

Item No. 4	Classification: OPEN	Date: 25/07/05	MEETING NAME Ouseley Review Working Group
Report title:		Assessment of the current potential for youth conflict based upon ethnic, racial or cultural difference	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
From:		Director of Children's Services	

1. RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 1.1 That Members support the notion that the Council and its partners within the Crime and Disorder Partnership (SSP) and emerging Children's Trust Young Southwark) adopt a 'whole-systems' approach to youth inclusion with a view to reducing all types of youth conflict and promoting sustainable and cohesive communities. Joint working across all sectors has been established through these bodies and their respective sub-groups.
- 1.2 That Members note the level of investment and resources allocated to youth related services and that all direct work with children and young people through the delivery of youth work and social inclusion programmes promote community cohesion (see Appendix A to follow).
- 1.3 That Members endorse the continued development of effective interagency systems (under the governance framework of the SSP) for regular sharing of intelligence concerning possible youth conflicts, including those arising from ethnic, racial or cultural difference to enable the effective deployment of inter-agency resources to identify and tackle emerging problems.
- 1.4 That Members note the assessment that there are distinctions between the types of youth conflict that occur in the borough based upon school or estate rivalry, criminally-oriented gang allegiances and conflict based upon ethnic, racial and cultural differences and that at this time there is little evidence of tension or conflict between young people from different communities.
- 1.5 That progress reports on the Young People and Crime Action Plan which incorporate the findings of this intelligence sharing are considered regularly by the SSP (Youth Crime Group) and Young Southwark and reported quarterly to the Executive Members for Children and Community Safety.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

This report is based on recommendation 16.22 of the report from Lord Ouseley, which states:

'The Council will wish to be reassured that existing arrangements for assessing and responding to the potential for inter-ethnic youth conflict are adequate and effective'.

- 2.1 The responsibility for assessing and responding to the potential for inter-ethnic youth conflict is shared by the Council and the Metropolitan Police and is

enhanced through two key partnerships – the Safer Southwark (Crime and Disorder Partnership), and Young Southwark (the emerging children's Trust) both of which include the Primary Care Trust and a wide range of voluntary sector representatives.

2.2 In addition the Safer Southwark Partnership has created a range of inter-agency fora for sharing information relating to gang-involved offending, hate crime, anti-social behaviour and community cohesion. These include the following groups working together:

- Borough Intelligence Unit
- Gangs Intelligence Analyst
- Safer Neighbourhood Teams
- Youth workers and youth facilities
- Gang Disruption Team
- YOT prevention and early intervention programmes
- Southwark Anti Social Behaviour Unit
- Youth Engagement Programmes
- Gangs Inter Agency Intelligence Group
- Gangs Community Group
- Partnership Operations Group
- Safer Schools Officers
- Specialist youth provision such as Youth Inclusion Programmes

These work to enable a prompt response to areas of concern. For example last year, apparently racially-motivated attacks on Black school pupils in Bermondsey were identified and the From Boyhood to Manhood Foundation was commissioned to work with White pupils in the area. Also, a Joint Action Team in Rotherhithe was created under the stewardship of the Director of Environment to provide a range of individual and group programmes for disaffected youths in Rotherhite involved in criminal and anti-social behaviour, including Hate Crime (homophobic and racially-motivated assaults and harassment).

2.3 It is acknowledged (Ouseley Report pg 30) that a large number of young people in the borough are vulnerable and at risk of a range of social and personal difficulties. Despite this, there is little evidence of tension or conflict between youths from different communities constituted on ethnic, racial or cultural difference, although the potential for this to arise must be acknowledged and proactively addressed.

2.4 The problems associated with gang-involved offending, and issues relating to gun and knife enabled crime, often associated with inter-gang rivalries are a priority concern for the Safer Southwark Partnership. A range of services, co-ordinated by a dedicated S.S.P sub-group, have been established including the Youth Offending Team Gangs Disruption Project, funded by Neighbourhood Renewal, the Kickstart Youth Inclusion Project, and detached youth work teams.

