



Report to Council

Date:	20 September 2023
Title:	Buckinghamshire Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2023-2024
Relevant councillor(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 12 September 2023

1. Executive summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present the Buckinghamshire Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2023-2024. The Youth Justice Strategic 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 Strategic 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:

- i. How youth justice services in their area are to be provided and funded; and
- ii. 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 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. The final plan is produced following consultation with partners via the Youth Offending Service Partnership board.

2.5 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.

2.6 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:

- i. Reduce the number of First Time Entrants (FTE) to the Youth Justice System
- ii. Reduce Re-offending
- iii. Reduce the Use of Custody

2.7 From April 2023 the Ministry of Justice also requires all YOTs to submit performance data against the following 10 additional Key Performance Indicators (KPI’s):

- Accommodation
- Education Training and Employment
- Special Educational Needs or Disability (SEND)/Additional Learning Needs (ALN)

- Mental Health and Emotional Well-being
- Substance Misuse
- Out of Court Disposals
- Management Board Attendance
- Wider Services
- Serious Violence
- Victims

Local Context

- 2.8 The Youth Offending Service continues to play a key role in preventing offending, reoffending, reducing the use of custody where appropriate, and delivering services for victims and safeguarding the most vulnerable.
- 2.9 The data provided below is the latest available from the Ministry of Justice for each measure. Reoffending data appears delayed as this includes a 12 month follow on period to track any potential reoffending.
- i. First time entrants: The number of young people entering the youth justice system for the first time in Buckinghamshire has continued to fall. The October 2021 to September 2022 period shows a rate of 125 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 represents a reduction from the 132 per 100,000 entering the system in Buckinghamshire between October 2020 and September 2021.
 - ii. Reoffending: The rate of young people reoffending in Buckinghamshire has risen to 30% for the January to March 2021 cohort, with performance stronger than that seen Nationally but weaker than that seen across the Southeast, Thames Valley and YOT family. This is a notable increase during a period when most other comparator groups saw a decrease. In actual numbers, this represents an increase from 6 young people reoffending in the January to March 2020 cohort in comparison with 9 in the January to March 2021 cohort. The overall tracking group reduced from 37 to 30 young people between these two periods which has also had an impact on the percentage increase.

- iii. Use of Custody: The rate of young people receiving a custodial sentence per 1000 of the local 10-17 year old population has decreased from 0.07 in 2021 to 0.03 in 2022. In actual numbers, this represents a reduction from 4 to 2 young people. Performance is stronger than that seen across the Thames Valley, South East, Nationally and within the YOT family.
- iv. Data is also monitored on numbers of young people remanded to custody and the number of bed nights this entails. 1 young person was remanded in 2022/23 and this represented a reduction in bed nights in comparison with the previous financial year.

Priorities for the coming year

- 2.10 2022-23 saw the Youth Offending Service continue to expand the scope of prevention delivery, with the volume of non-statutory out of court interventions overtaking statutory work (Youth Conditional Cautions and Court Orders) for the first time. In January 2023, His Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP) published their report on the Inspection of Buckinghamshire Youth Offending Service. An overall rating of 'Good' was made, with a number of strengths recognised. There were also some very clear areas for development identified, predominantly in relation to out of court disposals.
- 2.11 Important activity on improving and developing out of court disposals has already begun and will continue throughout 2023/24. This coincides with direct funding from the Ministry of Justice for all Youth Justice Services to increase the scope of out of court disposal work as part of the 'Turnaround' programme. As a result, there has been a significant amount of developmental work in this space which will see diversionary work offered to more children at risk of entering the youth justice system.
- 2.12 Despite a significant focus on ethnic disproportionality at strategic and operational level for several years, rates of disproportionality are once again high, and this will therefore remain a key strategic focus for the Board, as we continue to explore ways of influencing the key drivers and seeking systemic change through a partnership approach.
- 2.13 There will also be an increased focus on developing child first ways of working at strategic and operational level. This will mean greater involvement of children and young people in key decision making, increasing the scope of feedback and more work on improved outcomes as a result of the feedback received. There will be significant work undertaken to bring an increased child first focus to assessments.

- 2.14 The Youth Offending Service will continue to work in close partnership with colleagues in the Missing and Exploitation Hub and wider Children's Social Care. 2023/24 will see Buckinghamshire Children's Social Care Adolescent Service launched and the Youth Offending Service will play an important role in this, working in close partnership.
- 2.15 The partnership board maintains strategic oversight of data regarding groups that are over-represented in the Youth Justice System. Strategic links with the Opportunity Bucks project will allow the partnership board to analyse patterns of disproportionality within different geographical areas of the county. This will provide further opportunities to address gaps in provision.

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 partners. Contributions may also be in kind, for example staffing employed by partner organisations but dedicated to the YOS.

The following partnership resources make up the Youth Offending Service budget for 2023-2024:



Partner Contributions 2023-2024	Staffing Costs (£)	Posts In Kind	Other Delegated Funds (£)	Total (£)
Buckinghamshire Council	686,051		40,000	726,051
Thames Valley Police		90,657		90,657
Integrated Care Board		76,285		76,285
National Probation Service		29,431	8,580	38,011
Police Crime Commissioner	134,663		65,000	199,663
Youth Justice Board Grant	475,306			475,306
Ministry of Justice (Turnaround)	114,685			114,685
Total	1,410,705	196,373	113,580	1,720,658

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 The Youth Justice Strategic Plan will be communicated to partners via the YOS Partnership 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 Board which reports into the Safer Buckinghamshire Board.

9. Background papers

9.1 Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2023-24

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 email [democracy@buckinghamshire.gov.uk]

