

Item No. 22.	Classification: Open	Date: 16 July 2019	Meeting Name: Cabinet
Report title:		Report and Recommendations of the Southwark Serious Youth Violence Panel	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All wards	
Cabinet Member:		Councillor Evelyn Akoto, Community Safety and Public Health	

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

The subject of serious youth violence is one that is being discussed across the country due to its devastating impact on communities and families. The ongoing reports of knife fatalities have become commonplace not only in the capital but across the country. In Southwark, over the 12 months prior to May 2019, 112 young people up to the age of 24 were injured in knife attacks and unfortunately this number could easily rise in the next year.

The number of victims of serious youth violence in London has been rising over the past four years, with knives continuing to play a significant part in serious youth violence. Although Southwark has experienced a gradual decline in knife offences our numbers are still too high. My ambition is to eradicate serious youth violence in all forms in our borough. No child should be afraid to go about their daily activity; our children, families and communities should not be dealing with the trauma of losing young lives in horrific violent circumstances.

The cross party Southwark Serious Youth Violence panel was therefore established to look at the current issue in our borough in order to find solutions to the ever-pervasive problem. In order to achieve this, it was important that panel members reflected the various aspects of our communities and that key partners like schools, youth workers, police officers, faith and community leaders - as well as parents and especially young people all contributed to the work of the panel. The issue is complex and solving this problem will take time to achieve, unfortunately there are no quick fixes. It is therefore important that the solution to serious youth violence is found within a community wide approach, with all partners working collaboratively together to support our young people to have a safe and positive future. I am determined to build upon the COMMITMENT of frontline officers and programmes including the Positive Futures Fund in the borough that help towards tackling violence and place OUR young people and communities at the centre.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That cabinet:

1. Welcomes the work of the Cross Party Panel on Serious Youth Violence, appended to this report.
2. Accepts the recommendations from the Serious Youth Violence Panel and instructs officers to report back to Cabinet with a more detailed council wide delivery plan that also incorporates the findings of the Southwark Learning Review on Violence and Vulnerability.

3. Requests that the Cross Party Panel on Serious Youth Violence reconvenes in January 2020 to review progress with the recommendations.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

4. 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.
5. Though the trend in knife crime had declined in London over a period of years, it spiked again in 2016-2017. Southwark has a higher level of knife crime than the London average although over the last nine months Southwark has seen a continuous reduction. Despite this, the council recognises that these crimes still remain too high and the public remains rightly concerned about violence in the borough, specifically knife crime and carrying.
6. 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.
7. Southwark Council has a Knife Crime & Serious Violence Action Plan that runs until 2020. In January 2019, an Independent External Learning Review on Violence & Vulnerability deemed some of the council's programmes and initiatives exemplary national practice which could be further improved through bringing together how we deal with a range of exploitative crimes. The council is now in the process of setting up a Community Harm and Exploitation Board (CHEB), as recommended by the review, to progress this work.
8. While the council has a role in reducing youth violence and knife crime, other partners and crucially communities across the borough also have an important role in this area. All organisations, agencies and communities need to play their part. The panel's report makes recommendations for how the council will facilitate the better integration and effectiveness of action by all who have a role to play in making the borough a safer place to live and work.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

9. In November 2018, the cabinet agreed the proposal of the cabinet member for community safety and public health to establish a cross party, member-led 'Serious Youth Violence Panel' to lead and co-ordinate evidence gathering on the current status of youth violence and knife crime in Southwark and to use this evidence to further inform the council's response.
10. The Youth Violence Panel was a time limited task focused group which included members of ruling and opposition parties as well as youth and community representatives. Alongside receiving written and verbal evidence from council officers, partner agencies and community organisations the Panel paid particular attention to the experiences and perceptions of young people who are disproportionately affected.
11. The Panel held a series of meetings that are summarised in this report, starting in December 2018. It took evidence from a range of stakeholders, local service providers, community organisations and young people. The range of issues considered by the Panel included education, health, policing, the criminal justice system and youth provision.

