

Item No. 14.	Classification: Open	Date: 11 December 2018	Meeting Name: Cabinet
Report title:		Establishment of the Positive Futures Fund	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
Cabinet Member:		Councillor Evelyn Akoto, Community Safety and Public Health	

FOREWORD - COUNCILLOR EVELYN AKOTO, CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY SAFETY AND PUBLIC HEALTH

This cabinet report sets in motion our manifesto commitment to work with our communities to find local solutions that help young people stay away from crime and in particular knives by launching a £500,000 Positive Futures Fund to support community groups that provide innovative opportunities for young people across the borough.

Youth violence and in particular knife crime are both complex and long standing and continue to be a significant problem in Southwark and across London. Every young life lost is a tragedy and alongside our partners the council is committed to doing all that we can to end knife crime and youth violence in the borough.

No one agency has the answers but every part of the council is working with communities, the police, and other partners to tackle youth violence and other issues that are so harmful to our communities.

We recognise that our young people are full of passion and potential, but sadly we have all seen and heard about young lives lost because of knife crime. This fund is about inspiring opportunities for young people that make the most of this potential and passion.

Taking time to understand and accept the reality of life for young people as they see it, giving young people a voice in the work we are doing in tackling knife crime is vital to the work that we do. That is why we want the Fund to have the active involvement of young people in developing programmes that divert young people from a life of crime

There is no one way to tackle knife crime, the work that goes on day after day to prevent violence and divert people away from carrying knives generally goes unnoticed. Prevention takes time, dedication and understanding. The Positive Futures Fund aims to support work by community groups that aims to prevent violence.

Once again despite cuts from central government, Southwark Council continues to provide financial support to community groups, voluntary organisations and faith groups so that they add value to our borough, and make Southwark a place with strong and resilient communities which we can all be proud of. With this fund we are making another investment in our communities and in young people's futures.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To approve the establishment of the Positive Futures Fund that aims to support community organisations to provide inspiring opportunities for young people that divert them away from crime.
2. To instruct officers to develop the detailed criteria and funding processes for the scheme with the intention that the implementation of funded projects commences from April 2019.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

3. Knife crime had been declining in London over the last few years, but 2016-2017 marked an increase. For the last five years Southwark has had higher level of knife crime than the London average. The number of offences of knife crime with injury and knife possession has also been above the capital's average. In the last rolling 12 month period ending September 2018 Southwark has seen a decrease of over 15% in knife crime but the volumes still remain too high and the public remain rightly concerned about knife crime and carrying in the borough.
4. Serious youth violence is defined by the Metropolitan Police Service as any offence of most serious violence or weapon enabled crime, where the victim is aged 1-19' i.e. murder, manslaughter, rape, wounding with intent and causing grievous bodily harm. 'Youth violence' is defined in the same way, but also includes assault with injury offences.
5. Knife carrying by young people (10 to 24 years) is now more prevalent. Whilst not all knife crime is gang related or committed by young people, they remain disproportionately affected by knife crime.
6. Southwark Council recognises that youth violence and knife crime is a concern for many in our community and tackling it is the responsibility of everyone in society.
7. Southwark Council is currently implementing a knife crime and serious violence action plan. This multi-agency action plan was developed using the following themes and included consultation with a broad range of stakeholders:
 - a. Governance – robust governance of the partnership and ensuring a system wide approach to the issues involving all key agencies.
 - b. Engagement, consultation and needs assessment – increasing understanding of violence and how to tackle these issues alongside communities. Targeting lawbreakers – enforcement and criminal justice response to knife crime.
 - c. Keeping deadly weapons off our streets – addressing the accessibility and availability of knives.
 - d. Protecting and educating young people – recognising the importance of prevention and working alongside schools. Standing with communities, neighbourhoods and families against knife crime. Supporting victims of knife crime - ensuring that improving support to victims is at the heart of a holistic response.

