



## Report of: Lead Member Community Safety

Meeting of	Date	Ward(s)
Policy and Performance Scrutiny Committee	11 <sup>th</sup> February 2016	All

### SUBJECT: 6 month review of the Islington Youth Crime Strategy

#### 1. Synopsis

- 1.1 This report sets out an update on the delivery of the Youth Crime Strategy and on the progress of partners in the delivery of the Youth Crime Implementation plan

#### 2. Recommendations

- 2.1 The Policy and Performance Scrutiny Committee is requested to note and comment on:
- The progress made towards the actions to support the delivery of the Youth Crime Strategy including achievements and challenges.
  - The impact of the Youth Crime Strategy on youth crime in Islington.
  - The financial and resource implications.

#### 3. Background

- 3.1 In July 2015, the Council and partners adopted the Islington Youth Crime Strategy which is a comprehensive response to the growth in youth crime and gangs in Islington. The strategy sets out a strong commitment to fundamentally change youth offending to achieve:
- Fewer children becoming victims of violent crime, whether committed by other young people or by adults
  - Substantially less crime and low-level disorder involving children
  - A reduction in the number of children entering the criminal justice system for the first time
  - Fewer children already in the criminal justice system continuing to reoffend.

The Youth Crime Implementation Plan outlines how the new strategy is delivered by the partnership and this report provides information on the

progress to date. There is an Implementation Plan which sets out actions with RAG status under the three headings from the Youth Crime Strategy:

- Interventions, enforcement and reintegration
- Prevention and Diversion
- Community engagement.

## 4. Review of Actions and Impact

### 4.1 Summary of progress

There has generally been good progress with the implementation of the Youth Crime Strategy, with the majority of the actions rated green. This reflects the strong commitment and effort among the various partners involved in the delivery of the Youth Crime Strategy.

#### 4.1.1 Achievements

Islington has seen a 4% reduction in Serious Youth Violence this year and also reductions in first time entrants to the criminal justice system which shows that more young people are being diverted away from crime. The first half of 2015 saw a sharp increase in youth violent offences and following the Youth Crime Strategy's adoption and a decisive change in enforcement tactics, the number of offences in Islington dropped sharply:

Crime Type	Oct 14 to Dec 14	Oct 15 to Dec 15	Difference	% change
Theft of MV	276	188	-88	-32%
Serious Youth Violence	50	40	-10	-20%
Youth Violence	124	101	-23	-19%
Robbery Offences	237	216	-21	-9%
Knife Crime Offences	77	72	-5	-6%
Gun Crime Offences	9	9	0	0%
Theft From Person Offences	800	906	106	13%
Theft Person Snatch	516	635	119	23%

*\*Please note that Theft Person Snatch is a subset of the Theft From Person Offences (i.e. the Theft Person Snatch figures are included in the Theft From Person Offences).*

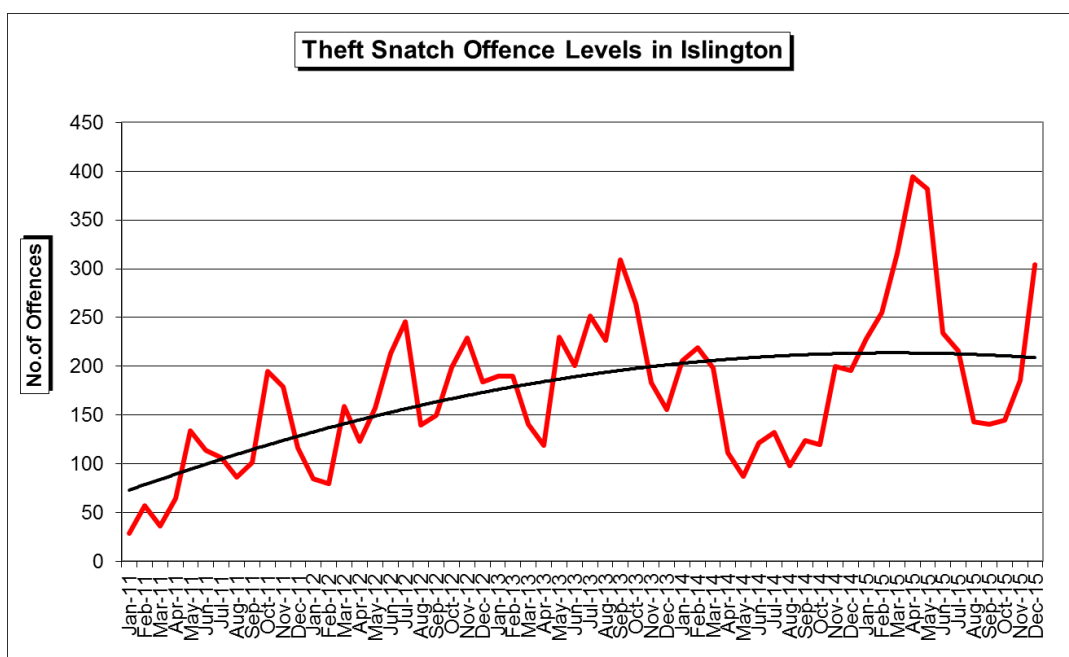
*Serious Youth Violence is defined as any offence of Most Serious Violence or Weapon Enabled Crime, where the victim was aged between 1 and 19 years old. This measure shows the number of victims of these offences, who were aged between 1 and 19 years old.*

