

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL**CABINET****DATE: 26 SEPTEMBER 2023**

REPORT OF CABINET MEMBER: **SINEAD MOONEY, CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES**

LEAD OFFICER: **JACKIE CLEMENTSON, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR FOR EARLY HELP AND ADOLESCENTS**

SUBJECT: **YOUTH JUSTICE PLAN**

ORGANISATION STRATEGY PRIORITY AREA: **NO ONE LEFT BEHIND/HIGH PERFORMING COUNCIL**

Purpose of the Report:

This paper sets out the proposed 2023/24 Youth Justice Plan, for Cabinet's approval.

Local authorities have a statutory duty to submit an annual youth justice plan relating to their provision of youth justice services. Section 40 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 sets out the youth justice partnership's¹ responsibilities in producing a plan. It is the duty of each local authority, after consultation with the partner agencies, to formulate and implement an annual youth justice plan, setting out how youth justice services in their area are to be provided and funded, how they will operate, and what functions will be carried out. The plan should address the functions assigned to a youth justice service, including how services will prevent offending behaviour and reduce reoffending.

Annual youth justice plans are an opportunity to review performance and developments over the last twelve months and plan for the next year. This allows services to be able to respond to any changes that have taken place in the previous year, including new legislation, demographic changes, delivery of key performance indicators, and developments in service delivery. The planning and production of a youth justice plan is beneficial to partnership working and service delivery to ensure the best outcomes for children.

The overarching vision for Surrey County Council's Children, Families and Lifelong Learning directorate is 'to support families and enable children and young people to be and feel safe, healthy and make good choices about their wellbeing'. We aim to ensure that Surrey's children and families have access to a range of services that tackle inequalities, support independence and enhance

¹ The partnership is made up of representatives from the Police, the Probation Service, Social Services, Education and the Health Service.

lives. This ethos is the foundation for the youth justice plan, which also supports the Council's 'No One Left Behind' commitment to Surrey residents, the wider 'The Surrey Way' objectives, and the Council's strategy for children and young people's emotional wellbeing and mental health.

The Surrey Youth Justice Service is an ambitious and outcomes-focused service, demonstrating passion and purpose in its approach to reducing offending, supporting children, families and victims in the context of our work and creating a safer environment for Surrey's residents in the process. The 2023/24 Plan emphasises working collaboratively with a range of partners, sharing analysis of performance and operating within a robust oversight framework. Together these will help the service to continue to demonstrate accountability for delivering positive results whilst striving to continually improve and building on the strong practice foundations currently in place.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that Cabinet:

1. approves the 2023/24 Youth Justice Plan for consideration by Full Council at its meeting on 10 October 2023.

Reason for Recommendations:

An annual youth justice plan is a statutory requirement for local authorities. This plan has been prepared following national guidance from the Youth Justice Board.

Executive Summary:

1. Annual youth justice plans are an opportunity to review performance and developments over the last twelve months and plan for the next year. This allows services to be able to respond to any relevant developments, including new legislation, demographic changes, delivery of key performance indicators, and developments in service delivery.
2. The Youth Justice Plan 2023/24, enclosed at Annex A, has been developed and endorsed by members of the Surrey Youth Justice Board. It contains a range of positive reflections on the last twelve months of performance, including a continued reduction in first time entrants to the criminal justice system and reduced re-offending rates. Custody rates also remain low and comparable with the general trend across Southeast and England.
3. The plan then outlines the direction of travel for 2023/24, building on last year's objectives and setting out how the service will develop in the year ahead.
4. It aims to promote a childhood removed from the justice system, using pre-emptive prevention, diversion, and minimal intervention wherever possible. The views of children and parents regarding the support they have been offered by Surrey Youth Justice Service are featured within. It reflects 'child first' thinking, aligning with Surrey's Child Centred Policing strategy, with

ambitions to improve the life chances of children and young people in all our communities through an integrated and effective partnership approach.

5. The planning and production of a youth justice plan is beneficial to partnership working and service delivery to ensure the best outcomes for children. It addresses the functions assigned to Surrey’s Youth Justice Service including how the multi-agency partnership will prevent offending behaviour and reduce reoffending.