- e. Offering ways out of crime - recognising that young people should be offered interventions which help them move away from criminality.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

8. A new Council Plan for 2018-2022 was agreed by cabinet in June 2018. It includes a Safer Community as a key commitment. The plan highlights that everyone has the right to feel safe and be safe.
9. The plan also recognises that while Southwark is a welcoming and inclusive borough and we are proud that so many people want to make it their home we need to empower people, particularly young people, with the opportunities that they need to make positive choices and to stay away from crime and violence. The plan commits the council to investing in our young people and finding new and innovative ways to support their futures, providing opportunities and investing in the groups that give young people inspiration and improved life chances.
10. In particular the Plan commits the council to launch a new Positive Futures Fund to support groups which provide inspiring opportunities for young people and divert them away from crime. This investment is additional to the council's existing investment in Youth Services, grants to voluntary sector youth providers and the Youth Fund that was established by the council in 2011. It will complement these existing programmes but be targeted at those young people most likely to become involved in crime.
11. Governance of the work that the council does in this area in partnership with other agencies is the responsibility of the Southwark Safeguarding Adults Board that includes the role of the statutory crime and disorder partnership. This ensures that the approach that is taken to tackling issues like knife crime and youth violence is a joined-up multiagency one involving the council, Police, Health, Education, Probation, Voluntary & Community Sector and other partners. The work of the partnership brings together the work on enforcement, the longer term public health approach and a range of targeted and effective interventions that address the immediate issue.
12. While enforcement and a focus on criminality is an integral part of the approach it is essential that the partnership also address issues around why more and more young people are carrying and using weapons. Youth violence is complex, with a range of deep rooted and difficult challenges in tackling it that require all partners to work together longer term to understand and address the underlying issues that result in youth violence.
13. The intention is that the Positive Futures Fund creates innovative work with partners to support a more direct community response to not only engaging directly with our most vulnerable and hard to reach young people, but also developing local solutions and responses to youth violence and knife crime.
14. The Positive Futures Fund aims to support voluntary and community sector organisations and groups working with disadvantaged young people within Southwark. It can contribute to up scaling existing projects or the creation of new ones. Young people will be given the opportunity to frame the desired outcomes from the fund, and funding recommendations will be the responsibility of a board – with at least half of the board being young people aged between 16-24. This board

will be actively supported by officers to ensure it has access to the best possible information on good practice in this area of work, does not duplicate existing work but links to and complements existing work across the partnership.

15. The board will be recruited via the existing established Southwark youth links such as the Youth Council, Southwark Young Advisors and Peer Navigators.
16. The intention of the fund is that all projects that are supported should be co-designed by the young people that they aim to support and evidence active engagement and participation by young people to ensure that they are recognising and tackling the most pressing problems felt by these groups.
17. The Southwark Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Strategy 2017/2022 'Common Purpose Common Cause' was launched by the local VCS, the council and Southwark Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) in November 2016.
18. The overall ambition of the strategy is to support a sustainable, confident and resourceful VCS that can work alongside the public and private sector to deliver the best outcomes for Southwark residents.
19. The action plan for delivering the strategy was designed to deliver outcomes in four key areas:
 - Creating better partnership working to improve outcomes for residents.
 - Improved commissioning and grant-giving to focus on outcomes.
 - Making better use of community assets to revitalise communities and create preventative places.
 - Enable and support more resilient communities that are connected and more resourceful.
20. In October 2017 the council agreed a common outcomes framework and new model of commissioning which acts as a single commissioning plan for the council and CCG providing a framework where impact will be measured by the contribution made by the VCS to establish and sustain strong and flourishing communities.
21. With regard to the Positive Futures Fund the aim is that projects supported make a contribution to the following key outcomes from the framework:
 - Residents have an improved understanding of their rights and responsibilities resulting in greater community ownership.
 - Residents feel safer where they live, work or socialise and know where to get support.
 - Children and young people feel safer in their neighbourhoods and in Southwark
 - Residents across communities are more confident in reporting issues when they arise.
 - Residents feel treated with respect and listened to through ongoing engagement and collaboration.
 - Residents feel more able to access services at an early point and in times of crisis.
 - More residents are helped to feel more secure in their homes.
22. It is proposed that the Positive Futures Fund supports projects that meet the following criteria:

