



Report of: **Executive Member for Community Safety and Executive Member for Children's Services**

Meeting of:	Date	Ward(s)
Executive	16 July 2015	

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## **SUBJECT: Safe Futures – Strategy for tackling Youth Crime**

### **1. Synopsis**

- 1.1 Youth crime has become a cause of major concern for Islington residents. The Borough has experienced a disturbing rise in youth crime, especially violence, which has caused widespread anxiety especially amongst families with children. This problem is not unique to Islington. All across London, violent crime committed against teenagers by teenagers has risen alarmingly in the past year. Decisive and urgent partnership action therefore required.
- 1.2 This report seeks approval for a strategy to tackle Youth Crime Strategy by first dealing with the current minority of young people committing these crimes and then ensuring that we intervene early to prevent another cohort of young people being lured into criminal activity and that we work with the whole community to help solve the problem.

### **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 To agree the attached Youth Crime Strategy (attached) to deal with the minority of young people that are currently offending or at risk of offending in the future.
- 2.2 To note that there are already significant activities (set out in Appendix A to the strategy) that result in positive outcomes for young people.
- 2.3 To agree to take immediate steps to progress the actions within the strategy and to establish an implementation progress group to be chaired by the Leader of the Council.

### **3. Implications**

#### **3.1 Financial implications:**

The actions within the youth crime strategy will have financial implications for the council and partners. Some of this is absorbed within existing budgets and have had resource allocated in line with individual service plans.

However, some of the actions will require extra resources and these will be allocated through a process of prioritisation by the council and partners through the Safer Islington Partnership (SIP) structures.

### 3.2 **Legal Implications:**

3.3 Islington Council and other partners have a duty under Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

3.4 The ASB, Crime and Policing Act 2014 provided a revision of the raft of powers available to tackle anti-social behaviour (ASB), with the main changes operational from 20th October 2014. A detailed work plan to prepare for the changes was overseen by the Safer Islington Partnership. The strategy complies with the provisions of the Act.

### 3.5 **Environmental Implications:** None

### 4.4 **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 resident impact assessment has been completed, which suggests that the youth crime strategy should have positive impacts on all relevant protected characteristics by ensuring that the issues below are taken into account.

#### **Age**

The strategy relates specifically to young people, this is pertinent because of the specific issues relating to the prevalence of young people in the criminal justice system. For instance under 25 year olds currently make up the most arrested group on the borough and are also the majority of victims of youth crime. This means that the strategy will have a positive impact on young people.

#### **Disability**

We know that young people who are victims or perpetrators of crime are disproportionately affected by mental health and that people with learning disabilities are over represented nationally within the criminal justice system nationally. The strategy includes provision for psychiatric and psychological support as part of the proposed interventions, which should lead to more positive outcomes than at present.

#### **Sexuality and Gender Reassignment**

There are no known differences or effects on trans-gender or gender reassigned people as a result of this strategy although it is to be noted that issues relating to hate crimes are picked up with the council equality objectives and should issues become pertinent to youth crime they will be picked up at the next review of this strategy. This also holds true for the lesbian, gay and bisexual community.

#### **Race**

Black young people are overrepresented in the criminal justice system in Islington. They are also over-represented in the figures for 'No Further Action' meaning that they are more likely to be identified as suspects in crimes but less likely to have any follow up following an arrest. The council has worked in partnership with the police to reduce the over representation of black young men in stop and search. If the overall disproportionality within the criminal justice system is to be reduced then the council and

partners will need to take specific steps to address this when implementing the strategy. If the strategy is successful then it should increase the chances that young people of all racial backgrounds will have a better chance of leading rich and fulfilling lives not marred by the revolving door of the criminal justice system.

### **Gender**

Males are over-represented in the criminal justice system. Historically, females offend less than males and those that do offend start later, stop sooner, and commit less serious offences than their male counterparts (Home Office, 2014). In recent years however, that trend seems to be changing as female roles in youth crime have become more understood. The 2011 report of the Children's Commissioner highlights the role of girls and young women in gangs - hiding and transporting drugs and weapons and as victims of sexual exploitation by gang members including their "boyfriends". The strategy proposes an integrated gangs team to deliver a more effective and targeted working with both boys and girls, which should address the specific issues faced by females.

### **Socio-Economic Status**

Socio-economic status (SES) is not a protected characteristic under the Equality Act but the Council takes the view that it is important that we try to minimise the disadvantage faced by poor and working class people as exemplified by the Fairness Commission. It is the case that low SES persons are more likely to be negatively affected by crime, both as victims and perpetrators. This is due to a number of factors: the type and geographical location of their housing; the capacity of their parent/s to provide material support; the nature of their education – state school or private school; the age at which their formal education terminates; the nature of qualifications (if any) they receive on completion of education; their age at entry into the labour market and the nature of their employment (if any); and the type of leisure activities that they pursue. The strategy is likely to have a positive impact on people with low SES.

### **Safeguarding**

Our safeguarding responsibilities take into account young people as victims and the council works collaboratively with partners to identify and respond to the many risks faced by young people. We are concerned about the impact of domestic and other forms of violence and of young people falling vulnerable to cybercrime, internet or other forms of radicalisation or sexual exploitation. The council and partners already have robust processes in place for safeguarding vulnerable children. The youth crime strategy should strengthen safeguarding arrangements for older young people.

### **Human Rights**

In implementing the enhanced enforcement proposed in the strategy the council will need to have due regard to human rights and seek legal advice as appropriate.

## **4. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations**

- 4.1 In light of the very serious nature of youth crime in the borough and its impact on young people and the wider community, the council and partners must make a concerted effort to turn the tide on youth crime. The youth crime strategy seeks to do this by taking decisive action in key areas so that we see immediate improvements in the short and medium term and, in the long term, make Islington one of the safest boroughs in London.

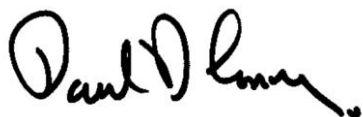
### **Attachments:**

- 1. Youth Crime Strategy**
- 2. Appendix A (Work already happening in the borough)**

Final report clearance:

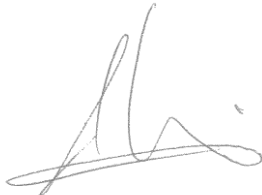
Signed by:

8 July 2015



Executive Member for Community Safety

Date:



8 July 2015

Executive Member for Children and Families

Date:

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