SCRUTINY REPORT

MEETING:	**Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee**
DATE:	**12 November 2026**
SUBJECT:	**Youth Justice Service Disaggregation Progress Update**
REPORT FROM:	**Cabinet Member for Children and Young People**
CONTACT OFFICER:	**Lisa Sowden, Head of Service – Adolescent Services**

1.0 BACKGROUND

1.1 The report provides Scrutiny Committee with an overview of the performance, priorities and developments within the Bury Youth Justice Service (YJS), including progress following the disaggregation of the former joint Bury and Rochdale Youth Justice Service, key areas of service delivery, governance arrangements, and future priorities.

1.2 Youth Justice Services have a statutory responsibility to prevent offending and reoffending by children and young people, protect the public, support victims of crime and improve outcomes for children who come into contact with the criminal justice system. Services work closely with police, probation, health, education and children's social care partners to reduce reoffending, protect victims and support vulnerable children.

1.3 Historically, Bury operated within a joint Youth Justice Service arrangement with Rochdale. During 2026, work was undertaken to establish Bury as a standalone Youth Justice Service to provide greater local accountability, strengthen integration with wider Adolescent Services and improve responsiveness to local need.

1.4 The establishment of a standalone service aligns with the Council's wider ambition to strengthen local accountability, improve integration within Adolescent Services and ensure services are responsive to the specific needs of Bury children and communities.

1.5 The service continues to operate within the Child First framework, recognising that children are children first and supporting their strengths, needs and potential to achieve positive outcomes.

2 ISSUES

Overview

2.1 The establishment of Bury's standalone Youth Justice Service represents a significant milestone in strengthening local accountability and ensuring services are tailored to the needs of Bury children, victims and communities.

2.2 Members should note that much of the performance information contained within this report reflects the joint Bury and Rochdale position. Although the services formally separated on 1 September 2026, performance reporting systems and associated data arrangements did not fully separate until the beginning of November 2026. As a result, the current dataset provides a combined position and should be viewed as a baseline from which future Bury-specific performance and trend analysis will be developed.

2.3 Despite operating during a period of significant organisational change, service performance has remained positive. The combined Bury and Rochdale dataset demonstrates a binary reoffending rate of 13.2%, a reduction in Serious Youth Violence offences from 64 to 27, and 100% of children being recorded as living in suitable accommodation at the end of intervention. Whilst these figures are not yet available on a Bury-only basis, they provide assurance regarding service effectiveness throughout the transition period.

2.4 The Youth Justice Management Board has agreed that the existing joint Bury and Rochdale Youth Justice Plan will remain in place until June 2027. This provides continuity of strategic

direction and service delivery during the transition period whilst a standalone Bury Youth Justice Plan is developed, informed by local need, performance and partnership priorities.

2.5 The service continues to respond to increasingly complex presentations involving exploitation, serious youth violence, contextual safeguarding concerns, trauma and adverse childhood experiences. Strong partnership working remains central to ensuring children receive timely support whilst maintaining an appropriate focus on public protection and victim needs.

2.6 Following separation from the former joint arrangements with Rochdale, substantial progress has been made in creating a fully operational service. All Bury children have successfully transitioned to Bury-managed caseloads, the case management system has been fully separated, key staffing appointments have been secured and dedicated accommodation at Milltown House is now ready for occupation.

2.7 The service is currently supporting approximately 81 children and young people across Youth Justice and Prevention Services. Throughout the transition period, statutory responsibilities and service delivery have been maintained, ensuring no disruption for children, families or victims.

2.8 The service is now entering the next phase of development, with a focus on embedding the standalone operating model, strengthening partnership contributions, addressing inequity in specialist partner provision, enhancing quality assurance arrangements and improving outcomes for children and young people.

Children and Young People Open to the Service

2.9 The transition of children from the former joint arrangements has now been completed. All Bury children have transferred to Bury Youth Justice and Prevention Services. All children are allocated to Bury practitioners. The transition has been completed without disruption to statutory service delivery, and all children are now managed through Bury-based operational and governance arrangements.

2.10 The service currently works with 81 children and young people across youth justice and prevention pathways. Many children present with complex needs associated with exploitation, serious violence, trauma, mental health needs and contextual safeguarding concerns. Despite these challenges, partnership arrangements continue to support strong outcomes for children, victims and communities.

Performance Overview

2.11 Members should note that the performance information presented reflects the combined Bury and Rochdale Youth Justice Service dataset due to the disaggregation of reporting arrangements not taking effect until November 2026. This data therefore provides a baseline position whilst a standalone Bury dataset is established.

2.12 Performance remains positive across several key indicators. The binary reoffending rate stands at 13.2%, significantly below regional and national comparators, providing assurance regarding the effectiveness of intervention and supervision arrangements. During the reporting period, 83 First Time Entrants entered the youth justice system, equivalent to 173 per 100,000 children aged 10-17. Serious Youth Violence offences reduced from 64 to 27, reflecting the impact of partnership activity focused on prevention, exploitation and violence reduction. Additionally, 100% of children were recorded as living in suitable accommodation at the conclusion of intervention.

2.13 A major milestone has been achieved through the successful separation of the case management system from Rochdale from 1 November 2026. This means the service now has independent case recording arrangements, Bury-specific reporting capability, improved local oversight, greater ability to analyse demand, performance and outcomes for Bury children.

