



Report to Council

Date:	30 November 2022
Title:	Buckinghamshire Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2022-2023
Cabinet Member(s):	Cllr Anita Cranmer, Cabinet Member for Education and Children's Services
Contact officer:	John Macilwraith, Corporate Director Children's Services
Ward(s) affected:	All
Recommendations:	Council is asked to resolve to agree the Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2022-23 following Cabinet endorsement on 11 October 2022

1. Executive summary

1.1 The purpose of this report is to present the Buckinghamshire Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2022-2023. The Youth Justice Plan provides details of progress made against agreed outcomes for Children and Young People. It outlines priorities, alongside potential future challenges for the partnership over the coming year. The Youth Justice Plan highlights the partnership arrangements and budget position for the Youth Offending Service Partnership.

2. Content of report

2.1 Buckinghamshire Youth Offending Service is a multi-agency partnership funded by the following statutory partners: Thames Valley Police, Buckinghamshire Council Children's Services, Health Services and Probation. Other partners including Community Safety and the voluntary sector also make up the partnership.

2.2 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 public protection and safeguarding.

2.3 The Youth Justice Strategic Plan is produced in compliance with the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, Section 40 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 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.’

- 2.4 The Youth Justice Plan for 2022/23 was produced in consultation with strategic partners. This was done through a series of focus groups held with representatives from the police, probation, magistrates, health, and Buckinghamshire Council services, including Children’s Social Care, Education and Community Safety. As well as representatives from voluntary organisations such as Barnardo’s and ‘SAFE!’.
- 2.5 The plan is produced in line with guidance published by the Youth Justice Board (YJB) and must be submitted to the Youth Justice Board for England and Wales and published in accordance with the directions of the Secretary of State.
- 2.6 The requirement for local authorities to have Youth Offending Teams has existed since 2000, following the 1998 Crime and Disorder Act. The intended function of Youth Offending Teams is to reduce 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.
- 2.7 The Youth Justice Board (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:
 - Reduce the number of First Time Entrants (FTE) to the Youth Justice System
 - Reduce Re-offending
 - Reduce the Use of Custody

Local Context

- 2.8 First Time Entrants: The number of young people entering the youth justice system for the first time has continued to fall in Buckinghamshire. Data for October 2020 to September 2021 shows a rate of 132 young people per 100,000 of the local 10-17 year old population, which represents stronger performance than that seen nationally, across Thames Valley and within the YOT family. This also represents a reduction from the 153 young people per 100,000 entering the youth justice system for the first time between October 2019 and September 2020.
- 2.9 Reoffending: The rate of young people reoffending in Buckinghamshire is currently lower than that seen nationally, across the South East, Thames Valley and the YOT

family. For the January to March 2020 cohort, only 16.2% of young people went on to reoffend within a 12 month follow up period. This represents a total of 6 reoffenders. This particular tracking period included 2 periods of extended national lockdown which in part explains why the rate is so much lower than the 31.3% figure for the January to March 2019 cohort. However, all of the comparator groups were also affected by the pandemic in the same way. The data therefore shows particularly strong performance in Buckinghamshire.

- 2.10 Use of Custody: The rate of young people receiving a custodial sentence per 1000 of the local 10–17-year-old population has risen slightly to 0.07 from 0.04. This represents an increase from 2 custodial sentences in 2020 to 4 in 2021. Performance is stronger than seen at a national level, is in line with Thames Valley and only slightly above that seen across the South East and within the YOT family.
- 2.11 There was a significant reduction in the number of new custodial remands and in associated bed nights during 2021-22. The 876 bed nights accrued in 2020-21 was in part due to lengthy remands of almost a year for 2 young people charged with serious violent offences.
- 2.12 The YOS reports quarterly on Prevention cases that have gone on to become a First Time Entrant within 12 months of beginning their intervention with the service. Of the 66 young people engaged in preventative work between October 2019 and March 2021, only 3 (4.5%) went on to receive a substantive outcome within 12 months.

Priorities for the coming year

- 2.13 Whilst 2021/22 saw the YOS still in a phase of recovery from the pandemic, there remained a clear focus on achieving our overarching long-term strategic priorities and maintaining strong performance against national and local indicators. The development of ongoing work with partners to influence systemic change and to increase the targeted secondary prevention offer has contributed to the falling numbers of First Time Entrants. For the first time ever, the YOS now works with more children in a voluntary prevention and diversion capacity than those on a statutory basis (Youth Conditional Cautions and Court Orders). This is a significant shift that demonstrates the effectiveness of recent developments in prevention provision and the intention is to continue on this trajectory.
- 2.14 The following key strategic priorities that have helped to drive this good progress in recent years will remain, and a continued focus on developing the transition towards a predominantly prevention-based model of working will cut across all three.
 - Continuing to address disproportionality
 - Addressing exploitation of young people
 - Strengthening an evidence-based model of practice / focus on intervening as early as possible.

- 2.15 The long-term vision for the YOS will be to continue to expand the prevention offer, specifically by exploring funding opportunities to grow the existing model of youth work support for schools. These priorities are consistent with other local long term strategic priorities, such as those set by the Safer Bucks Board and the Violence Reduction Unit.
- 2.16 As referenced earlier in this report, data on numbers of children and young people who receive prevention interventions that go on to enter the Youth Justice System, demonstrate that this approach is effective. However, we also know that the picture locally is complex and that there are some children and young people whom this approach will not benefit, such as those who move in to Buckinghamshire from other areas.
- 2.17 It is unclear whether the reduction in first time entrants will be sustained or if we will see an increase as partners in the Police and other areas of the justice system, return to pre-pandemic ways of working. We continue to work hard to prevent this from happening through the increased focus on prevention work whilst ensuring we retain sufficient capacity to deliver the statutory Youth Justice work should numbers increase.

3. Other options considered

- 3.1 N/A.

4. Legal and Financial implications

- 4.1 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.
- 4.2 The Youth Offending Service is funded through a combination of grant funding from the Youth Justice Board and contributions from the partners. Contributions may also be in kind, for example staffing employed by partner organisations but dedicated to the YOS.
- 4.3 The following partnership resources make up the Youth Offending Service budget for 2022-2023:

Partner Contributions 2022-2023	Staffing Costs (£)	Posts In Kind	Other Delegated Funds (£)	Total (£)
Buckinghamshire Council	694,121		65,547	759,668
Thames Valley Police		175,348		175,348
Clinical Commissioning Group		76,285		76,285
National Probation Service		22,680	8,580	31,260
Police Crime Commissioner	134,663		65,000	199,663
Youth Justice Board Grant	454,838			454,838
TOTAL	1,283,622	274,313	139,127	1,697,062

4.4 The council contribution to the budget has increased by £29,581, to cover inflationary staffing costs. The annual Youth Justice Board grant has increased by £40,779, which will fund direct interventions with young people. Thames Valley Police, National Probation Service and CCG continue to provide posts in kind and contributions from the Police and Crime Commissioner fund 2 prevention projects in schools.

5. Corporate implications

5.1 N/A

6. Local councillors & community boards consultation & views

6.1 N/A

7. Communication, engagement & further consultation

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

8. Next steps and review

8.1 The Youth Justice Plan should be reviewed and agreed annually. Progress of the plan will be monitored through the YOS Partnership Management Board which reports into the Safer Buckinghamshire Board.

9. Background papers

- Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2022-2023

10. Your questions and views (for key decisions)

10.1 If you have any questions about the matters contained in this report please get in touch with the author of this report. If you have any views that you would like the cabinet member to consider please inform the democratic services team. This can be done by telephone [01296 382343] or email [democracy@buckinghamshire.gov.uk]