2.4.1 Police intelligence and inter-agency research suggests that these gangs are predominantly criminal in orientation, and inter-gang conflict and violence is motivated by access to criminal markets rather than issues of race and ethnicity.

2.4.2 This analysis has prompted the sub-group to endorse the following definition of a gang: A group of 3 or more, with a distinctive name or identity, an identified 'turf' or territory, and involvement in criminal activity. This is not to suggest that groups

of young people creating a visible nuisance on the streets, and/or engaged in anti-social or sub-criminal behaviour are not a matter of concern, but that the response should not necessarily be routed in enforcement activity and the Criminal Justice System. Rather, the focus, outlined in the draft Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy, of early intervention and diversion, modelled in Rotherhithe (see above) is likely to be more effective with these groups. However where intelligence shows a “gang” is in operation a criminal justice/enforcement led intervention is required.

2.5 In this context, agencies are concerned that the complex dynamics that underpin the formation of youth groups and that occasionally lead to inter-group or even intra-group conflict are not conflated with issues of ethnicity, race and culture. However, it is imperative that we remain sensitive to the fact that the experience of social exclusion and disaffection may give rise to tensions between communities, and that these tensions may be mis-described or even exploited by more sophisticated groups.

2.5.1 The Council is promoting social inclusion and community cohesion through all services directly provided or commissioned by Children’s and Young Peoples Services. For example the Youth and Connexions Service Summer University and Positive activities programmes and the Young Southwark Festival. The full extent of the Council’s investment in youth related activity is described in Appendix A (to follow).

Providers of youth services are networked on a geographical basis and as part of their network meetings assess issues for young people in their areas including any emerging tensions. The more targeted projects like the Children’s Fund are very inclusive with 70% of service users being of BME origin. On Track has a high rate of participation from school pupils and parents of West African origin in the South of the borough.

3. KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

3.1 The 2001 census data indicates that 59% of children are of Black and other ethnic minority origin. This community is itself heterogeneous with 29% of children being of Black African origin, which is itself not an homogenous group, and 9% being of Caribbean origin. The 10-17 year population that falls within the scope of the Youth Justice System is similarly diverse with 37% classified as being Black or Black British. A review of school age population suggests that 26% of pupils speak English as a second language. This diversity enriches the community but also presents a challenge to our schools and other children’s services to provide culturally relevant and accessible services to all communities. Those that are, or at least perceive themselves to be excluded from service provision may display their disaffection in ways that are problematic.

3.1.2 One successful example has been the dialogue leaders of the local Somali community, which is growing in size, have entered into with the Council, concerning a lack of provision for their young people. We are working in partnership with community leaders to promote inclusion through a range of culturally relevant youth programmes and community development processes to reduce the potential for disaffection and conflict. Locally we have not experienced the degree of crime and anti-social behaviour from Somali youth as in other London boroughs. This is testimony to the strength and organisation of the borough’s Somali community and suggests that the Council must continue to consider in designing, delivering, and commissioning services, and in its allocation of grants the needs of all established and newly emerging communities, as the

local demography continues to change in terms of age, race and ethnicity.

