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| <b>DECISION-MAKER:</b>   | CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SCRUTINY PANEL                       |
| <b>SUBJECT:</b>          | THE YOUTH JUSTICE SERVICE                                  |
| <b>DATE OF DECISION:</b> | 26 SEPTEMBER 2024  |
| <b>REPORT OF:</b>        | ROB HENDERSON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND LEARNING |

| <b><u>CONTACT DETAILS</u></b> |               |  |                                  |
|-------------------------------|---------------|--|----------------------------------|
| <b>Executive Director</b>     | <b>Title</b>  | <b>Executive Director for Children and Learning.</b> |                                  |
|                               | <b>Name:</b>  | <b>Rob Henderson</b>                                 | <b>Tel:</b> <b>023 8083 4899</b> |
|                               | <b>E-mail</b> | <b>Robert.henderson@southampton.gov.uk</b>           |                                  |
| <b>Author:</b>                | <b>Title</b>  | <b>Head of Young People's Services</b>               |                                  |
|                               | <b>Name:</b>  | <b>Tim Nelson</b>                                    | <b>Tel:</b> <b>023 8254 5329</b> |
|                               | <b>E-mail</b> | <b>tim.nelson@southampton.gov.uk</b>                 |                                  |

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|-------------------------------------|
| <b>STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY</b> |
| None                                |

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| <b>BRIEF SUMMARY</b>   |
| <p>This report provides an update of the performance of the Youth Justice Service in Southampton. Particular areas of focus are the recommended areas of scrutiny discussed by the Panel in March 2024. These areas are;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The number of children sentenced or remanded to custody</li> <li>• Improvements in education outcomes</li> <li>• Levels of serious youth violence</li> </ul> |

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| <b>RECOMMENDATIONS:</b>  |   |   |      |   |
| <table border="1"> <tr> <td>(i)</td> <td>That the Panel note the partnership focus on reducing custody rates and serious youth crime in Southampton.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>(ii)</td> <td>That the Panel is provided with a further update on education outcomes, once the national comparator data is available.</td> </tr> </table> | (i)   | That the Panel note the partnership focus on reducing custody rates and serious youth crime in Southampton. | (ii) | That the Panel is provided with a further update on education outcomes, once the national comparator data is available. |
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| <b>REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS</b>   |   |   |
| <table border="1"> <tr> <td>1.</td> <td>To enable effective scrutiny of progress against the local Youth Justice Strategic Plan and the work of the multi-agency Vulnerable Adolescent Board.</td> </tr> </table> | 1.  | To enable effective scrutiny of progress against the local Youth Justice Strategic Plan and the work of the multi-agency Vulnerable Adolescent Board. |
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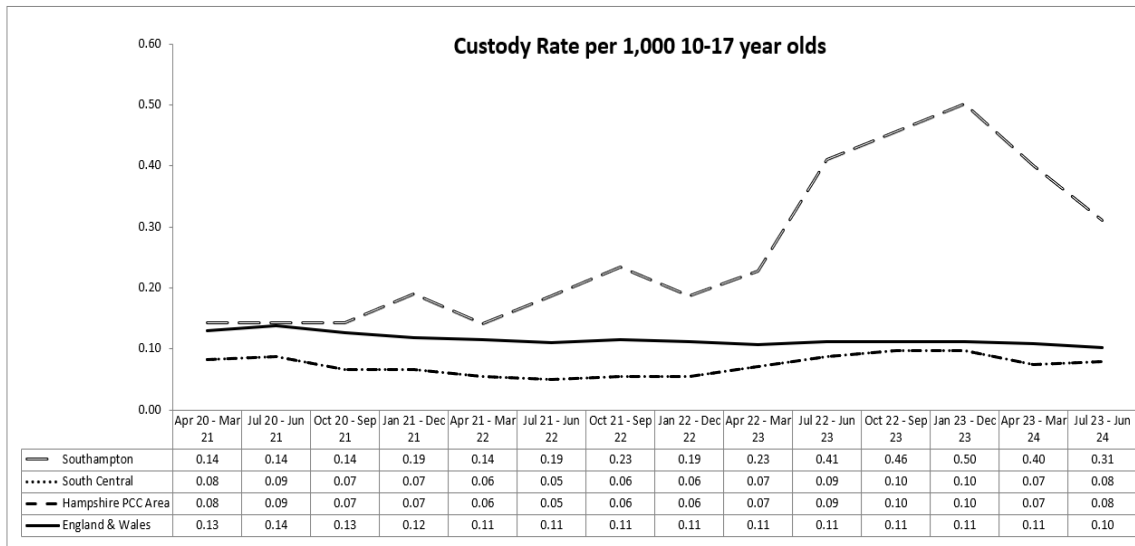
|   |       |       |
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| <b>ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED</b>                |       |       |
| <table border="1"> <tr> <td>2.</td> <td>None.</td> </tr> </table> | 2.    | None. |
| 2.  | None. |       |

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|---|---|---|
| <b>DETAIL (Including consultation carried out)</b>  |   |   |
| <b>Context</b>  |   |   |
| <table border="1"> <tr> <td>3.</td> <td>Overall, in 2022/23 Southampton remained highest amongst iQuanta comparator Community Safety Partnerships and higher than the national average when considering both the volume (rate) and severity of total police recorded crime. This suggests that in 2022/23 Southampton experienced more crimes per population,</td> </tr> </table> | 3.  | Overall, in 2022/23 Southampton remained highest amongst iQuanta comparator Community Safety Partnerships and higher than the national average when considering both the volume (rate) and severity of total police recorded crime. This suggests that in 2022/23 Southampton experienced more crimes per population, |
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- as well as a more severe mix of crimes compared to comparators and the national average. The data from the Safer City Partnership 2023/24 shows an improving picture of reducing offending in the City across most crime types. This data is yet to be published.
- 4. The 'All-crime' picture through 2022/23 undoubtedly impacted on youth crime, with an increase over that year of knife crime in the youth cohort, specifically hostility between two Urban Street Gangs.
- 5. Nationally, the Youth Justice Board (YJB) has been instrumental in changing the narrative for children in the criminal justice system. The evidence-based 'child first' approach is helping to support and shape youth justice policy, driving the principle that children within the criminal justice system have complex needs and are in need of help and support, stability and care. While risk management, victims and community safety are a priority, the child and their needs should be at the centre of our collective decision making and service provision.
- 6. Our youth justice comparator group has recently changed. YJS comparator groups are not the same as Community Safety Partnership or police force comparator groups but are based on the DFE Children's Services Statistical Neighbour Benchmarking Model. So, while partnerships are looking at similar offence data, we are all using different comparator groups.

**Youth Justice Custody Rates**

- 7. The custody data below was published by the Youth Justice Board within YDS publication 119 and is the latest available National data that includes custody up to June 2024.



The above graph shows a steady increase in custody rates for Southampton children between April 2020 and December 2024. Overall, nationally, custody rates for children have been reducing, and Southampton rates have highlighted the City as an outlier to that trend. In 2022 there were some very significant incidences of serious violence in the City. The children involved in these offences went on to receive custodial sentences in 2023. At this point, SYJS were higher than the YJS Family average (rate of 0.16 per 1,000 10-17 YO) and higher than the national average (rate of 0.10 per 1,000 10-17 YO), the rates for 2023 placed Southampton as one of the highest in the country for rates of children receiving a custodial sentence. This context also affected the number of remands: in 2023 there were 10

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|     | instances of remand (seven youth detentions and three remands to Local Authority Accommodation, comprising of 8 children).  |
| 8.  | <p><b>Remand and Custody – safeguarding management</b></p> <p>The national prison estate is experiencing resourcing issues for a growing prison population. This is also impacting on the youth estate, with the current youth system experiencing challenges in meeting the needs of this reducing but complex group of children. The service is proactive in terms of the concerns for the safety of our children in custody. All of the sites where children were residing were visited by senior leaders in the summer of 2023. Meetings were held with the Head of Youth Custody Services; their safeguarding lead and regular meetings were also arranged with the Feltham Resettlement Head of Service.</p>  |
| 9.  | <p><b>Response and Impact: Reduction in custody rates</b></p> <p>The data published by the Youth Justice Board is a rolling 12-month period. The reporting period ended in June 2024. To date, in 2024 there have been four custodial sentences (one child received two sentences of custody, one was 18 when sentenced, but due to appearing as a youth at his first court appearance, he is represented in YJ figures). While rates remain high, we can see a declining trend. In the year to date 2024-2025 there have been two remands to the local authority and three remands to youth detention (one for one night, followed by a remand to the Local Authority the following day, and two young people who were remanded to the care of the Local Authority and subsequently remanded to youth detention. One has since been sentenced to custody). Again, although high, this is an improving picture, evidencing that the work achieved by the partnership has started to have an impact.</p>   |
| 10. | <p>The work of the Partnerships includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing and improving ‘alternative to custody’ packages, building on the Intensive Supervision and Surveillance requirement, which is imposed by the Court and is seen as a direct alternative to remand and custody. These packages are bespoke to the child and these types of orders often comprise up to 25 hours per week of intervention over a seven-day period. They also include a curfew. We have taken steps to improve how we present these packages to the court, increasing awareness of what this offer looks like, providing information and reassurance to partners by outlining the detail of the bespoke offer. These steps have also involved meeting with sentencers, a hub event to talk to our children, a prospectus showing what such a package would look like in reality, and a change to court reports reflecting our ‘child first’ approach.</li> <li>• A drive to reduce caseloads in youth justice so that case managers are able to deliver on resource-intensive court orders. The development of the Young People’s Service has also promoted a joined-up approach across Youth Justice and Social Care to respond to children who have received intensive orders.</li> <li>• Assertive representation of senior leaders at court to articulate plans and to evidence to the court the Council and Partnership commitment to these children and how seriously we take this commitment.</li> </ul> <p>This approach has led to two children being given the opportunity to work with us in the community as an alternative to custody, one in February 2024 and one in March 2024. This approach is providing opportunities for courts, children and the partnership to explore alternatives ways of managing children who present a risk of</p> |

harm, while still seeing them as children and protecting and supporting them and their families.

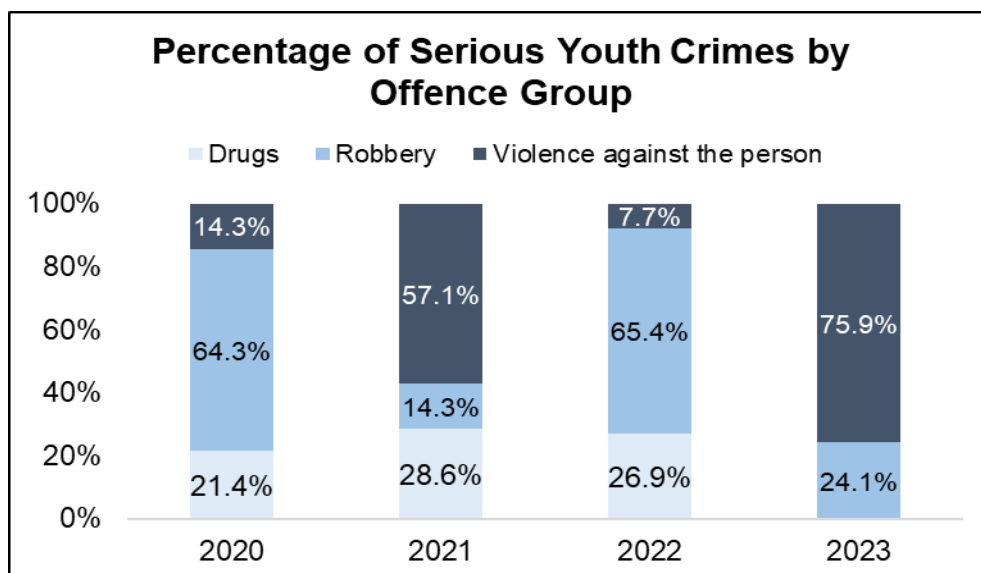
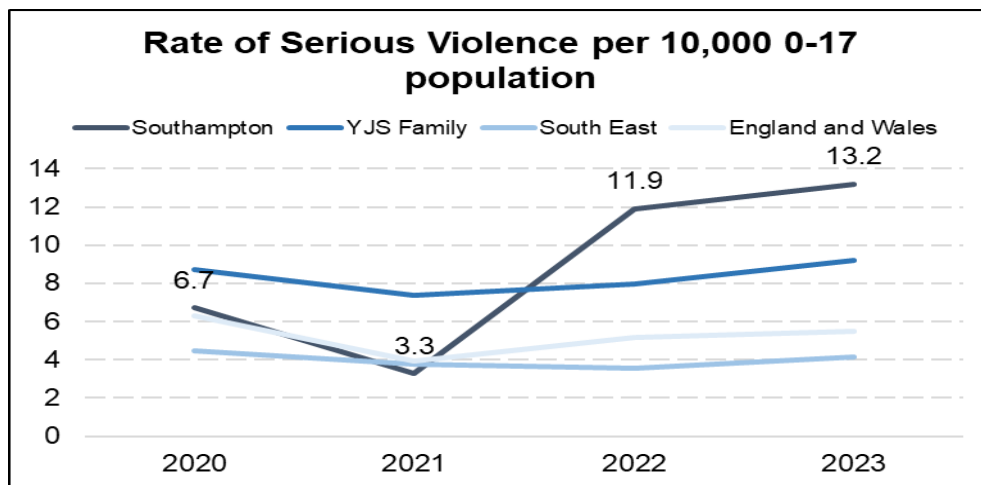
## Serious Youth Violence

