



<b>Title</b>	Reading Youth Justice Plan 2023-2024
<b>Purpose of the report</b>	To note the report for information
<b>Report status</b>	Public report
<b>Report author</b>	Lara Patel, Executive Director for Children's Services
<b>Lead Councillor</b>	Cllr Graeme Hoskin
<b>Corporate priority</b>	Thriving Communities
<b>Recommendations</b>	That the Youth Justice Plan 2023-2024 be adopted, as attached to the report at Appendix 1.

## **1. Executive Summary**

- 1.1. The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 places a duty on the Local Authority to produce an annual Youth Justice Plan. The production of a plan is also a condition of the Youth Justice Board Grant. Once agreed the plan will be published on the Reading Borough Council website. The plan is attached to this report as Appendix 1.
- 1.2. The production and sign-off of the plan is overseen by the multi-agency Youth Justice Partnership through the Youth Justice Management Board which is independently chaired. The plan was signed off by the Board in June 2023. The structure of the attached plan complies with the expectations of the Youth Justice Board.
- 1.3. The plan reports the performance of the Youth Justice Service (previously the Youth Offending Service) for 2022/23 against the national and local performance indicators. Overall, the YJS has performed well against national and statistical family comparators in this period, although our figures for First Time Entrants into the criminal justice system remain higher than neighbours. Local analysis has identified areas for improvement that will enable this performance to continue.

## **2. Policy Context**

- 2.1. The Annual Youth Justice Plan is a statutory requirement of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, requiring the local authority to publish a plan on an annual basis. The plan contributes to the strategic theme of "Thriving Communities" as set out in the Corporate Plan.
- 2.2. The Youth Justice Plan was considered by the Adult Social Care, Children's Services & Education Committee at its meeting on 18 October 2023 (Minute 16 refers) and is now being presented to Council for formal adoption.

## **3. The Proposal**

- 3.1. The 20/23 plan describes the Youth Justice Service and partners' performance against the national indicators, namely, Reducing First Time Entrants (FTE's) into the criminal justice system, reducing reoffending, Reducing the numbers of young people going to custody. The plan also provides further analysis about safeguarding, managing the risk of harm to others and other local performance indicators.
- 3.2. The annual report identified the following areas as priorities for 2023/34:

- 3.2.1. Reducing first time entrants into the criminal justice system
- 3.2.2. Addressing disproportionality within the criminal justice system
- 3.2.3. Reducing the impact of serious violence
- 3.2.4. The increased participation and engagement of children, young people and their families in the service.

#### **4. Contribution to Strategic Aims**

- 4.1. The Youth Justice Plan makes a major contribution to the theme of “Thriving Communities” as set out in the Corporate Plan. It does this through its work in addressing the three national indicators as well as through the four locally established priorities.

#### **5. Environmental and Climate Implications**

- 5.1. There are no environmental or climate implications linked to the Youth Justice Plan as its primary focus is on diverting young people from the criminal justice system and reducing the impact of serious violence in the community.

#### **6. Community Engagement**

- 6.1. Feedback from young people, parents, victims and partner agencies have been used to inform the plan and priorities.

#### **7. Equality Implications**

- 7.1. The annual plan identifies key priorities for Youth Justice for 2023/24. Whilst the priorities cover the whole borough there will be specific individuals and groups for whom the plan will have more relevance. The needs of young people who offend are explicitly addressed by the plan. Many of these young people experience social isolation, poor mental health, deprivation and learning and communication difficulties.
- 7.2. Addressing disproportionality within the criminal justice system is one of the priorities for the coming year and further details of this are set out in the plan.

#### **8. Other Relevant Considerations**

- 8.1. All other relevant considerations are contained within the plan.

#### **9. Legal Implications**

- 9.1. The publication of the plan will fulfil Reading Borough Council’s legal responsibilities in accordance with the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.
- 9.2. The provision of a multi-agency Youth Justice Service by Reading Borough Council in partnership with the National Probation Service, Clinical Commissioning Group and Thames Valley Police ensures we are compliant with the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.
- 9.3. Reading’s Constitution requires the Plan to be adopted by the Council, in accordance with section 3(2)(a) of the Local Authorities (Committee System)(England Regulations 2012).

#### **10. Financial Implications**

- 10.1. The plan sets out the financial contributions from the relevant statutory partners, which is determined at a local level and has largely been maintained for 2023/24. The Youth Justice Board contribution (the national contribution) is based on a national funding formula and although at the time of writing, this contribution has yet to be confirmed, we anticipate this being in line with last year’s level.

#### **11. Timetable for Implementation**

- 11.1. The plan sets out a timetable for implementation.

## **12. Background Papers**

12.1. There are none.

### **Appendices**

1. The Youth Justice Plan 2023/24 is attached

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The financial implications arising from the proposals set out in this report are set out below:-

#### **1. Revenue Implications**

The plan sets out the financial contributions from the relevant statutory partners, which is determined at a local level and has largely been maintained for 2023/24. The Youth Justice Board contribution (the national contribution) is based on a national funding formula and although at the time of writing, this contribution has yet to be confirmed, we anticipate this being in line with last year's level. There are no other financial implications arising from the plan.

#### **2. Capital Implications**

There are no capital implications arising from the plan.

#### **3. Value for Money (VFM)**

There are no VFM implications arising from the plan as it is solely service focused within the exiting budget.

#### **4. Risk Assessment.**

The only significant financial risk relates to the YJB's failure to confirm the amount of the annual settlement. However, they have communicated that we should expect this to be in line with previous years, that this is simply awaiting sign off by ministers and in fact, this type of delay on this specific grant is not unusual.