

Committee: Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Date: 15 January 2013

Agenda item: 7

Wards:

Subject: Youth Violence and Gang Related Offending

Lead officer: Keith Shipman

Lead member: Councillor Maxi Martin

Forward Plan reference number:

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Recommendations:

- A. Members of the panel note and comment on the current work to reduce serious youth violence and gang related offending in Merton.
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1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. To inform CYP scrutiny panel of the actions being taken by agencies to reduce serious youth violence and gang offending. The report provides information on the extent of such offending in the borough and on a number of multi-agency approaches being taken to reduce serious youth violence and gang related offending. It also outlines steps taken by a range of key agencies specifically in respect of reducing the incidence of knife crime.

2 DETAILS

- 2.1. The Police define serious youth violence in terms of young people being victims of a serious offence. This may or may not have been perpetrated by a young person. Gang offending is when groups of people offend together under a collective name, colours or identity that increase their risk of offending. Being in a group increases the risk through peer dynamics of offending behaviour.
- 2.2. Historically, agencies have worked together closely to reduce gang offending in Merton. Names and identities of gangs change over time so this update will not focus on detail of the current gangs picture, as this is essentially fluid. However, we have seen a resurgence of gang related offending over the past year. This has included both high-level drug dealing involving young people in adult gang activity and also low level territorial offending characterised by street robbery. Both have included cross border issues where groups ally themselves to others against a third grouping or where the criminal network involves a wider area.
- 2.3. Reducing this activity in young people is the responsibility of a wide group of partners who may educate and support young people to steer them away from identifying themselves with gangs. There is a specific focus on reducing

the carrying and use of weapons as this clearly increases the risk levels in serious youth violence.

2.4 On 27th December a statement was made by the Home Secretary that the Home Office will be expanding its 'Ending Gang and Youth Violence' frontline team model to cover four more priority areas including Merton. Although details including possible funding have not yet been made available this model has, in other boroughs, supported prevention work in schools, a potential peer review of current processes and voluntary sector funding. Officers consider the announcement helpful in its recognition of both the need in Merton and the ability of local services to work together to tackle issues of gangs and youth violence.

2.4. **Outcomes on Knife crime and Serious Youth Violence**

2.5. Police data of recorded offences between January and December 2012 against the previous year shows very significant falls in the key indicators of serious youth violence. Knife crime offences have fallen by 42% and sanction detection rates have increased from 19% to 33%. Serious Youth Violence rates have fallen by 27%. These are very significant falls from an historically relatively low base in Merton.

2.6. **Offender Management Panel**

2.7. In 2011 we identified the need to work across agencies in a more planned way to reduce the risk of young people and young adults involved in serious youth violence and gang offending. This had to build on the effective processes in our Youth Offending Team to identify vulnerability and risk with young people and their families. The Offender Management Panel was set up and has met monthly since Feb 2011. Its terms of reference are attached as **Appendix 1**

2.8. At the panel an individual plan is agreed based on an understanding of the young person's risk and vulnerability. Partners who attend the panel are: Police; Safer Merton Anti Social Behaviour team; Youth Justice Service; Social Care; Housing providers: Merton Priory Homes, Grenfell - Amicus Horizon have also attended; Schools – Smart Centre and Melrose as relevant; for individual cases social workers, Camhs workers (Child and Adolescent Mental Health) and specific police officers may attend.

2.9. The panel will agree actions relevant to reducing risk for each young person. This may include support from youth workers or within schools; assessment and support re family and parenting; or direct challenge from police. A second section of the panel discusses adults.

2.10. Outcomes are promising. Since February 2011 the panel has discussed 39 referrals. 6 were deemed to be not of high enough risk. Of the remaining 33, 24 have been removed from the panel as their risk has been successfully reduced or contained (72%). This included only 2 re referrals and 2 who left the panel due to age and went on to the young adult panel as high risk. Thus we can realistically claim a success rate of reducing risk of 60%.