2.14 Development of a Bury-only dataset is at an early stage, limiting current trend analysis and benchmarking. Data reporting arrangements have been established following system separation and Bury-specific reporting is now being developed. Over the coming months, performance reporting will continue to develop as a standalone dataset becomes established. As Bury-specific data becomes available, the service will be able to provide more detailed analysis of local trends and outcomes, enabling Scrutiny Committee and the Youth Justice Management Board to better assess the impact of service developments and future improvement activity

Workforce

2.15 Significant progress has been made in establishing the staffing structure required to deliver a standalone service. Achievements include: recruitment of a substantive Service Manager; recruitment to practitioner vacancies; appointment of a Data Analyst; internal recruitment to a dedicated Business Support post; and appointment of a Referral Order Coordinator, who will commence within the coming weeks.

2.16 To support continuity and knowledge transfer, Rochdale colleagues will continue to provide a short period of transitional support for both business support functions and referral order processes whilst induction and training are completed.

2.17 The successful recruitment programme has significantly reduced reliance on temporary arrangements and places the service in a stable position from which to embed and further develop the standalone operating model.

Accommodation

2.18 The refurbishment programme at Milltown House has now been completed. Key developments include: completion of all planned building works., handover of keys expected within the coming week, final ICT and Wi-Fi installation arrangements underway, with planned occupation anticipated during December 2026.

2.19 The move will provide a dedicated hub for Youth Justice and Prevention Services and improve opportunities for multi-agency working and collaborative practice.

Health and Education Contributions

2.20 Children involved with the Youth Justice Service frequently present with complex health, emotional wellbeing, communication and educational needs. Some progress has been made in strengthening these specialist resources: CAMHS support has been agreed and recruitment is underway. The service continues to work with partners to address inequity in specialist provision available to Bury children open to Youth Justice, particularly in relation to Speech and Language Therapy (SALT). Interim arrangements currently provide one day per week of SALT support; however, this is not considered a long-term solution and there is currently no agreed commissioning arrangement in place. This matter has been escalated through partnership governance arrangements and will be discussed at the next Locality Board.

2.21 A dedicated Education Worker has been secured and will commence with the service shortly. These developments demonstrate progress in strengthening specialist support whilst recognising that further work is required to secure equitable and sustainable provision for Bury children and young people.

Strategic Context

2.22 The Youth Justice Management Board has agreed that the current joint Bury and Rochdale Youth Justice Plan will remain in place until June 2027, ensuring continuity of delivery during the transition to a standalone Bury service.

2.23 The current plan is structured around several core objectives designed to improve outcomes for children whilst protecting victims and communities. These are:

- Prevent offending and reoffending through early intervention and diversion.
- Reduce serious violence, exploitation and contextual safeguarding risks.
- Keep children, victims and communities safe through effective risk management.
- Improve outcomes in education, training, employment, health and wellbeing.
- Embed Child First and trauma-informed practice.
- Strengthen the voice of children, families and victims.
- Drive continuous improvement through quality assurance, audit and performance management.
- Develop and maintain a skilled and resilient workforce.

Governance Arrangements

2.24 Governance of the service is provided through the Youth Justice Management Board. In recognition of the recent separation from Rochdale and the need to support the embedding of the standalone service, the Board currently meets on a bi-monthly basis to provide enhanced oversight of performance, quality assurance, risk, partnership contributions and service

development. Supporting this is a monthly Youth Justice Operational Group, which is responsible for progressing actions arising from the Management Board, monitoring delivery against agreed priorities, addressing operational barriers and escalating risks requiring strategic oversight. These arrangements provide robust governance and accountability during the transition and embedding phase of the standalone service.

Priorities

2.25 The next phase of development will focus on:

- Embedding the standalone service model.
- Establishing operations within Milltown House.
- Integrating newly appointed staff into the service.
- Implementing CAMHS and Education Worker provision.
- Developing local Referral Order Panel arrangements.
- Securing equitable and sustainable Speech and Language Therapy provision for Bury children open to Youth Justice.
- Embedding quality assurance and audit activity.
- Strengthening the voice of children, families and victims within service development.
- Developing a mature Bury-specific performance framework to support continuous improvement.

3.1 The transition to a standalone Bury Youth Justice Service has been delivered successfully, with statutory functions maintained throughout the process and no disruption to children, families or victims.

3.2 The major elements of the transition programme have now been completed, including the transfer of children, recruitment to key posts, separation of the case management system and completion of accommodation works. The focus of the service is now shifting from implementation to consolidation, quality improvement and achieving positive outcomes for children, victims and communities.

3.3 Whilst current performance data reflects the combined Bury and Rochdale position, available indicators remain positive and provide assurance regarding service effectiveness throughout the transition period. The continuation of the jointly agreed Youth Justice Plan until June 2027 provides a clear strategic framework whilst Bury develops its own future plan informed by local need and emerging performance data.

3.4 In summary, the service is in a strong position to build upon the successful transition and improve outcomes for children: reducing reoffending, strengthening victim engagement and protecting communities. Key priorities for the coming year include embedding governance arrangements, strengthening quality assurance activity and working with partners to secure equitable access to specialist services for Bury children

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List of Background Papers:-

a) Bury and Rochdale Youth Justice Business Plan 2025
b) YJS Management Board Performance Report Q2 2026 - 2027

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