



## Report of: Director Youth and Community Service & Superintendent MPS

| Meeting of                                | Date        | Ward(s) |
|---|-------------|---------|
| Policy and Performance Scrutiny Committee | 3 July 2017 | All     |

### SUBJECT: Update on Youth Crime and Youth Violence in Islington

#### 1. Synopsis

- 1.1 This report sets out an update on Youth Crime and Youth Violence in Islington including crime data and police response.

#### 2. Recommendations

- 2.1 The Policy and Performance Scrutiny Committee is requested to note and comment on:
- The information provided on youth crime including knife crime and mobile phone thefts
  - The police response and approach

#### 3. Background

While the rate of first time offending rates has continued to drop in Islington and our reoffending rates have also started to reduce, there remains a small cohort of young people who persistently offend, and who escalate in their offending in a short time. In the past year Islington has seen an increase in youth violence overall, but we have seen a decrease in the rate of knife crime with injury. We continue to see high rates of theft snatch offences often moped enabled, and young people continue to be drawn into this type of offending, mainly due to the financial gain this crime type offers. For example, a stolen Samsung can be worth £125. It is important to note that these crimes are increasing across the capital and there has been a disturbing rise in knife crime in particular with 13 people fatally stabbed in London in the three weeks alone 3 of these teenagers.

#### 4. Youth Crime in Islington

This section provides an update on the borough's performance around crimes predominantly committed by young people.

##### 4.1 Theft Person Snatch Offences

There were 3,508 'Theft Snatch' (mobile phone) offences recorded in Islington in the full year 2016/17, which was an increase of 33% from the previous year. While no seasonal

trends exist, there are clear peaks during 2015 and 2016, particularly around May and June each year. In 2016/17, for context, our neighbouring boroughs have also seen increases with 2,028 offences in Hackney, and 1,797 offences in Camden. The hot spots where there are particular high concentrations of theft snatches offences centre around Roseberry Avenue, Angel, Old Street and just off Essex Road. Offences peaked between 2100 and 2359 (Monday – Friday) and 0000-0259 over the weekend.

## 4.2 Theft of Motor Vehicle

There were 639 theft of MV offences in Islington in 2016/17, a 10% reduction on the previous year. 66% of offences were theft of a two-wheeled vehicle.

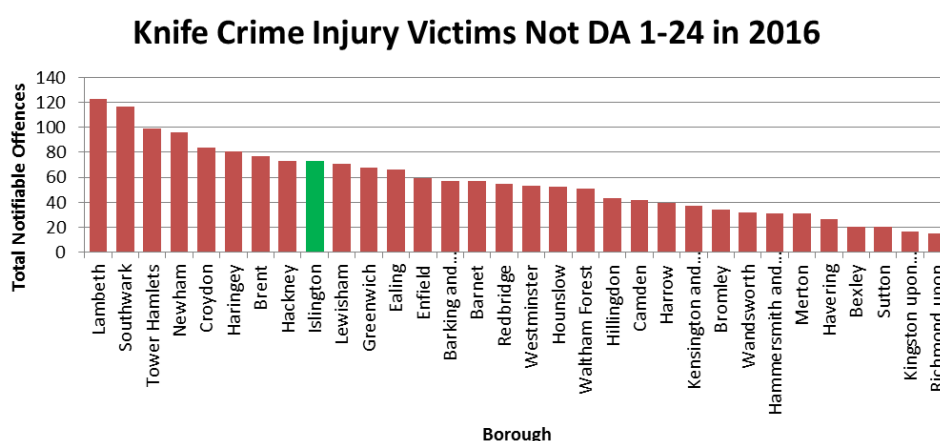
## 4.3 Youth Violence

Both ‘Youth Violence’ and ‘Serious Youth Violence’ have been increasing from 2013 onwards. There was a 9% increase in 2016 from 2015 (youth violence) and a 10% increase in serious youth violence. Levels of ‘youth violence’ across London have also been increasing.