### 11. Definitions of Serious Youth Violence

The Youth Justice Board's operational definition of Serious Violence (SV) is any drug, robbery or violence against the person offence that has a gravity score of five or more. Robbery offences all carry a gravity score of 6. Gravity scores range from 1 (least serious) to 8 (most serious). Youth Justice Board definitions of serious violence also include drug related crime.

The serious violence toolkit counts the number of proven offences committed by children aged 10 to 17. A proven offence is one for which a child receives a youth caution or sentence. The quarter the offence is shown in the data is the quarter the outcome was received in, not when the offence was committed. The data only shows offences that have led to a substantive outcome, not offences still in the system that have yet to result in a sentence (police investigation timeliness and court delays affect timeliness of outcomes and therefore the accuracy of data). The data also does not reflect the level of incidences in the City that do not lead to any formal outcome.

Southampton saw an increase in serious youth violence between 2021 and 2023, referred to in the youth custody section of this report.



|                             | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
|-----------------------------|------|------|------|------|
| Drug Offences               | 3    | 2    | 7    | 0    |
| Robbery                     | 9    | 1    | 17   | 7    |
| Violence against the person | 2    | 4    | 2    | 22   |

12. **Response and Impact: reduction in harm score**

The partnership response to these challenges has been robust and includes:

- **The building of a governance response as a partnership to serious incidents in the City.** This has developed from an operation in the East of the City in Spring/Summer 2023, taking a partnership response to a specific area where there were high rates of knife-enabled incidents (Operation Meero).
- **Creation of local serious youth violence meetings.** The partnership then sought to make this approach 'business as usual' and develop similar responses across the whole City. Partnership meetings have now been set up across each police area with commitment from across agencies to support their delivery. Current work is focused on how these meetings merge with the partnership action groups and how we use this space to problem solve about how to make places and spaces safer for communities.
- **The creation of a Focused Deterrence model for Southampton** (evidence-based approach to tackling serious violence). The partnership secured funding from the Violent Reduction Unit (VRU) to help us create a model that works for the City, consider the resourcing required from the partnership, and bring the partnership together, creating a multi-agency team that works in localities. This team's workflow would come from the serious violence meetings already set up and running. These roles have been identified and we are in the process of setting up this team, which would report to the Youth Justice Service Manager. There is a high level of commitment from our local VRU who have committed funding. This has enabled our recruitment of external support to drive this project forward.

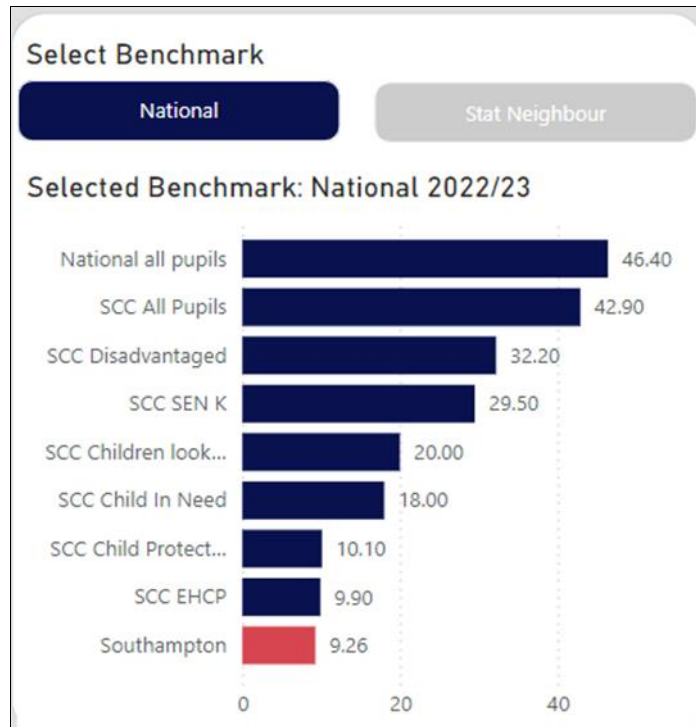
13. The work involved a partnership response to reducing risk in the area which included an increased police presence, a review of all the children at risk and offers of intervention for all of the children identified, an outreach response into the area, referrals and support of children into holidays activities over the summer. It also involved high visibility patrols in the area, considering the context and making spaces safer (CCTV, public meetings with the community, requests made for additional funding). Police harm score following 3 months of intensive partnership work reduce the harm score from 240 to 10.

Ongoing work includes:

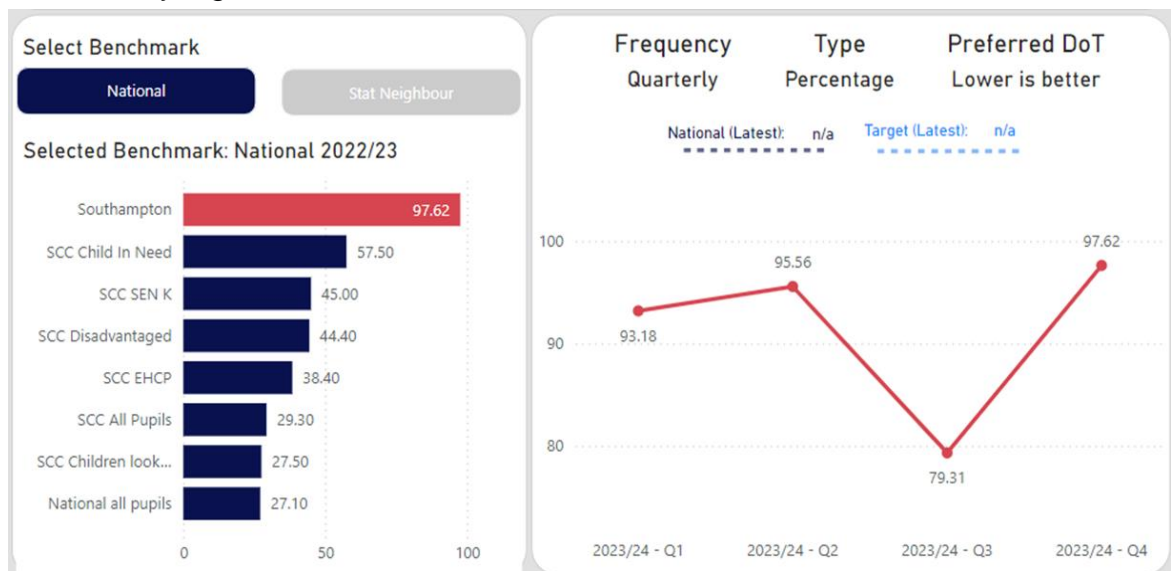
- Partnership Action Groups creating multi agency responses to areas of need and risk.
- Ensuring commissioned services can respond to the needs of the City by creating flexible and responsive services operating at a local level.

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|            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Coordination of Youth Outreach activity across the City to ensure it is targeted at hotspot areas identified through the analysis of data and as part of that contextual response.</li> <li>▪ The development of a learning, skills, work experience offer within the Youth Justice to provide hope, aspiration and diversion to the Youth Justice Cohort of young people.</li> </ul>  |
|            | <p><b>Youth Justice and Education</b></p>   |
| <p>14.</p> | <p><b>Context and data</b></p> <p>Nationally outcomes for children who are in the youth justice system are poor, with a high proportion of children not in mainstream education, or with poor attendance. Many have missed out on universal services, have undiagnosed needs or are struggling to cope in alternative provision settings. Those who are in school have high exclusion rates. Some children express their frustration through dysregulated and heightened behaviour leading to exclusion from a normal school regime and part-time timetables with limited hours of contact with learning.</p> <p>Children who lose connection with the school community tend to feel rejected and this often increases difficult behaviours. A large proportion of children in the youth justice system are not in school at all, and a number have been absent from school for a number of years. It is difficult for these children to step back into a structured environment as part of a group setting. They often struggle to catch up on their missed education. These children feel alienated from their peer groups and have a large amount of unstructured time. When they are offered off site or online learning, they may not have the tools to access such provision because they struggle to learn without support. Many have parents who don't have the capacity to support their education at home.</p> <p>Due to the review of the YJ education KPIs we are currently unable to benchmark ourselves against our comparators. The Youth Justice Board has indicated that this will be possible from October 2024.</p> <p>We are able to match Key Stage 4 Attainment 8 outcomes against adolescent young people open to Youth Justice within Quarter 4 2023/24. To provide context to this performance, pupil groups from Education and Social Care have been included using 2023 performance outcomes.</p> <p>Attainment 8 is a way of measuring how well pupils do in key stage 4, which they usually finish when they are 16 years old. The 8 subjects which make up Attainment 8 are: English maths 3 subjects from qualifications that count towards the English Baccalaureate (EBacc), like sciences, language and history 3 more GCSE qualifications (including EBacc subjects) or technical awards from a list approved by the Department for Education. Each grade a pupil gets is assigned a point score from 9 (the highest) to 1 (the lowest). Each pupil's Attainment 8 score is calculated by adding up the points for their 8 subjects, with English and maths counted twice.</p> <p>In the bar charts below, the red coloured bar for 'Southampton' denotes the Youth Justice cohort. It shows that young people involved with the SYJS perform at a lower level than the national average and Southampton 'all pupils', at a level that aligns with children subject to child protection planning and children with education, health and care plans (EHCPs). As stated, it is vitally important that we start receiving comparable data from the Youth Justice Board so that we can accurately</p> |

measure our performance for young people involved in the youth justice system against our YJS family members.



Young people open to SYJS within Quarter 4 made up 10% of the total persistent absence cohort during the Autumn and Spring terms from academic year 2023/24. However, within the YJS cohort the level of persistent absenteeism is consistently high over 2022/23 and 2023/24.



15. **What have we done about it?**

In 2022 Youth Justice had a peer review specifically focused on improving education outcomes. Progress against the review action plan includes the following activity:

- In the last year we have recruited to the Education Manager role and trialled a year of a speech and language therapist dedicated to youth justice. The education manager role's focus is driving YJS outcomes for YJS children in Education Training and Employment. The overall aim is to improve attendance, reduce children not in education, employment or

training, and advocate better for children with a comprehensive understanding of their needs.

- We have created the HELP pathway, an integrated health and education pathway for all YJS children coming into the cohort to better understand and support need and deliver and advocate at the right level. The pathway involves representatives from education psychologists, speech and language, children and adolescent mental health services, education, special educational needs team and substance misuse. Examples of its value is that it allows a better understanding of the child when making key decisions such as outcomes that means a child enters the criminal justice system or our contribution to the in year fair access panel where schools are making decisions about managed moves for example. This pathway gives children and families access to specialist services that they might have not had opportunities for due to school attendance issues, it also empowers case managers to advocate for them at school, in court and when referring into community provision.
- The other area of significant development is the skills agenda. The education manager, also a teacher, has been building opportunities to learn and achieve at the Young Peoples Hub. The service is now an accredited learning centre for Lazer awards, a body that allows the service to create options to gain qualifications. This was a year-long process in terms of application and has allowed us to develop a skills programme in the hub. Examples of this are tutoring, a café intervention and a local charity, who are now able to ensure their interactive sessions can also lead towards qualifications and currency into other providers.
- The service has applied for Alternative Provision status and is currently going through a quality assurance process. This would allow us to offer this provision to a small group of children in the City where other options have not been successful and whose risk profile has limited their options. The aim is time limited offers of support with a view to integration back into community provision.
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- Examples of the types of work the service has developed include dedicated YJS CSCS card course in collaboration with the Princes Trust (where YJS supported to enable children who would not normally pass their risk assessment process, opportunities to attend), developing the cafe intervention (Opportunity Brews that provides customer service, food hygiene, barista training opportunities), securing funding for bike maintenance sessions weekly and tutoring on a one to one, recognising that our children require this dedicated and focused time.
- This work has also facilitated better packages for the court to consider as alternative to custody options and has allowed the service to respond quickly to children appearing before the court in an unplanned way for serious offences. In the past we would have suggested that without



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|   | education that alternative to custody packages could not be facilitated. We are now creating solutions to that.  |
|   | <b>Next Steps</b>  |
| 16.   | <p>While a great deal has been progressed this year as outlined above, this has yet to be reflected in our data. We will start to see the impact of the huge focus on this area in terms of delivery of services, but the causation of the problem is entrenched and complex and so to is the solution to resolving the issues. The Youth Justice Service Manager has visited other areas across the country to understand what they are doing to tackle these challenges. The findings are that there are few services that are offering opportunities in the way we are, with most areas still grappling with this problem.</p> <p><b>Next steps include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Continuing to build on this offer creating opportunities for children in their locality. This includes a collaboration with a local roasting house and coffee business providing a range of work experience options through creation of a coffee blend to selling the coffee. Resources have been found to progress this and plans are in place. This would aim to expand the current café intervention.</li> <li>▪ Further CSCS card courses are being planned, supported by the Violent Reduction Unit, but building on that first course and developing pathways with include work experience, apprenticeship opportunities and permanent employment. The next course is scheduled for November.</li> <li>▪ Further funding opportunities are being explored to ensure that the tutoring and bike mechanics work can continue. The tutoring has been well sorted after by children and families.</li> <li>▪ Creation of a young sessional role for a child who has been through or system and who is able to help and support other children.</li> <li>▪ Mentoring opportunity focused on supporting children back into education, training or employment. If a child has been out of education, or has never worked, finding a place is sometimes the easy bit. The hard bit is to support a child to take a step into something new and huge resource, time and effort goes into this knowing that hope and aspiration as well as a shift of identity can be the key to reduction in offending.</li> </ul> |
| <b>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b>  |  |
| <b><u>Capital/Revenue/Property/Other</u></b>                        |  |
| 17.   | The partnership budget is monitored by the Vulnerable Adolescent Board on a quarterly basis  |
| 18.   | The service is based in the Youth Hub in Southampton Civic Centre.   |
| <b>LEGAL IMPLICATIONS</b>   |  |
| <b><u>Statutory power to undertake proposals in the report:</u></b> |  |
| 19.   | Crime and Disorder Act 1998<br>Children Act 1989 and 2004  |
| <b><u>Other Legal Implications:</u></b>                             |  |
| 20.   | None   |

|                                      |  |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| <b>RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS</b>  |  |
| 21.                                  | The Vulnerable Adolescent Board has quarterly oversight of the operations of the Youth Justice Service and progress against the Youth Justice Strategic Plan.  |
| <b>POLICY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS</b> |  |
| 22.                                  | <p>The 2024 updated Corporate Plan includes the following strategic objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safe and stable home environments</li> <li>• Accessible education and skills pathways.</li> </ul> <p>The actions and recommendations detailed in this report are important in achieving these objectives.</p> |

|                                    |      |
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| <b>KEY DECISION?</b>               | No   |
| <b>WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED:</b> | None |
| <u>SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION</u>    |      |
| <b>Appendices</b>                  |      |
| 1.                                 | None |

#### Documents In Members' Rooms

|    |      |
|----|------|
| 1. | None |
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#### Equality Impact Assessment

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| Do the implications/subject of the report require an Equality and Safety Impact Assessment (ESIA) to be carried out? | No |
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#### Data Protection Impact Assessment

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Do the implications/subject of the report require a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) to be carried out? | No |
|---|----|

#### Other Background Documents

**Other Background documents available for inspection at:**

| Title of Background Paper(s) | Relevant Paragraph of the Access to Information Procedure Rules / Schedule 12A allowing document to be Exempt/Confidential (if applicable) |
|------------------------------|--|
| 1.                           | <a href="#">Southampton Youth Justice Service report to the Children and Families Scrutiny Panel March 2024</a>                            |