

YOUTH JUSTICE SERVICE STRATEGY 2024-2029

Cabinet Member(s)	Cllr Susan O'Brien
Cabinet Portfolio(s)	Cabinet Member for Children, Families & Education
Officer Contact(s)	Nuzhat Ilyas – Youth Justice Service and AXIS
Papers with report	Hillingdon Youth Justice Service Draft Strategy 2024-2029

HEADLINES

Summary	<p>This report presents the draft Hillingdon Youth Justice Service Strategy 2024-2029 which seeks to set out a clear vision and priorities for how youth justice services are delivered in the next five years.</p> <p>The report seeks approval to commence a 6-week formal public consultation process from 1st July 2024 to 11th August 2024, including feedback from the Select Committee.</p>
Putting our Residents First Delivering on the Council Strategy 2022-2026	<p>This report supports our ambition for residents / the Council of: Live active and healthy lives</p> <p>This report supports our commitments to residents of: Thriving, Healthy Households, Safe and Strong Communities</p>
Financial Cost	This strategy will come at no additional cost to the Council.
Relevant Select Committee	Children, Families and Education Select Committee
Relevant Ward(s)	N/A

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Cabinet agrees the Draft Youth Justice Service Strategy 2024-2029 for public consultation as a policy framework document.

Reasons for recommendation

The draft Youth Justice Service Strategy sets out a clear vision and priorities for how youth justice services are delivered in the next five years and forms a key element of the policy framework. Approval is sought from Cabinet to approve the draft strategy for consultation, to ensure that residents and partners have the opportunity to consider and comment on the priorities for service delivery.

Alternative options considered / risk management

Without a Strategy, the Council would not be able to make clear its priorities in relation to youth justice and assist in the development and performance management of work streams and provide a framework for our work with partner organisations.

Democratic compliance / previous authority

Along with the recent guidance from the Youth Justice Board, Democratic Services note that the Youth Justice Service Strategy [Youth Justice Plan] is one of the Council's policy framework documents as set out in Chapter 4 of the Council's Constitution. Consideration of this is, therefore, being undertaken in accordance with the Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules and these require the Cabinet to set out a timetable for the Strategy's adoption, to include a minimum 6-week consultation period, consideration by the relevant select committee and therefore also not subject to scrutiny call-in. The following timetable is being adhered to:

Draft strategy to Cabinet	27 June 2024 (not subject to call-in)
Consultation (six weeks)	Commence from 1 July 2024
Children, Families & Education Select Committee consultation	17 July 2024
Cabinet final draft	10 October 2024 (not subject to call-in)
Full Council adoption	28 November 2024

Select Committee comments

None at this stage, though the Committee have a statutory requirement to be consulted on this and influence the final Strategy before it is approved by the Full Council. It is currently scheduled to be considered by the Children, Families & Education Select Committee in July 2024.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1. Local authorities have a statutory duty to submit an annual youth justice plan relating to their provision of youth justice services as per Section 40 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, which stipulates that it is the duty of each local authority, after consultation with the partner agencies, to formulate and implement an annual youth justice plan. The plan sets 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.

2. Following updated guidance from the Youth Justice Board (YJB) in 2023, all 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. To align with other council strategies, officers propose the completion of a 5-year strategy with annual updates to the Select Committee and Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education, to comply with this guidance.
3. The proposed draft Youth Justice Service Strategy builds on the success of the Youth Justice Service and sets a clear vision of how services are delivered to our residents, and key priorities over the next five years to continue to be responsive and meet changing demands and requirements.
4. The vision for the Youth Justice Service is:

“We are committed to taking a child first approach to understanding the challenges faced by children and families including social deprivation, discrimination, trauma, unmet health needs, and will actively empower children and families to improve outcomes by providing opportunities for every child to succeed. We take a “justice for all” approach by supporting victims, protecting the public and engaging our communities to divert children from entering the criminal justice system.”
5. Hillingdon Council is committed to putting residents first and reflects this commitment across the council’s plans and services. Our youth justice priorities are directly aligned with this commitment, which will be set out in further detail within the draft strategy. The five priorities are:
 1. Prevention and Early Intervention - Addressing the root causes of offending behaviour and intervene at the earliest possible stage to prevent escalation and reduce the risk of future harm, ensuring the safety and security of our communities.
 2. Over-representation and disproportionality – Addressing disproportionality in youth justice is crucial for ensuring fairness, equity, and justice within our society to reduce the barriers that prevent children from accessing support, thereby promoting trust in the system.
 3. Child-centred practice - Recognising children as active participants in their own lives and advocates for their rights, well-being, and development, creating nurturing environments where every child can thrive.
 4. Reducing re-offending - Providing rehabilitation, support, and positive development opportunities, we can break the cycle of offending and promote the reintegration of children into society.
 5. Victims and restorative justice - Giving victims a voice and an active role in the justice process, empowering them and helping them to regain a sense of control over their lives, providing them with an opportunity to heal and recover from the harm they have experienced.
6. The draft strategy is attached at appendix A. Subject to Cabinet approval a 6-week formal consultation process will begin on Monday 1st July 2024 and end Sunday 11th August 2024. A final draft with amendments following consultation will be presented to Cabinet on 10th October 2024 and subsequently Full Council on 28th November 2024.

Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications resulting from the recommendations of this report.

RESIDENT BENEFIT & CONSULTATION

The benefit or impact upon Hillingdon residents, service users and communities?

The draft Youth Justice Service Strategy sets out identifies key challenges and sets out priorities for the coming five years and has a direct bearing on the Council's vision of 'putting residents first.'

The Council will need to ensure that any policies or decisions in relation to youth justice take account of requirements under equalities and human rights legislation, including ensuring that policies and decisions do not discriminate against those with protected characteristics, and complying with the public sector equality duty.

Consultation carried out or required.

Informal consultation has already taken place within the Youth Justice Service Performance Board. Subject to Cabinet approval a 6-week formal consultation process will begin on Monday 1st July 2024 and end Sunday 11th August 2024. This will include:

- Publication of the draft Youth Justice Service Strategy alongside an online survey questionnaire (Written copies/large print will be available on request)
- Publication of a child friendly Youth Justice Service Strategy to maximise consultation from Hillingdon children.
- A variety of methods to promote completion of the survey will be used including: All staff email, Hillingdon People, and social media.
- We will be consulting with the Select Committee on 17th July 2024.
- We will be seeking consultation from the wider strategic partnership that contribute to the prevention of offending behaviour, as well as residents who access youth justice services in Hillingdon. This includes the use of focus groups with children and families.

