has continued to fluctuate. The latest report figures show that between January and March 2018, the rate of reoffending in Buckinghamshire was 29.4 which is lower

than the National average (39.3%), the South East (38.7%) and Thames Valley (35.6%).

- 2.5 There were 0.16 custodial sentences per 1000 of the 10 to 17 year old population in Buckinghamshire during 2019. This is lower than the National average (0.25) and higher than the South East (0.14) and the Thames Valley figure (0.11).
- 2.6 Following a significant increase in both the number of young people remanded to custody and the number of bed nights accrued in 2018/19, there was a drop in both figures for 2019/20. This represents a 37.3% decrease in bed nights from 2018/19.
- 2.7 All young people offered a Prevention Programme by Buckinghamshire YOS are tracked for 12 months to monitor whether they commit any offences and subsequently become a first time entrant. Of the 45 young people offered a voluntary programme in 2018/19, 1 (2.2%) went on to commit offences and become a first time entrant within 12 months. The 1 young person did not complete their intervention as they left the country to attend school abroad. This compares positively with the 11 out of 87 young people who went on to offend from the 2017/18 cohort (12.6%).

3. Legal and financial implications

- 3.1 Overall, the YOS budget for 2020/21 demonstrates a reduction in funding of approx. £51,000 compared to 2019/20. The YOS has utilised funding from the Police and Crime Commissioner to support prevention work.
- 3.2 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.

4. Corporate implications

N/A

5. Consultation and communication

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

6. Next steps and review

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

7. Background papers



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