12. The report at Appendix 1 sets out the findings of the Southwark Youth Violence Panel. The table below sets out each recommendation and how it can be addressed and by when.
13. A summary of the Youth Violence Panel's recommendations include:

Early Years & Education		
Recommendation	Action	Date
Undertake a more in-depth scrutiny review on school exclusions, managed moves, home schooling along with alternative provision and its impact on young people and vulnerability.	Propose thematic area to be undertaken as Community Safety Scrutiny Commission for completion within 19/20	January 2020, (TBC)
Co-produce charter on preventing school exclusions working with schools, young people and parents/carers.	Consultation and co-production of charter Charter developed and launched	September - December 2019 March 2020
Recommendation	Action	Date
Provide an information/resource pack for educational settings on violence and vulnerability which includes information on referral routes and services and support on offer.	Shared narrative agreed on local profile of violence and vulnerability Development of local resource pack including referral routes and support for frontline staff in educational settings	September 2019 December 2019

<p>Review current offer from schools to help children transition from primary to secondary school to ensure every child that needs one has the offer of a support package to aid transition.</p>	<p>Review of current programmes in schools to assist with transition</p> <p>Design and pilot support package to aid support for school transition</p> <p>Roll out support package</p>	<p>September 2019</p> <p>January 2019</p> <p>April 2020</p>
<p>Advocate for a zero exclusions policy to central government.</p>	<p>Lobby government to reconsider current guidelines on school exclusions in line with Timpson Review</p> <p>Act as an advocate highlighting the risks and impacts of school exclusions</p>	<p>March 2020</p>
Mental Health & Public Health Approach		
Recommendation	Action	Date
<p>To work in partnership to raise awareness of mental health & wellbeing with young people specifically the perceived stigma attached to this by young people and how this impacts their vulnerability to violence.</p>	<p>Through programmes such as the Young Advisors and Peer Navigators create mental health and wellbeing ambassadors to raise awareness especially considering the links to violence and vulnerability.</p> <p>Ensure all services commissioned for young people involve these ambassadors' voices</p>	<p>January 2020</p> <p>March 2020</p>
<p>The panel supports Southwark Council and its partners on the Health and Wellbeing Board's pledge to treat 100% of children diagnosed with mental health conditions by 2022.</p>		
<p>Southwark Council should work with partners to produce a framework for action that has at its centre the public health approach to violence prevention. This work should be</p>	<p>Joint Strategic Assessment of Youth Violence completed as a baseline</p> <p>Implement a serious</p>	<p>September 2019</p>

led by the Community Safety Partnership Team working closely with the Public Health Team.	violence framework which puts 'Prevention' at the centre supporting a multi-faceted response - -preventing risk factors -preventing violence -reducing long term impact	March 2020
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Role Models and Parents/Carers

Recommendation	Action	Date
Support parents and wider community to develop the capacity and skills in supporting their children to resist pressure to becoming involved in knife crime and serious violence.	Support offer developed for parents to build capacity and skills to support their children resist the pressure to become involved in knife crime and serious violence.	December 2019
Promote raising young people's aspirations through signposting to mentoring schemes and through the use of trusted role models to both male and females at risk of youth violence.	Signposting and referral pathways produced for young people highlighting access to mentoring scheme and support for both males and females	December 2019
Southwark should consult with young people on the best way to recognise and reward young people within the borough for excellence building on the success of the Positive Futures Fund.	With young people identify different ways in which young people and their lives can be recognised, celebrated and rewarded. Plan of events and initiatives.	December 2019 January 2020
Criminal Justice/Police		
Recommendation	Action	Date
Advocate for more resources for local policing and active engagement with MOPAC and their newly forming Violence Reduction Unit, (VRU)	Lobby MOPAC and Central Government for more local police resources. Co-working with the	Ongoing

