

Report of: **Executive Member for Children and Families**

Meeting of:	Date	Ward(s)
Policy and Performance Scrutiny Committee	4 July 2016	All

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## **SUBJECT: Update report on tackling violent youth crime**

### **1. Synopsis**

- 1.1 This report provides an update on various connected strands of the council's work to address violent youth crime.

### **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 The Policy and Performance Committee are asked to:
- Scrutinise the service developments noted in this report
  - Scrutinise the commissioning approach to £500k spend on services to prevent youth violence
  - Note that the Procurement Strategy will be taken to the Executive for approval in December 2016

### **3. Background**

#### **Youth crime overview**

Gang crime, violence and youth crime generally has seen significant reductions between April-June 2016. However, there is still serious youth violence and gang issues for young people, including serious tensions that exist between the different gangs. Levels of violent youth crime are still too high. These issues are being actively dealt with through the new fully integrated gangs team and the other related strands of work detailed below.

#### **Definition of serious youth violence**

Serious youth violence is defined as any offence of most serious violence and assault with injury or weapon enabled crime, where the victim is aged 1-19. The perpetrator could be any age.

## **Integrated Gangs Team (IGT)**

- 3.1 As of May 2016 the IGT is fully co-located with the gangs police team at Tolpuddle Street. Early signs are that co-location arrangements appear to be working well with overwhelmingly positive feedback from the council, police and partnership colleagues involved. The key benefits to date are around the open communication channels regarding the top 50 gang nominals, and the fast time information sharing and response through daily tasking.
- 3.2 The IGT has developed a strong multi-agency delivery model. The team consists of a range of disciplines including:
- Psychological input, providing mental health support to young people directly as well as clinical supervision and support to IGT staff
  - Direct rehabilitation work by the designated YOS/IGT link worker
  - Children's Social Care Gangs Safeguarding Co-ordinator to ensure information sharing and to co-ordinate and chair strategy meetings where there are concerns a child may be at risk of significant harm due to gangs
  - Abianda (a community and voluntary sector provider) delivering targeted interventions to gang affected young women
  - Victim Support interventions with IGT top 50 cohort where they have been or are identified as at risk of being a victim of gang related violence and young people/young adults not in the IGT top 50 cohort who have been victims of gang related violence
  - Department of Work and Pensions providing ETE and benefit advice to IGT top 50 cohort
  - 18-24 transitions team providing holistic support to IGT top 50 cohort to support them to make positive choices and move away from criminal lifestyles
  - Police gangs team delivery regarding enforcement action, safer schools and public protection
- 3.3 As at April 2016 the IGT were working with 42 10-24 year olds, the majority of whom are 15-19 years old. IGT are engaging with services and organisations to raise awareness of the remit of the IGT, the range of interventions they deliver, the referral criteria and the referral process.
- 3.4 IGT takes a holistic approach to supporting and challenging young people to make positive safe choices and overcome the barriers preventing them from moving on from gang activity. The team also addresses the impact of being victims of youth violence. Interventions focus on
- accommodation;
  - physical and mental health;
  - drug and alcohol use;
  - finance;
  - education, training and employment;
  - whole family work; and
  - work to address and change attitudes, thinking and behaviour.
- 3.5 The IGT is arranging partnership meetings in gang hotspot areas and working with the key local providers in each area to develop an action plan involving third sector youth organisations, Targeted Youth Support (TYS), housing and police.
- 3.6 IGT are planning a number of community events over the next year in known gang hotspots
- 3.7 IGT now have a custody rota in place so if any of the IGT cohort are held in the custody suite the IGT will conduct a welfare visit to the young person/young adult.

- 3.8 IGT have recently developed a group interventions programme which the team will be piloting at New River College Pupil Referral Unit and Feltham YOI over the summer.
- 3.9 Performance on offending, reoffending and gravity of offending is monitored at the IGT Implementation Board and the Safer Islington Partnership (SIP) Board.
- 3.10 The financial year to date has seen significant and encouraging improvements for gun and knife crime:
- Islington is in the top five most improved London boroughs for gun crime, with just under 50% fewer offences than this period last year
  - Knife injury to victims under 25 is the key performance indicator for gang crime. Islington is improving in this area, with 50% fewer offences May 2016 than the same period last year