*Youth Violence is defined as any offence of Most Serious Violence, Weapon Enabled Crime, or Assault with Injury, where the victim was aged between 1 and 19 years old. This measure shows the number of victims of these offences, who were aged between 1 and 19 years old.*

#### 4.1.2 Smartphone thefts

The introduction of Operation Attrition and Operation Omega by the police had a noticeable impact on phone crime and other linked offences such as theft of two-wheeled vehicles. Theft snatch is a very indicative crime which is higher in Islington than any other part of London. As a result of very firm enforcement tactics, between early Summer 2015 and the end of the year, the number of such offences dropped faster and further than in any previous period.

However, towards the end of the year, a number of known young offenders were released from custody and, despite active offender management, there has been a significant rise again in theft snatch levels, particularly during December 2015. These crimes have been committed by moped riders and by young people on pedal cycles.



The number of young people under the focus of Operation Attrition continues to increase with the figure currently 85. Of the top 12 who currently receive the most “focus”, 7 are Islington residents with a further 2 being young people from the borough now housed elsewhere. Islington YOS is currently managing 5 of these young offenders with another two under 18 but not known to the service yet.

The partnership has still not progressed with the understanding the changes within the stolen phone market and have invited the Home Office Ending Gang Violence team in to undertake a Local Area Profile (LAP) assessment on the borough in February to help move this forward. Put simply, it appears as if new distribution channels have emerged within the organised crime world and, although there are evidently individual intermediaries here in Islington, they form part of a sophisticated supply chain that provides cash in return for stolen phones and exports and repurposes these phones abroad. Interdiction of this market requires the support of London-wide, national and international investigative resources.

### 4.1.3 Gangs & Violence

Youth violence, robbery and knife crime have all seen continued reductions since the summer. In the second half of 2015, the number of knife related critical incidents almost halved. This reflects the targeted enforcement work of Operation Attrition and other offender management actions: by September 2015, almost two thirds of the Borough's gang "nominals" were either in custody or released under strict orders. This resulted in a welcome period of respite especially in the most hard-pressed areas in and around Mildmay and Caledonian wards and the EC1 neighbourhoods. However, we have seen a short-term worsening of challenging public realm behaviour, ASB and crime in St Peters and Canonbury wards.

Snatch theft remains Islington's "signature" crime. Over the last two years the levels of youth violence appear to have been interconnected with the level of snatch thefts occurring. The connection between snatch theft, drugs and violence is complicated however:

- theft of smartphones generates cash to provide liquidity for the drugs economy
- gang nominals will alternate at times between theft and drug dealing
- tensions, rivalries and disputes between gang nominals are more pronounced in relation to the drugs market
- as a result, a rise in snatch theft may correspond with a decline in violence because gangs are less likely to be involved in escalated disputes.

While tensions remain between our main gangs / groups, incidents of serious violence have been sporadic and low in number during the last three months. The tragic murder of Vasso Kakko in November 2015, though not a gang-related offence, underlines the problem facing the borough because of the number of young people who are carrying and using knives.