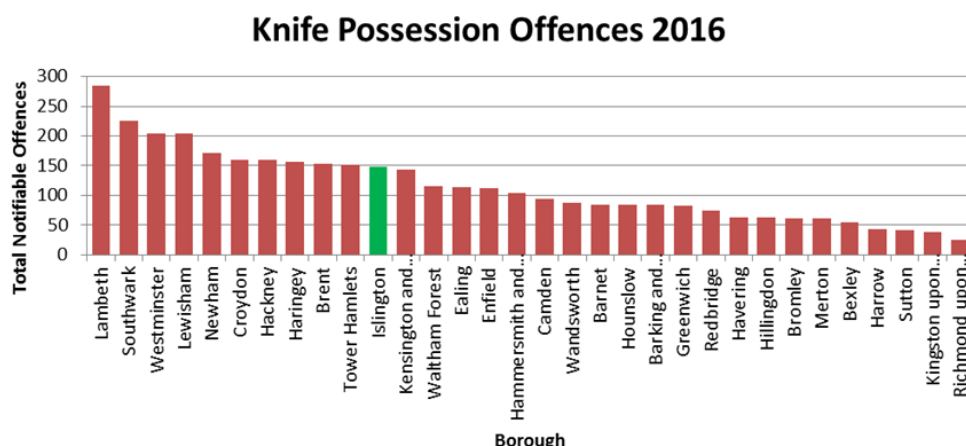
There are six gangs believed to be operating in Islington, three currently in the Metropolitan Police Service top 20 in terms of the risk they pose.

## 4.4 Knife Crime

There were 73 knife crimes with injury offences (excluding domestic abuse) where victims were aged between 1 and 24 in Islington in 2016 (ranked 9<sup>th</sup> out of 32 London Boroughs). This represented a 4% decrease compared to 2015. In London there was an 11% increase.



There were 149 knife possession offences in Islington in 2016 (ranked 11<sup>th</sup> out of 32 boroughs).



There have been an average of 9.3 stabbings per month across Islington during the past 24 months. Tensions between the gangs operating on the borough are a significant driver behind this. Youth-on-youth offences account for a significant proportion of these offences.

#### 4.5 County Lines

County Lines is now recognised as a growing safeguarding issue for young people in the UK, and like other local authorities we are waiting a national steer from the government. Cllr Joe Caluori has taken a lead in London for raising this issue with the Home Office. and wrote to Amber Rudd in the Home Office in February, with the support of 18 London boroughs, to call for the Government to help protect vulnerable young people at risk of exploitation in 'county lines' and for a meeting to discuss the issue.

The exact number of individuals identified as involved in county lines (drug running across counties) is unknown in Islington. However, there has been an increase of females identified since the first county lines profile and those aged under 18 are at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation. 45% of individuals were aged under 18 when they were identified as being involved in county lines.

#### 5. Police response

Youth crime and the policing response to this remains a key focus of our Safeguarding commitment to Islington partners, residents, businesses and persons who visit this Borough on a daily basis. Over the last year we have seen within the police a change in the policing structure of Islington which will only improve the police support and identification of Safeguarding incidents and risks.

The joining of Camden and Islington Policing areas now provides policing resource of over 1300 officers, a faster more co-ordinated safeguarding structure with the return to local policing of sexual offences and Child Abuse Investigation Teams, increased staff to support proactive activity targeting high harm offenders, the uplift of schools officers to support all local secondary and primary schools in the area and creation of both a dedicated Youth Engagement Team and Child Sexual Exploitation unit.

Knife crime focus remains in place with not only education taking place below, but regular weapon sweeps which are regularly publicised on police twitter when finds occur, internet

interventions where knives are ordered on line and clear court escalation when people commit more than one knife offence.