### **Youth Offending Service (YOS)**

- 3.11 Listening to young people  
A small group of staff have volunteered to be Champions for enabling young people's voices to contribute to service development. They will be drawing on the feedback from the HMIP e-Survey and last year's survey alongside the views gathered from the newly established User Engagement group to help shape priorities. YOS will seek and respond to ongoing feedback through the user engagement group and the annual survey.
- 3.12 Partnership working  
An issue relating to police input into the YOS was raised in the 2015 YOS inspection. The issue of police co-location is being resolved pending police equipment installation. Measures have been put in place in the interim with an increased police presence at the YOS. This presence has had a noticeable impact on working relationships. Work is still underway to build on this to further improve sharing of intelligence and information about risk and victims. A joint protocol to be agreed between police, the council's Community Safety team and the YOS will clarify expectations and increase consistency of good practice.
- 3.13 The YOS liaises with and shares intelligence with neighbouring boroughs to discuss cross border gangs and risk issues.
- 3.14 Gangs  
A safety questionnaire has been devised for YOS and TYS staff to routinely ask young people about gang affiliations and clashes. There is a focus on this to ensure this is consistently completed with all young people at the start of every Order, including Out of Court Disposals and Triages. The information will be collated by the YOS IGT Gangs Worker and shared with police and Community Safety partners to inform intelligence and planning.
- 3.15 Work is planned to develop a richer picture of the YOS client group and to consider satellite venues for delivery of services. This work will enable more targeted and realistic planning and an improvement in order and intervention completion rates.
- 3.16 Interventions  
YOS are contributing to the review of interventions effective in reducing youth crime being led by Public Health. This is happening in parallel with an internal review of YOS interventions. A YOS project group is developing a 'library' of Islington approved, high quality intervention tools and programmes to address risks of re-offending, tailored to risk levels, offence types and learning preferences.
- 3.17 YOS oversees the court Orders of young people sentenced for violent incidents. There is a set programme to address knife crime which is delivered in several locations and in

partnership with the Ben Kinsella Trust.

- 3.18 The YOS is developing a programme to address violent behaviour more widely, using cognitive behavioural principles, as well as one to one anger management/replacement support using accredited programmes.
- 3.19 YOS access trauma related support for young people who have witnessed serious acts of violence, experience Post-Traumatic Stress Disorders and may be at risk of committing violent acts.
- 3.20 Life skills training is available for young women engaged in offending and gang activity.
- 3.21 Intensive Supervision and Surveillance (ISS)  
Between Jan-Mar 2016 Islington had a custody rate of 2.26 per 1,000 of the youth population, compared with 0.66 for London and 0.40 across England and Wales. ISS is the most intensive community based disposal, designed to be a direct alternative to custody.

In the last YOS restructure the resources for ISS were significantly reduced, which restricted the ability to offer this as a disposal. Placing a child/young person in custody has a negative effect on the likelihood of recidivism alongside a significant financial cost. Investing in successful alternatives to custody therefore has social as well as financial benefits.

A review by YOS of Islington's ISS offer is in progress which will include learning from good practice in other boroughs. A proposal will be taken to the next Youth Justice Management Board.

- 3.22 Asset Plus Case Management System  
The introduction of Asset Plus is imminent. This represents the most major change to the youth justice system since its inception. The principles underlying the framework – an emphasis on desistance and building positive factors, a clear link between assessment, planning and intervention, and thorough analysis of offending patterns and pathways – underpin YOS improvement activity, and the move to the new system enables the service to embed new standards for supervision and management oversight.

### **Gangs Safeguarding Protocol**

- 3.23 A multi-agency Gangs Safeguarding Protocol and Practice Guidance has been developed and implemented since the YOS inspection, which recognised the need for greater consistency and a more robust response in considering when gang activity and youth violence is a safeguarding issue, particularly when the threshold of significant harm is reached. The protocol has been recognised as a good example of best practice by the Home Office. The protocol supports practitioners in understanding the 3 risk level categories and to take appropriate action when risk is identified.
- 3.24 The development of the Gangs Safeguarding Co-ordinator role ensures relevant information is shared between Children's Social Care, YOS and IGT to ensure appropriate responses to children on the periphery of gangs as well as those entrenched in gang activity and to ensure robust safety plans are put in place for children and young people.
- 3.25 The Gangs Safeguarding Co-ordinator's presence across IGT (including police gangs unit and Probation), YOS and Targeted Youth Support (TYS) has encouraged safeguarding referrals to children's social care where the threshold for significant harm is met and when there are risks to younger siblings or children present or associated with gang members in the household.