	VRU to ensure Southwark has access to resources/support.	Ongoing
Recommendation	Action	Date
Facilitate better communication between police and young people in the borough to support confidence building.	Communication led by our young people (e.g. Young Independent Advisory Group) to ensure their voices are heard and to facilitate and foster better relations.	September 2019 – ongoing
Youth & Community Services		
Southwark to work with young people to redesign its youth provision to ensure that it is fit for purpose and helps give young people the best chance to thrive in life.	Review of `Youth and Play Strategy to enable redesign of borough provision.	March 2020
Southwark Council should work with the community, faith groups, the voluntary sector, parents and Tenants & Residents Associations, (TRAs) to build resilience and address the trauma of serious youth violence. As part of this, Southwark Council should re-examine their victim support/ support offer for parents and carers.	Deliver community led resilience and support programme which is based on trauma informed approach. Review victim support offer across the borough.	December 2019 October 2019
Recommendations	Action	Date
Community led organisations and TRAs should be supported to make their resources and halls available for young people/services targeted at young people to use. TRAs should be encouraged to consider the diversity of their boards.	Map current use of community assets and how they are used to support young people.	March 2020
Southwark Council to use all commissioning frameworks to consider how they can contribute to addressing youth violence and to specifically rethink alternative	Council Strategic Commissioning Board will ensure that all decisions and work	Immediate

education provision and how our resources are used to support young people and parents and carers to complete their education.	programmes consider the contribution they make on preventing youth violence	
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14. The set of recommendations tabled above will require cross council departmental delivery and will be integrated with the recommendations of the recent Southwark External Learning Review on Violence & Vulnerability. A more detailed action plan will come back to Cabinet in October 2019.

Policy implications

15. The Southwark Serious Youth Violence Panel was not a decision making body, however its report sets out recommendations to cabinet which, if adopted, may impact on future policy.
16. The recommendation for 100% of children diagnosed with a mental health need to receive appropriate treatment was an aim agreed by the Health & Wellbeing Board on 21 November 2018.

Financial implications

17. Most of the panel's recommendation for the council can be accommodated within existing budgets and processes. The proposal to provide particular children with a transition package on leaving primary school may entail additional cost which has yet to be fully quantified and which will be included in the Medium Term Financial Plan for 2019-2020 onwards.

Community impact statement

18. The Southwark Youth Violence Panel took professional and personal evidence on the cause and consequences of knife crime and youth violence in order to inform more effective working between the council, partner agencies and the community. The recommendations of the panel identify a range of measures that can be taken to better address the needs of vulnerable young people and improve their engagement with public services and community activities.
19. The impact of these proposals should be to reduce knife crime and violence in the borough through the provision of greater support for young people at risk of committing or becoming victims of violence, increase the confidence of the community in the work of the council, the police and other agencies, as well as provide opportunities for local community service providers.

SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS

Director of Law and Democracy

20. This report is asking cabinet to accept the recommendations from the Serious Youth Violence Panel; as these cut across a number of portfolios this is a decision for cabinet.
21. 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 its functions and a need to 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 work of the panel.

22. However in making the decision to accept these recommendations, consideration has also been given by the cabinet to the council's duty under the Equality Act 2010 which requires the council to have due regard when taking decision to the need to:
 - Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation or other prohibited conduct
 - Advance of equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristics and those who do not share it
 - Foster good relations between those who share a relevant characteristic and those that do not share it.
23. Of particular regard here are issues of age, one of the protected characteristics.
24. Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity is further defined in s.149 as having due regard to the need of:
 - Remove or minimise disadvantages connected with a relevant protected characteristic
 - Take steps to meet the different needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic
 - Encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic participate in public life or any other activity in which they are under- represented.

Strategic Director of Finance and Governance (FC19/008)

25. The strategic director of finance and governance notes the report and the recommendations of the Serious Youth Violence Panel. The report acknowledges that most recommendations could be achieved within the existing budget available.
26. However, given the uncertainty around the council's resources going forward, the requirement for, and scale of savings needed may impact on current funding levels. Proposals requiring additional funding need to be fully quantified and considered alongside other service priorities for inclusion in the appropriate departmental budget plans for 2020-21 (specifically Education given the current scale of the DSG deficit).

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
None		

APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	Southwark Serious Youth Violence Panel Report

AUDIT TRAIL

Cabinet Member	Councillor Evelyn Akoto, Community Safety and Public Health	
Lead Officer	Michael Scorer, Strategic Director of Housing and Modernisation, Stephen Douglass, Director of Communities	
Report Author	Caroline Thwaites, Assistant Director, Community Safety and Partnerships	
Version	Final	
Dated	8 July 2019	
Key Decision?	Yes	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments Included
Director of Law and Democracy	Yes	Yes
Strategic Director of Finance and Governance	Yes	Yes
Cabinet Member	Yes	Yes
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team		8 July 2019