The growth in sexual exploitation of girls and the emergence of "County Lines" drugs activity remains an area requiring continued investigation. The Home Office Local Area Profile assessment will focus on these two areas and the new Gangs & CSE analyst is now in post to lead on developing this understanding.

### 4.1.4 Interventions, Enforcement and Re-integration

The forming of the Integrated Gangs Team at Islington Police station where Police and Islington partnership agencies will work alongside each other in a co-located office to ensure every opportunity is maximised against gang and knife offenders.

The Integrated Team is now almost fully staffed with significant contribution from Children's Services to support safeguarding and work around child sexual exploitation. A key appointment is the Gangs and CSE Analyst who started in January and is already having an impact on the identification of young people at risk of CSE as well as perpetrators. The 18 – 24 Team is embedded within the new integrated gangs team and continuing to achieve a reduction in offending amongst young adults. P&PS Committee will visit the

Integrated Gang Team on the 19<sup>th</sup> February as part of the Youth Crime Scrutiny.

Habitual Knife Carrier (HKC) status is attributed to those who have two or more convictions for the possession of an Offensive Weapon, Knife or Pointed or Bladed article. Home visits and the delivery of a warning letter has been completed on 33 Islington residents by the Police gangs team. Part of the engagement is the reinforcement of new '2 strikes' legislation where there are now minimum sentencing rules for those convicted of possessing a Knife or Offensive Weapon on two or more occasions.

Islington Gangs team and the Neighbourhood Policing Teams now regularly target knife crime and gang hotspot areas based on the latest intelligence available. This involves direct engagement at street level, high visibility reassurance patrols, plain clothes control, the execution of search warrants. The police actively seek to arrest and prioritise all suspects who are wanted for knife crime offences. Police have also deployed a knife arch in key offending areas. Through the Antisocial Behaviour Team we also actively seek to obtain Criminal Behaviour Orders and other civil injunctions against knife crime offenders and work with housing for those engaged in antisocial behaviour.

The Home Office has reviewed the new Islington multi-agency safeguarding protocol for children at risk of gangs, threshold and gang prevention interventions documents. They report that it is the best they have seen and will be highlighting as good practice through the Ending Gangs Team.

Parenting Orders have increased by 100% and there have been 23 CBOs and 12 injunctions to date this year.

#### **4.1.5 Prevention and Diversion**

Vigorous enforcement action has achieved a significant reduction in offences but it has generally suppressed criminality rather than fundamentally stopped it. This emphasises the need to develop long term prevention to "turn off the tap" and divert the small cohort of young people from being lured into gangs and criminal behaviour.

TYS engaged with 898 young people through the summer programme including a number who are on the MPS gang matrix. 16 YOS young people are attending the joint LFB, Police and YOS motoring project, targeting those who have been arrested for a moped related offence.

There are new processes in place to reduce the number of children in Alternative Provision and numbers are lower than last year.

Pact project is working with Children Centres to increase identification and support to children of families in prison.

There are new CAMHS arrangements in YOS and increased counselling support for young people through the YYS Youth Counsellor.

The Council Executive has proposed a budget for 2016-17 which includes a £500,000 growth item to fund a range of additional youth services particularly those targeted at the most challenging young people who offend or at risk of

serious offending. Building on the experience with St Giles Trust in summer 2015, the new funding will commission youth services that provide practical and effective mentoring.

During the Summer, St Giles Trust was brought into the Borough and engaged with the most challenging gang nominals.

ASB teams, Parkguard, LBI Housing are working more closely with YOS and Stronger Families to share data and ensure appropriate action can be taken including increasing referrals to IFIT.

Neighbourhood Policing Team officers have visited all local business in their area that sell knives as part of the responsible retailer scheme. This has involved providing advice and training to managers and staff and poster / leaflet material reinforcing their responsibilities, including a joint letter from the Borough Commander and LBI to emphasis the attention being given to this issue.

Weapon sweeps in the vicinity of knife crime hotspots and other suitable locations are completed daily as part of the Neighbourhood Policing Teams core business. A lot of sweeps are made in partnership with Park Guard officers. Since April Islington has completed over 800 weapons sweeps, averaging 22 a week. A total of 83 knives have been seized along with 8 firearms recovered.