## **Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Harmful Sexual Behaviour (HSB)**

- 3.26 CSE is a well acknowledged issue. There are services already delivering interventions in this area. HSB is an issue increasingly linked to CSE through the developing recognition of the prominence of peer on peer abuse. These are two areas Islington acknowledges are important to invest in and tackle, to support and reduce the risk of harm associated with children/young people who are victims of CSE and/or perpetrators of HSB.
- 3.27 The CSE Co-ordinator is now a permanent role within Targeted and Specialist Children and Families Services (TSCFS) and links in with IGT. There is agreement for the CSE Co-ordinator to have oversight of all contacts and referrals to Children's Social Care relating to CSE/HSB, and to review information from return home interviews following a missing child episode. This will ensure better intelligence about the links between CSE and missing child episodes. In addition all CSE strategy meetings are now chaired by the CSE Co-ordinator which ensures consistent thresholds and plans as well as aiding knowledge of the CSE profile in Islington.
- 3.28 The CSE and Gangs Analyst has enabled a more in depth and robust approach to identifying the connections and potential risk and vulnerability of children and young people in the borough. These 'link maps' have already demonstrated the weight this evidence can provide in establishing the need for Children's Social Care involvement and specialised CSE or HSB interventions.
- 3.29 Mapping meetings, a format which has been successful in other areas and commended by Ofsted as a useful way of linking CSE, missing, gangs and other safeguarding issues are being implemented in Islington and will be held every 6 weeks. These meetings bring together practitioners, CSE and Gangs analyst and key partners to gather information and develop a profile around young people who come to the frequent attention of children's social care but who do not yet meet the threshold for Children's Social Care services.
- 3.30 A new system for recording CSE risks (along with risks around Gangs as mentioned earlier in the report) now enables services to see changes in CSE risk status, monitor CSE cases and cross-match data successfully with other risks i.e. missing children, gangs etc. This enables us to accurately state the numbers of and risk levels of the CSE victims and Gang affected young people that we are working with at any time.
- 3.31 The CSE Co-ordinator has delivered a CSE Train the Trainer session to multiple professionals so that they are able to effectively deliver CSE training to others in their own agencies. This was well received and will be repeated at least annually.
- 3.32 Recruitment is underway to recruit two specialist intervention workers to work across TSCFS, providing specific intervention programmes for medium to high risk young people (CSE and HSB) with specialist risk assessments and outcome reports, develop intervention programmes as well as providing tools and training to up skill practitioners. These posts are to be funded by the £500k additional investment. See section 3.42 below for more details.

### **Violence and Gangs Education Offer in school**

- 3.33 The council, with police and voluntary sector partners, are working together to improve and enhance the offer to schools around violence and gangs in Islington. Recent developments include:
- Islington police launched the London Met's first School Engagement Programme in November 2015 to ensure a consistent partnership approach. 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.

- In May 2016 the Integrated Gangs Team started a series of evening "Choices & Consequences" events at secondary schools aimed at both parents and young people. The event not only highlights the dangers and warning signs of gangs and knife crime but promotes diversionary opportunities/positive activities available to young people to steer them away from the temptations of crime and disorder.
- The Islington Junior Citizen Programme is due to start in late June 2016. It will run for two weeks with 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.
- Islington Schools are continuing to work with well-established projects such as the Ben Kinsella Trust and Victim Support. From July 2016, the council will be using some of the additional £500k investment (see section 3.40) to fund St Giles Trust to deliver 30 SOS+ sessions to Islington schools. 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.

### **Multi-agency approach to tackling antisocial behaviour (ASB) 'Hotspots'**

#### **3.34 Aim of the Hotspots programme**

To identify, consult and engage young people who are causing ASB and participating in crime in meaningful interventions to challenge and change behaviours and decrease levels of reported and recorded crime in Islington. A steering group oversees this programme.

