

Cabinet  
Council

1 October 2023  
15 October 2023

**Name of Cabinet Member:**

Cabinet Member for Children and Young People - Councillor P Seaman

**Director approving submission of the report:**

Director of Childrens Services and Education

**Ward(s) affected:**

All wards

**Title:**

**Coventry Youth Justice Plan – 2023-25 Strategy - Update 2024**

**Is this a key decision?**

No - although the proposals affect more than two electoral wards, the impact is not expected to be significant.

**Executive summary:**

This paper is being submitted as notification that the Coventry Youth Justice Service (CYJS) - Youth Justice Plan has been agreed and signed off by its Chair, the previous Interim Director of Childrens Services, and to seek Council endorsement.

Youth Justice Services were established under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 with the principal aim being to prevent offending behaviour by children and young persons [s.37(1) Crime and Disorder Act 1998]. The Act imposed a duty on each local authority (with its statutory partners: Police, Health, and Probation) to ensure that adequate Youth Justice Services are available in the area. The key tasks of the service are:

- Management and delivery of diversion work to children at risk of entering the youth justice system and children subject to an out of court disposal, community sentences, and a secure estate sentence
- Servicing the Youth Court and Crown Courts (in terms of provision of the court team, Bail & Health Assessments, provision of Court Reports)
- Parenting services and management of Parenting Orders
- Victim services

The legislation also imposed a duty to complete and submit a Youth Justice Plan each year. The Youth Justice Board (YJB) provide a grant to the Service, outline delivery expectations and oversee performance for Services; the plan follows a YJB mandated template.

**Recommendations:**

Cabinet is requested to:

- 1) Endorse acceptance of the Coventry Youth Justice Plan - 2023-25 Strategy – Update 2024 and recommend that Council endorse it.

Council is requested to:

- 1) Endorse the Coventry Youth Justice Plan - 2023-25 Strategy – Update 2024.

**List of Appendices included:**

The following appendices are attached to the report:

Appendix 1 – Coventry Youth Justice Plan - 2023-25 Strategy – Update 2024  
Appendix 2 – Equality Impact Assessment

**Background papers:**

None

**Other useful documents**

None

**Has it or will it be considered by Scrutiny?**

No

**Has it or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body?**

No

**Will this report go to Council?**

Yes – 15<sup>th</sup> October 2024

## **Report title: Coventry Youth Justice Plan – 2023-25 Strategy - Update 2024**

### **1. Context (or background)**

1.1. The plan demonstrates, in line with the Youth Justice Board (YJB) grant requirement, the continued delivery of services as set out in s38 Crime and Disorder Act 1998. CYJS has submitted the plan in line with the mandated YJB structure. The plan demonstrates the delivery of the Service's functions and the methods for achieving this in line with the grant requirement. The plan presents an updated analysis of youth justice provision in Coventry, our performance, arrangements for delivery and resourcing, and emerging risks and challenges; the final section details an action plan for the year 2024/25.

### **1.2. Key Achievements and Headlines 2023/24**

Overall key performance indicators have remained strong with continued low reoffending rates at 19.2% for the period April 2021-March 2022; this is the latest available data and provided nationally via the Youth Justice Board. While custody use has risen from the all-time low of 2022/23 with a rate of 0.14 per 1000 children, this rate is much lower than the 0.29 per 1000 children in 2021-22.

More broadly, the Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) in March 2024 on serious youth violence and exploitation, saw the partnership recognised as strategically effective and our efforts to build trusting relationships with children applauded.

#### **1.2.1 More children accessing diversion**

There has been a doubling of children accessing diversion out of court disposals and an overall successful engagement rate of 95.24%. Additionally, there has been successful progress of the national Turnaround Programme, locally delivered via the Youth Workers in the family hubs. Children through either pathway have access to a Speech and Language Therapist and this work has been recognised through a national award.

#### **1.2.2 Reduced serious youth violence, but more children with proven weapon offences**

There has been a 26.8% increase in proven weapon offences by children; however, the city has overall seen a reduction in knife offences and a continued reduction in serious youth violence overall. These conflicting trends are suspected to reflect that children are not necessarily feeling safer; this will be a core focus in the coming year.

#### **1.2.3 Positive trends in reducing racial disproportionality, though more to do**

We have seen a move to a smaller overrepresentation for court disposals. Mixed heritage children (particularly White and Black Caribbean/ Black African) continue to be two-fold over-represented and black children underrepresented in diversion support, when compared to Coventry's Secondary School Population.

#### **1.2.4 A focus in the coming year on intervention for children at risk of permanent school exclusion**

22% of children open to the Service have been permanently excluded from school and attainment levels for children continue to be over two grades lower than expected. The next year will see a focus on targeted intervention as part of packages to avoid permanent exclusion, supporting children to be offered intervention earlier.

#### **1.2.5 Successful funding bid, for stop and search**

The 7 Youth Justice Services in the West Midlands have successfully bid (April 2024) for funding to reduce racial overrepresentation in the Youth Justice Service. The funding will see a regional approach to support children stopped & searched by the Police. The first year's funding will be used to recruit a Regional Project Manager. This role will scope with children in the Youth Justice Service about their experiences of being stopped and searched and what intervention could have made a difference at that time. A regional package will then be enacted in line with feedback with a key performance indicator of increasing early preventative engagement of children from black and minority ethnic backgrounds.

### **2. Options considered and recommended proposal**

- 2.1. Completion and submission of this plan is a statutory duty under s40 Crime and Disorder Act 1998. In particular, the Council is under a duty, after consultation with the relevant persons and bodies, to formulate and implement for each year, the youth justice plan. This is required to set out (a) how youth justice services in the area are to be provided and funded; and (b) how the youth offending team so established is to be composed and funded, how it operates, and what functions it is to carry out.
- 2.2. It is requested Cabinet recommends that the Council endorse the Plan.