2.11. **Serious Youth Violence Exit process/ Gangs Exit process**

2.12. In 2012 we identified that we needed greater focus on supporting young people to leave gangs and serious youth violence behind. There was also a

growing body of international evidence and within the UK about what elements needed to be put in place for such work to be more successful. A multi – agency task and finish group has drafted the new Serious Youth Violence Exit process that has been signed off by the Borough Commander and Youth Justice Executive Board. This is based on a “call in” model whereby young people who are high risk get called into an event, often in a court setting, where they are given a choice and educated about the possible impacts of their current behaviour. They are then supported to make the choice to move away from gangs and violence or be specifically targeted by the police. The support will include: support for their family; support with pursuing education or seeking a job via Job Centre Plus and mentoring including by those who have already left gangs and serious youth violence. Many of the young people who meet the threshold for OMP will be supported by our new Transforming Families team. The first “call in” is currently being planned by the Police. **Appendix 2** outlines the agreed process.

2.13. **Knife Crime**

2.14. The incidence of knife crime and knife enabled crime is another measure of the numbers of young people at risk or putting others at risk.

2.15. Current work undertaken to reduce knife crime includes:

2.16. Primary / Secondary Schools – Personal Social and Health Education lessons / Citizenship Education: learning how to be safe and awareness of peer pressure; Growing against Gangs and Violence (GACV) Police Programme in Primary / Secondary schools; Phone Safety; “Watch over me” DVD programme; Knife Workshop; Life Course; Theatre in Education; Prison Visits; Understanding role in society – court system.

2.17. KPPP (knife possession prevention programme) is a very effective anti knife programme run by the Youth Justice Service and Youth Service for all young people on orders for knife crime and possession. STABB – Students and Teachers against Bullets and Blades – run by the Youth Service is a lower level, but shorter course offered in schools and the Smart Centre.

2.18. Police use a range of options including: patrolling – specifically at high risk times and places – such as on buses; targeted stop and search; safer neighbourhood teams working with schools, Kicks projects or youth clubs to educate and advise against weapons; planned operations using search arches; intelligence led weapons sweeps; SHARP anonymous reporting – this is a police web based system put on school websites.

2.19. Currently a safer schools police officer model exists across many of our secondary schools. As part of a wider review of police numbers in Merton we are working with Merton’s secondary Headteachers to develop a cost effective model for 2013.

2.20. For targeted young people ‘team around the child’ meetings may be called and risk assessments undertaken leading to actions such as reporting to a schools officer or accepting random searching; restorative work with victims may also be undertaken; and parents may be invited to join parents support groups.

- 2.21. An action plan was agreed following a multi agency workshop aimed at reducing knife crime. That plan is being tracked by Safer Merton and includes focusing on where and when knife crime occurs, supporting potential victims and identifying potential offenders. The plan includes tactical information from the police so is not included as an appendix to this report. However it also includes actions such as feedback from young people about safe and less safe places in Merton. Work was undertaken with the Participation Team and the Police Cadets who visited and photographed areas in Merton. A feedback session was run where the Police, Children Schools and Families and Environment and Regeneration staff listened to the views of the young people. Two key issues came out of the event. We need to consider how we help young people to know how to report areas that make them feel less safe and a specific focus on places including alley – ways leading to and from bus stops and tram stops. The event also highlighted that the environmental changes being undertaken by Merton to reduce railings and plant more trees enhanced feelings of safety. Young people also identified that the Insight Centre- the young people’s information advice and guidance centre in Mitcham – is seen by them as a model of a safe place for young people.

