



REPORT TITLE: Youth Justice Plan 2024/25

Cabinet Date	24 July 2024
Cabinet Member	Councillor Stephen Davies Cabinet Member for Children’s Safeguarding and Early Years
Key Decision	Yes
Purpose of Report	To seek Cabinet’s recommendation that Council approve Gloucestershire’s Youth Justice Plan 2024/25.
Recommendations	To recommend the Youth Justice Plan 2024/25, attached at Appendix 1 to Council for approval.
Reasons for Recommendations	Gloucestershire County Council is the accountable body for youth justice services in the county and is required to work with local partners to bring forward an annual youth justice plan. The Council’s constitution requires that the plan be considered by Cabinet prior to approval by Council.
Resource Implications	There are no direct resource implications arising from this decision.
Background Documents	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/youth-justice-plans-guidance-for-youth-justice-services/youth-justice-plans-guidance-for-youth-justice-services
Statutory Authority	Crime and Disorder Act 1998
Divisional Councillor(s)	All
Officer	Clarisse Forgues Programme Manager E-mail: clarisse.forgues@gloucestershire.gov.uk
Timeline	The Youth Justice Plan will be considered by Gloucestershire’s Youth Justice Management Board, prior to submission to the National Youth Justice Board by 30 June 2024. Subject to Cabinet’s recommendation, the plan will be submitted for approval by Council on 11 September 2024.

Background

- 1.0** Local authorities have a statutory duty to submit an Annual Youth Justice Plan relating to their provision of Youth Justice Services (YJS). Section 40 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 sets out the Youth Justice Partnership's responsibilities in producing a plan. It states that it is the duty of each relevant local authority, after consultation with local partner agencies, to formulate and implement an Annual Youth Justice Plan, setting out how youth justice services are to be provided and funded, how they will operate and what functions will be carried out.
- 2.0** Local governance for the YJS is provided by Gloucestershire Youth Justice Management Board (YJMB) comprising of representatives from the statutory partners – local authority, police, NHS and probation services, alongside relevant local agencies, including the Judiciary. The Youth Justice Plan 2024/25 is required to be approved by the YJMB prior to its submission to the Youth Justice Board no later than 30th June 2024.
- 3.0** Youth justice plans, in England only, must be signed off by the full Council in accordance with 'Regulation 4 of the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000'. If this has not taken place before 30 June 2024, the statutory guidance allows the plan to be submitted with the approval of the Youth Justice Management Board with confirmation of the full sign-off submitted at a later date.
- 4.0** The Youth Justice Board (YJB), as the relevant national body, has set out its expectations for the format and structure of youth justice plans for 2024/25 in their guidance document 'Youth Justice Plans: YJB Practice Guidance (March 2024)'. The YJB planning guidance requires that local plans address the following:

 - Introduction, vision, and strategy
 - Child First
 - Voice of the child
 - Governance, leadership and partnership arrangements
 - Board Development
 - Progress on previous plan
 - Resources and Services
 - Performance
 - National key performance indicators
 - Priorities
 - Children from groups which are over represented.
 - Prevention
 - Diversion
 - Education
 - Restorative approaches and victims
 - Serious violence and exploitation
 - Detention in police custody
 - Remands

- Use of custody
- Constructive resettlement
- Standards for children in the justice system
- Workforce Development
- Evidence-based practice and innovation
- Evaluation
- Service development plan
- Service development
- Challenges, risks and issues

5.0 The performance of YJS is determined by reference to a range of national and local performance metrics. At a national level, there are three key determinants: -

- The number and rate of first time entrants (FTE) to the criminal justice system – those young people receiving a substantial, sanction based outcome.
- The re offending rate of a tracked cohort – this includes the number of young people committing further offences and the number of offences on average each has committed.
- The use of custody as a rate per 10,000 young people aged 10 – 17 years old.

6.0 In 2022, the Youth Justice Board (YJB) expanded the range of youth justice performance indicators, as set out below, to provide for a holistic picture of service effectiveness. The change in approach acknowledges that diverting young people from the criminal justice system and reducing offending requires a ‘whole system’ approach, encompassing activity beyond direct provision by the youth justice services. YJS were required to report on the new performance indicators from April 2023 however underlying issues with some indicators has required an incremental approach to be followed, from the first submission to the YJB in July 2023.

- Suitable accommodation.
- Education, training and employment.
- Special educational needs and disabilities.
- Mental health care and emotional wellbeing.
- Substance misuse.
- Out-of-court disposals.
- Links to wider services.
- Management Board attendance.
- Serious violence.
- Victims.

7.0 Gloucestershire Youth Justice Services had previously been delivered by the Youth Support Team (Shaw Trust/Prospects) on a commissioned basis, as part of the Youth Support Service, with the contract period concluding on 1 July 2024. Invitations to tender for a revised service, reflecting changes to performance and practice standards introduced by YJB, were issued in November 2023, with the process concluding in February 2024. The current provider opted not to bid and whilst the council received a tender submission from an alternative provider, the evaluation process did not recommend award due to several unresolved issues. A further tender exercise into a very limited market, at least for youth justice services, that had been tested through the

first procurement exercise, was not considered to be a practicable option. Consequently, the process for in-sourcing commenced in June 2024, alongside a limited extension (3 months) with the current provider to ensure a smooth transition, with the revised service commencing 1 October 2024.

8.0 The insourcing of youth justice will bring delivery arrangements in line with the model prevailing elsewhere and provide the opportunity for further integration with an improving children's service. Gloucestershire YJS is generally performing well against key metrics when compared with both national and comparator performance. There had been a question about local reoffending data, which was not aligning with national data, which indicated higher rates of recidivism than understood locally. This is subject to joint exploration with the YJB to ensure the confidence of local leaders in our data is justified.

9.0 Although Gloucestershire YJS is generally performing well, there are considerable national and local challenges in continuing to improve outcomes for children and young people encountering the youth justice system and in protecting the wider community. These are reflected in the priorities for 2024/25, which along with measures to support workforce development, and enhancing the engagement and voice of children and young people in youth justice, is built around the following key aims:

- The successful transition and mobilisation of Gloucestershire's Youth Justice Service to Gloucestershire County Council by 30 September 2024.
- Child First Youth Justice and implementation of the Child First Approach into practical service delivery.
- Reduction in racial disparity within Gloucestershire YJS through the delivery of a bespoke 6-month project.
- Improving the health and wellbeing of children within the youth justice system.
- Ensuring an effective response to child victims of crime.

The Youth Justice Plan will be submitted to the Youth Justice Board at national level by 30 June 2024 and be subject to regular review by Gloucestershire's Youth Justice Management Board. Quarterly review meetings between YJB regional leads, Youth Justice Management Board Chairs and Heads of Youth Justice Services provide a further layer of scrutiny and oversight of local service effectiveness. The Chair of Gloucestershire's YMB and Director of Children's Services met with YJB Regional Leads in June to provide assurance on the measures put in place to enable a smooth transition to direct delivery.

Options

10.0 There is a statutory requirement for Gloucestershire County Council, working with local partner agencies, to publish an annual Youth Justice Plan. The local Youth Justice Plan is also required to be submitted to the Youth Justice Board for their approval as a condition of their grant funding.

Risks

11.0 There are several risks identified:

1. **Risk:** The Youth Justice Plan is not effective in tackling key issues including new entrants to the justice system and re-offending. **Mitigation:** The Youth Justice Service is currently performing well against key performance metrics and the current plan set out further measures to improve effectiveness.
2. **Risk:** The transition to an in-house delivery model is poorly handled and causes disruption to the justice system, impacting on children and the wider community. **Mitigation:** A comprehensive transition plan has been established, supported by a transition working group, alongside a contract extension until 30 September 2024 with the current provider.
3. **Risk:** There is a risk that the outcomes and experience of children is disproportionate and unfair, based on their ethnicity or gender. **Mitigation:** A programme of training on disproportionality and work with partners around their core processes are key elements within the Youth Justice Plan.
4. **Risk:** Partners are insufficiently engaged in the administration and effectiveness of Youth Justice in Gloucestershire. **Mitigation:** The Youth Management Board provides oversight of partner agency support for the YJS and delivery of the annual Youth Justice Plan.

