

Report to:	Cabinet	Date: 15 January 2026
Subject:	Youth Justice Business Plan 2025 – 2026	
Report of	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children and Young People	

Summary

The legislative requirement for a Youth Justice Business Plan in England and Wales is set out in Section 40 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. This law mandates that: each local authority, in consultation with its statutory partners (police, health, probation, and others), must formulate and implement an annual Youth Justice Plan. The plan must detail: How youth justice services (YJSs) will be provided and funded: How they will operate, including staffing and partner services: What functions they will carry out, including prevention of offending and reduction of reoffending.

Our Youth Justice Business Plan 2025- 2026 has been approved by the Youth Justice Partnership Management Board, and the Youth Justice Board. As a legislative requirement the Ministry of Justice grant is given to us on condition that this plan is completed and implemented.

The plan must be approved by the full council (in England) under Regulation 4 of the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000.

Recommendation(s)

The plan has been submitted for approval, as expected statutorily and to make Cabinet aware of the priorities, performance, issues and risks for the Youth Justice Services over the coming year (outlined on pages 21 – 23 of the Youth Justice Business Plan 2025-2026 (see appendix 1)

Reasons for recommendation(s)

The legislative requirement set out in Section 40 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, as detailed in the summary section above.

Alternative options considered and rejected

Not applicable.

Report Author and Contact Details:

Name: Jen Rust

Position: Head of Service Early Help (interim MASSH, Duty & Assessment, EDT and CST)

Department: Bury Children's Services

E-mail: j.rust@bury.gov.uk

Background

1. Bury and Rochdale Youth Justice Service amalgamated in 2014, and our partnership board is chaired by the Director of Bury Children's Services, with the Assistant Director of Rochdale Children's Services as co-chair. Strategically and operationally partners are drawn from both boroughs.
2. Bury retained responsibility for the Youth Justice Prevention element following the merge. There are close links and working relationships between the two services to ensure that we are identifying need at the earliest opportunity. One of our key priority areas is early identification of young people who may be at risk of offending, to intervene early and reduce the number of first-time entrants into the criminal justice service.
3. The Youth Justice Plan 2025/2026 was agreed by the Youth Justice Board in July 2025, and sets out the priorities for this financial year, in addition to the proposed outcomes for children and young people open to the service.
4. Issues covered in the business plan that are important for Cabinet to be aware of include:
 - a. the need for a Bury town centre base for the service,
 - b. higher numbers of children in Bury's care open to the service
 - c. higher numbers of Bury children with EHCPs and identified SEND being worked with by the Youth Justice Service
 - d. the disproportionality of some ethnic groups within the cohort of young people supported by the service
5. The Business plan notes performance against national key performance measures, with the number of first time entrants falling and the reoffending rate and custody rate being lower than the regional or GM average in Bury and Rochdale.
6. The plan also notes key risks, which include:
 - a. Inconsistent attendance at the Partnership Board, with a change in governance structure being implemented to address this issue
 - b. Differential access to expert additional resource as part of the Youth Justice offer, with Bury children not having access to a dedicated CAMHs practitioner, or a Educational Attendance specialist, or a Speech and Language Therapist
 - c. The absence of a seconded probation officer for children moving between children and adult youth justice services.
7. Six priority areas for 2025/26 are identified within the plan:
 - a. Governance & Leadership
 - b. Prevention and Diversion
 - c. Remand, Custody and Resettlement
 - d. Victims and Restorative Justice
 - e. Serious Violence and Harmful Sexual Behaviour
 - f. Quality Assurance and Workforce Developmentand these broadly map to the inspection framework for Youth Justice Services.

Links with the Corporate Priorities:

1. The Youth Justice Business plan links to the strategic vision from Let's Do It Strategy – making Bury a place of opportunity, reducing deprivation, improving

life chances, and operationalises it is the contact of children and young people involved (or at risk of involvement) in the youth justice system.

2. It supports the Council's corporate priorities by contributing directly to improved educational outcomes, increased employability, prevention of offending, building safer and more resilient communities.
3. The plan embeds the LET's principles into its approach: working at a neighbourhood level; promoting skills / education; partnership across agencies and communities; focusing on strengths and early intervention.
4. It also provides a delivery route for the Council's ambition that no young person is left behind, that services are joined up, early intervention is key, and children / young people are supported to reach their full potential.

Equality Impact and Considerations:

A comprehensive equality analysis has identified potential impacts across all characteristics which this plan seeks to address. Mitigations have been incorporated into the plan to reduce and eliminate disadvantages taking into account the different needs and approaches specific characteristics require, ensuring the plan is inclusive and equitable.

Environmental Impact and Considerations:

1. The Youth Justice Plan has a low direct environmental impact but aligns with Bury Council's commitment to sustainability and climate responsibility. Through local delivery models, digital working, and environmentally focused community reparation projects, the service contributes to reducing emissions and improving local environments.

Assessment and Mitigation of Risk:

Risk / opportunity	Mitigation
Demand and complexity of cases. Increasing complexity of young people's needs (e.g. trauma, exploitation, mental health, substance misuse) places strain on capacity and resources	Multi-agency planning trauma informed practice; early help pathways; workforce development in complex needs and safeguarding.
Disproportionality and Equality Continued overrepresentation of looked after children and minority ethnic groups in YJS cohort.	Regular disproportionality adults; targeted diversion for children looked after and minority groups; joint working with schools and social care; board monitoring equality data.
Partnership Coordination Changes in partner priorities (e.g. Police, Health, Education) reduce alignment or	Maintain robust Youth Justice Partnership Board governance; shared

resource contribution to youth justice outcomes.	priorities in strategic plans; joint training and communications.
Re-offending rates Increase in youth reoffending or serious violence due to social / economic pressures or reduced Early Help capacity	Focused early intervention and diversion; targeted work with known cohorts (e.g. serious youth violence); robust monitoring and case review

Legal Implications:

Every Local Authority is subject to a statutory duty to formulate and implement for every year a plan in consultation with relevant persons and bodies every year setting out how Youth Justice Services are to be funded and provided and how youth justice teams are to be composed, funded, operated and what functions they are to carry out (Section 40(1)(a)-(b) Crime and Disorder Act 1998). This plan fulfils this duty.

Financial Implications:

There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

Appendices:

Bury and Rochdale Youth Justice Business Plan 2025-26.

Background papers:

None.

Please include a glossary of terms, abbreviations and acronyms used in this report.

Term	Meaning