3 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 3.1. None for the purposes of this report

4 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED

- 4.1. A consultation was undertaken with the Youth Parliament and was fed back to the Offender Management Panel to consider. The Parliament were well informed on current high profile cases and wanted to discuss those initially. The issues raised by the Parliament was as follows:
- 4.2. Young people involved in violence must be seen firstly as young people with needs who can be helped to change, not just young people who have to be forced to do things;
- 4.3. Many serious youth violence issues are related to cross border territorial issue. They wanted the council to support more activities where young people from different school/ youth groups meet up.
- 4.4. They felt that some serious youth violence grows out of a lack of trust between groups of young people. They specifically discussed the historical separation between Battersea/ Wandsworth and Tooting/ Mitcham.
- 4.5. Drug dealing was at the heart of a significant amount of crime and the some argued that the decriminalisation of some drugs would remove this from the offending world;
- 4.6. They discussed the issue of girls hiding weapons and drugs for boys and how more girls were now getting arrested.
- 4.7. They were interested in the Serious Youth Violence exit process, but thought that compulsion would be unsuccessful and that young people had to choose to join if it is to work and they asked for an update in 9 months on the success of the scheme

5 TIMETABLE

5.1. N/A for purposes of this report.

6 FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

6.1. N/A for the purposes of this report.

7 LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

7.1 SEE BODY OF REPORT

8 HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS

8.1. Issues from OMP that are relevant to community cohesion as taken to the Community Cohesion meeting for central consideration.

9 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

9.1. See body of report

10 RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

10.1. See body of report

11 APPENDICES – THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS ARE TO BE PUBLISHED WITH THIS REPORT AND FORM PART OF THE REPORT

- Offender Management Panel Terms of reference – Appendix One
- Serious Youth Violence Exit Programme/Process – Appendix Two

12 BACKGROUND PAPERS

12.1. None

Offender Management Panel - Management of High Risk (of reoffending / harm / concern) Young People and Adults in the Borough of Merton

1.0 Background & Introduction

- 1.1 The setting up of the Offender Management Panel (OMP) has been informed by developments in the Borough relating to Operation Vortex (Gang nominals) the Deter Young offender Scheme (Panel) for youth (top 15-20 YP with a high risk of reoffending) and the desire to see a more integrated system for offender management particularly around the ages of 18-25. Within a climate of reducing resources, work in these areas must be more strategically focused within the Borough by targeting amongst agencies those YP and adults most at risk of re-offending/causing serious harm and current concern.
- 1.2 These work streams will be managed through an integrated series of panels held on the same morning for those YP & adults identified by agencies as representing current concern principally around high risk to others / themselves in the community. Many referred to the OMP are likely to be actively involved or at the fringes of 'gang activity' / serious group offending.
- 1.3 The OMP seeks to strengthen the active involvement from key agencies and provide a supportive infra structure involving up-to-date intelligence and administrative support. It will need to enhance current supervision arrangements within the Youth Justice Service and Probation as well as prioritise local needs.
- 1.4 The model outlined here draws from a successful approach managed by the Northumberland County Council which has been recognised by C4EO as also promoting good practice in safeguarding. This is not dissimilar with current arrangements within the Borough.

2.0 Aims, Criteria & Terms of Reference

2.1 To provide a partnership response via a Panel to the management of young people / adults in the Borough where there are serious concerns about harm to others and / or where there are high level concerns about serious offending / behaviour for which a multi-agency response is usually required and could make a difference.

2.2 i) The panel will be known as the '**Offender Management Panel**'

ii) Each agency will have its own criteria about risk. For the Youth Justice Service this risk will focus upon those YP at the top end of Level 4 / Level 5 of the Child Concern / Welfare Model and Level 5 of the Framework for the Management of YP at Risk of Reoffending / Public Protection. These levels highlight YP where there are serious concerns about harm to others and / or where there are high level concerns about serious offending / behaviour. Risks identified by the Police might well relate to identified active gang nominals.

- iii) It is anticipated as a consequence of the risk assessment that those referred to the Panel will be small in number and for whom a Partnership response can make a difference and is usually required.
- iv) Interventions agreed at the panel are likely to involve the use of 'external controls', including prohibitive requirements, surveillance and enforcement activities as well as non-negotiable support / challenge and better and earlier prevention.
- v) These panels will not take responsibility for those offenders managed under Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA). These include registered sex offenders, violent and other sex offenders or 'dangerous offenders' those persons who may cause serious harm to the public.

