

LONDON BOROUGH OF CROYDON

REPORT:	CABINET MEETING	
DATE OF DECISION	22nd NOVEMBER 2023	
REPORT TITLE:	Youth Justice Plan 2023/24	
CORPORATE DIRECTOR	CORPORATE DIRECTOR Debbie Jones	
LEAD OFFICER:	DIRECTOR – Róisín Madden HEAD OF SERVICE: Leana Ebanks SERVICE MANAGER: Emma Carter	
LEAD MEMBER:	Maria Gatland, Cabinet Member for Children & Young People	
KEY DECISION?	NO	This is not a key decision as does not meet Financial or Community Impact Criteria.
CONTAINS EXEMPT INFORMATION?	NO	
WARDS AFFECTED:	All	

1 SUMMARY OF REPORT

- 1.1** The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 places a statutory obligation upon each Local Authority to create a local Youth Justice Team, whose primary aim is to prevent and reduce the offending behaviour of children (aged 10–18-year-olds) alongside key partners. A further obligation is placed upon each local Team to create a yearly Youth Justice Plan setting out strategic and operational objectives for the forthcoming 12 months.
- 1.2** The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 requires each plan to have Council approval and endorsement. Historically this endorsement has been sighted and governed through the local Youth Justice Crime Board. However, the Ministry of Justice has reverted to the Act and has requested that given the public nature of this document such plans are approved at Full Council. Youth justice plans must be signed off by Full Council in

accordance with Regulation 4 of the 'Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000'.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

For the reasons set out in the report [and its appendices], the following is recommended:

- 2.1** Executive Mayor recommends the Youth Justice Plan to Full Council for approval.

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1** To comply with legal expectations as defined in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and in accordance with conditions of the Youth Justice Grant.

4 BACKGROUND AND DETAILS

- 4.1** The Youth Justice Grant, a funding stream issued to each Local Authority to help with the delivery of Services requires the creation of a Youth Justice Plan to be submitted to Council as part of the grant conditions. The condition of the grant is that the devised plan, which is created in partnership, has to be endorsed by Full Council. Failure to endorse could result in funding loss.
- 4.2** The Youth Justice Plan has 26 sub-sections – the template is a prescribed template issued by the Youth Justice Board (YJB) to ensure all aspects of the Youth Justice Service's functions are fully considered and critiqued. The Plan is aimed at the previous year marking achievements and challenges whilst looking forward and setting a plan for the forthcoming year.
- 4.3** The plan begins by noting the Youth Justice Service's vision – to ensure all children known to the Service are provided with the best possible opportunities through the offer of holistic services to desist from future contact with the Criminal Justice System. This principle is in line with a Child First Approach which is core to Youth Justice delivery and included within Section 3 of the plan. Subsequently, section 4 of the plan details 'voice participation' and ensures the plan considers the voice of those who access the Service(s).
- 4.4** The plan provides local context (pages 5-9) detailing the overall Youth Population within the borough and the number of children who access the Service. Gender, ethnicity, religion, social care status, locality and education are all reported on providing local context of the children known and providing data on protective characteristics.

- 4.5** The plan also provides the number of children it receives from other Local Authorities and those placed in the borough via temporary arrangements, often with relatives. It also notes how many Croydon children are placed outside of the borough. When this occurs there is case management guidance issued by the Youth Justice Board and Ministry of Justice that provides expectations on both the home local authority and the host local authority. To note the area in which the child resides is identified as being the Youth Justice area responsible for delivery of interventions with the home local authority retaining key decision making (such as enforcement action when statutory orders are not complied with).
- 4.6** The plan sets out the Governance arrangements for the Youth Justice Service including frequency of these arrangements (Pages 11-14) and details additional scrutiny arrangements to ensure the Service is meeting with both national and local expectations and Key Performance Indicators.
- 4.7** Pages 14-21 of the Plan looks back at the previous year 2022/23 looking at the objectives set, and progress made. The objectives for 2022/23 included: addressing the ongoing issue of disproportionately and the creation of a Disproportionately Action Plan detailing the Service's commitment in all practice areas to challenge and influence over-representation, the Service's contribution to reducing Serious Youth Violence with Partners, evolving the Service's Health Offer for Children known to the Service, Diverting Children away from the System using Prevention Projects and Interventions, The services contribution to safeguarding frameworks – specifically contextual safeguarding and county-lines, reducing re-offending, reducing NEET numbers, widening the resettlement offer for those being released from custody and ensuring the Service is victim centric.
- 4.8** The plan continues to outline resources and performance for 2022/23 as measured by key performance indicators. Further sections look at over-representation in finer detail confirming that boys from Black and mixed backgrounds are more represented than other groups but also confirming that there is an over-representation of children known to social care within the cohort particularly children with a looked after status, inclusive of children placed in the borough by other Local Authorities. The plan provides descriptive information and data on a number of areas: Prevention offer, Diversion, Education, Restorative Approaches, Custody (including information related to detention in Police Custody) and constructive use of resettlement.
- 4.9** The plan looks at Standards for the Youth Justice System and provides data and comparative data with other local areas, in addition to providing an analysis of workforce development and how practice is underpinned by evidence-based practice.
- 4.10** The report finishes with a reflection on the learnings from 2022/23 and integrates this into a new plan for the year 2023/24. Effectively the plan has similar strategic headings with the adding of one new priority this being worked related to domestic abuse and extra-familial harm. (Pages 61-65). The plan details the identified challenges and risks posed to achieve all priorities and objectives and efforts to overcome these.

