

Title of the Report: Youth Justice Annual Plan and Strategic Priorities

Ward(s): All

Portfolios: Cllr T Wilson - Children's Services Social Care

1. Aim and purpose

- 1.1 Youth Justice partnerships have a statutory duty to produce an annual youth justice plan for submission to the Youth Justice Board for England and Wales showing how youth justice services will be provided and funded with the identification of strategic priorities.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 For Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee to note the contents of the report and Strategic Plan and consider if a progress report should be heard at a future meeting.

3. Report detail: know

Context

- 3.1 Walsall Youth Justice Service (YJS) is a statutory multi-agency service under Section 37 of the 1998 Crime and Disorder Act in partnership with the Local Authority, Walsall Children's Services, West Midlands Police, National Probation Service and Health. The YJS is also supported by numerous other partners who contribute to the YJS' agenda.
- 3.2 The principle aim of the YJS partnership is to prevent and reduce offending and re-offending behaviour in children and young people and we have three national key performance indicators:
- a) Reducing the number of young people entering the justice system for the first time (FTE)
 - b) Reducing re-offending
 - c) Reducing the use of custodial disposals.
- 3.3 Youth justice partnerships have a statutory duty to produce an annual youth justice plan for submission to the Youth Justice Board for England and Wales showing how youth justice services will be provided and funded.

- 3.4 The Youth Justice Plan is prepared on an annual basis in accordance with the YJB governance and leadership guidance and specific conditions as set within the Youth Justice Board Effective Practice Grant. The youth justice plan sets out key achievements over the past 12 months, how Walsall Youth Justice Service is structured and funded and also identifies risks to service delivery and improvement.
- 3.5 The YJB are resolute that youth justice services should use the template they have provided and work from guidance they have released.
- 3.6 The plan and its priorities have been informed by the HMIP assurance review completed in November 2021 and a Board development workshop in January 2022.
- 3.7 The plan identifies 5 main priorities as stated below:
- Reducing Serious Youth Violence:
Strategic Lead: Superintendent Walsall Police.
This priority is aligned to the Safer Walsall Partnership and recognises the Serious Violence Duty (2021) and the delegated responsibilities on agencies and partnership.
 - Responding to Disproportionality
Strategic Lead: Head of Service – Children’s Social Care.
This priority is linked to the Council’s Corporate Equality Group and objectives within the Corporate Plan 2022-25.
 - Transitions and Resettlement.
Strategic Lead: Head of Probation
This priority is aligned to the Safer Walsall Partnership reducing re-offending priority and the regional Transition 2 Adulthood policy framework.
 - Identifying and responding to unmet need (health).
Strategic Lead: Head of CAMHS commissioning
Our partnership recognise that there is a clear need to ‘level up’ health provision for Walsall children in line with the Black country and regional developments.
 - Voice of our children
Strategic Lead: YJS Strategic Lead
Following the findings of the HMIP assurance review in 2021, the partnership are committed to better evidencing that we hear and are responsive to the voices of our children both strategically and operationally.
- 3.8 Child First Vision:
The Youth Justice Partnership is resolute in our ‘child first’ vision. We believe that offending behaviour is a symptom of childhood adversity and trauma and that developing strengths and resilience will be most effective in reducing risk. These

principles align with our Walsall Right 4 Children vision aimed at ensuring the right children are in the right place with the right support for as long as it is needed so they are safe from harm, happy and learning well.

- 3.9 Walsall YJS are a trauma aware organisation. We understand that our children have experienced significant childhood adversity during their short lives which includes a range of trauma and abuse. It becomes clear that involvement within the justice system can at times re-traumatise them. Child First practice is about working in a way that reduces the stigmatisation that contact with the justice system brings

4. *Financial information*

- 4.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

5. *Reducing Inequalities*

- 5.1 The provision of Youth Justice Services to young people aims to support those at risk of harm and who need safeguarding. This includes young people from protected characteristics of gender, disability, race and religion. We are aware that there is overrepresentation of black and mixed heritage young people within the justice system in Walsall at this time and our wider plans will seek to improve outcomes for this group and others.

6. *Decide*

- 6.1 For overview and scrutiny committee to consider if a progress report should be presented to a future meeting.

7. *Respond*

- 7.1 It was a statutory requirement in the Youth Justice Effective Practice Grant to submit the approved plan to the Youth Justice Board (YJB) in June 2022. Following approval by the YJS Performance and Partnership Board, the plan was submitted on time to the YJB.

8. *Review*

- 8.1 Progress against the priorities and the delivery plan will be monitored on a quarterly basis by the YJS Performance and Partnership Board.

Background papers

Please see attached Strategic Plan.

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