### **3. Results of consultation undertaken**

- 3.1. All statutory partners are consulted under a statutory duty imposed by the Act. All Management Board members are consulted and contribute, although only statutory partner's cooperation is required. Additionally, the following methodology has been undertaken to formulate the plan: child/parent consultation on their experience and improvement areas; team consultation on how we achieve desistance for children; data analysis review of the Service and children in the youth justice system; a review of the best practice evidence base; a wider strategic partnership review; and, sharing with partners for feedback and amendments.
- 3.2. **Statutory Members are represented by:**
  - Interim Director of Children and Education Services (at the time of sign off)
  - Strategic Lead for Help and Protection, Children's Services
  - Superintendent, Coventry, West Midlands Police
  - Head of Coventry Delivery Unit, Probation
  - Chief Medical Officer, NHS Coventry and Warwickshire Integrated Care Board

### 3.3. Other members include:

- General Manager, Mental Health Services for Children & Young People, Coventry & Warwickshire Partnership NHS Trust
- Head of Safer Housing and Communities, Regulatory Services
- Operations Manager, Coventry and Warwickshire, Prospects Services
- Chair of The Magistrates Youth Panel
- Head of Service, Education Improvement and Standards
- Head of Service, SEND and Specialist Services
- Violence Prevention - Programme Manager, Public Health Team
- Early Help Operational Lead, Children's Services
- Service Manager, Positive Choices
- Head of Oversight, Midlands, Youth Justice Board

## 4. Timetable for implementing this decision

- 4.1. YJB grant conditions state that receipt of grant is conditional on the submission of a strategic plan and that Council endorsement is to be sought. The YJB recognise that local political processes do not necessarily tie in with submission dates and therefore they accept a draft plan, which had to be submitted by the end of June 2023; the guidance for the plan was published on the 19<sup>th</sup> of March 2024.

## 5. Comments from the Director of Finance and Resources and the Director of Law and Governance

### 5.1. Financial Implications

Grant funding from YJB may be withheld/withdrawn if the plan is not submitted in line with the Crime and Disorder Act and grant requirements.

	<b>Final Allocations</b>		<b>Budget</b>	
<b>Agency</b>	<b>2023-24</b>		<b>2024-25</b>	
Local Authority	£	835,331	£	854,042
Youth Justice Board	£	677,005	£	678,801
Police and Crime Commissioner	£	105,064	£	105,064
Health Service	£	123,320	£	127,800
Police Service	£	67,214	£	68,398
National Probation Service	£	60,939	£	55,976
<b>Total</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>1,868,873</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>1,890,081</b>

The change to the LA contribution since financial year 2023/24 is as a result of increased costs due to staffing inflation. The Health, Police and Probation figures reflect 'payments in kind' through seconded roles and other delegated funds.

The Youth Justice Board grant was announced on the 8<sup>th</sup> August 2024 for 2024/25 and this is a 0.3% uplift compared to 2023/24. The figures for 2024/25, included in the accompanying plan, were provisional as of the 30<sup>th</sup> June 2024, which is why they differ from the above table. The YJB uplift is lower than inflation, however to be prudent when

planning for 2024/25 it was assumed there would be no uplift meaning this will not cause a financial pressure.

## 5.2. **Legal Implications**

The plan was written prior to the YJB grant announcement and written based on funding being matched to the core grant allocation in 2023-24, as per the advice of the YJB. The grant has now been announced with a 0.3% uplift, which will contribute towards inflationary costs; inflationary impact will continue to be monitored and reviewed through the year.

This Youth Justice Plan sets out the requirements to be considered by the Youth Justice Board. This in turn enables the Youth Justice Board to carry out various functions, including the function [pursuant to s.41(5)(ha) Crime and Disorder Act 1998] to make such grant to the Council and other persons, as is necessary, for the purposes of the operation of the youth justice system and the provision of youth justice services, subject to such conditions as the Board considers appropriate, including conditions as to repayment. The provision of the Youth Justice Plan also enables the Youth Justice Board to provide assistance to the Council and other persons in connection with information technology systems and equipment used or to be used for the purposes of the operation of the youth justice system and the provision of youth justice services.

## 6. **Other implications**

### 6.1. **How will this contribute to the One Coventry Plan?**

(<https://www.coventry.gov.uk/strategies-plans-policies/one-coventry-plan>)

The plan's vision is underpinned by the One Coventry Plan and overarching aim of working together to improve our city and the lives of those who live, work and study in Coventry. The improvement and business plan (Appendix 1 to the report: Section 13-Service Development Plan) details the steps over the next 12 months to realise the plan's vision, and in turn the Council's. The activity within the plan is aligned locally to plans that include: Early Help Strategy, Local Police and Crime Board Plan, Safeguarding Partnership Strategy, Coventry Health and Wellbeing Strategy, Children and Young People's Plan, Local Policing Plan, and Coventry Sustainable Communities Strategy.

### 6.2. **How is risk being managed?**

Risk to the YJB grant, have been managed by consulting with partners in a timely manner to facilitate sign off and submission of the draft plan (grant requirement). The report is also submitted now for endorsement in line with statutory duties and good practice requirements.

### 6.3. **What is the impact on the organisation?**

The Plan presents a balanced budget and no immediate implications for other groups. The Plan details the risks going forward into 2024/25.

**6.4. Equalities / EIA?**

While this is not a new activity, an EIA has been completed and this identified a positive impact for one or more protected groups – see Appendix 2 to the report.

**6.5. Implications for (or impact on) climate change and the environment?**

None

**6.6. Implications for partner organisations?**

Partners have all participated in agreement and sign off the Plan and there are no implications arising post sign off.

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