- Projects that work in innovative ways to inspire and to keep young people out of the criminal justice system (and those who are potentially at risk of falling into the criminal justice system).
- Projects that aim to create a positive impact in local communities and encourage longer term sustainability of resources to continue the work taking place with disadvantaged young people.
- Projects that focus on prevention and early help or reduction of criminal activity and are clearly targeted at those most vulnerable to being drawn into criminal activity rather than open access services.
- Projects that do not duplicate but can link to activities funded through existing programmes such as the council's youth grants or existing council provision working with this target group.
- Projects that help make communities, and/or young people, feel safer.
- Projects that support young ex-offenders, young people who are Care Leavers and complement the ongoing partnership work on young people's mental health and wellbeing.
- Projects that support young people feeling more able to access services at an early point and in times of crisis.
- Applicants need to show that Young People are and will continue to be actively involved in delivery and be able to evidence clear impact.
- Projects that have in place appropriate systems of control in particular adequate safeguarding policies, procedures and practices.
- Projects that can access funding or resources from other sources to complement the Positive Futures Fund.
- Projects that are designed to leave a lasting legacy including the opportunity to bring young people together with other existing initiatives such as the Southwark Young Advisors, Southwark Youth Council and Southwark Scholars

23. Given that the fund is targeting work with vulnerable young people the council will carry out the necessary due diligence on recipients to ensure their proposed activities take steps to mitigate any safeguarding or other risks to the vulnerable young people that are intended to benefit. This will include:

- Scrutiny of applications received to ensure they address safeguarding issues;
- Assessing the financial competence and capability of applicants;
- Reviewing applicants track record;
- Requiring progress and monitoring reports on projects, including financial monitoring;
- Requiring and assessing a copy of the applicant's safeguarding policy and practices (and monitoring this throughout the life of the project) to ensure that this includes:
 - arrangements for vetting staff and volunteers
 - a clear understanding of what safeguarding means in the context of the organisation's activities, clients, staff and volunteers
 - a commitment to training staff and volunteers in good safeguarding practice
 - effective procedures for reporting abuse and for taking the appropriate action.

24. Those applying must be living and/or working actively within Southwark and their

main objectives should be to work with young people who are on the periphery of crime and/or in disadvantaged communities and be able to demonstrate the ways in which they would inspire young people.

25. Successful projects must also be based in the local community and demonstrate that young people play an active role in the project. We will prioritise small local organisations that are active in Camberwell, Walworth, Peckham and Bermondsey and the fund criteria and process will be sufficiently flexible to minimise the administrative burdens on the successful organisations so that the focus is on delivery while ensuring value for money, accountability and good safeguarding practice. It will be critical that funded groups are linked in to existing provision across the council and its partners so that young people can be signposted to good quality opportunities that retain their engagement beyond the life of the fund.
26. Robust evaluation of outcomes from each project is essential and all successful applicants will be supported to complete and submit an end of grant report which enables Positive Futures not only to see what difference the grant has made and ensure a lasting legacy but establish what impact this funding has had on both the organisation and its beneficiaries.
27. Given that the intention is a high level of active engagement and co-design of successful projects it is proposed that the fund application process takes place in two stages. At stage 1, organisations will be asked to submit a short expression of interest that gathers basic information about the project and organisation that is used to check eligibility for the fund.
28. At this stage those organisations who are successful will request a technical assistance and co-design grant of up to £2,000 to help to develop the project and co-design it with young people. Those invited to proceed will work with council officers and Community Southwark to develop the project and meet the eligibility requirements for stage 2. This will include support through a facilitated workshop hosted by young people and co-design experts. This first stage will be completed within 6 months.
29. At stage 2 organisations will be asked to complete a full application form for funding towards the project delivery of normally up to £50,000, more in the case of exceptionally strong applications. The proposals will be assessed by the Funding Board outlined above with a detailed report from the lead officer who has worked on the development of the bid. Delivery and evaluation of projects will then take place over the financial years 2019-22 with a full evaluation of each project taking place to inform the future direction of the programme.