2.1 These panels will have the following functions:

- To have a clear and shared definition of the types of risk / and levels of vulnerability for individual people. The Youth Justice Service currently uses ASSET and the Probation Service OaSys.
- To share information including police intelligence
- To provide a greater understanding of the interventions necessary to moderate the risks
- Assistance to frontline staff to evidence shared decision making
- Identification of gaps in service provision and success in bids for Joint Tasking Group / capital funding.

3.0 How it will work in Merton

3.1 Agencies provide names of YP and Adults via secure email according to the above criteria.

(Within the YJS names are likely to be referred from the YJS Risk Management Panel where there are specific / serious concerns about a YP that require interventions at a higher level)

3.2 Names and details need to be checked by all agencies in advance of the meeting so that any relevant contributions can be made at the panel

3.3 The panel(s) sits from 9.30am – 12.30 pm every 4 weeks. It has multi-agency involvement and delegates are responsible for ensuring that their agency is represented. (See proposed membership list Appendix A) The chair of the Panel will be initially from the Police.

The 1st part of the morning from 9.30am -11.00am deals with the Youth group. The 2nd part of the morning 11.15am – 12.30pm will deal with the Adult group which is envisaged will be smaller in number.

The Integrated Offender Management Scheme / PPO workers would attend both parts of the panel as required to help identify those who could be worked with from both groups. In particular those YP / adults who remain at high risk of re-offending once their statutory period of supervision has expired

The following template is used for the Deter Young Offenders Scheme and is proposed for use by both parts of the panel.

Template for feedback at Panel meeting

- Name / ethnicity / age & address of YP / Adult
- Index offence/ previous offending behaviour.
- Pattern of offending and risk factors linked to offending, is offending escalating in terms of frequency /seriousness? Is it less frequent? Less serious?
- Positive/ protective factors in the young person's /adult's life.
- What do other agencies know about this young person/ adult ?
- What can other agencies contribute to the planned intervention with this young person?
- Brief actions within an intervention plan with the young person / adult

3.4 It is crucial to have a dedicated minute taker at the panel that can ensure that minutes are circulated within 2 working days of the panel meeting. The role would also involve sending out an agenda a week before the meeting to include names of any new referrals to the OMP.

4.0 Governance Arrangements / Strategic oversight

Strategic oversight of this work especially for YP will come under the Youth Crime Prevention Executive Group which is attended by Senior Staff of all relevant agencies.

Service delivery needs to respect agency boundaries / activity but also enhance and support partnership priorities working to address public protection issues, individual offending and create safer communities.

5.0 Information Sharing Protocol

The OMP will work with the LBM Information Governance Manager to produce a Protocol in line with the Panel's requirements.

6.0 Success Criteria - Monitoring & Evaluation of Panels

This could be monitored via tracking a cohort of YP / adults referred to the Panel. This is currently required for the Deter young Offenders Scheme and is monitored via the Local Criminal Justice Board. Consideration might be given to looking at the reduction of seriousness / frequency of offending.

Chris Giles
(YJS Service manager)
(Dec '10)

Membership of Panels

Part 1

Police
Probation
YJS
PPO / IOM

ASB Team
Housing
Youth Service
Social Care
CAMHS
Substance Misuse
Others – as necessary

Part 2

Police
Probation
YJS (as necessary)
PPO / IOM
Mental Health
DIP Team
Substance Misuse
Others – as necessary

Serious Youth Violence Exit Programme – Operational Guidance

1) Introduction – Criteria / Referral

The Serious Youth Violence Exit Programme is being set up to work with those entrenched young people in the Borough of Merton between the ages of 14-19 to help them exit from serious youth violence including gang / group offending. Referral to the programme is via agencies within the Borough principally the Police and Youth Justice Service / Youth Service. Some young people will be subject to Court Orders. The Offender Management panel (OMP) – a multi-agency group - will be the final arbitrator of those admitted to the programme. The OMP meets monthly. Those YP identified at a lower level of concern / criminal activity will be visited by the Police and ASB letters issued where necessary.