- 3.2 An analysis of youth conflict in the borough, as noted above, suggests that the key drivers are school or estate rivalry, or criminal markets. These issues are dealt with in various S.S.P or Children's Services fora. However, conflicts that develop on this basis may easily become reframed as inter-ethnic or inter-racial conflict if not sensitively and effectively managed.
- 3.2.1 Youth gangs in Peckham, which are criminal in orientation, are composed of a number of splinter groups linked to estates and schools. However, in recent years, the pre-eminence of Caribbean youth has been displaced by those of Black African origin. The potential for conflicts based on criminal economics and other rivalries to be re-described in terms of ethnic conflict is clear.
- 3.2.2 Similar statements can be made in relation to cross-border conflicts between local youths and those from neighbouring boroughs. In addition to the measures outlined above, inter-borough information-sharing and co-ordination is crucial and this has been developed with services in Lewisham and Lambeth, to address potential areas of conflict and emerging problems swiftly.
- 3.2.3 An example of this is that of the so-called 'South Moslem Soldiers', which originated in Lambeth, but is showing signs of operating within Southwark. This is a criminal gang with no real affiliation to the Moslem community, whose leaders have unequivocally condemned their activities. As a response to the possibility that this gang may prompt misplaced hostility towards the Moslem community. The late Inspector Russell Denton led some work with leaders of the local Moslem faith community to provide positive and factual images of their faith to young people through the Agencies Supporting Schools Programme (ASSP), which will be delivered in the academic year 2005/06.
- 3.3 Historically, there have been concerns relating to inter-racial conflict between the White host population in the North of the borough and BME communities. There is little evidence of organised inter-racial conflict, although Race Hate Crime continues to be a problem. A range of measures co-ordinated by the Hate Crimes Unit and the Anti-Social Behaviour Unit in accordance with the Corporate Strategy have been implemented to tackle perpetrators, and support victims. Measures in relation to the former include Anti-Social Behaviour Orders, Possession proceedings with respect to Council tenants, and so forth. To support victims, a helpline is available to facilitate reporting, and there is support for victims to give evidence against the perpetrators.
- 3.3.1 However, large numbers of White youths feel disaffected, and claim that they have few opportunities for recreation and personal development. This provides fertile ground for those who would wish to preach racist views, although at present, there is little evidence of this taking place.

In the medium to long term, the strategic response is to address the concerns of all young people in relation to access to Education, Training and Employment, and constructive leisure activities. This falls within the purview of the Council's department of Environment and Leisure, and the Youth and Connexions Service, supported by other agencies.

In the short term, the model developed by the Rotherhite JAT (see above) can have a demonstrable impact, and should be considered for further roll-out. In addition, consideration should be given to expanding the work of Bede House in

relation to anti-racist youth work, and of Kickstart Youth Inclusion Project in West Bermondsey funded by Neighbourhood Renewal and Positive Futures.

4. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The development of a clear focus for all services upon promoting social cohesion and the tolerance of difference is essentially resource neutral.
- 4.2 The 'pump-priming' of the development of new communities, such as the Somali community, and facilitating their greater integration may require additional resourcing after the current allocation of available funding streams has been reviewed.
- 4.3 The planned review of the local Youth Crime Strategy and associated Action Plan may pose further choices in relation to additional investment or the re-designation of priorities.
- 4.4 Local youth programmes need to maintain enough flexibility to address any potential flashpoints of conflict.
- 4.5 **Financial Implications (Ref: FI/763/JC)**
No specific investment choices have been proposed in this report (see 4.3).

Human Resource Implications

- 4.5 No specific human resource implications arise from this report.

5. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 This report relates to the potential for inter-ethnic youth conflict, which may include inter-racial conflict (Black and White), but also conflict between different ethnic groups of the same race but with different cultures, histories and differing issues in relation to social inclusion.
- 5.2 If community tensions are not addressed in a proactive and timely way, social cohesion and the development of safer communities may be jeopardised.

6. SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS

Borough Solicitor & Secretary

Concurrent report of the Borough Solicitor:

Section 6 of the 1998 Crime and Disorder Act requires the Council and its partners to take a joint approach to tackling crime and disorder priorities in the borough.

The Borough has a duty under Section 40 1998 CDA to produce an annual Youth Justice Plan, which included a target to reduce the involvement of Black and other ethnic minority young people in the Criminal Justice System to their proportion of the general population.

Chief Finance Officer (if required)

- 6.2 **Concurrent report from the Chief Finance Officer:**

Not required.

Other Officers (if required)

Not required.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
<i>Crime and Drugs Strategy 2005/08</i>	<i>Community Safety Team Town Hall, Peckham Road, London SE5 8UB</i>	<i>Jonathon Toy 0207 525 1479</i>

APPENDIX A

Audit Trail

Lead Officer	<i>Jonathan Toy</i>	
Report Author	<i>Jonathan Toy Chris Domeney</i>	
Version	<i>Final v1.1</i>	
Dated	<i>19 July 2005</i>	
Key Decision?	<i>No</i>	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / EXECUTIVE MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments included
Borough Solicitor & Secretary	Yes	Yes
Chief Finance Officer	No	No