



16 October 2024

Title	Reading Youth Justice Plan 2024-2025
Purpose of the report	To note the report for information
Report status	Public report
Report author	Lara Patel, Executive Director for Children's Services
Lead Councillor	Cllr Wendy Griffiths, Lead Member for Children
Corporate priority	Thriving Communities
Recommendations	1. That the Committee notes the contents of the Youth Justice Plan

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 on 9th July 2024. 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 2023/24 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 improved 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.

3. The Proposal

- 3.1. The 24/25 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 and reducing the number 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 Plan identified the following areas as priorities for 2024/25:
 - 3.2.1. Reducing first time entrants into the criminal justice system
 - 3.2.2. Reducing reoffending
 - 3.2.3. Reducing the use of custody

- 3.2.4. Addressing disproportionality within the criminal justice system
- 3.2.5. Reducing the impact of serious youth violence
- 3.2.6. Embedding Child First and Identity Development Practice as the practice model across the partnership
- 3.2.7. Improving outcomes for victims of youth crime

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 2024/25. 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. 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 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, Integrated Care Board and Thames Valley Police ensures we are compliant with the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.

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 2024/25. The Youth Justice Board contribution (the national contribution) is based on a national funding formula. The YJB contribution for the current year is confirmed as £319,009. This is an increase of £844 on the previous year.

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 2024/25 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 2024/25. The Youth Justice Board contribution (the national contribution) is based on a national funding formula. There are no other financial implications arising directly 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 existing budget.

4. Risk Assessment.

No identified risk.