The creation of the Youth Engagement Team has enabled more focused work in terms of knife crime awareness, police led events and trying to develop better diversion opportunities. This work is ongoing and includes:

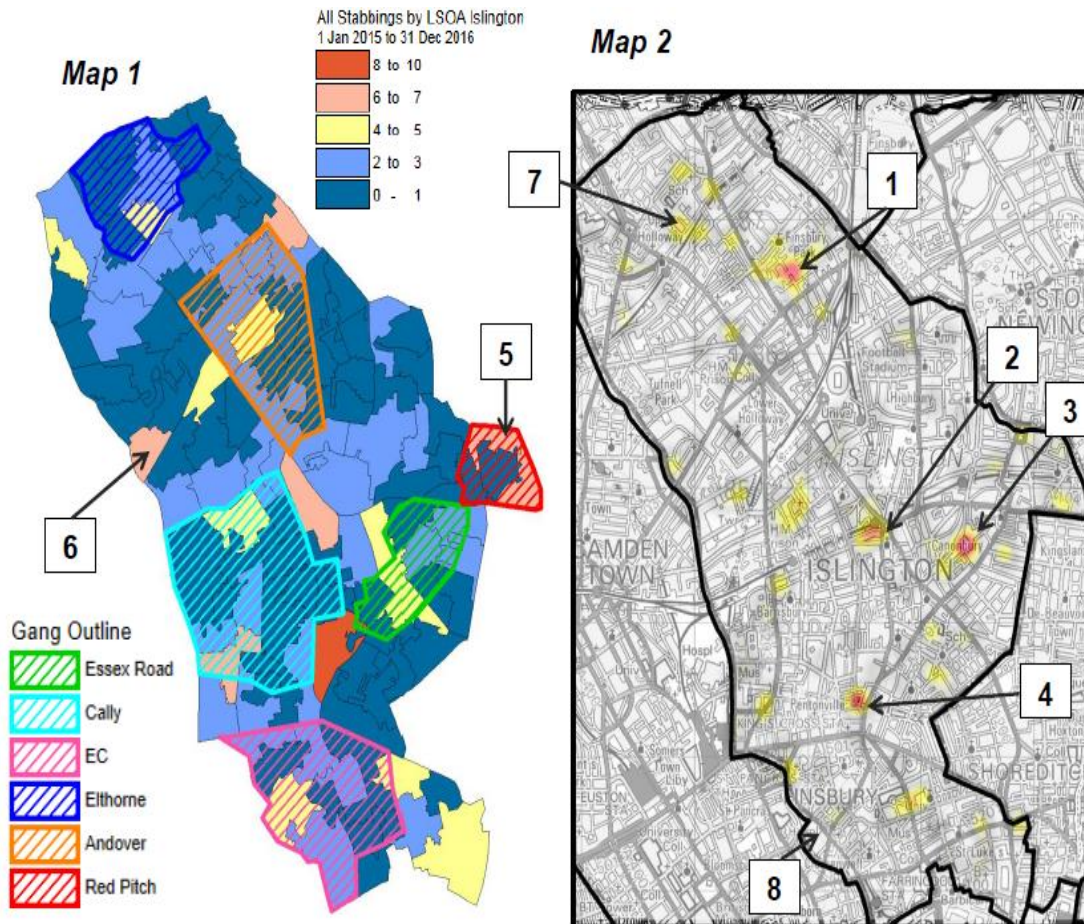
- the creation of the Visiting Green Gang nominals, and other youths at risk of becoming involved in crime, offering support and diversionary opportunities
- attending Schools, Youth Clubs, Community (Youth) Events, Sports Clubs and supporting Cadets to engage with youths, build trust and deliver short presentations around knife crime / violence,
- making links / named Single Point of Contact with Children's homes, Youth Clubs to engage with residents and staff to improve risk identification and management,
- development of a Boxing Club at the Sobell Centre to work with the Young male and females in the Community, and also a set-Youth Offending Service referral evening – (6 week course etc. TBC) for training, engagement and inputs

The Youth Offending Team now has a dedicated supervisor who works on a rotational basis between Camden and Islington. Working with children service senior managers, the threshold for local police intervention around u/18 first time cannabis users and CSE victims where crimes may have been committed have increased to reflect their vulnerability. This is impacting on number of First Time Entrants. The support of young people in custody has also been improved through intensive training with local Custody Sergeants to ensure all youth who require alternative venues before court are facilitated with social services prior to court appearances.