#### **3.35 Intended outcomes**

The programme aims to achieve the following outcomes:

- Young people at risk of serious youth crime, gang activity or ASB are engaged in positive activities
- Reduction in the number of young people Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)
- Reduction in the reports of youth ASB in the target areas
- Improved opportunities and pathways for young people
- Demonstration of the effectiveness of Integrated Youth Support in diverting young people from crime and ASB

#### **3.36 Overview of the programme**

The programme has started and consultation with young people about their needs and issues was completed in March 2016. The programme delivers some of the strands below and will continue to embed the integrated community based youth support approach over the remaining part of the year to:

- Identify young people who are engaged in ASB and negative behaviours
- Deliver projects and detached work at key times such as school holidays and times partners identify as problematic
- Build trust with young people
- Provide signposting and diversionary activities in order to meet the identified needs of the young people
- Work closely across partners such as targeted youth support, play and youth sector, community centres, sports providers, youth careers and police to develop and deliver targeted programmes in local settings to engage, educate, challenge and support the identified young people to make informed choices
- Trial innovative work experience opportunities for young people to gain work skills

and employment

- Trial modelling an integrated youth support approach
- Maximise on local community and youth centre resources to access space for young people on a regular basis for delivery of programmes and developing potential within the community to sustain delivery
- Develop and train local people to sustain and deliver youth work as possible
- Utilise arts and media projects and sports providers to deliver programmes

3.37 Three current 'hotspot' areas have been identified for the programme so far and work is underway in these areas. They are Mildmay, Bingfield Park/Caledonian Road and Cluse Court/Packington Estate.

3.38 A number of developments have already been made as a result of this integrated approach including an upgrade to football pitches; delivery of football sessions by Arsenal and Access to Sports; additional Youth Truck sessions delivered by TYS; group work with young men targeted for group support

3.39 Achievements to date include the following:

- TYS has been working with Play and Youth Commissioning Team and Hyde Housing to develop youth activity in the Packington area
- Targeted young people have engaged in additional sports activities that have been delivered in hotspots areas
- Reported calls to ASB hotline have reduced in Cluse Court/Packington area

### **£500k additional investment in targeted and specialist interventions to prevent youth violence**

3.40 Objective

There is already a great deal of work being delivered by services within the council and with partners to prevent and reduce youth violence. However, given the level of incidents of youth violence and gang related violence Islington has seen in recent years, Islington is investing more funding in interventions to tackle this issue which affects young people, families and the wider community.

The objective is to adopt a stronger early intervention approach to serious youth crime. This will be done by enhancing the integrated multi-agency approach to tackling youth crime and providing targeted interventions to children and young people from 7 to 18 years old. Interventions will be targeted at those who are at risk of becoming involved in gang activity, a perpetrator or victim of youth violence. Investment will also focus 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. This investment aims to reduce serious youth violence which in turn will help people to feel safer and aid community cohesion and a sense of safety within the community.

3.41 Methodology

There is recognition that some of the highest risk young people and their families feel a level of distrust and suspicion towards the state. In identifying the most appropriate interventions to prevent serious youth crime Islington will consider that for some young people, the greatest difference will be made by commissioning independent providers who have a track record of delivering change for these hard to reach groups. The commissioning approach will reflect this need for a spread of services/interventions across the local authority and independent providers.

3.42 Resource

The council has identified £500k per year for 4 years from 2016/17 to 2019/20.

3.43 Commissioning approach

A project group is steering a thorough commissioning approach. This approach ensures that the identified interventions are based on a detailed analysis of the youth offending and gang profiles within the borough; an evidence review of 'what works' and promising practice in preventing youth crime and serious youth violence; and a mapping exercise to understand the current range of interventions across the borough. This will be enhanced by drawing on sources of information that highlight young people's insights and experiences.

The procurement strategy will go to Executive in December. Following Executive approval the advert(s) are due to be published in January 2017 detailing the interventions/services the council wishes to procure and the intended outcomes. The intention is for contracts to be in place from July 2017.

#### 3.44 Stakeholder engagement

**The voluntary and community sector** as well as a range of service areas within the council have expertise and insights to add value to this commissioning process. The VCS have contributed to the mapping of the current offer and representatives from the sector will be invited to a multi-agency collaborative workshop in August to identify gaps and priorities. A representative from the Children and Families Voluntary Sector Forum has also been invited to sit on the Procurement Panel.

From the perspective of **young people**, the Youth Council have kick started some useful insights into the nature of 'gangs' in Islington and the types of interventions which may be beneficial in tackling the issue. The project group plan to discuss a proposal with the Youth Council to hold a focus group in August with a range of young people to mirror the multi-agency workshop, to identify gaps and priorities. Young people will also make up part of the procurement panel.