- 4.11** Croydon Youth Justice Service is due to be inspected during the year 2024. The Youth Justice Plan identifies the Service's strengths and priorities for the forthcoming year to ensure practice standards are being met in accordance with Inspectorate Guidance.
- 4.12** The Youth Justice Plan has been created synergistically with the Council's Youth Safety Plan, which details how the partnership is currently and intends to address serious youth violence. The Youth Justice Plan contributes to and is informed by the Youth Safety Plan to ensure a joined-up, co-ordinated approach to tackling serious youth violence across partner agencies in Croydon.

5 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 5.1** There are no other practical options as approach is required as part of Grant Funding and legislation.

6 CONSULTATION

- 6.1** The Youth Justice Plan has had the input of all primary partners as defined by the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 – Police, Social Care, Health, Probation and Education. The plan has also had input from Youth Justice Practitioners, Children known to the Service, Voluntary Community Sector, Community Safety.
- 6.2** The Youth Justice Plan was presented to the Scrutiny Children & Young People Sub-Committee on 10th October 2023. Members enquired as to the progress from the prior year's plan, the reasons behind the slight increase in females within the YJS cohort and sought clarification on the meaning of 'unique vulnerabilities'. Members heard clarifying detail as to the interventions provided to young women by the service and the interface with other council and voluntary sector services. Members enquired as to the extent of the partnership contribution to the plan and heard about the role of the Youth Crime Board in holding all partners to account for the partnership. The role of the Youth Justice Board was discussed, both regional and nationally. The use of data and qualitative reports to understand the quality of practice was also discussed. Members enquired further as to the impact of the disproportionality action plan given the unequal representation of black and other global majority children in the YJS cohort. Members questioned officers regarding the evident voice of children, parents and carers in the plan and the work of the service; officers described co-production activities with young people and accepted that more work could be done to involve parents and carers.
- 6.3** The sub-committee recommended that there should be greater involvement of parents and carers in the development of the next Youth Justice Plan for 24/25 [Minutes details on public web site.](#)

7 CONTRIBUTION TO COUNCIL PRIORITIES

- 7.1 The Youth Justice Plan aligns itself with other strategies including the Community Safety Strategy and the Executive Mayor’s Business Plan priorities – Children and young in Croydon have the change to thrive, learn and fulfil their potential.

8 IMPLICATIONS

8.1 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

	Current Year	Medium Term Financial Strategy – 3-year forecast		
	2023/24 £’000	2024/25 £’000	2025/26 £’000	2026/27 £’000
Revenue Budget Available				
Expenditure	£2,171	£2,171	£2,171	£2,171
Income	(£1,021)	(£1,021)	(£1,021)	(£1,021)
Net budget	£1,150	£1,150	£1,150	£1,150

- 8.1.1 The Youth Justice Team is a statutory service funded by various statutory partners. The net budget is not expected to reduce significantly over the next three years.

- 8.1.2 Comments approved by Maiyani Henry-Hercules, Head of Finance on behalf of the Director of Finance. (Date 08/08/2023)

8.2 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.2.1 Local Authorities are legally required to form a youth offending team with the statutory partners named in the Crime & Disorder Act 1998.

- 8.2.2 Under s.40 of the Crime & Disorder Act 1998 it is the duty of each local authority, after consultation with the relevant persons and bodies, to formulate and implement a youth justice plan each year setting out how youth justice services are to be provided and funded in their area, and how the youth offending team will be composed and funded. The Youth Justice Plan 2023 meets these legal obligations.

- 8.2.3 The Equality Strategy, which includes the equality objectives, is part of the Council’s Policy Framework under Article 4 of the Constitution and must be adopted or approved by Full Council. In addition, the adoption or approval of plans and strategies comprising the Policy Framework must comply with the provisions of the Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules in Part 4.C of the Constitution

Comments approved by Doutimi Aseh, Head of Social Care & Education Law on behalf of the Director of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer. (Date 08/09/23)

8.3 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

8.3.1 Under the Public Sector Equality Duty of the Equality Act 2010, decision makers must evidence consideration of any potential impacts of proposals on groups who share the protected characteristics, before decisions are taken. This includes any decisions relating to how authorities act as employers; how they develop, evaluate and review policies; how they design, deliver and evaluate services, and also how they commission and procure services from others.

8.3.2 Section 149 of the Act requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it; and
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

8.3.3 The Youth Justice Plan specifically highlights ongoing overrepresentation of specific groups – children from Black and mixed heritage backgrounds predominately males but also females. Data contained within the Plan also confirms that this overrepresentation becomes more stark within the custody and higher tier statutory order cohort. The Youth Justice Plan contains an appendix 3 titled 'Disproportionately Action Plan' which details the Service(s) commitment in all areas of practice to ensure challenge is made to other parts of the Criminal Justice System and delivery of Service is culturally and gender sensitive. This challenge supports our aim outlined in the George Floyd Race Matters Pledge to work towards becoming an anti-racist organisation by embedding this in our strategies, actions and behaviours and by making a difference to the lived experience of our communities.

8.3.4 Comments approved by Denise McCausland Equalities Programme Manager 26/07/23.

9 APPENDICES

9.1 Appendix A - Youth Justice Plan 2023/24

10 BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

10.1 None