The volume of theft of motor vehicle and snatch offences is increasing across Islington and Camden. This is reflected across London with all 32 Policing areas experiencing significant rises. This is complicated by the fact that people now being arrested for these offences are normally now local youths rather than from Islington and Camden as traditionally experienced. Operation Attrition remains in place to target these offenders which over the last year has been supported by London wide staff. This has resulted in over 700 arrests in the last 12 months with 60 young people being imprisoned or had judicial orders placed on them. Police have worked with Youth Offending Service managers and Highbury Court clerks to simplify Criminal Behavioural Orders for young offenders as well as start to work on wider diversion opportunities with the LFB and other partners.

Although County Lines and Child Sexual Exploitation continues to be an emerging issue re intelligence, changing cohort etc., it remains a key focus which is now supported by the Safeguarding and Investigation delivery strands which provide additional dedicated CSE focus and proactive asset to support the local partnership delivery.

## Gang activity



The following hot spots (based on the last 24 months of data) were identified from the maps:

1. In and around the **Andover Estate** where there were 12 stabbings over the 24 month period
2. There were 9 stabbings in and around **Highbury Corner**
3. There were 5 stabbings in and around **Nightingale Road, New River Walk** area
4. There were 7 stabbings around **Upper Street** towards Angel and N1 shopping centre
5. There were 13 stabbings in and around **Mildmay Est** (King Henry's/Kerridge Court)
6. There were 7 stabbings in and around **Hilldrop Crescent** area
7. 7 stabbings in and around **Fairbridge Rd** and **Hatchard Rd**
8. 5 stabbings in and around **Wilmington Square and surrounding area**

As the map shows the violence linked to gangs is spread across the area. Most of the knife hotspots are attributable to the five active gangs in Islington. The peak time is Saturday mid to late evening; other than this the spread is fairly even across the other days. The hotspots that sit outside these areas are attributable to both the dense night-time economy and the nexus between several gang areas. These hotspots are well understood locally and while there have been sporadic spikes; they have seen little

change in the past 12 months. While all hotspot areas receive attentions, NI gangs unit activity has been particularly focussed on the hotspots believed directly attributable to the Red Pitch and Essex Road gangs, (hotspots 2, 3, 4 and 5), and the Andover and Elthorne gangs (hotspot 1) . As well as standard TEAL, the MET police gang operation, directed activity, Islington Police Gangs Unit have implemented a number of proactive operations both internally and in collaboration with trident.

Islington has seen a steady rise in KVI over the last 12 months (though below the overall London trend) and has one of the highest percentages attributable to gang activity in London (around 41%). Other factors to be noted are the portion of stabbings that have occurred in Pentonville prison and the portion which are hospitable presentations (typically Whittington) where scenes are often unattributed or misleading.

Despite the police structural changes, the Integrated Gangs team, which is recognised as best practice, is due, to the rising youth violence. increasing staff to focus on emerging young people to provide quicker intervention. As the gang activity and intelligence has improved over the last 6 months, greater threats have been identified with emerging links to outer Boroughs and the yearly peaks of youth violence during the summer. This has led to the creation with partners Operation Gainsborough which has been supported by additional MPS staff for May / June to target the locations and high harm offenders linked to the key gangs and has been done jointly with Hackney in order to minimise cross border displacement, especially around the Red Pitch Gang activity.

A change in investigation processes have enabled the Gangs unit to focus on preventing retaliation when an incident occurs without losing the investigating standards expected. This has been supported by work with the local hospitals to improve information sharing and informing when knife related injuries to allow faster engagement with the victims of the offences. This increases the offences now being reported to police. This work will continue in 2016/17.

What should be recognised across all these strands of police work and activity, is the vital importance and impact the existing partnership structures are having on responding to the youth crime that occurs every day. It is clear that without the support of, community leaders, statutory and 3<sup>rd</sup> party partners across the Safeguarding delivery area, the youth crime trends in Islington would have increased more than they have. This support remains essential in establishing a safe and supportive community for our young people.