

# LONDON BOROUGH OF CROYDON

<b>REPORT:</b>	<b>COUNCIL MEETING</b>	
<b>DATE OF DECISION</b>	<b>11<sup>th</sup> December 2024</b>	
<b>REPORT TITLE:</b>	<b>Youth Justice Plan 2024/25 Approval</b>	
<b>CORPORATE DIRECTOR</b>	<b>CORPORATE DIRECTOR Debbie Jones</b>	
<b>LEAD OFFICER:</b>	<b>DIRECTOR – Róisín Madden</b>  <b>HEAD OF SERVICE: Leana Ebanks,</b>  <b>SERVICE MANAGER: Emma Carter</b>	
<b>LEAD MEMBER:</b>	<b>Maria Gatland, Cabinet Member for Children &amp; Young People</b>	
<b>KEY DECISION?</b>	<b>NO</b>	This is not a key decision as does not meet Financial or Community Impact Criteria.
<b>CONTAINS EXEMPT INFORMATION?</b>	<b>NO</b>	
<b>WARDS AFFECTED:</b>	The Youth Justice Plan is relevant for all wards.	

## 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 ascertain 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 the

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** For the Council to endorse the Youth Justice plan in line with statutory obligations detailed in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.

## **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.
- 3.2** The Youth Justice Plan went to cabinet on the 30<sup>th</sup> October 2024 where the Executive Mayor in cabinet recommend the Plan go to Full Council.

## **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.
- 4.4** The plan provides local context 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 and details additional scrutiny arrangements to ensure the Service is meeting with both national and local expectations and Key Performance Indicators.
- 4.7** The Plan looks back at the previous year 2023/24 looking at the objectives set, and progress made. The objectives for 2023/24 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 2023/24 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 2023/24 and integrates this into a new plan for the year 2024/25. 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 2025. 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 the newly devised Inspectorate Guidance issued by HMPI Inspectorate.

**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.

**4.13**

Alongside the Youth Justice Plan also aligns with the Safer Croydon Partnership three-year plan to tackle violence against women and girls (VAWG). The plan sets out a clear multi-agency, long-term approach to tackling and preventing VAWG. Croydon Council are listening to the views and ideas from the full range of our residents, communities, and partners. All women and girls should feel safe in Croydon and the Council's aim is to work with the Police, our partners, and women and girls to make Croydon safer. The plan came into effect in 2024.

## **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.

## **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		
	2024/25 £'000	2024/25 £'000	2025/26 £'000	2026/27 £'000
<b>Revenue Budget Available</b>				
Expenditure	£2,441	£2,176	£2,176	£2,176
Income	(£970)	(£0.705)	(£0.705)	(£0.705)
<b>Net budget</b>	<b>£1,471</b>	<b>£1,471</b>	<b>£1,471</b>	<b>£1,471</b>

- 8.1.1 The Youth Justice Service is a statutory service, it is funded through general fund budget, youth justice grant and other grant contributions.
- 8.1.2 For 2025/26 the funding available will reduce by £294k, therefore the expenditure budget will decrease also to avoid creating a pressure on the general fund.
- 8.1.3 Youth Justice grant for 2025/26 is not yet known, based estimate on 2024/25 allocation of £566,907.
- 8.1.4 Assumes ongoing Public Health funding of £52k and £86k contribution from UASC funding. If either of these funding streams changes the expenditure will need to be adjusted accordingly.
- 8.1.5 Comments approved by Jenny Bartlett, Head of Strategic Finance – CYPE (Date 04/12/2024)

## 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 2024/25 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 27/11/24)

### **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 starker within the custody and higher tier statutory order cohort. The Youth Justice Plan contains an appendix 4 titled 'Disproportionately Action Plan' which details the Service(s) commitment in all areas of operational 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 A1 - Cabinet Report 30<sup>th</sup> October

Appendix A2 Youth Justice Plan 2024/25

## **10 BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

**10.1** None

