

# **Scrutiny review proposal**

## **1 What is the review?**

Knife crime, undertaken jointly with the Housing and Community Safety scrutiny committee.

### Justification

After a drop in knife crime incidents, in the early years of this decade, the UK and London has seen a reversal of this trend. In 2016 knife crime across England and Wales rose by 14 per cent, with an 11 per cent increase in London. In the 12 months to March 2017, over 12,000 knife crimes were recorded in London.

The latest Metropolitan Police statistics show there were 172 incidents of 'knife crime with injury' in Southwark during 2015-16, compared to 254 in 2016-17: a rise of 47.67 per cent.

## **2 What outcomes could realistically be achieved? Which agency does the review seek to influence?**

The desired outcome is a reduction of (x) per cent in recorded knife crimes in Southwark over the next three years.

Agencies the review seeks to influence include:

- Council children's social services, education department, community safety & public health
- NHS Southwark CCG
- Southwark Schools
- Southwark Police

## **3 When should the review be carried out/completed?**

Completed by February 2018

## **4 What format would suit this review? (eg full investigation, q&a with executive member/partners, public meeting, one-off session)**

Scrutiny in a day, focus group with young people including care leavers, and one off sessions in committees.

## **5 What are some of the key issues that you would like the review to look at?**

### Context and approach

The recent rise in incidents of knife crime and the terrible impact knife crime injuries and deaths have had on young people and their families, in particular, is a big concern within the local community. There is also widespread anxiety amongst young people, families and schools about the extent of knife crime and knife carrying and a desire to reverse the present trend and work to end knife crime.

The last year has seen significant steps by both the Mayor of London, local police and the council to tackle knife crime. There is both a Mayor of London strategy, and a Southwark Knife Crime and Knife Carrying action plan. The latter is a joint priority for the Southwark Safeguarding Adults' Board (SSAB) and Southwark Children's Board (SSCB). In Southwark two scrutiny committees and the Youth Council have all identified tackling knife crime as a priority.

At the same time the Metropolitan Police's anti knife crime initiative Operation Sceptre has publicly recognised its own weakness in engaging with communities most effected by youth violence.

Given the extensive nature of the multi-agency work already set in motion it will be important that the scrutiny committee's work complements the council's and its partners' work to make a difference in Southwark. We can do this is by focusing on groups of young people that are of particular concern and the council has most responsibility for, such as young people in care, on the edge of care, and in need.

Scrutiny has a proven ability to bring the different parts of the system together. We will also add value by bringing in a lay perspective and exploring best practice and research from further afield, such as Glasgow's approach of treating violence generally, and knife crime in particular, as a Public Health issue. This was informed by work conducted by the WHO and successful anti-gang work in Boston. The committee can also draw on previous reviews and concerns raised. These include the increased risk young people in care/ in need face with gang involvement or peer pressure. Although not all knife crime is gang related, the most significant harm is perpetrated by gang members.

Previous reviews have also emphasised the importance of partnership

work in protecting young people and tackling social and mental health issues. There is evidence that young people are more at risk of knife crime if social and emotional issues are not addressed. Schools have asked us to look at how we can tackle violence and the links with social deprivation and mental health to promote better inter agency responses.

The committee is well placed to gather partners together from the council, police and health services, to get a more accurate picture of the extent of knife crime, and to secure a better profile in the community so we can respond more effectively. When the Violence Reduction Unit started work in Glasgow they identified under reporting and set out to get a more accurate picture using a range of data. The Mayor of London has provided a good overview in his report, and identified trends such as men and the BAME community being significantly more at risk, and that although women are less likely to be victims and significantly less likely to be perpetrators there are some worrying trends around domestic abuse and CSE. Gathering more local data would enable the committee to get a more accurate idea of the community challenge, and also enable it to perform its overview role once the review is finished by tracking data.

Last and not least the committee intend to look at the high re-offending rates and if restorative justice, and similar approaches, could offer a way to tackle these, particularly given the evidence that there is some overlap between perpetrators and victims of knife crime.

Issues to be examined include :

- How to best safeguard young people in care from knife crime & knife carrying (with a focus on young people in need because of social / emotional deprivation & mental health needs)
- The links between knife crime and gangs
- How best to work with schools, including primary schools
- Engaging young people and youth services in preventing knife crime and knife carrying (particularly the Youth Council, voluntary & statutory youth service)
- Wider strategies and good practice in combating violence, in particular taking a Public Health approach
- The potential for restorative justice, and similar initiatives,

to reduce repeat offending

- the gathering of statistics to understand rates of knife crime and a profile of the perpetrator/ target community (including age, gender and ethnicity)
- Assess the impact of the Metropolitan Police's anti knife crime initiative, Operation Sceptre, in Southwark

**6 Who would you like to receive evidence and advice from during the review?**

- Cllr Barrie Hargrove on Southwark Knife Crime and Knife Carrying action plan
- The Mayor of London on The London Knife Crime Strategy
- Southwark Borough commander (via Housing community safety scrutiny committee and possibly at the scrutiny in a day)
- Scotland Violence Reduction Unit & World Health Organisation's Violence Prevention Alliance work on taking a Public Health approach to violence.
- Local schools via the secondary and primary Headteachers executives
- Children's services on children in care and at risk – particularly on looking at gangs and partnership work with agencies to support children and young people at risk of harm (schools, health, police)
- Youth Council
- Youth Services – voluntary and statutory
- Initiatives to reduce re-offending, including restorative justice
- Experts, local and national, on tackling gangs
- Council officers, the police, emergency departments and other agencies who are able to provide statistics
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**7 Any suggestions for background information? Are you aware of any best practice on this topic?**

- European report on preventing knife crime among young people:  
[http://www.euro.who.int/data/assets/pdf\\_file/0012/121314/E94277.pdf](http://www.euro.who.int/data/assets/pdf_file/0012/121314/E94277.pdf)
- UK Government papers on knife crime reduction:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/knife-gun-and-gang-crime>
- The London Knife Crime Strategy  
[https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/mopac\\_knife\\_crime\\_strategy\\_june\\_2017.pdf](https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/mopac_knife_crime_strategy_june_2017.pdf)
- Scotland Violence Reduction Unit & World Health Organisation's Violence Prevention Alliance work on taking a Public Health approach to violence.  
<http://www.actiononviolence.org.uk/about-us> and  
[http://www.who.int/violenceprevention/about/participants/vru\\_scotland/en](http://www.who.int/violenceprevention/about/participants/vru_scotland/en)
- Overview: 24 Ways to Reduce Crime in Violent Cities  
<https://www.theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network/2015/jun/30/24-ways-to-reduce-in-the-worlds-most-violent-cities>

**8 What approaches could be useful for gathering evidence? What can be done outside committee meetings?**

e.g. verbal or written submissions, site visits, mystery-shopping, service observation, meeting with stakeholders, survey, consultation event

- Presentation at committees on present work on Knife Crime and Knife Carrying work and the Borough Commander.
- Focus group with young people including children in care and care leavers in Southwark
- Scrutiny in a Day event with presentations and workshops.