

Title of meeting:	Cabinet Meeting
Date of meeting:	03.10.2023
Subject:	Portsmouth Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2023-2025
Report by:	Keely Mitchell, Head of Service, Adolescents and Young Adolescents.
Wards affected:	All
Key decision:	No
Full Council decision:	Yes

1. Purpose of report

To share with the Cabinet details of the Portsmouth Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2023-25 (Appendix 1) and seek approval for that Plan.

2. Recommendations

To approve the plan and the priorities set out within it.

3. Background

Local Authorities have a statutory duty to formulate and implement an annual youth justice plan relating to the provision of youth justice services in their local area which can be published in accordance with the directions of the Secretary of State. Those plans must be submitted to the Youth Justice Board (YJB) for England and Wales, who specify the requirements for content and submission, subject to local arrangements for governance and sign off.

The Strategic Youth Justice Plan 2023-25 has been discussed and approved by members of the Portsmouth Youth Justice Partnership Management Board and requires final approval by Cabinet. It has been updated following a review of the previous plan and objectives for 2021-23 and in accordance with the current operational and strategic priorities as agreed by the Youth Justice Partnership Management Board.

The Plan notes achievements to date and identifies a range of partnership working activities which are in place. It also highlights work planned for 2023-25 in respect of key performance indicators and other aspects of our work.

4. **Executive summary:**

To celebrate in 2022 Portsmouth Youth Offending Team (YOT) were inspected by HMI Probation and were graded Good. Through a positive restructure process, we have also modernised the service which now sits under Adolescent and Young Adult Service and in doing so developed increasing working relationships across the wider children services, policing colleagues and our partners. As part of that, we have changed our name to Youth Justice Service to reduce stigma and labelling which you will see reflected in the body of the report.

In relation to the key performance indicators, the following headlines can be observed:

Reducing First Time Entrants:

Our rate at the end of Quarter 4 2022-23 (relating to the period January to December 2022) was 229 per 100,000 of the 10-17 year old population.

For comparison, the national average was 148. The comparator average was 183 and the range amongst those comparators was 138 to 226 compared to our rate of 229.

Positively, our rates demonstrate a local reduction compared to previous years which is an indication of progress despite our ranking amongst comparators. Actual numbers also show a reduction in real terms (and are lower than in other areas performing better in terms of rate due to varying population sizes).

At this stage, COVID does not appear to have had an impact (either positive or negative) on the numbers or rate observed. Though the number of 'referrals' (from Police and the Courts) did reduce over that period, they have now increased following recovery, yet the number of first-time entrants has continued to reduce.

This would seem to validate the focussed activity carried out across the partnership, particularly within Targeted Early Help, Police and Youth Justice services, which has developed over the same period and includes initiatives to strengthen early identification of criminogenic (crime-related) need, offer diversion opportunities wherever possible and ensure targeted intervention is provided when required.

Reducing Re-Offending

Our rate at the end of Quarter 4 2022-23 (relating to the period April to June 2021) was 43.3%.

For comparison, the national average was 31.1%. The comparator average was 34.3% and the range amongst those comparators was 29.4% to 41.2% compared to our rate of 43.3%.

Figures available for the last 3 years show rates and numbers have fluctuated. It is recognised that returns can be volatile (subject to variation) due to the 3-month cohort sample and its inconsistent size.

A 12-month cohort is therefore deemed more reliable for observing or predicting trends. Though this also shows some variation in local performance across the last 3 years. importantly there is an overall downward trend compared to two years prior in terms of cohort size (children who are included because they have offended), reoffending numbers/rate (those of that cohort who go on to reoffend) and the number of reoffences they have committed.

Of note, success in reducing the overall reoffending cohort can sometimes present a challenge in relation to achieving the same kind of reduction in reoffending rate. This is because those who are received into the system potentially have a higher level of need or risk and may therefore be more likely to re-offend than others who have been appropriately diverted. In short, volume of numbers may go down but concentration of need amongst them can intensify which then presents a different kind of challenge and requires a more sustained response.

Due to the periods over which this data is monitored, it is too early to understand the impact COVID had or will have on our local performance. It appears the experiences of other YJS' has also fluctuated (some up, some down) and therefore COVID impact may be very localised depending on local offending profiles and other variances. We are working to develop more localised data which can help us understand our own position and drive reduction going forward.

Reducing use of custody

Our rate at the end of Quarter 4 2022-23 (relating to the period April to March 2023) was 0.17 per 1000 of the 10–17-year-old population.

For comparison, the national average was 0.11. The comparator average was 0.09 and the range amongst those comparators was 0 to 0.23 compared to our rate of 0.17.

In real terms, in Portsmouth, this equated to 3 custodial sentences being imposed over that 12-month period, which represented an increase on the previous 2 years. We are conscious of the need to monitor this closely, alongside use of custodial remands, to understand the reasons for the rise and whether it will continue. However, we have maintained a reduction compared to pre-COVID levels, which is positive to note:

4. Reasons for recommendations

The Strategic Plan 2023-25 has been agreed by members of the Portsmouth Youth Justice Partnership Management Board based on analysis of current risks and needs. It now requires final approval by Cabinet and Full Council in line with local governance processes.

5. Integrated impact assessment

An integrated impact assessment is not required as the recommendations do not directly impact on service or policy delivery. Any changes made arising from this report would be subject to investigation in their own right.

6. Legal implications

Section 40 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 states:

- 1) It shall be the duty of each local authority, after consultation with the relevant persons and bodies, to formulate and implement for each year a plan setting out:
 - (a) How youth justice services in their area are to be provided and funded; and
 - (b) How the youth offending team or teams established by them (whether alone or jointly with one or more other local authorities) are to be composed and funded, how they are to operate, and what functions they are to carry out.

7. Director of Finance's comments

The Portsmouth Youth Justice Team budget for 2023/24 is within the plan, and is made up of partner contributions (which includes in kind budgets) and also grant income, which is subject to change each financial year.

The Portsmouth Youth Justice Partnership Board are aware that the Youth Justice Strategic Plan needs to be delivered within the constraints of the budget in each financial year and receive regular financial monitoring reports.

Signed by: Sarah Daly

.....
Sarah Daly, Director Children, Families and Education

Appendices:

Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

Title of document	Location
Strategic Youth Justice Plan 2023-25	Appendix 1

The recommendation(s) set out above were approved/ approved as amended/ deferred/ rejected by on

.....
Signed by: