



Report of: Director Youth and Community Service

Meeting:	Date:	Wards:
Executive	13 July 2017	All

SUBJECT: Knife Crime and Mobile Phone Theft Scrutiny Review – Executive Members Response

1. Synopsis

- 1.1 The Committee concluded the review on knife crime, mobile phone thefts and crime hotspots in May 2016. It made a large number of recommendations in reflection of the seriousness of the issue, that set out to assist in reducing the incidence of knife crime and mobile phone theft in Islington. This covering paper sets out the overall response from the Executive and reports back on general progress since the Scrutiny Committee reported in May 2016. A progress update to each of the recommendations is found in Appendix 1.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 To agree the response to the Policy and Performance Scrutiny Committee's recommendations.
- 2.2 To note the progress to date and the future plans to implement the recommendations.

3. Background

- 3.1 The PPS Committee's review on knife crime, mobile phone thefts and crime hotspots ran from June 2015 until May 2016 and was established in the context of worrying increases in knife crime and very high levels of mobile phone theft in the borough. The committee heard that in 2014/15 knife crime had increased by 15% and serious youth violence increased by 40% in Islington. In addition, mobile phone theft offences had reached unprecedented levels with up to 300 phones snatched each month.

The review set out to achieve the following objectives:

- To better understand the issues and causes of knife crime and what the Council can do to reduce knife crime in the borough
- In parallel with the above, to review and improve what the Council and its partners can do to reduce mobile phone theft by thieves on bikes within the borough

The review received evidence from a variety of sources that included presentations from witnesses; police, Margate Task Force, Chance UK and Safer London and young people, as well as presentations from council officers. The review included visits to New River College PRU, the Integrated Gang Team and New Horizons Youth Centre.

The recommendations of the committee focussed principally on impacts on young people, and placed an emphasis on identification of children at an early age so that interventions can take place and support offered to families.

4. Response to the recommendations

4.1 We are grateful to the Policy and Performance Scrutiny Committee for its report and recommendations. The Committee examined a number of important issues which have a direct bearing on the safety of children and young people and the wider community in our borough. All of the recommendations have been accepted and a progress update to each of the recommendations is found in Appendix 1.

4.2 There has been a great deal of partnership activity and additional resources secured in response to the committee's recommendations reflecting the strong commitment and effort among the various partners involved in working to reduce youth crime in Islington.

Highlights include:

- The work of the Integrated Gang Team (IGT) fully co-located at Islington Police station from May 2016
- 329 practitioners trained in Safeguarding Young People in Relation to Gang and Serious Youth Violence
- Islington has seen continued reductions in first time offending rates
- Commissioning of the council investment of youth violence prevention providing additional resource to work with young people at risk and their families including mentoring and key working
- The improvement in our Youth Offending Service which has recently been taken off formal improvement processes by the Youth Justice Board
- Cllr Joe Caluori has taken a lead in London for raising the issue of County Lines as a growing safeguarding concern with the Home Office
- New guidance shared with Islington schools in April on an effective and whole school approach to preventing and addressing youth violence

4.3 Despite the good progress made in response to the recommendations, we have not achieved the impact we would like to see in tackling knife crime and mobile phone theft in our borough. In the past year Islington, like other parts of London has seen worrying increases in youth violence and increases in mobile phone theft, and there are still too many children, young people and families impacted negatively by crime. In June the council is launching the refreshed youth crime plan, 'Working Together for a Safer Islington 2017 - 2020 - A partnership response to tackling youth crime in our borough in Islington'. The plan sets out how the partnership will work together over the next 3 years to reduce youth crime, we intend to broaden our range of commitments and increase our focus to reduce the risk factors that can lead young people becoming vulnerable to being drawn into offending lifestyles and gangs. As part of this we will be piloting a new assertive outreach youth work team this summer to work on Friday and Saturday evenings in partnership with St Giles Trust.

5. Implications

5.1 Financial implications:

The response to the committee's recommendations is being delivered using existing budgets.

5.2 Legal Implications:

The Council has the power to carry out all the implementation plans under the general power of competence (Localism Act 2011, section 1).

5.3 Environmental Implications:

None

5.4 Resident Impact Assessment:

The Council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and to advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations, between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it (section 149 Equality Act 2010). The Council has a duty to have due regard to the need to remove or minimise disadvantages, take steps to meet needs, in particular steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities, and encourage people to participate in public life. The Council must have due regard to the need to tackle prejudice and promote understanding. A RIA was done on the scrutiny recommendations and highlighted the following:

Age - the scrutiny focused primarily on young people. Under 25s are the most arrested age group in the borough and are also the majority of victims of youth crime.

Disability - young people involved or the victims of crime are disproportionately affected by mental health and young people with learning disabilities are over represented nationally within the criminal justice system

Race - Black young people are over represented in the youth justice system in our borough as they are nationally.

Gender – Males are over represented in the youth justice system, but we know that girls can be used by gangs to carry drugs and hide weapons, also there is increasing awareness of the impact of CSE and peer on peer abuse on females as well as males.

6. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

The Committee's recommendations on knife crime, mobile phone thefts and crime hotspots are welcomed. They have further strengthened the focus on delivering a strong partnership to the issues of knife crime and mobile phone theft in our borough. Reducing knife crime and the related harm to young people, families and communities remains the highest priority for our council, and all our partners.

The focus will continue through the delivery of the refreshed youth crime plan, Working together for a Safer Islington 2017 – 2020. The plan sets out what we will do over the next 3 years to reduce the number of young people becoming involved in crime or being the victims of crime.

A key priority will be on prevention and early intervention and we will work hard to ensure that young people, families and communities are at the heart of our planning and delivery.

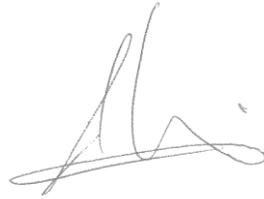
Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Response to recommendations

Background papers: None

Final report clearance:

Signed by:



26 June 2017

Executive Member for Children, Families and
Young People

Date

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Appendix 1

Knife Crime, mobile phone thefts and crime hotspots' scrutiny review

Progress update on each of the recommendations

Recommendation 1: That, given the concerns expressed about sentencing, a briefing meeting be held with the Clerks at Highbury Magistrates Court, with the aim of informing them of the 'local picture', in respect of gang and youth violence and the community impact it is having and to support more appropriate sentencing for these types of offences.

The YOS court lead regularly attends the court user group meetings at Highbury Magistrates Court and the court receives regular updates and information on the local picture on crime in the borough. The Chief Magistrate sits on the Youth Justice Services Management Board and therefore has very good knowledge of youth crime issues in the borough and the partnership's response. An area for development going forward will be to explore the use of knife crime impact statements between the police and council to identify the risks and violence.

Recommendation 2: That Integrated Gangs Team, together with the Police, set up an awareness raising programme for frontline practitioners working with young people in Islington, to increase understanding of the issues and the services available, with regard to gangs, violence and vulnerability of young people

Since October 2016, the Gang Coordinator who is the Social Worker in the IGT has delivered borough wide training to 329 practitioners in Safeguarding Young People in Relation to Gang Activity & Serious Youth Violence. The training was co-delivered with police and IGT partnership colleagues including St Giles. Objectives that are covered in the training;

- Understanding the mind-set of a gang member.
- Key indicators & signs of a YP involved in gangs.
- Key interventions and strategies when working with gang affected YP.
- A clear understanding of Islington procedures for YP affected by gangs and serious youth violence.

The training has been successful in raising staff awareness on the protocols and procedures around safeguarding children affected by gang activity/violence and there has been a significant increase in the number of Strategy (safeguarding) Meetings being requested in relation to gang concerns. Feedback from the training:

"This training has given me the confidence and resources to (address issues with adolescents)".

This training has now been incorporated in to the Islington Safeguarding Children Board training offer and will be delivered more frequently in the coming year.

Recommendation 3: That in view of the fact that there are significant intelligence gaps in the drugs market locally and nationally through County Lines –

- i. **The Child Exploitation (CSE) and Gangs Analyst develop a problem profile on County Lines from Islington, drawing on intelligence from statutory and voluntary sector organisations, to inform the co-ordinated response to gangs and organised crime groups controlling the drugs market**

- ii. **Whilst the Trident matrix can be an effective tool in identifying the cohort of gang members causing, or at risk of causing significant harm, it does not cater for the significant number of young people on the periphery of gangs. It is therefore recommended that the use of the ISCB Gangs Safeguarding protocol is encouraged to support agencies in identifying, referring and engaging this vulnerable cohort of young people in targeted gang prevention work, to prevent their rise to full gang status**

The CSE and Gangs Analyst has completed a problem profile on County Lines that provided both individual analysis of young people involved/suspected to be involved and wider analysis of the extent of county lines in Islington. This was taken to MOPAC and circulated to the relevant professionals, and is informing the borough's approach to county lines. It has identified previously unknown young people and trends in relation to county lines and safeguarding in our borough. The information from the problem profile will also inform the funding application for the MOPAC London Crime Prevention Fund top slice for a cross London project around County Lines. The CSE and Gangs Analyst recently contributed data and information for the recent training provided to British Transport Police on County Lines, attended by 50 BTP Officers.

The multi-agency Gangs Safeguarding Protocol and Practice Guidance has been widely promoted and is supporting practitioners in understanding the 3 risk level categories and in how to take appropriate action when risk is identified. The protocol is included in the gangs training (see recommendation 2) and its use has led to a significant increase in strategy meetings, and the earlier identification of children and young people due to gang risk.

Recommendation 4: That, as a large number of mobile phone thefts take place at busy transport hubs and at shopping centres, MAGPI officers should develop a communication strategy to alert the public to the risks of using their phone in hotspot areas, and that local businesses be encouraged to contribute to funding this

The MAGPI team has worked with the council communications team on the mobile phone theft campaign and developed leaflets that have been widely disseminated across the borough. In addition, the police have tried some innovative approaches including using messages on pavements to alert members of the public to be more careful with their phones. However, this is an area that requires a lot more work and partnership focus as mobile phone theft has continued to rise, and the phenomenon is now widespread across London. We have recently been working with council communications team to update our messaging for this summer and have involved the youth council in reviewing our communications around knife crime and mobile phone theft in particular.

Recommendation 5: That the CSE and Gangs Analyst develop a problem profile on child sexual exploitation issues in Islington to increase knowledge of offenders and victims and to enhance the safeguarding of vulnerable young people at risk

The CSE and Gang Analyst post holder works closely with Childrens Services and Police colleagues to provide analytical products that assist in mapping intelligence on CSE and gangs and youth violence in Islington. This involves providing information to Islington's Multi Agency Sexual Exploitation meeting, IGT and the

Bronze Gangs Tasking Group as well as to relevant strategic partners. The aim of the post is to increase identification and intelligence on victims and perpetrators of CSE and of young people at risk of involvement in gangs and group offending. In the past year her work has assisted with the identification of a CSE perpetrator with links to county lines, as well as helping to build a much better picture of a young person that was missing.

Recommendation 6: That the creation of the Integrated Gangs Team be supported and more cross border work take place by the Police and the Council with other neighbouring Police forces and local authorities to share information and co-ordinate activity, given that crime is not restricted to borough boundaries

The Integrated Gang Team has been operational since January 2016 and fully co-located at the Police Station since May. The coordinated tasking is happening daily and collaborative work includes joint home visits to key gang nominals and their families, welfare checks to young people in the custody suite at Tolpuddle St, and targeted work with victims and young women. The IGT has worked with 97 Young People and Young Adults (up to 24 years old) since April 2016 - including 68 gang involved and on the MPS matrix, and 15 young victims and 14 gang affected young women. After the first year of operation we are beginning to see some positive signs of impact and the IGT has assisted 15 young people to access employment since April 2016, and 9 former gang matrix nominals who have successfully completed the IGT programme have not reoffended.

With regards to cross border working the IGT has developed improved links with all, neighbouring boroughs; Hackney, City of London, Camden and Haringey. Islington & Camden borough have now merged to form Central North area. This has improved information sharing with Camden as the Camden Police are working in the Islington IGT office. The team have also developed improved links with both the proactive & reactive OP Trident police and are in discussion with them regarding their attendance at the IGT tasking meetings.

Islington hosted a Home Office funded Review in March 2017 to explore County lines/CSE/Missing/Safeguarding issues. It was attended by Police and Local Authority Gang leads from surrounding London Boroughs, Op Trident, Essex, Norfolk and Kent Police/Local Authority leads.

Recommendation 7: That whilst the Committee support the use of Stop and Search, this should only be used where appropriate and be proportionate. The Council should identify meaningful ways to involve young people in the process of holding Police to account on stop and search issues and to provide training for young people to help inform them of their rights and responsibilities

The Islington Stop and Search Community Monitoring Group (ISSCMG) is a sub group of the Safer Neighbourhood Board and is the forum for discussing the police approach on stop and search in the borough. The ISSCMG with the support of the Youth Council have conducted a Youth survey on stop and search. 1000 responses have been received and a report due this June. The ISSCMG have expressed their request from more support with this group and with engaging with young people in the borough around stop and search.

Recommendation 8: That the work carried out in relation to Early Intervention strategies, as part of the Youth Crime Strategy, be supported as this is a vital element in deterring future cohorts of young people becoming involved in criminality

The council has invested a further £2million of funding to address serious youth violence over four years and this has added capacity into the teams and allowed practitioners to work alongside the community and voluntary sector who have developed expertise in approaches to support young people at risk. Interventions are targeted at those who are at risk of becoming involved in gang activity, a perpetrator or victim of youth violence. Investment is focused on those who would benefit from specialist interventions to enable them to leave gang activity and/or support to overcome trauma and risks associated with being victims of youth violence. The objective is to adopt a stronger early intervention approach to serious youth crime. The interventions, services, along with training and resources for practitioners focus on further embedding the Think Family approach to ensure the wider systemic issues (such as parental issues) are addressed alongside intensive direct work with the young people, addressing underlying causes of their behaviour.

Funding has been allocated to the following, as part of an integrated multi-agency approach to tackling youth crime, gang activity and violence. Services delivered to date include:

- mentoring delivered by Chance UK for an additional 10 targeted primary school children (to increase reach of current mentoring contract from 2016-2020) and Safer London for 25 young people 11 to 17 years
- one to one intensive support for 75 10-18 year olds plus group work, delivered by workers from St Giles Trust who utilise their experiences as a way of connecting with young people both on the fringes of and already entrenched in gang activity. They will be based in TYS, TYS/Integrate (a Camden and Islington Foundation Trust clinical led project that engages young people involved in gangs in EC1 area) and Integrated Gangs Team (IGT)

This early intervention approach is having a good impact in our borough and we have seen significant reduction in entrants to First Time Entrants to the Youth Justice System this is down 25% on the previous year far exceeding the corporate target. In addition, 80% of Young People who are triaged did not go on to receive a substantive youth outcome within one year

Recommendation 9: That discussions take place with schools as to measures that can be taken to 'flag up' young people who are felt to be at risk or vulnerable to becoming involved in criminality, in order to ensure early intervention can take place. In addition, as it has been shown that many young people permanently excluded from school are at a higher risk of taking part in criminality, measures should be put in place to permanently exclude as few young people as possible

The council in consultation with schools, police, IGT, YOS and Early Help have developed a new guidance for Islington schools on an effective and whole school approach to preventing and addressing youth violence. Further consultation with schools took place at a consultation event February 2017 that was attended by representatives from nine primary schools, seven secondary schools and six Safer Schools Officers. The guidance was circulated to all Islington schools in May 2017

and includes information about risk and protective factors, tell-tale signs and trauma informed approaches.

Recommendation 10: That the work of the Police Safer Schools and other partners, e.g. the Ben Kinsella Trust be supported and extended to pupils in schools on crime prevention, knife crime and gangs and the CSE

There is a very good offer to Islington Schools from well-established projects such as the Ben Kinsella Trust, Victim Support and our Safer Schools police. The council is using some of the additional £2million investment in youth violence prevention to fund St Giles Trust to deliver 30 SOS+ sessions to Islington schools per year. SOS is designed to provide young people with the empowerment and tools to stay safe, resist street pressures and make better life choices. The sessions are delivered by credible ex-offenders with real first-hand experience. Feedback on SOS from Samuel Rhodes School March 2017:

“It’s been completely on point. The pupils and staff were blown away by the workshop and information learnt via it and it alleviated all of their concerns. One class who had further questions asked if they could go into the workshop a second time in order to have all of their questions answered.”

Islington police launched the London Met’s first School Engagement Programme in November 2015 and the Programme is offered to every primary and secondary school in Islington with the flexibility to tailor it to meet schools’ individual needs. Topics include personal safety, dangers of crime and in particular sessions around gangs, knife crime and the concept of joint enterprise. To date over 160 sessions have taken place within Islington Schools with over 7200 pupils taking part. The Islington Junior Citizen Programme ran for two weeks in June and July 2016 and was attended by 1185 children and teachers from 25 Primary Schools across Islington attending. The event aims to teach children how to react safely to scenarios that have been designed and adapted to suit local problems and will be running again in summer 2017.

However take up has not been consistent across all our schools, despite considerable effort to promote the programme by the Safer Schools police. This is disappointing as it means that some Islington pupils are missing out on important messages on knife crime and keeping safe.

Recommendation 11: That as the Committee heard evidence that many young people suffered from a lack of affordable sports facilities in their area, particularly the most vulnerable, it is of the view that discussions should take place with schools and the Council’s Leisure provider, to investigate the possibility of the use of school and leisure facilities in the evenings and at weekends, this to include the provision of free/low cost options at Council Leisure facilities for young people. There should also be a review of the use of current Council community facilities for youth provision to ensure these are situated appropriately and are utilised in the most effective manner to meet current needs. In addition, as some young people are vulnerable to involvement in ASB and crime, Council provision and commissioned services should be encouraged to offer more evening and weekend facilities and that the hours of youth workers should be reviewed so that they are visible in crime hotspots at appropriate times

Organisations like Arsenal in the Community and Access to Sport have a significant reach in Islington providing free and affordable sport activities across the borough including in areas impacted by youth crime. The YOS have an agreement with the Sobel centre to give free use of their facilities for young people subject to the most

rigorous monitoring in the community. Further discussion is required regarding the council leisure and community facilities and this will be taken forward through a key work stream in the Youth Crime plan which aims to co-locate more of our services in the community and extend the hours which our youth services work to include later in the evening and at weekends. We will be piloting an extended youth offer this summer to work later on Friday evenings and at weekends.

Recommendation 12: That the Committee heard evidence of the good work that Chance UK and Safer Aspire carry out in the borough in mentoring and working with vulnerable young people. The Committee noted that an evaluation of this work is currently taking place to assess its effectiveness. This evaluation should be made available when it is completed. Furthermore we noted that there are various funding sources across London that may be able to assist in supporting children in sports activities etc. and these should be looked at and accessed, where possible in relation to mentoring related activities

The Chance UK mentoring programme is undergoing a Randomised Control Trial (RCT) in order to determine the service's impact on children's behaviour and emotional wellbeing. The Social Research Unit (SRU) at Dartington is conducting the RCT, which is called the ECHO project (Evidence for Children's Outcomes). The Social Research Unit report on the trial will be available late in 2017.

In addition, we are evidencing the effectiveness of these services through our own monitoring processes:

In 2016 – 2017 **Chance UK** worked with 50 Islington children (43 boys, 7 girls).

By the end of the programme:

- 69% of ending SDQ's scored below 16 – indicating the children have no behavioural difficulty
- 63% of ending SDQ's also demonstrated an increase in pro-social behaviours (All children are assessed using Goodman's Strengths & Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) the acceptance score is 16 and the average score of children taken onto programme is 29).

In 2016 – 17 the **Safer London Aspire** service matched 27 young people with mentors or intensive support. A snap shot of 7 young people who completed the programme showed a 93% Improvement in engagement with EET; goals and aspirations; engagement in positive activities and services, improved confidence and self-esteem and increased understanding of risks and consequences of gangs and offending.

Recommendation 13: That, given the recent unsatisfactory report on the Youth Offending Service, we noted that measures are being put in place to address the concerns raised. However, more information sharing should take place with other boroughs with a good rating, in order to look at successful measures that can be replicated in Islington. We also recommend that given that the staff in the YOS team are probably suffering from low morale, that additional support and training should be given to them in undertaking often very stressful work

The YOS has achieved significant improvement over the past year and has recently been taken off formal improvement processes by the Youth Justice Board. We have recently been successful in recruiting a new Head of YOS / TYS, Curtis Ashton, who brings extensive experience and skills. The YJB carried out an audit / mock inspection in January which showed that the quality of case management met or exceeded the required standard for HMIP Inspection. The staff team has stabilised and permanent staff recruitment and consequently there has been a positive improvement morale. The

YOS has in addition seen continued reductions in the rate of first time entrants to the youth justice system and a recent reduction in reoffending. However, despite the positive progress it is important to acknowledge that the Islington reoffending and youth custody rates remain very high and are among the highest in the UK.

Recommendation 14: That as the Committee heard evidence of the high prevalence of mental health problems amongst young people involved in gangs and criminality, it is welcomed that there is a mental health worker situated in the Integrated Gangs Team. However we feel that more work needs to be carried out in establishing a more effective process to support young people when transferring from children to adult mental health services and investment, wherever possible, should be maintained and increased in mental health services

The YOS now has a seconded Forensic Psychologist full time and a clinical Psychologist 2 days per week to work with young people identified as having emotional and mental health support needs. These roles can support transition to adult services where needed and can also hold on to cases of young adults to provide a gradual transition if appropriate. Both workers link into and share information with the IGT Psychologist where cases are transferring to the IGT service.

Recommendation 15: That the Council's housing policies be reviewed in respect of emergency moves out of the borough for young people and their families at high risk of gang related harm, and increase the links with the Pan London Gangs service, which can provide support in moving gang members to other boroughs

This area of work is still in development at the time of writing and the IGT Manager is in the process of writing new guidance on housing moves for young people at high risk of gang related harm. Housing remains one of the biggest challenges in our work with young people, especially in the current financial climate and the recent changes to housing legislation which are having a very negative impact on young people. Providing support around housing is a key area of work for the IGT and in 2016 – 17 the team assisted 4 young people in to permanent accommodation, 7 into temporary accommodation and 7 into supported accommodation. Furthermore, we have supported 5 families to move out of the Borough following a Gangs Strategy meeting, due to Police, Social Care and Housing all working together to safeguard the young person and their families from gang retribution/ activity.

Recommendation 16: That consequent to the Crime Summit community event in April the following take place –

- i. A meeting be organised with key stakeholders to discuss the outcome of the summit and proposals for the future way forward**
- ii. An action plan be developed for the 'community' strand of the Youth Crime strategy**
- iii. Support the Safer Neighbourhood Boards in delivery of actions and to identify ways of involving young people in their work**

The main issues from the Summit were captured and shared with the Safer Neighbourhood Board who continue to focus on youth crime issues by holding the police to account. The SNB has allocated the MOPAC community project funding to projects with a focus on youth crime this year. We have carried out extensive consultation with partners over the past year including 3 events in January and February to inform the youth crime plan. These events were attended by a wide range of statutory and voluntary organisations, local residents including parents and young people. In addition the SNB continues to have regular representation from the Youth Council at their meetings.

Recommendation 17: That the IGT and YOS develop further relationships with New Horizons Centre, who have secured external funding from the lottery to work with young people at risk of gang involvement and increase the reach to Islington young people

The YOS has seconded a youth employment worker from New Horizons who has been based with the YOS at Iseldon Rd since September 2016. He provides 1:1 support to young people who are NEET and mentoring into employment. He also links lots of our young people into New Horizons Youth Centre so they can benefit from the full range of facilities and services they offer. Shelagh O'Connor the Chief Executive Officer of New Horizons Youth Centre is a member of the Youth Justice Services Management Board and contributes to oversight and strategic direction of the YOS.

Recommendation 18: That, as it has been shown that engagement in Education, Employment and Training is a key pathway out of offending, the Council should look to provide increased opportunities for young people, such as more use of apprenticeships for the Youth Offending service young people

The council's youth employment team work closely with the Youth Offending Service. In the past year there has been:

- one traineeship that started last year and ran into this year with 5 YOS YP
- one traineeship that started this year and is still running with one YOS YP
- 3 YOS on Artichoke work placement scheme this summer and all 3 went onto level 1 courses at Kings Cross Construction
- Apprenticeships – (awaiting numbers)

The employment team have promoted the Aspire (3 employer events for NEET young people with vacancies) heavily to YOS staff and young people.