Financial implications

- 12.0** Gloucestershire's YJS is funded by a combination of direct grant funding from the Youth Justice Board and contributions, both financial and material, from the statutory partner agencies identified within the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. Details of local funding and resourcing are set out in the Youth Justice Plan 2024/25, attached at Appendix 1. There are no direct financial implications arising from this decision and funding for the current year is considered to be sufficient to meet service needs.
- 13.0** The transition cost of transferring the Youth Support team, including Youth Justice, from Prospects to be an in-house provided service will be met from funding which has not been allocated to date for the social care transformation in year. Following the transition the funding required to support the on-going service will be identified by Children's Services.

Climate Change and Ecological implications

Has the Climate Impact Assessment Tool (CIAT) been completed? Yes

A Climate Impact Assessment Tool has been completed. Due to the wide spectrum of areas the Youth Justice Plan covers, it is difficult to assess specific climate impacts, however in general, the following should be prioritised to help reduce climate impacts;

- Opting for suppliers who exhibit sustainable practises when procuring related services.
- Requesting staff and users (where applicable) to walk, cycle, car share or utilise public transport instead of private vehicle use.

- Sites should be encouraged to be appropriately insulated and utilise renewable energy systems to reduce fossil fuel reliance, where possible. Staff and service users should also be encouraged to adopt energy saving practises such as turning off equipment when not in use, turning off taps etc.
- Items should only be purchased if necessary, e.g. if existing items cannot be repaired and are no longer fit for purpose. Hiring of items is preferred to purchase and single use goods should not be purchased unless necessary to prevent waste.

Has an Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) been produced, or will one be undertaken at a later stage? No

14.0 There are no direct climate change implications arising from the completion of the Youth Justice Plan.

Equality implications

Has an Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) been completed? Yes

15.0 A key aspect of the Youth Justice Plan and work of Gloucestershire's Youth Justice Service is to ensure that the administration of Youth Justice is fair and non-discriminatory. Current data evidence that children and young people from mixed and BAME ethnic groups and females are over represented within Gloucestershire's Youth Justice Service population. The Youth Justice Plan sets out a range of actions to address this, with performance reported on a regular basis to the Youth Justice Management Board.

16.0 A further focus within the Youth Justice Plan 2024/25 will be the extent to which other vulnerable groups, such as looked after children and children with behavioural, emotional, or mental health needs become involved in the Youth Justice System. The Children First programme which takes a restorative, trauma informed approach is key to ensuring that young people, who are vulnerable, and/or disadvantaged, do not become labelled by the system with all that implies for their longer-term prospects.

Cabinet Members should read and consider the Equalities Impact Assessment to satisfy themselves as decision makers that due regard has been given.

Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) implications

17.0 There are no direct Data Protection Impact Assessment implications arising from the completion of the Youth Justice Plan 2024/25.

Social value implications

18.0 There is a considerable body of research evidence that the early involvement of young people in the criminal justice system has a significant and adverse impact on their subsequent outcomes. An effective YJS and local youth justice plan are key to diverting young people in the first instance and preventing the escalation of those

young people already in contact with youth justice services, which together deliver significant social value for the wider community of Gloucestershire.

Consultation feedback

19.0 In developing the Youth Justice Plan, GCC has undertaken extensive consultation with local partners and stakeholders working through Gloucestershire's Youth Justice Management Board. Feedback has been positive, and the plan will be subject to approval by the Youth Justice Management Board, prior to submission to the Youth Justice Board by 30 June 2024.

Officer recommendations

20.0 Gloucestershire County Council, working with local partner agencies, have taken the lead in developing the local Youth Justice Plan. The plan proposes an early intervention approach and the progressive replacement of criminalising sanctions with restorative approaches that address offending behaviour and meet the needs of victims.

21.0 It is considered that the Youth Justice Plan 2024/25, when finalised, will provide an effective mechanism through which GCC, and its partners can meet their statutory obligations under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.

Performance management/follow-up

22.0 There is a comprehensive range of performance indicators in place to evidence the impact, or otherwise, of the YJS and Youth Justice Plan. These include the rate of first time entrants, re-offending, the use of custody alongside the range of local measures. The performance framework for youth Justice was substantially enhanced via the introduction of a broader range of KPIs announced by the YJB in May 2022. Local reporting against the wider set of metrics commenced on an incremental basis over the course of 2023/24.

23.0 At a local level, performance is scrutinised by the Youth Justice Management Board and, at a national level, by the Youth Justice Board. Gloucestershire YJS is generally performing well against key performance metrics when compared to regional, statistical, and national comparators.