Policy implications

30. The draft council plan was agreed by cabinet in October 2018, and is due to go for final decision to Council Assembly in November 2018. The Council Plan sets out the council's ambition for a Southwark to be a great place to live with clean, green and safe communities. The council plan commits to "empower people, particularly young people, with the opportunities that they need to make positive choices and to stay away from crime and violence." It commits to "work with communities to find local solutions that help young people stay away from knives."
31. The Positive Futures Fund is part of the council's work towards meeting this commitment and its findings will impact on future policy.

Community impact statement

32. Youth violence and knife crime is an issue of national importance and particularly impactful locally. As a result, it is important that Southwark Council effectively understands the community impact and works with community organisations to develop potential solutions.
33. This fund will focus on and therefore particularly impact young people and the aim is to support proposals that are co-designed with and have the active engagement of young people in Southwark.
34. There is a legal duty on local authorities, in the exercise of their functions, to have due regard to the need to promote equal opportunities, eliminate discrimination and to promote positive community relations. This grants programme will empower and enable hard-to-reach communities and those communities which experience discrimination, to achieve a better quality of life.
35. As part of the application process the council will ask organisations to estimate the percentage of their service users that fall into the protected characteristics of the Equality Act 2010. This information is used to assess the equalities impact of the programme. As part of the application process VCS organisations must demonstrate who will benefit from their organisations' activities and how they support cohesion and community safety initiatives. Organisations must evidence the benefits users gain from their services or activities.
36. Grant funded VCS organisations are required as part of the Conditions of Grant Funding to sign up to the Southwark Diversity Standard. Contained within this is a requirement that all subcontractors and service provider pay workers the London Living Wage as a minimum. The council has recently achieved Friendly Funder accreditation with the Living Wage Foundation. Living Wage Friendly Funders support charities to pay the real Living Wage that meets the cost of living through their grant-making.

Resource implications

37. The total budget available for the Positive Futures Fund will be £500,000 subject to final approval as part of the council's budget setting process.

Legal implications

38. Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 places a duty on local authorities when carrying out its functions to give due regard to the likely effect of its work on and do all that it reasonably can to prevent: crime and disorder, misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances, and reoffending. This duty extends to the establishment of the Positive Futures Fund.

Consultation

39. The active involvement and engagement of young people will be a key component of successful projects. The intention is that all projects that are supported will be co-designed by young people to ensure that they tackle the most pressing problems felt by these groups.

SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS

Director of Law and Democracy

40. The Localism Act 2011 gives councils a general power of competence whereby they have power to do anything that individuals generally may do. This power can be used even if legislation already exists that allows a local authority to do the same thing. However the general power of competence does not enable a local authority to do anything which it was restricted or prevented from doing under that previous legislation.
41. The director of law and democracy is not aware any restriction.
42. As stated, section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 places a duty on local authorities when carrying out its functions to give due regard to the likely effect of its work on and do all that it reasonably can to prevent: crime and disorder, misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances, and reoffending. This duty extends to the establishment of the Positive Futures Fund.

Strategic Director of Finance and Governance (H&M18/070)

43. The total budget available for the Positive Futures Fund will be subject to final approval as part of the council's budget setting process. The council's contribution to be funded from the one-off additional income received from the London Business Rates Pool (growth generated in 2018-19).
44. The council's costs in governing and administering the initiative will be contained within existing budgets.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Council Plan 2018-2022	Housing & Modernisation 160 Tooley Street London SE1 2QH	Stephen Douglass 020 7525 0886
Link: http://www.southwark.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/fairer-future/council-plan		

APPENDICES

No.	Title
None	

AUDIT TRAIL

Cabinet Member	Councillor Evelyn Akoto, Community Safety and Public Health	
Lead Officer	Michael Scorer, Strategic Director of Housing and Modernisation	
Report Author	Stephen Douglass, Director of Communities	
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Director of Law and Democracy	Yes	Yes
Strategic Director of Finance and Governance	Yes	Yes
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