* SYV – Serious Youth Violence. QA – Quality Assurance

Figure 1: Key priorities set out in 2023/24 Youth Justice Plan



Consultation:

6. Internal consultation – The plan has been co-produced by colleagues in Children’s Social Care, Education, Finance and Business, Surrey’s Youth Justice Board and CFLL cabinet members.
7. External consultation – Surrey’s Youth Justice Board have endorsed the plan. The Board’s membership includes external partners from the Police, the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, Probation and Health. The National Youth Justice Board provide governance and oversight of Youth Justice Services across England and Wales and the grant funding for our service is determinate on a number of conditions being met, including the submission of the Surrey Youth Justice plan.

Risk Management and Implications:

8. The Youth Justice Service operates within a statutory framework with robust systems to support internal and external oversight of performance. Any identified risks and plan to mitigate will be agreed and monitored with the partnership via Surrey Youth Justice Board and national Youth Justice Board governance and oversight framework.

Financial and Value for Money Implications:

9. Planned expenditure for 2023-24 on the Youth Justice Plan is shown below and affordable within budget plus confirmed grant allocation for 2023-24:

Agency	Staffing costs £	Payments in Kind £	Total £
Youth Justice Board *	802,249		802,249
Local Authority	1,316,471		1,316,471
Police	169,835		169,835
Police & Crime Commissioner	30,000		30,000
Probation	44,142	5,000	49,142
Health	165,513		165,513
Total	2,528,210	5,000	2,533,210

* updated for 2023-24 Grant Award

10. The Youth Justice Board grant has already been received following the Board's receipt of the plan. The Surrey Youth Justice Management Board commits to every member being held to account, to ensure this Plan is delivered.
11. The expected outcomes include continued reduction in first time entrants to the criminal justice system and reduced re-offending rates, avoiding remand placement costs of up to £5,655 per week for placements lasting from weeks to several months or more. The total spend on Secure Remand placements in 2022-23 was £392,100 funded in part by Remand grant of £141,300, leaving a net cost to Surrey CC of £250,700.
12. Ultimately the Plan will benefit wider public services in Surrey by helping to reduce pressures on the police, probation service, prison service, health system and social care services.
13. Surrey's continued investment in youth justice has demonstrated good value for money to date. The Youth Justice Board published statistics comparing the number of first-time entrants to the youth justice system shows Surrey County Council to be the best performing Local Authority in the South-East with a 13% decrease from 2020-21 to 2021-22. South East Sector Led improvement group also publish benchmarking statics which show that Surrey County Council is the best performing authority in the South East for numbers per 10K of first time entrants. We would continue to monitor our performance against these benchmarks and others to maintain value for money.

Section 151 Officer Commentary:

14. Significant progress has been made in recent years to improve the Council's financial resilience and the financial management capabilities across the organisation. Whilst this has built a stronger financial base from which to deliver our services, the increased cost of living, global financial uncertainty, high inflation and government policy changes mean we continue to face

challenges to our financial position. This requires an increased focus on financial management to protect service delivery, a continuation of the need to be forward looking in the medium term, as well as the delivery of the efficiencies to achieve a balanced budget position each year.

15. In addition to these immediate challenges, the medium-term financial outlook beyond 2023/24 remains uncertain. With no clarity on central government funding in the medium term, our working assumption is that financial resources will continue to be constrained, as they have been for the majority of the past decade. This places an onus on the Council to continue to consider issues of financial sustainability as a priority, in order to ensure the stable provision of services in the medium term.

16. As such, the Section 151 Officer supports the approval of the plan, noting the plan falls within the budget set as part of the current Medium Term Financial Strategy.

Legal Implications – Monitoring Officer:

17. Local authorities have a statutory duty after consultation with the partner agencies, to formulate and implement an annual Youth Justice Plan, setting out how youth justice services in their area are to be provided and funded, how they will operate, and what functions will be carried out. In accordance with the 'Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000' the plan must be approved by full Council. Cabinet is asked to endorse the 2023/24 plan for consideration by full Council at its meeting in October 2023.