Young people are likely to be on the programme between 4-6 months and move through **various phases** of activity culminating in sustaining positive outcomes (see Appendix 1). A police sergeant / Youth Justice Worker / Youth Worker will be the 'principal workers' within the project supported by their respective line managers and a small group of mentors / mentoring coordinator. The programme has the resources to manage between 8-10 young people at any one time. As young people leave the programme, this will create space for new referrals.

2) Induction Process

- i) Once agreed by the OMP – individuals will be required to attend a 'call in'. This will explain why these young people have been identified for the programme / outline the agency concerns and dangers around gang membership and the response of agencies for compliance and non compliance. It will provide clarity about sanctions and support to gang members & the requirements / expectations of the programme.
- ii) Following the 'Call in' the young people subject to the programme will be visited at home by the principal workers. This will involve parents / carers so all parties are aware of programme expectations, roles and responsibilities. It may well be that Multi Systemic Therapy (MST) or the Transforming Families Programme (TFP) will be already working with that family or subsequently involved through the Serious Youth Violence Exit Programme
- iii) A meeting will take place involving the principal workers and the young person to draw up a clear plan / contract of engagement. This will underline the individual's aims and objectives on the programme / what issues will need to be addressed / provide clarity about roles and responsibilities and be clear about time lines. Where possible the prescribed mentors for the young person will be present at the meeting.

Outcomes

These will vary depending upon the needs of the young people. The main outcomes will include the following:

- Exit from the gang
- Desistance from offending / reduction of serious offending
- Finding and sustaining Training & Employment
- School Attendance

- Pro social family outcomes
- Positive contribution / community engagement & cohesion

Key characteristics of the programme

1. This will **not** be a 'one size fits' all programme – See programme chart
2. A plan / contract including a robust risk management plan will be drawn up with each young person and will require regular reviews
3. The programme will have 'core elements' and a menu of activity to meet specific needs – 'needs led customised' programme.
4. The Principal workers will oversee work with each young person and have weekly briefings to update / share intelligence and monitor progress and developments. This will include ensuring compliance to the plan / contract and particularly responding to issues around further offending.
5. Mentors will have 2 young people to mentor. A maximum number of hours will be determined at the outset between the mentor / young person / principal workers. This will need to be sanctioned by the Mentor Coordinator. It is envisaged that mentors hours are likely to be 2 hours in the 1st week but this is likely to grow to 2-3 sessions each week thereafter and more if necessary. Mentors will be accountable to the principal workers but will be required to attend monthly sessions with the mentoring coordinator. The YJS has a separate mentoring policy and procedure outlining roles and expectations for Mentors.
6. The Principal workers and mentors will take responsibility for 'travelling with' and 'supporting' the young people through the 4 / respective phases (Appendix 1). The last phase will focus upon building upon progress, maintenance and sustainability.
7. In most cases work with parents / carers and the wider family will be crucial to ensure progress is recognised and embedded and difficulties successfully managed. The links and work with MST and TFP will be of importance here.
8. Work with partners of the young people on the programme will be included as necessary within the Contract / plan and actions identified. The OMP will review friendship groups including girlfriends and refer to other agencies accordingly.

Chris Giles Service Manager – Youth Justice Service - September '12



Serious Youth Violence Exit Process

Background

From April 2012 – August 2012 a task and finish group has considered how we could improve our partnership approach to helping young people exit from serious youth violence including gang and group offending. The group comprised representatives from Merton's Youth Justice Service (YJS), Youth Service, Job Centre plus Merton Priory Homes, Safer Merton Police and Borough Police. The group's proposals will be considered by the Director of Children Schools and Families and the Borough Commander of Merton's Police. Once agreed it will be considered for adoption by partner agencies. The programme will have the same process *pre and post 19*. *The 14-19 year will be managed and overseen by the Police / YJS and Youth Service. Post 19 up to 25 arrangements will be managed and overseen by the Probation / Safer Merton and Police Up to 25. This will document refers to the pre 19 process only.*

Learning from the Current Model

We must;

Avoid: A lack of consistent police Intel and an exit process not resulting in jobs; insufficient integration of effort and single agency working which is unable to succeed in the long run to prevent reoffending.

