



SPECIAL JOINT MEETING OF CHILDREN AND LIFELONG LEARNING AND COMMUNITIES' SCRUTINY PANEL

8th September 2025 at 2.00pm

Present: Councillors Aisthorpe, Bonner, Boyd, Cairns, Crofts (substitute for K. Swinburn), Downes, Farren, Hasthorpe (substitute for Brookes), Parkinson (substitute for Lindley), Patrick, Shutt and Silvester.

Officers in attendance:

- Zoe Grindle (Service Lead, Youth Justice)
- Harriet Malkin (Deputy Service Director, Safeguarding and Disability)
- Charlene Sykes (Service Director Safeguarding Youth Justice and Family Help)
- Joanne Paterson (Scrutiny and Committee Advisor)

Also in attendance:

- Councillor Cracknell Portfolio Holder for Children and Education

There were no members of the public present.

JSPCT.5 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED – That Councillor Silvester be appointed Chair for this joint scrutiny panel meeting.

COUNCILLOR SILVESTER IN THE CHAIR

JSPCT.6 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Brookes, Lindley, K. Swinburn and Wheatley.

JSPCT.7 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made with regard to any items on the agenda for this meeting.

JSPCT.8 YOUTH JUSTICE PLAN

The panel considered the Youth Justice Plan ahead of its submission to Cabinet on 16th September 2025.

Members raised the following queries on the Youth Justice Plan:

Members asked what work was taking place in schools to reduce the use of knives and weapons. Officers provided assurance that significant work was taking place within the community partnership, and also with the use of virtual reality tools, to ensure numbers remained low. Officers confirmed that a Weapons Policy was in place and explained in detail how the green, amber and red risks worked.

Members were particularly concerned around the transition from children to adults within the Youth Justice Service (YJS), with members taking time to explore the data provided for the different cohorts of children. Officers explained the preventative measures that were in place and assured members that a Transition Protocol was also in place from post-16. Officers noted that the service had seconded a Probation Officer into the Youth Justice Team to assist with these transitions. The officers provided assurance that a robust package was provided on an individual level, and at a more strategic level this was considered through the Youth Justice Board (YJB).

Members were keen to understand more about the service priorities for the coming year, noting that under education, training and employment there was an action to reduce the number of permanent exclusions and suspension rates and how the council would look to improve its relationship with its academies. Officers outlined the work that was taking place within academies to ensure that children were in the right setting and that every child's needs were being met.

A brief discussion ensued with members commenting on the following areas within the report:

- How child exploitation was being addressed and the increase in sexual offences.
- Those children being Elected Home Educated (EHE) and how the council was encouraging children back into school.
- The Prosecutions Scheme and Crown Prosecution Service (CPS).
- Lack of data around males involved in the Youth Justice Service (YJS).
- 'The Childs Voice'.
- Issues with students locally on part-time school timetables.

- How the council was working with local housing organisations and the impact of Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO)s
- Increases in crime due to non-British nationals.

In terms of the increase in sexual offences, officers reassured the panel that they worked closely with social workers, Family Help and local charities to deliver positive interventions and equip children with the required skills and understanding around positive and healthy relationships. Schools and colleges were engaged overall with this and any challenges were addressed on a bespoke basis

In response to queries raised around data and how the council were targeting males involved in substance misuse. Ms Sykes did not have the data to hand but could take this way and provide some information back to the panel via Democratic Services.

In terms of prosecutions, it was explained that the CPS had changed their guidance to only recognise Youth Conditional Cautions (YCC) and Youth Cautions when matters arrived in court. The YJS were promoting greater use of 'Outcome 22s' where no admissions were made, preventing the need for children to go to court. This being a much more child first approach with the evidence behind the impact of this for children being much stronger.

In terms of the Child's Voice, this was integral to all intervention. The service had recently launched a feedback app to further enhance this as an additional measure, which children could now give feedback through and this had been positively received.

Ms Sykes shared the ambition for all children to be engaged in education and explained the reasoning behind students being on part time timetables, which included some children having bespoke needs, requiring a part time approach which is part of a wider multi agency plan, and an aim to integrate them into education full time.

RESOLVED – That the Youth Justice Plan be noted and forwarded onto Cabinet.

There being no further business, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 2.53p.m.