Equalities and Diversity:

18. The plan contains analysis on diversity, including over-representation of certain demographics in the criminal justice system generally and in Surrey. Key points include the following:

- a. Children whose ethnicity is recorded as black, mixed, and 'other' remain overrepresented when measuring the offending figures against local population and this is therefore an area of concern.
- b. Data shows that Surrey remains significantly below the national average in serious violence offences overall. Children of Asian and Black ethnicity have seen a reduction in involvement with serious offending in the last 12 months. The proportion of children committing serious offences who are 15 and 16 years old is starting to increase, with those of mixed heritage, 'other' and white are over-represented in this area.
- c. 75% of children who have offended over the past year have had Social Care intervention in their lifetime with 18% having entered the care system.

19. Priorities for addressing equality and diversity as part of the youth justice plan are set out in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Equality and diversity priorities as part of the 2023/24 Youth Justice Plan

Disparity and Over-representation	Next steps
<p>Surrey YJS to address over representation within our cohort, promote anti racist practice (as per HMIP’s effective practice guide), demonstrate cultural competence and reduce the risk of discrimination impacting on a child’s journey through the criminal justice system</p>	<p>Commission and deliver disproportionality training for all staff involved in Surrey’s YJS delivery</p> <p>A commitment from the YJ management team and Senior Leaders on the SYJB to attend disproportionality training</p> <p>Convene quarterly disparity working group involving key partners to develop a robust action plan addressing concerns pertaining to children overrepresented in Surrey YJS</p> <p>Data and Performance team to provide up to date local data and via YJB disparity tool kit to inform analysis and priorities moving forward. Greater analysis of ethnic categorisations required at both local and regional level</p> <p>Consider strategic and operational responses to target resource and support those sections of the community who are most effected</p> <p>Analyse data from non-admissions scheme to measure effectiveness and impact</p> <p>Consult children to understanding their lived experience of the criminal justice system, ensuring there is shared recognition, understanding and response to over representation amongst our cohort</p> <p>Form a sub- group made up of Team Managers and front-line staff to feed into analysis through use of qualitative data, consider localised response given large geographical area covered in Surrey</p> <p>Ensure learning is disseminated from the disparity working group and sub-group with the wider youth justice service, relevant partners and SYJB for governance and oversight</p>
<p>To work with our Magistrates and colleagues in Court to support learning and development opportunities</p>	<p>YJ central team to broach with Magistrates as part of quarterly Court user group meetings</p>

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pertaining to disproportionality and over representation.	Continue to promote best practice and child first language in PSR reports to guard against issues such as adultification, ensuring children as seen as children.
Continue in our attempt to recruit and diversify the pool of Referral Order panel volunteers and reflect the demographic in Surrey's local community.	YJ central team to work in partnership with Equality and Diversity lead, liaise with Surreys Minority Ethnic Forum and Surrey Gypsy Traveller Communities Forum.
Review and evaluate effectiveness of Surrey provision developed as a direct response to the rise in females entering the criminal justice system in Surrey over the past 3 years	Liaise with Youth Offer and YJ ETE leads to assess the range of projects on offer and feed into the evaluation process Complete thematic audit pertaining to girls lived experience in the YJS, as directed by the SYJB

Other Implications:

20. The potential implications for the following council priorities and policy areas have been considered. Where the impact is potentially significant a summary of the issues is set out in detail below.

Area assessed:	Direct Implications:
Corporate Parenting/Looked After Children	Not applicable in this instance.
Safeguarding responsibilities for vulnerable children and adults	Not applicable in this instance.
Environmental sustainability	Not applicable in this instance.
Compliance against net-zero emissions target and future climate compatibility/resilience	Not applicable in this instance.
Public Health	Not applicable in this instance.

What Happens Next:

21. The Youth Justice Plan will be considered by Full Council in October.

Report Author:

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Annexes:

Annex A – The Youth Justice Plan 2023/24

Sources/background papers:

The Surrey Youth Justice plan for 2023/24

The Youth Justice Board guidance for plan completion:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/youth-justice-plans-guidance-for-youth-justice-services/youth-justice-plans-guidance-for-youth-justice-services#how-to-produce-your-plan>