Build on: the trust and previous effective joined up work re TZ; the Offender Management Panel (OMP) – multi-agency group - has identified all the key players in significant youth crime incidents over the past year – it is an effective tasking partnership.

The New Model

The following points are based on the Wave Trusts publication of international research on the key principles for effective gangs exit programmes.

1. Community and key stakeholder support - must be agreed by Borough Commander and DCS - all parties must be signed up to one way of working.
2. Led by a multi agency partnership – single agency approaches do not work – there must be a common belief by all parties in the way of working. OMP must agree the list of nominals and actions.
3. Planned together with the agencies and based on research and good quality intelligence. OMP needs to be well informed by up to date intel.
4. Builds in evaluation and review to see if it is working. OMP needs to review the effectiveness at each meeting. The Youth Justice exec group should receive an annual report evaluating OMP and the serious youth violence exit process.
5. There must be intervention to create the situation where the young offender needs to choose. It will be more effective if it is linked to key crisis points – at A/E, when in custody, when key negative events have happened. The Call in is designed to create an artificial moment of choice. Graduated sanctions are needed to ensure that once the choice is made, we don't derail engagement by poor intel leading to Police targeting somebody on the program. However if they offend whilst on the program they will be arrested.
6. Workers who know the young people and are trusted by them to assess their need – build relationships and help them to the leave offending are key to making change. The workers need strong supervision so that they are clear when the young person is and is not engaging. The youth justice service and targeted youth support service will each have a part time role dedicated to this work. Sessional staff/ mentors which include ex offenders will be recruited to be part of the scheme as role models that exit if possible and positive.
7. There must be a real path to rehabilitation leading to a Job. Link to Job centre plus and additional employability programmes are key. There will be a key link worker in the targeted youth support team whose role it will be to ensure effective links with Job centre plus. The program will include making effective relationships with the Job centre to access its services. We will explore other opportunities re employability projects in addition.
8. Work with the young person must understand their needs in the context of the needs of their whole family. All referrals to the program will consider who is giving family support in each case – MST, Transforming families and parenting programmes will be considered.

Operating Principles

1) A serious youth violence / gang's exit process must be based on a real choice for those who are engaged in crime and offending. The choice needs to be based on developing an individual's aspirations and self worth which are central to why they choose offending and gang related behaviour. The alternative to choosing to leave their offending past behind is the real prospect of being arrested and charged by the police for their continued offending or being breached by the YJS or probation. The approach taken by services must encourage the need to make the choice.

2) The agencies need to trust and accept an agreed approach to each young person. We must avoid our previous weaknesses and build on where we have been successful before.

3) There will be a weekly Intel sharing meeting between Police and youth agencies supporting the programme. This will ensure that we keep the right young people on the scheme – so we don't "up tariff" young people via Police matrix systems, but equally can review engagements weekly to test the young persons commitment. The risks in these meetings are acknowledged that young people trust workers and must not see them as "grasses". This will be less safe for young people and staff. Equally, young people's staff must be clear with young people with whom they work that they will work with the Police to help them to get away from reoffending.

4) Graduated sanctions are needed to ensure that the choice is made, but doesn't derail engagement. –we need to avoid wrongly identifying young people based on historical Intel as being involved in gangs when they are trying to leave. If the police/ agencies have current evidence of offending behaviour they must be held accountable for it. OMP to consider sanctions that can support engagement in each case. Key issue is feedback from and to mentors – they need to know if a young person is offending or not and need to be managed to have a professional distance from those on the scheme as well as complete commitment that the young people can make it. Key partners need to sign up to this. We must avoid single agency working with these high risk young people.

Process

A diagrammatical / flow chart of the process is documented on **Appendix 1** and the Operational guidance regarding the programme is outlined on **Appendix 2**. Details of the Serious youth Violence exit programme is charted on **Appendix 3**.



Merton Serious Youth Violence Process for young people 14-19
[inclusive]