#### 3.45 2016/17 allocation of resource

Members have been keen to minimise delay whilst commissioning is underway for interventions from 2017 onwards. This has been achieved through identifying interventions in 2016/17 that enhance the integrated approach and reach targeted young people who will benefit the most from the interventions. The project group have adopted a clear rationale for spend in 2016/17, following consultation with the Executive Member for Children and Families, and have attempted to address areas of need across the age range of young people and levels of risk.

#### 3.46 The project group have allocated resources to secure the following, as part of an integrated multi-agency approach to tackling youth crime, gang activity and violence:

- mentoring delivered by Chance UK for targeted primary school children (to increase reach of current mentoring contract from 2016-2020) and Safer London for young people 11 to 17 years
- one to one intensive support for 10-18 year olds, 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)
- additional capacity within TYS to deliver counselling for more young people 12 -18 years old
- IGT workers to enhance communication, information sharing and analysis of cohort as well as case work capacity (2016-2020)
- one to one education, training and employment support delivered by a worker from New Horizons for young people known to YOS
- Child sexual exploitation (CSE) and harmful sexual behaviours (HSB) pilot to implement and evaluate specialist interventions for those young people at medium to high risk of being victim of CSE and/or perpetrator of HSB (2 year pilot 2016/17-



2018/19).

Some of the above interventions and posts are already in place. It is envisaged that most if not all posts will be in place and interventions will start by end of July 2016. The vast majority of these resources will be integrated within IGT, YOS, and TYS in an attempt to ensure seamless delivery of services for children and young people.

#### 3.47 Resource available for commissioning in 2017

In addition to the resources that will continue to be funded post 2016, there will be approximately £200k available out of the £500k for new interventions commissioned in 2017.

In addition the CSE/HSB pilot will end in summer 2018 at which point the evaluation will determine the future model of CSE/HSB interventions and the way the budget will be invested to best meet the needs of children and young people in this cohort.

#### 3.48 Evaluation

The interventions the council wish to commission will be decided once the gaps and priorities are clear. However the council is clear that it wants evidence based interventions where possible. Given the limited evidence base for interventions that prevent youth violence, key to the commissioning will be building the evidence base up from promising practice. Evaluation of interventions, where there isn't a current strong evidence base, will be built into contracts and we are in conversations with a university about resource they may be able to provide to support us to shape and build the evaluation framework.

## 4. Implications

### 4.1 Financial implications:

All the measures described in this report can be implemented within existing budgets and the £500k additional investment in targeted and specialist interventions to prevent youth violence.

### 4.2 Legal Implications:

The Council has a duty to investigate where it has reasonable cause to suspect that a child in the area is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm, and to take appropriate action (section 47 Children Act 1989). Further, the Council is under a duty to make arrangements to ensure that its functions are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children (section 11 Children Act 2004). Services working with children and young people are aware of these duties and that safeguarding considerations are paramount.

The procurement of external service providers will need to be undertaken in accordance with the council's Procurement Rules and the Public Contracts Regulations 2015.

### 4.3 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 is in place for the £500k additional investment and is a live and working document which will continue to be amended as the commissioning progresses. This piece of commissioning is intended to contribute to providing fair chances for all and have a positive impact on young people in the borough, increasing sense of safety in the community. No specific issues have been identified and there are plans in place to monitor, track and evaluate our approach and the impact of the services and interventions.

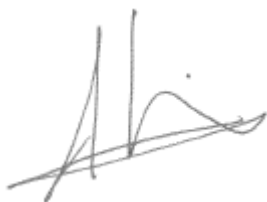
## 5. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

- 5.1 Youth crime and serious youth violence remain a priority for Islington and the council are investing in this issue. The council is working with its partners to ensure an integrated response to concerns. The council is investing in early intervention to identify and respond to children and young people at risk of involvement in antisocial behaviour, offending, gang activity and violent crime. It is also focusing investment on those already entrenched in offending, who may be victims as well as perpetrators of crime, to challenge and support them to change attitudes and behaviour. The aim being to reduce the number of young people who become victims of peer on peer violence and enable children and young people to fulfil their potential.
- 5.2 The committee is asked to note the developments and the challenges in addressing the complex issue of youth violence and to support the commissioning approach to additional investment in tackling the issue.

**Appendices:** None

Final report clearance:

**Signed by:**



Cllr Joe Caluori  
Executive Member Children and Families

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