Police and Park guard have provided training to estate managers and caretakers in the search for, seizure and forensic opportunities around knives and weapons.

Islington has also ensured the two knife surrender bins are fit for purpose, and emptied regularly. They are currently located at:

- St Marks Church, 1 Moray Road, London N4 3LD
- All Saints Church, Carnegie Street, London N1 9QW

There are now dedicated Police Officers in 10 of Islington Secondary Schools and primary school liaison are being improved.

Islington Schools Engagement Programme is now underway and this includes a bespoke knife crime awareness programme and support to school age pupils attending Islington schools. To date the Engagement Programme has already resulted in 24 sessions throughout the borough with 798 pupils receiving an input from the schools Policing team across both Primary and Secondary Schools. A further 16 sessions have already been booked for the New Year. Our nine dedicated Schools officer's also complete regular weapons sweeps around the school premises and support teachers within.

#### **4.1.6 Community Engagement**

The Safer Neighbourhood Board has a good oversight of the Youth Crime Strategy and has made youth crime and community engagement the primary theme of the Islington Crime Summit on the 5<sup>th</sup> March.

Two of the newly elected youth councillors stood on a crime platform and will be involved in delivering assemblies to secondary schools.

More businesses have signed up to the Safe Haven Scheme and internet knife sellers are being targeted.

## **5. Other achievements: police operations and targeted activities**

In response to the Met wide increase in knife enabled offending Islington Police teams have now taken part in two week long Sceptre knife crime focused operations lead by Operation Trident. The second of these took place between 23rd - 30th October. The aims of the operation is to -

- To reduce serious violence involving young people as victims and as offenders, including those involved in gang related violence.
- To reduce the carrying of knives by young people on the streets of London
- To gain the support of communities and young people for police action to reduce youth violence
- To reduce the overall impact of knife crime on all Londoners.

Together with Trident, Islington Police have successfully supported a Bedfordshire run operation focused on an online retailer selling large knives, swords, and other weapons with little regard for their use. This has resulted in the successful prosecution of the owner with conditions that they have to remove items that are currently marketed as weapons.

## **6. Future Activity planned to reduce knife carrying**

The police and partners are regularly promoting the use of the established knife bins through focussed media and on-line campaigns. Test purchase operations continue which target knife retailers with LBI Trading Standards and using the Volunteer Police Cadets.

Additional police resources have been allocated to Islington from the Met's North London taskforce which means an extra 28 specialist officers allocated to investigation and enforcement in Islington. From the beginning of January 2016, eight additional police officers have been allocated to the Gangs team.

A further Operation Sceptre is planned for February.

## **7. Challenges**

Despite the work done through Operation Attrition/Omega mobile phone theft is up considerably on last year with December showing the third highest ever level seen in Islington and offending by young people has continued to increase.

A significant challenge in the implementation of the youth crime strategy has been securing premises at the police station to allow the full co-location of the Integrated Gang Team. We are waiting for a final decision at a MPS Property Management meeting on the 9<sup>th</sup> February and in the meantime the coordinated tasking has started and the collaborative work has already improved e.g. joint home visits to key gang nominals.

Following the recent YOS inspection report, which received a poor judgement, the YOS is developing an improvement plan and receiving support from the Youth Justice Board. Representatives from the YOS will be attending the PPS Committee in March to present the improvement plan and progress made to date.

## **8. Finance**

The most significant new cost attached to the delivery of the Youth Crime Implementation Plan has been the setting up of the Integrated Gang Team. This is being established with no new funding allocated but has inevitably involved new cost especially around staffing. For example, Children's Services is providing a full time Social Worker for 6 months, a full time YOS worker and part time CSE Social Work and YOS Manager posts, as well as a TYS contribution towards a post to work with non-statutory young people, this is a total contribution of £142,360.

Similarly, the Council's Community Safety Team has contributed the existing resource attached to the 18 – 24 Team and has re-profiled MOPAC funding to pay for the Probation and CSE/Gang Analyst costs. Other partners have contributed in kind costs e.g. police and Abianda is providing a full time post to work with young women at no cost to the partnership through funding via the Dispossessed Fund.

While most of the other costs are from existing base or are in kind, contribution of resource and staffing from council departments and external partners towards the delivery of the Youth Crime Strategy should be acknowledged.