CORPORATE CONSIDERATIONS

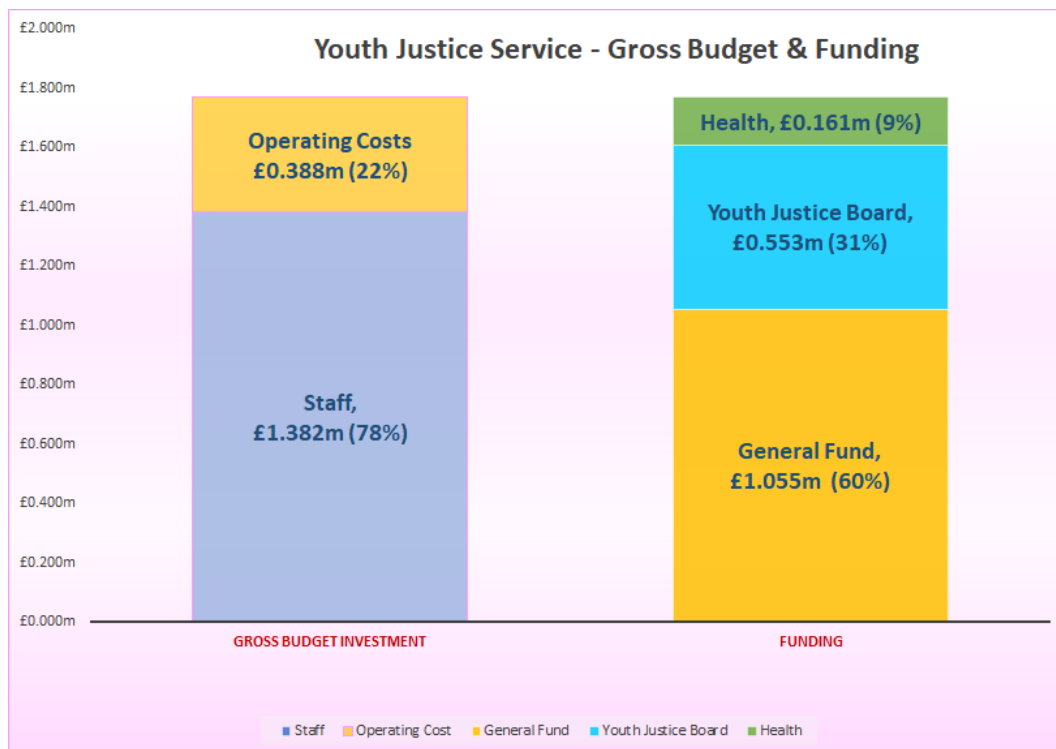
Corporate Finance

The Youth Justice Service currently employs 20 Staff (18.75 FTE) and spends £1.770m per annum which is funded by a combination of:

- General Fund – 1.055m (60%)
- YJ Board - £0.553m (31%)
- Health - £0.161m (9%)

The service had a small underspend of £0.181m in the Outturn for 2023/24 primarily on staff, accommodation and shortfall on grant which has been addressed in this financial year. The chart below highlights the breakdown of investment and funding. As highlighted in the Strategy paper

the service is very successfully managing demand despite the challenges post COVID and the current Cost of Living and financial instability.



As the legal commentary highlights, there is a duty to provide the service and it is clear in the current climate that the demands on the service will intensify over the next 5 years of the Strategy. While, at this stage there is no additional risk of financial pressure, there are a few potential risks going forward which the service will need to monitor including:

- Increase in Youth Offending particularly during the ongoing financial instability
- Potential pressure on remand accommodation costs
- Any reduction in funding, particularly grant funding which could critically undermine the effectiveness of the service and result in growth in offending and unintended rise in greater / more acute costs.

While these risks will closely monitored, the performance of the service over recent years including robust and effective management of its budget, provides a lot of assurance that the Strategy can be delivered effectively within the current budget.

Legal

Legal Services confirm that the Council is responsible for carrying out this function pursuant to section 38 and 40 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, which requires each local authority to have youth justice services available in their area to the extent that is appropriate, and, after consultation with the partner agencies, to formulate and implement an annual youth justice plan. The guidance on Youth justice plans confirms that whilst the Act refers to an annual plan, it is recognised that planning over a longer period may be more effective. Therefore, Local partnerships may, if they choose, produce a plan over multiple years; in this case an annual

update, covering progress against priorities, a summary of performance, any changes in demographics and legislation, and any additional reporting requirements. The report confirms that an annual update will be provided.

As set out in the report, the Council will need to ensure that any policies or decisions in relation to youth justice take account of requirements under the equalities and human rights legislation, including ensuring that policies and decisions do not discriminate against those with protected characteristics, and comply with the Local Authority's public sector equality duty (section 149 of the Equalities Act 2010).

It is noted that a final draft with amendments following consultation will be presented to Cabinet on 10th October 2024 and subsequently Full Council on 28th November 2024. As such, Cabinet approval for consultation of the draft Youth Justice Service Strategy is recommended as set out in this report.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. [Hillingdon Family Hub Strategy 2023-2025](#)
2. [Youth Justice Board for England and Wales Strategic Plan 2024-27.odt \(live.com\)](#)
3. [Code of Practice for Victims of Crime in England and Wales \(Victims' Code\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
4. [Reducing criminalisation of looked-after children and care leavers | London City Hall](#)